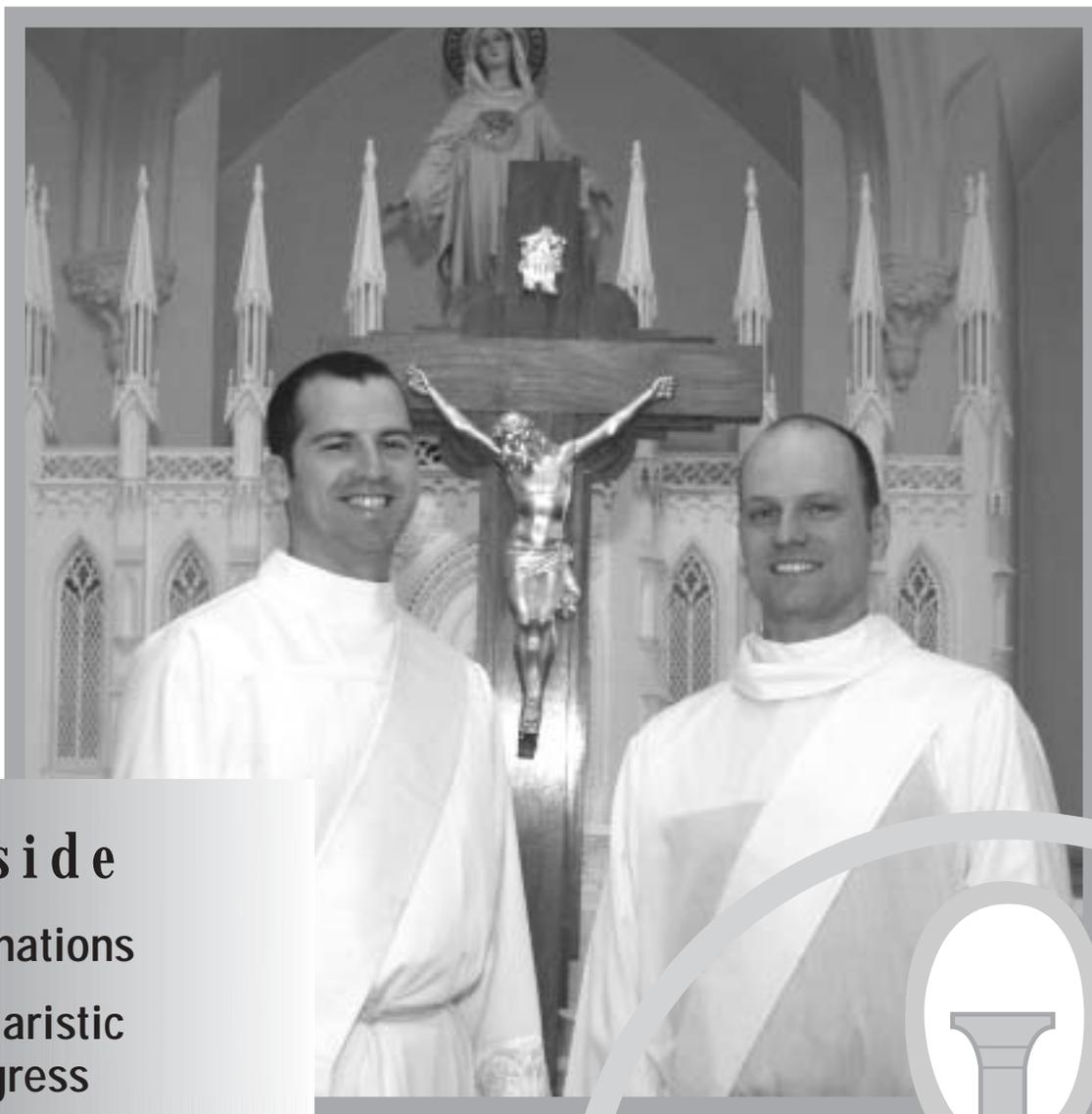




Summer 2008

Companions of the Cross



Inside

Ordinations

**Eucharistic
Congress**

**New Philippines'
Foundation**

CC Annual Ordination Anniversary Celebration

This Year Featuring: Fr. Francis Frankovich's 40th!



Monday, August 25th, 2008

St. Maurice Church, 4 Perry St., Ottawa, Ontario
Mass 7:00 p.m.

Champagne & Dessert Reception to follow in Parish Hall
\$15 per person

Tickets for the Reception must be purchased by August 24th.
No tickets will be sold at the door. Adults Only.

To purchase tickets, please call our CC Office at (613) 728-3175 or St. Maurice at (613) 224-1892.

*A great opportunity to honour our Texas brother
& to meet and greet many other CC priests and seminarians!*

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Companions of the Cross

ORDINATION



Archbishop Terrence Prendergast's Ordination Homily

The way in which the Companions of the Cross live their priestly ministry derives from a desire on their part to share in the renewal of the Church enunciated by Pope John XXIII at the outset of the Second Vatican Council, as it were, by a new Pentecost for our day. Finding strength in the brotherhood afforded by their life in community, the Companions of the Cross wish to be animated by a profound devotion to the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the power and the wisdom that flow from it (cf. 1 Cor 24). The Companions of the Cross describe their ideal in these terms:

“We surrender to the Lord individually and personally daily, in and through his Holy Mother. Our essential mission is to evangelize through the many apostolic works we do, whether they be in parishes or other more specialized works, or with the poor and alienated. In our life together we try to live simply, detached from material things. Our prayer is at times characterized as being charismatic and Eucharistic in both style and focus. We are committed to cooperating with the bishop of the diocese we are in, as well as always trying to think and act according to the mind of the Church.”

When we hear these ideals we are moved, but we are also awed when we consider our own limitations. How comforting then is the message of today's 2nd reading (Rm 8:22-27), which assures us of the Holy Spirit's aid in preserving the fellowship of the Church. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought. But that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. How each of us longs for a renewal of Pentecost in our own hearts!

Fr. Bolger, Fr. Messier, as you will now be known, we promise you our prayers and support of your priestly service. May your years of ministry be long and fruitful. And we hope that Mary's *Magnificat*, prayed by the Church at Vespers each evening, may truly be your canticle of praise all the days of your lives as priests of Jesus Christ. My sons, your call to be faithful to the Paschal mystery in its most visible and ecclesial form, when you gather the broken and the healthy, the poor and the wealthy, sinners and saints, around the altar of sacrifice, the table of the Lord is to help them all to become a Eucharistic people, nourished by God's Word and by God's Sacrament.

My dear brothers John Paul and Bernard, by your own free choice you seek to enter

the order of presbyters. Since your earliest commitment you have wished to live in an evangelical manner, in simplicity of life, in celibate chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of God, in obedience to your superiors. These promises that you have made will draw you close to the poor, the friends of Jesus, with whom he identifies himself. In your priestly ministry may you always be close to the poor.

The prayer of all of us gathered here today is that your priestly life and character will give witness to your brothers and sisters in faith that it is God who has to be loved before all else, and that it is Jesus who one serves in others. With the whole Church we are praying that you brothers not turn away from the hope which the Gospel offers. For now you must not only listen to God's Word, but also preach it and enact it in the Eucharistic mystery. Therefore, hold to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience, and express in action what you proclaim by word of mouth. Then the people of Christ, brought to life by the Holy Spirit, will be an offering that God accepts.

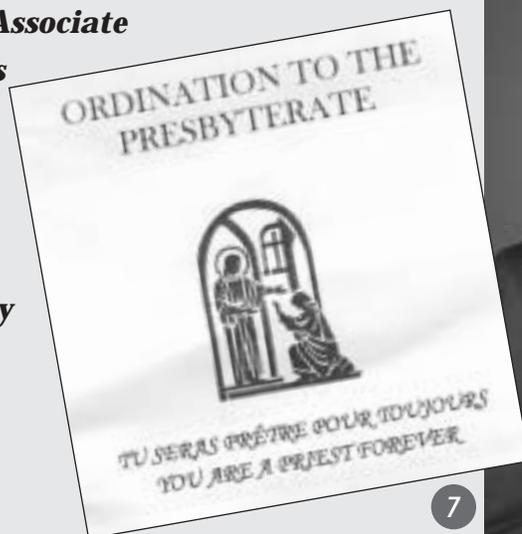
Finally, on the Last Day, may you hear the Lord Jesus say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.” Amen.

Continued on page 2

You Are a Priest Forever

– PHOTO ALBUM

“On Sat. May 10th, 2008 at Notre Dame Basilica in Ottawa, Archbishop Terrance Prendergast ordained Companions of the Cross John Paul Bolger and Bernard Messier to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Many family, friends and community members were on hand to witness this blessed and joyful event. The next day, Pentecost Sunday, Fr. Bernard offered a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Mary’s parish in Ottawa. Fr. John Paul offered his Mass of Thanksgiving a week later back at his home parish of St. Patrick’s in Cambridge, ON. Please continue to keep Frs. J.P. and Bernard in your prayers as they begin their first priestly assignments: Fr. Messier as Associate Pastor of St. Timothy’s in Toronto and Fr. Bolger as Associate Pastor of Queen of Peace parish in Houston. May the Holy Spirit give them fire for the Kingdom of God!”





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1. Frs. John Paul and Bernard concelebrating Ordination Eucharist.

2. Archbishop Prendergast ordaining Frs. John Paul and Bernard.

3. Deacon Bernard with his parents awaiting the call to Orders.

4. Fr. John Paul consecrating his new chalice at Mass of Thanksgiving.

5. Fr. Bernard entrusting his priesthood to the care of the Blessed Mother.

6. Fr. Messier imparting a priestly blessing.

7. Ordination Program

8. Fr. John Paul Bolger

9. Frs. John Paul and Bernard thanking Ordination coordinator Mary Lauzon at reception.

10. Fr. Bolger imparting a priestly blessing.



FEATURE

by Fr. Pierre Ingram

Becoming a Eucharistic Community

The Centrality of the Eucharist

Just as the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life, it is at the very centre of the communal life, mission, and spirituality of the Companions of the Cross. This centrality is manifested in four commitments which are specified in our *Constitutions and Rules*.

1. Dynamic and More Fruitful Celebrations of the Eucharistic Liturgy

“The sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated in the celebration of the Eucharist. We desire to be at the service of dynamic and more fruitful celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy by helping the people of God to enter more whole-heartedly into this act of worship of Christ to his Father in the power of the Holy Spirit” (C. & R., R51.3).

Sacrifice of the Cross

As Companions of the Cross, we take the Eucharist very seriously, because we know that when it is celebrated, the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ on Calvary is made present to us. The Mass allows us to stand at the Cross, and receive all its fruits. The Body we receive is the one that was broken for us. The Blood we drink is the one that was shed in atonement for our sins. We affirm the teaching of the Church that the sacrifice of the Mass and that of Calvary are one and the same, because they have the same Priest and the same



Victim; only the manner of offering is different.

To trivialize the Mass, therefore, would be to trivialize the saving work of our Redeemer. As faithful sons of the Church, we are committed to celebrating the Eucharist in a way that manifests our awareness of its incomparable sacredness and sanctifying power. As a “magisterial” community, we want to be in full compliance with universal liturgical laws (a.k.a. “rubrics”), and any particular laws enacted by the diocesan bishop or the national conference of bishops. We reject the idea that the Mass is the private possession either of the priest or of the local community. As individual priests, we are not free to alter the liturgy in order to suit our own preferences, or even in order to make it more “attractive” for people. The Sacred Liturgy has its own integrity, rhythm, and internal structure, which must always be respected.

Dynamic

That being said, we are also convinced that every effort must be made to enliven Eucharistic celebrations, so that they will truly be transformative experiences for everyone involved. Of course, the Lord himself is the only one who can transform human hearts. But there is much we can and should do to cooperate with the invisible work of grace. The “missing ingredient” for most Catholics, at least in North America, is the expectation that anything new will happen to them at Mass that they will really encounter the living God in Word and Sacrament, and be changed as a result. We Companions are determined to help supply this missing ingredient, to awaken in Catholics a genuinely expectant faith in relation to the Eucharist.

How is this to be achieved? We do not have a pre-packaged answer. Every parish



is unique, and there is a place for legitimate diversity in styles of worship. The CCs are by no means opposed, for example, to traditional sacred music. (In fact, training in sacred music and Gregorian chant is an integral part of the formation of our seminarians.) It is not the loudness or trendiness of the music that brings renewal; it is the Spirit of God. But we do know that a clear proclamation of the basic gospel message is vitally important for renewal at the parish level. As St. Paul declares, the gospel “*is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith*” (Rm 1:16). People who come to our liturgical celebrations need to hear an invitation to make a personal response to the Word of God. This invitation should sound forth in the homily, of course, but also in the manner of proclaiming the readings, the content of the hymns and other songs chosen for the liturgy, and so on.

More Fruitful

As Catholics we know that neither the Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements nor the power of his Sacrifice depends upon the personal holiness (or other dispositions) of those who celebrate it. However, the fruitfulness of our own individual sharing in the Eucharist does vary. The better disposed we are - that is, the more aligned our wills are with the will of God - the more deeply we will drink from this fountain of grace. To align our wills with God’s means to hate what he hates and to love what he loves. This requires an ongoing process of **conversion**. It is not enough to make an initial decision for Christ; we must live that choice out by authentic discipleship, day after day: rooting out patterns of sin and vice, and planting virtues. As CCs, we are committed not only to the task of basic evangelization, but also to training and equipping disciples.

People of God

Although we are a community of clerics, we are definitely not a clericalist community! “We desire to be united with lay people in fulfilling the mission of the Church. We wish to affirm the importance of their baptismal call and to promote their gifts for the apostolate” (R51.6). The Mass is not meant to be a “one man show,” even though the ordained minister’s role is obviously essential. We affirm unhesitatingly the Second Vatican Council’s teaching that “fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations” must be seen as the “right and duty” of the Christian people “by reason of their baptism” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, no. 14). Active participation is best realized when every member of the assembly exercises his own particular role or gift, whether it is presiding, preaching, proclaiming a reading, leading the congregation

Continued on page 6

tion in song, greeting newcomers, decorating, etc. – or simply joining attentively and devoutly in the common prayers, responses, and gestures. It is our desire to see all the baptized come into awareness and ownership of their spiritual gifts and to exercise them, as appropriate, in the liturgical assembly. No one should come to Mass with the attitude of a spectator or a consumer; all are called to contribute to the liturgical action.

Act of Worship

The Eucharist is the sign and cause of the Church's unity: "*Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread*" (1 Cor 10:17). But this horizontal dimension of the Eucharist must always be seen together with its vertical dimension, because the ultimate purpose of engaging in liturgy is not to make ourselves happy but to give honour and glory to Almighty God. The Mass is the most perfect act of worship on earth; it draws us into the very self-offering of the Son to the Father. We must challenge the all-too-common attitude in our culture that the value of the Mass depends upon what we "get out of it". Our primary focus needs to be on giving (ourselves - see Rm 12:1) rather than on receiving.

Power of the Holy Spirit

St Paul's humble recognition that "*we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us*" (Rm 8:26) is the foundation of an authentically Christian understanding of prayer. All Christian prayer, whether it follows a set formula (like the liturgy) or flows spontaneously from the believer's heart, is meant to be done "in the Spirit" (Eph 6:18), that is, under his influence and in conformity with his divine will. Our exterior words and actions in the liturgy will ring hollow unless they are enlivened by the love of God (1 Cor 13:1), which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts (Rm

5:5). In our own time, through the grace of the Charismatic Renewal, millions of Catholics worldwide have experienced a "stirring up" of the gift of the Spirit, received in Baptism and Confirmation. This grace, commonly known in English-speaking countries as "baptism in the Holy Spirit", is freely available to all who seek it. It is an integral part of the spirituality of the Companions of the Cross. One of its many effects is an increased desire for prayer in all its forms, from quiet contemplation to loud and lively vocal praise - all of which (we believe) can find proper expression in the Church's liturgy.

2. Daily Mass

"We celebrate the Eucharist daily when possible" (R51.3)

The *Code of Canon Law* says that all priests are "earnestly invited [*enixe invitantur*] to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice daily" (can. 276, s.2, 2), as a way of "nourish[ing] their spiritual life at the twofold table of the sacred Scripture and the Eucharist." Recent popes have also insistently presented daily Mass as a powerful means of pursuing personal holiness. The CCs say an enthusiastic yes to the Church's "earnest invitation". In the midst of hectic lives and demanding pastoral assignments, our daily celebration is the anchor that keeps us grounded in our fundamental identity as priests of Jesus Christ.

3. Promoting Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

"As one way of remaining better connected to the mystery of Christ that the Eucharistic Liturgy makes present, we encourage adoration of the Blessed Sacrament" (R51.4).

The consecration of the Eucharistic elements makes present the whole Christ: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. This presence demands from believers the

highest form of adoration. The entire Mass is an act of adoration of the Blessed Trinity; but it also contains particular prescribed acts of adoration directed towards the Sacred Species. In addition to this adoration during Mass, the CCs promote adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (either reserved in the tabernacle or exposed) at other times – even perpetually if that is feasible. Eucharistic adoration is an effective means of deepening our union with Christ and increasing our desire to receive him in Holy Communion. It has been practised by innumerable saints and mystics of the Church.

4. Incorporating Exposition in Our Times of Communal Prayer

"We also encourage times of communal prayer with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament" (R51.5).

Unlike many other liturgical rites, the *Rite of Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* provides considerable flexibility in terms of content. Readings, hymns, silent prayer, the Marian rosary, and parts of the Liturgy of the Hours are all permitted. One of the features of our CC communal prayer is extended times of singing and spontaneous vocal praise, as well as the Liturgy of the Hours, in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. Generally speaking, our songs and praise move from loud and exuberant to quiet and meditative.

Please pray for us, that as we seek to be faithful to these four commitments, we will truly become a Eucharistic community, and that our whole lives will be one great sacrifice of praise to the glory of God! ☩

Fr. Pierre Ingram was ordained in 1995. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies at St. Paul University.

The Power of the Holy Spirit

by Fr. Bob Bedard

Back in March of 1975, the Lord gave me a very special gift. It was a gift of personal prayer. It changed my life.

As a boy, as an adolescent, as a young man, I was very lazy. The dirtiest four letter word in the English language for me was “work”. I never had to be coaxed to take it easy. One of my father’s favourite maxims – “Anything worth doing, is worth doing well” - was a continual challenge, I found, a challenge I became very skilled at ducking.

Ordination changed that. From being a dedicated drone, I galvanized into action. Although not ever being a fast mover, I became very purposeful. The job that had to be done got done. Although never a whirlwind, I became a very dedicated grinder. Maybe the early lessons from my dad had begun to sink in.

Quickly enough, my reputation grew as a very dependable guy. As I moved from parish ministry to the task of establishing, with the help of a few young priests a new high school from scratch. I began to take on the tasks that nobody else seemed interested in taking on. That is how I got into basketball. I took on the coach’s job with the juniors because nobody else would do it. I took over the program of Canadian History when a need in that department became clearly evident. I became principal at 32 and rector a year



later. I took on the grade XIII Religion program as well. All of the above jobs needed some shoring up when I stepped in, as well large portions of just plain hard work.

I guess I had become a prime example of somebody who was caught up in the heresy of works. Anything could be accomplished by human effort, aided and abetted, of course, by the grace of God.

It took my assignment as pastor of St. Mary’s for the Lord to begin teaching me just what the blend should be between human effort and the Holy Spirit. His clear word to me was that he himself not only had all the plans for the parish, but also that the Holy Spirit would do almost all of the work. That successfully disabused me once and for all about the works heresy. With the growth of the CCs and the growth of the parish itself, I couldn’t handle everything myself anyway. It was in desperation, more than anything else that prompted me to turn everything over to the Lord.

I was simply to surrender all the control buttons to the Lord, take my orders from him and carry them out while he remained in the control room sending out the messages. I wound up simply running a message centre, receiving and sending out his instructions and appointing ministry folks to carry out his wishes. It’s an amazing system. Since it works beautifully, I recommend it to absolutely everybody.

I should have known. Earlier, I feel the Lord had revealed to me that the Holy Spirit is the one who gets things done. He has the power to accomplish things, anything in fact. Not only difficult things, but impossible things as well. There is no need whatever for us to quail before difficult assignments from him.

The power of the Holy Spirit is precisely what the Church needs in our day. My contention has been that the power (or grace?) of the Holy Spirit admits of degrees. In that way I maintain it took a greater measure of power for God to bring Mary Magdalene to conversion than it did to raise Lazarus from the dead. In fact, a conversion of a person from no faith at all to a lively relationship with the Lord wherein he falls madly in love with God requires a greater degree of grace than just about anything else.

The Holy Spirit is not worn out. He has not retired. He is ready to swing into action if only we will give the invitation. The age of the Holy Spirit, heralded regularly by the popes of our day, is still on the go. Take heart, O Catholic people. The victory is in sight. ☩



FEATURE

by Christine Labrosse

A Deluge of Eucharistic Graces

It rained . . . and rained . . . and rained some more. And then at the closing Mass it rained so hard during Communion we were drenched to the bone. But as the Papal Legate (representative of the Pope) Cardinal Jozef Tomko said at the end of Mass, “God is pouring out his grace upon all of us.” Indeed, we were blessed with an abundance of grace at the Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City the week of June 15th to 22nd.

This congress was a gathering of the universal Church right here in Canada. There were pilgrims from over 70 countries represented, 40 cardinals, 250 bishops and many priests. We had all gathered for the 49th International Eucharistic Congress to receive catechesis on the Eucharistic Lord, to hear testimony of what God is doing around the world and to meet and share with each other our experience of God’s living presence in our lives. We felt as though this were a small taste of what it will be like in heaven as we worship the Lord in unity, all peoples gathered together with that one focus, Jesus Christ.

The congress coincided with the 400th anniversary celebration of the founding of Quebec. Cardinal Marc Ouellette, the President of the Congress Organizing Committee, and Archbishop of the first diocese founded in North America, said that it was a wonderful opportunity to bring people together to discover the treasure of their faith. “The coming together of so many pilgrims will rekindle the flame of the faith and retrieve the riches of our tradition. This will help bring more hope

in our society. This hope is the certainty of the love of God and the Eucharist is the gift of God, of love and hope.”

Each day there was a time of catechesis in the morning given by a cardinal or bishop from around the world. Each day also had a theme and there was representation of different continents and cultures from around the world. The morning concluded with a Mass – the Mass was presided over by different Cardinals. The first day it was presided over by Cardinal Marc Ouellette, the second day by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, and other days included cardinals from Asia, Africa and the United States. On Wednesday the Divine Liturgy was celebrated according to the Byzantine Rite by the Most Reverend Lawrence Huculak, Ukrainian Catholic Archeparch of Winnipeg and Metropolitan for Ukrainian Catholics in Canada. This was a beautiful liturgy to participate in, with all the richness of the Byzantine rite – the incense, the candles, the prayers – a different way of celebrating the Eucharist.

Each afternoon there were workshops or presentations or dialogue related to that day’s theme. In the evening there were cultural activities around the city in various churches. One night we went to a multicultural evening where there was adoration of the Blessed Sacrament accompanied by music from the Congo, Angola, Thailand as well as a mixed African choir – absolutely wonderful! And of course there was adoration in many places. There was a silent adoration chapel on the grounds and an adoration chapel where there was guided adoration. The Companions of the Cross led two of these holy hours and they



Daily Mass celebrated each morning in the Coliseum

were truly blessed. Sometimes when it was difficult to get into the workshops (there were so many people they filled up quickly) we decided to choose adoration over frustration! We were certainly blessed during our times spent adoring our Eucharistic Lord.

All of these liturgies and teaching and adoration seemed to build as the week went on. It was almost as if what we were receiving was coming in layers – layers of richness that just kept building and going deeper into our hearts and souls. Certainly enough food that will take quite some time to digest.

As I was pondering many of the things that we took in during the week I recalled that there was one catechesis session that touched me quite deeply. It was given by Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle of Imus, Philippines. While I can’t possibly describe it all here I will pass on a few of the things that he touched on. The theme for this particular day was “The Eucharist, the Life of Christ in Our Lives”. He looked at this theme under three topics: 1) The worship and sacrifice of Jesus; 2) The spiritual worship of the baptized; and 3) Authentic adoration.

1) The Bishop said we have gone beyond the ritual sacrifices of the Old Testament with Jesus and entered into the living sacrifice of his self-giving love. This self-



We all did our best to keep dry as the skies opened up during Communion



The closing Mass was on the Plains of Abraham with 60,000 attending.

offering of Jesus becomes true worship because he offered prayers that were heard by the Father. His prayers were heard because of his obedience to the Father. His obedience or reverent submission to the Father makes his self-sacrifice a true act of worship. The Bishop encouraged us to look at our own self-sacrifices to see if they are acts of true worship or if they are offerings that promote our self-interests.

2) When we are baptized we share in the sacrifice of Jesus, because we are baptized into his death. Like Jesus we are called to offer our very lives to God as a living sacrifice. Bishop Tagle said that that our very lives dedicated to God and united with Jesus' sacrifice builds up the community – God's faithful. He said that conformity to God's will is the key to the sacrifice of our lives.

3) Eucharistic Adoration enlivens our worship, so adoration and worship are intertwined. Adoration means being present, beholding, remaining in Jesus. Adoration is similar to standing at the foot of the cross. Here the bishop used the Roman Centurion standing at the foot of the cross as a model for adoration. He said this Roman guard was probably there with Jesus from the time of his arrest right through to when he was removed from the cross after he died. He was probably hardened by seeing so many crucifixions, but there was something different about this

one. There was something that caused him to say at the end, "Truly this man was innocent". The guard would have had to face Jesus through this whole series of events. He would have been ordered to watch him from beginning to end – he would have had to report what he saw. This centurion had to face Jesus, he had to contemplate him, be vigilant. At first it was out of duty but the Holy Spirit guided him at the end to confess that "*Clearly this man was the Son of God!*" (Mk 15:39b).

This Roman would have seen the horror of suffering, he was an eyewitness to the torment and humiliation of Jesus by his own people and of the torture inflicted by the Roman guards. He would have seen the betrayal, the inhumanity and viciousness and the loneliness of being left with so few of his followers at the end. But the centurion also would have seen the love in Jesus' eyes – the love and mercy for the repentant thief crucified with him. He would have heard him forgiving those who had done this to him. This Roman would have seen love bloom and truth revealed. He would have found love there that refused to die. And that would have been transforming as witnessed by his words recognizing Jesus as the Son of God.

This reflection by Bishop Tagle touched a chord deep in my heart – I could connect with this Roman centurion – I needed a transformation in a profound way before I

came into a relationship with Jesus, my Lord and Saviour. It also taught me at a deeper level the kind of vigilant facing of Jesus we should do to come to know him in a more profound way. And this is best done in adoration of him in his real presence in the Eucharist. What a wonderful catechesis to deepen our understanding of authentic adoration of Jesus. As we gaze at him we will come to know him and experience his unending love in the sacrifice he made for each and every one of us. And there were seven days full of such richness. There was so much to be pondered. Even if you were unable to attend the congress a DVD with the teachings can be ordered from www.ecdq.tv. You can also view the videos of the congress on this website and there is translation in English available.

During the homily at the closing Mass Pope Benedict (live via satellite) announced that the next International Eucharistic Congress will take place in 2012 in Dublin, Ireland. Hopefully by then we will have meditated sufficiently on all that came out of this congress so we can grow more deeply in love with Jesus in four years when the Irish will be our hosts! ☺

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Christine Labrosse is the Managing Editor of the Companions of the Cross Newsletter. She and her husband Charles are parishioners of St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.



FEATURE

by Fr. Galen Bank

Will You be Mine?

There is a scripture passage from Isaiah that has always resonated in my soul. It reads, “As a young man marries a virgin so will your God marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so will your God rejoice in you” (Is 62:5). Over the course of years, God has graciously helped me understand the significance of this passage and how it applies to my spiritual life. The following article is a reflection on the spiritual marriage God desires to have with us primarily through the Eucharist – God’s gift for the life of the world.

Before I continue, it is important to speak briefly about the biblical understanding of covenant for it is the foundation of God’s relationship to us.

God goes to incredible lengths to manifest his love and establish a relationship with every person. He has expressed and transmitted this love in numerous, unthinkable and creative ways in history and in our personal lives. In the Old Testament, the greatest expression of God’s love and desire for relationship was the establishment of a covenant with them – “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God” (Ex 6:7; Jr 7:23; Lv 26:12). This covenant was then established and sealed with the sacrificial blood of animals offered to God. The most vivid and powerful account of this covenant is seen when the people of Israel are delivered from the slavery of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.



God’s extravagant love in the Old Testament is a foreshadowing of an even greater gift of himself to come. Through Jesus, God the Father takes the old covenant and elevates it to a new level of intensity and commitment. Unlike the old covenant, which was ratified in the blood of animals, the new one is established and ratified in the Blood of the Eternal Son of God who sacrificed his life for us in his bitter passion and death. To use marital imagery, the crucifixion on Calvary was the moment God pledged his love for all humanity and placed a ring on our finger and said “I will be yours, will you be mine?”

God’s love did not even stop at the sacrifice of his Son. He also wanted to renew and seal this New Covenant as often as possible through the **Gift of the Eucharist**. Each time we attend Mass and

approach the holy table to receive the Lord he says, “I am yours, will you be mine?” As he gives himself to us, he invites us to make the same act of commitment in return, “Jesus I am yours; be the centre of my life. This is my body, my life, my heart and my soul. Take it as a humble offering and do with it what you will.” Every Mass we attend, we **MUST BE** conscious of the covenant that God is renewing and sealing as he offers himself to us in the Eucharist. Seen from this perspective, we should be inspired to respond generously to the Lord.

I would like to convey this with a short illustration that Fr. Slavko Barbaric, OFM uses in a book he wrote, *Celebrate Mass with Your Heart*. He says, “We do not want to be like the one who was invited by a friend to a splendid lunch but in the end we go unwillingly, conversing with-

out enthusiasm, not answering questions, not asking anything, not being interested in anything and looking forward only to the end. When it is over, we rush off from the place of meeting. This would be a grave offense and a loss of friendship and a breakdown in the relationship.” Our relationship with God works in a similar way. He invites us to the mystical supper to renew his covenant with us. He waits for us to respond and say YES to him just as Mary did at the Annunciation. Our FIAT leads to the same end as Mary’s FIAT – spiritual union with the Saviour.

Continuing to deepen our understanding of spiritual marriage with the Lord, I would like to reflect further on the crucifixion and its important link to both the covenant and the Eucharist.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote and spoke insightfully about the significance of the “HOUR” in John’s Gospel. John’s first reference to the Hour takes place at the Wedding Feast in Cana (Jn 2). When Mary requested her Son to do something about the lack of wine, Jesus’ response was, “*Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come*” (Jn 2:4). As we know, Jesus did do something – he changed water into wine. This was the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry and his Hour had now begun. Archbishop Sheen points out that this Hour, which began in Cana, lasted for three years (the length of his ministry) and ended on Calvary when Jesus declared from the Cross, “*It is finished*” (Jn 19:30).

Jesus’ “Hour” began in a wedding ceremony; his Hour also ends in a wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony at the end of his Hour (three years of ministry) takes place on the cross. This wedding is

unlike our common understanding of weddings in this life. When a couple is married, they join their right hands and declare their consent to one another. The vows professed to each other read as such, “*I name take you name, to be my husband (wife). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.*”

Jesus also exchanges vows with us but they are professed from the holy cross and do not require words. They speak for themselves but this is what is professed: “*This is my Body given for you. This is my Blood poured out for you. I will love you despite your infidelities; I will remain one with you in all circumstances of your life. You are mine and I desire intimacy with you now and forever in eternity.*” These vows spoken from the cross should cause us to tremble and elicit a wholehearted response of self-offering to him.

The beauty of our Catholic identity is that as often as we attend Mass, we have the opportunity to renew our vows with Jesus and seal them through reception of the Eucharist. The giving of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist is the consummation of our spiritual and mystical marriage union with God.

After saying all this, how is it that the bride of Christ, the Church, has difficulty returning love, commitment, generosity, and fidelity? When he renews and seals the covenant with us, why are we unresponsive or give little or nothing in return? History has proven that we have been a people who willingly drain the chalice of life. We take advantage and receive the full benefit of Jesus’ free gift of life, but slowly and effortlessly we give anything back to the one who loves us.

We must come to realize that vows are never meant to be professed by one person whether in marriage, religious life, Baptism or Eucharist. Two people need to be involved in a profession. As baptized members of the Church, we must come to realize the need to reciprocate the love given so freely to us.

Jesus impatiently waits for us and fervently desires to give himself to his bride the Church. In fact, Jesus says this himself at the Last Supper, “*I have EAGERLY DESIRED to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me. And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you*” (Lk 22).

He eagerly desires to be one with us. He longs to say “I am yours, will you be mine” and then waits for our response. What is most incredible is that even if we do not respond, he still offers and gives his Body and Blood to us in the Eucharist.

“*As a young man marries a virgin so will your God marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so will your God rejoice in you*” (Is 62:5). At every Eucharist he is asking “Will you be mine?” Like Mary, may we say yes with all our heart. ☩

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Fr. Galen Bank is the Pastor of St. Maurice Church in Ottawa.



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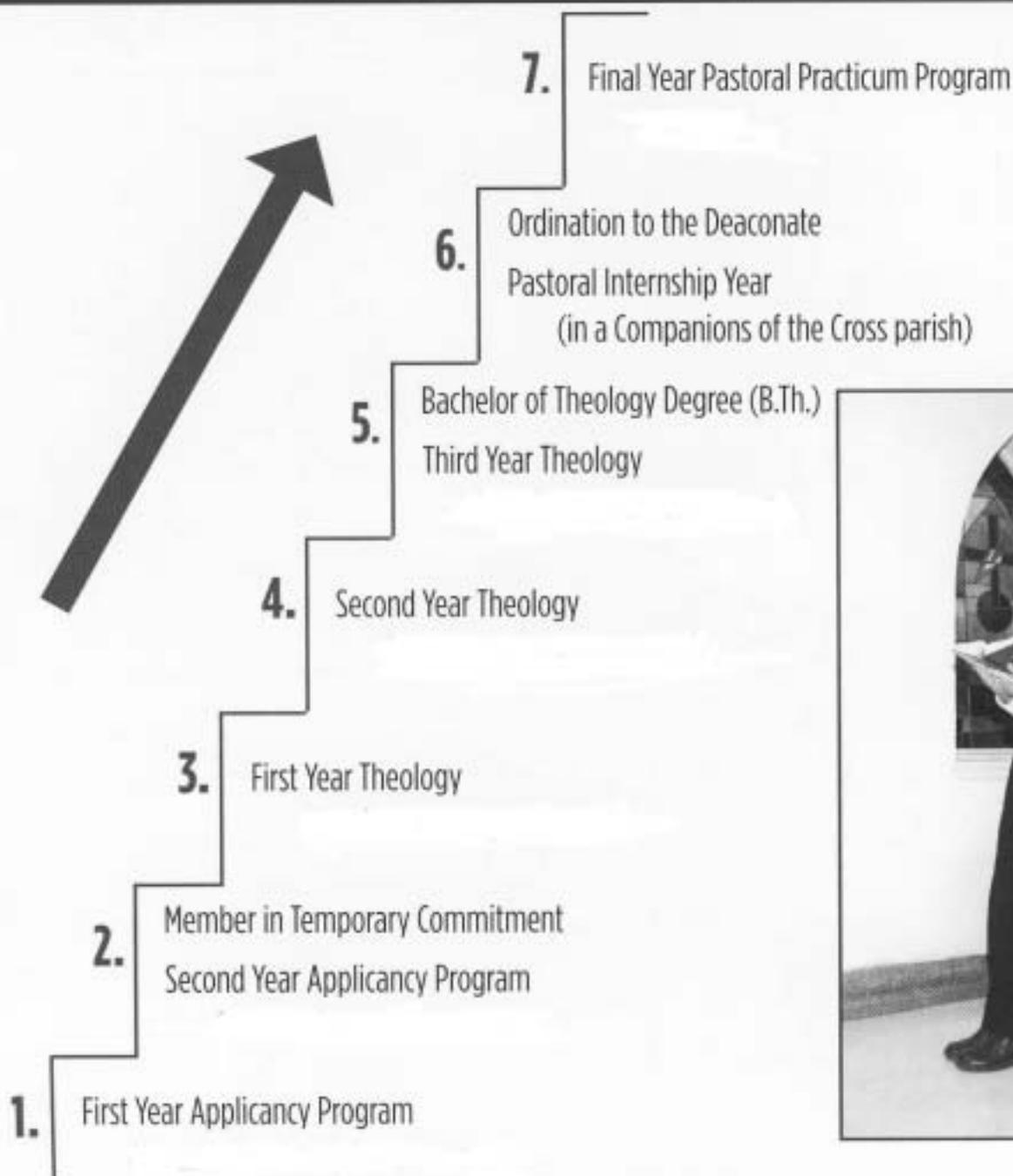
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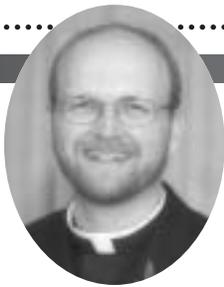
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FEATURE

by Fr. Charles Orchard



New Philippines' Foundation

On Sunday, September 7, 2008 Fr. Fernando Suarez, CC, Fr. Jeff Shannon, CC, David Bergeron and myself will arrive in the Philippines to begin a new Companions of the Cross foundation near Batangas City. The Companions have been invited by Most Reverend Ramón Cabrera Argüelles DD, STL, the Archbishop of Lipa to establish a Companions of the Cross household and serve in his Archdiocese. Fr. Scott McCaig and our Executive Council have been in discussion with Fr. Fernando, Fr. Jeff, David and myself for well over a year now and hearing that we are all sensing a call to undertake this new foundation have discerned that the Lord is inviting us to live, pray and minister as Companions of the Cross in the Philippines. The Companions will commission us to establish this new foundation for our community at the end of our annual Community days on August 29. We will be living in a house at Montemaria, (30 minutes outside of Batangas City, 100 km south of Manila) and working with the Mary Mother of the Poor Charitable organization.

When an Archbishop invites a religious community or society of apostolic life to his Archdiocese he first of all is inviting them to live their charism as a service to the people of God in his archdiocese and as a witness to Jesus Christ. "As **Companions**, we are called to embrace the common life. Community living is central to our vocation. We base ourselves on the model of Jesus and his disciples who lived together, ministered together,

and supported one another. St. Paul teaches that while not all members of the Church have the same talents together they can count on God to provide all the gifts needed for ministry (cf. Rm 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:4-30). We are convinced that our ministry in the Church is made more fruitful by the fact that we live and work together. We live the common life in order to affirm, support, and challenge one another" (*Constitutions of the Companions of the Cross*, #C6-C9).

Our first year in the Philippines will be a year of establishing our common life and living out our charism as brothers working together in the new evangelization. In this first year Fr. Fernando and Fr. Jeff will be travelling less than they have been the last few years in order to allow us to build a strong brotherhood and walk day-by-day together in this new adventure.

This first year is also a year of enculturation. Like Jesus himself who lived the life of Nazareth for 30 years, we are first called to live among the people, to learn from them and about them so that we can be of real service and walk with them as brothers who truly know their culture and language, their hopes and dreams, their strengths and needs. Fr. Fernando will be our "coach" as we learn about his country and people. We will be getting to know our brother priests and local parishes in the Archdiocese of Lipa as we have been invited to share in their ministry. Although English is spoken throughout the Philippines we three Canadians will also be studying Tagalog - the language of this region of the Philippines, so that we



Fr. Charles Orchard stands on the slopes of Monte Maria near Batangas City, the Philippines (future site of Marian Shrine & CC Foundation).

can pray, proclaim the good news, celebrate the sacraments and communicate with people in their native tongue.

We will be working alongside the Mary Mother of the Poor (MMP) charitable organization. Fr. Fernando founded this organization when he was a seminarian with the mission: to seek holiness in evangelizing and working with the poor through the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The objectives of the ministry are to: relieve poverty, coordinate health and social services, advance and teach Catholic tenets and to help youth develop their talent. Currently this ministry provides food for over 4000 children daily and provides medical care, housing and meaningful work for those in need. I have been able to meet many of the lay leaders of Mary Mother of the Poor in the Philippines and here in Canada and am so edified by their generous service and desire to provide for the spiritual and material needs of the Philippino people.

This wonderful ministry (MMP) also assists Fr. Fernando as he ministers with his healing charism at healing masses and missions around the world. Fr. Jeff and Fr. Fernando have worked together full-time for Mary Mother the Poor for over two years now, literally travelling the world to

evangelize and to pray for the healing of body, mind and soul of hundreds of thousands of people as well as continuing to support the organization's charitable works and outreaches. It has been a joy to see my two brothers serving together with such great love, zeal for the Kingdom and bringing the Word of God, the grace of the Eucharist and the gift of healing to so many.

We will be living as Companions on a potential shrine site called Montemaria. A few years ago Fr. Fernando had the sense that Jesus wanted him to prepare a special place of prayer where people could come to commune with the Lord. Word of Fr. Fernando's dream caught the attention of people in the Philippines during his many visits over these last few years and this led to the donation of a large piece of land near Batangas City. With the support of the local Archbishop and the Cardinal of Manila a plan has been developed to build a shrine dedicated to Mary Mother of the Poor. I was blessed to be present in the Philippines last August when Fr. Fernando presented Montemaria at a Sunday Eucharist broadcast on national television. This project has plans for a 33-story statue of Mary, Mother of the Poor and a 2,500 seat Basilica as well as places for pilgrims of all walks of life to stay and pray.

Since the ground breaking in January of 2007, Montemaria has already become a place of pilgrimage. I was able to make a visit there myself last August and found it to be a peaceful and beautiful place that is very conducive to prayer. The shrine site is on a peninsula that rises out of the ocean to a great height with the Verde and Mindora Islands to the south, Batangas Bay to the East and the towns of Matabaco and Ilijan to the west. At this time the first buildings on the site are in process of being built they are St. Joseph house and Mary's house- a small chapel and a large metal canopy for outdoor celebrations of prayer and the Eucharist. Currently the Eucharist is celebrated on the Montemaria site every Saturday evening and each week about 2,000 people are visiting the site. We will now be having a full-time presence at Montemaria and will be able to support Mary Mother of the Poor's ministry there.

As you can see there is much happening right now through the ministry of Mary Mother of the Poor. Our founder Fr. Bob has always taught us to support what we see the Lord doing. We see the Holy Spirit doing so much right now in the Philippines and want to establish a new branch of our community in order to be present to Jesus' work and plan in the Philippines. As the Companions of the Cross make this new step to establishing a new foundation in the Philippines I ask for your prayers for us that as we go to live, pray and serve together as brothers we will be ever closer to Jesus, docile to his Holy Spirit and faithful sons of Mary Mother of the Poor. Website: www.montemariashrine.com.

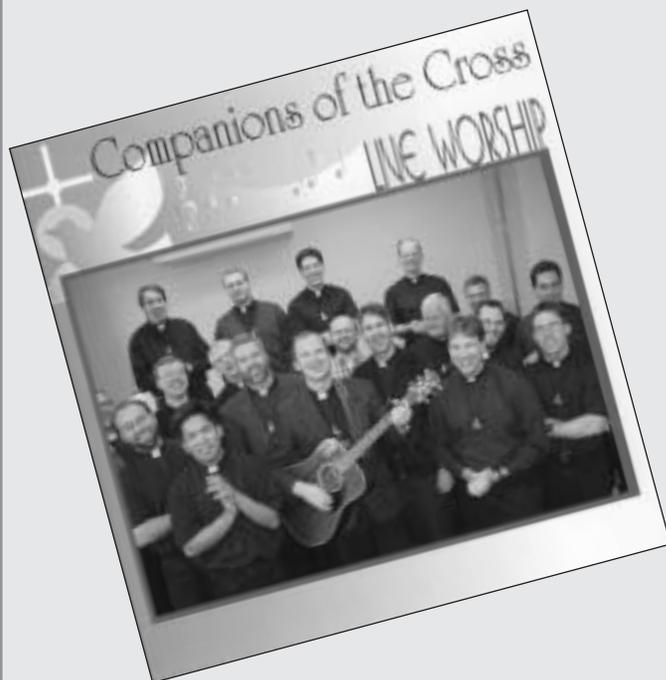


Fr. Charles Orchard was ordained in 1995 and up until this summer was the Pastor of St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.

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TESTIMONY

by Anthony Cafik

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Mt 7:7).

My journey to find purpose has been long and challenging. My four siblings and I were raised in the Catholic faith by two loving parents. One of my early memories as a child was just before going to bed praying and kissing the wounds of Christ on the crucifix beside my bed. I remember as a boy teaching my brother the Hail Mary and making images on the wall with a flashlight. The stories always had a teaching with a moral meaning and at times an amusing outcome. In short, Jesus and my faith were part of my everyday life. As for going to church, I did not connect it to my relationship with Jesus, even though I had faith. All I recall about church from those years was that I had to be there on time, dressed properly, and well behaved. I usually followed the Mass in the missal with one eye on the clock hoping I wouldn't miss something (outside of church) if it took too long.

My goal in life was to be married, have children, a house, a nice car, and a high-powered career. With this in mind I left school early in search of my dream, thinking I would be better off on my own; that I had what it took to be successful and happy. I achieved most of what I was hoping for, but I felt empty inside. It was as though there was never enough for me. I always seemed to be searching for something more; racing cars, chasing money, travelling, partying, exotic foods, and staying in the best places, but still I had no sense of peace or purpose. By outside appearances I seemed to be doing well but it was all superficial.

Then the bottom fell out. In striving to reach my life goals I had abandoned my faith. The fact of the matter is I didn't have a true and solid foundation to stand on. I sincerely didn't know who I was, and that frightened me. All that I thought was important to me suddenly was stripped away without warning. I was lost, full of fear and without hope. When I reflect back on this time, my life was based on WHAT I DID, WHAT I OWNED, and WHO I KNEW--not who I was and what was I called to be.

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Interestingly this was the beginning for me; it was my vulnerability and my need that prepared me to receive God into my life. One evening, while visiting church with my parents, I was deeply moved by the passion of Christ during the Stations of the Cross. I clearly and vividly saw how my life of self-indulgence inflicted the very wounds which I had kissed on

the crucifix as a child. The parallel was uncanny. Unknown to me, the one whom I had loved since childhood, was the one I had been persecuting. I was brought to my knees in tears of remorse. I wanted to amend my life. I sought outside help and received an abundance of support.

I decided to begin afresh by taking a humble job sweeping a parking lot which in turn became a prayer for me. It was during these blessed, simple years that God lead me on a journey of realization. I learned that how I had lived my life took away the very dignity I was searching for, my dignity, and that of others whom I thought I had loved. My life based on my own selfish ends—it was devoid of true love, meaning, and respect.

Throughout what I will call my “formative” years, I created a space in my life for God to work. It was not what I did, as much as what I didn't do. I didn't put things in my life such as disordered relationships, partying, and material wealth - all that would distract me from what was truly important. God wanted me to know how much he loved me no matter how I had lived. God did not want to punish me but wanted me to understand how I separated myself from him by my actions and my absence of trust in anything outside myself. He wanted me to surrender to him completely. “Let go and let God,” so to speak.

It was not long after that I returned to the faith I had abandoned. I started to hear the Gospel in a whole new way; it was as though God was speaking directly to me in my heart. I had never experienced anything like this before; I was awestruck. The Word of God was alive and active in me in a powerful way. So powerful, in fact, was the Word that I started to change

my old ways. For the first time in many years I was compelled to go to confession and began attending church regularly as God moved in my conscience. I had nothing materially to speak of, in fact I had never had so little, yet I had never been happier and fulfilled. I had true joy within! I was not alone! I was loved! I felt whole! I used to think that my wrongs of the past were unforgivable and that I did not deserve love. It was self pity which was an excuse I used to turn away from God and do what I wanted. I was wrong! God wanted to free me from the bondage of shame, guilt and selfishness. I accepted and believed that the all-powerful God could and would free me if I let him.

After a few years of living a simple life and participating in God's grace, I was asked by some of the parishioners if I was considering becoming a priest. When I heard this question a glow filled me. At the same time, I felt unworthy to even consider it because of the life I had lived. My response was to dismiss it and the encouragement people were giving me. But, over time, the question had an impact. In prayer I said to God if he wanted me to be a priest he would have to initiate the process so I could be sure it was him asking and not me making it happen like I had in my old controlling ways.

Before long I was being asked to undertake various ministries in the church and I was grateful, for I saw God working in me in a specific and special way. The instructor of the Exploring the Catholic Faith course I was taking saw something in me and approached me to meet with the vocations director. I did and subsequently told my story to the bishop. He thought I had a call to the priesthood but that I had to resolve some obstacles. With patience, hard work, and with God's help, the obstacles were removed.

During this time my Mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer. My Mom came to me in tears saying: "Anthony, I can go now knowing you are on the right path as you were my last project. This will be a time of growth for both of us." We both hugged and cried. My worst fear was realized; to have someone whom I loved dearly and had come to depend on so much taken from me. But for the grace of God, there was a beauty and love even in the midst of this intense sadness, grief, and fear of losing my Mom.

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I remember coming home from a Life and the Spirit seminar after being baptized in the Holy Spirit. My Mom asked if God had anything to say to me for her. I stopped and pondered a moment.

"Yes Mom, God did."

"Oh," she said, "what did he say?"

I said, "Mom, God said he has prepared a place for you and he is calling you home to himself. He has work for you to do, watching over our family."

My Mom joyfully replied with tears in her eyes, "Oh, that is so beautiful, I would love to do that."

A few weeks later I got word from the Companions of the Cross that they accepted me for their novitiate program, my Mom, by then, was very ill. I approached her with the news that I had been accepted, but that I was afraid that if I went I would not see her again. She said, "It is important that you go. I will be fine. You need to go and follow God's plan for you."

We cried together and I told her that I would enter the seminary. Several months prior, I had asked God if I could hold my Mom's hand as she died. After this conversation with my Mom I spoke to God in prayer and said to him, that I did not need to hold my Mom's hand and that I would respond to his invitation to the seminary to discern the call to the priesthood. It was the hardest decision I have ever made. My Mom died a week before I entered the seminary and by the grace of God I was there to hold her hand with family. What a gift I was given.

As I departed for my journey, I realized that all that I had feared and lost in my life was found through my relationships and connection to Jesus. I am ever grateful to God who knows our needs before we ask.

Please pray for me. ☺

LAY ASSOCIATES CORNER

by Linda Dupré

An Introduction to Ignatian Discernment

Having been raised in a traditional Catholic family, I received the sacraments at the set times and rarely missed Sunday Mass. I was taught at a very early age that obedience to both my parents and to God was to be my number one priority. However, I don't remember hearing about a gentle and merciful God who loved me unconditionally. As a result, I did not know I could have a personal relationship with Jesus. To me, God was someone way out there whom I prayed to when I needed things and whom I tried really hard not to offend.

When tragedy struck our family almost 10 years ago, I knew instinctively that I needed God's strength and courage to make it through the pain. But I didn't know him. I was on my knees in despair when I first realized I needed to grow in my relationship with Jesus, and it came so gently through Our Blessed Mother's intercession. Over the years I have taken little baby steps, moving towards and then sometimes away, in my relationship with Jesus and his Mother.

Many times I have been unsure of what direction the Lord wanted me to take. I thought that if it was helping me to grow in faith, hope and love, it must be a good thing and therefore his will for me. Over time I realized that this way of thinking needed some tweaking. Although I began to bring situations to Jesus in prayer more often as I spent quiet time with him at home or in front of the Blessed Sacrament, his will for my life wasn't always clear to me in my particular circumstance.

So when I heard through a friend about the lay formation course "An Introduction

to Ignatian Discernment", I was interested. This course outlined the 14 Rules for Discernment of Spirits from the First Week of St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, providing some basic tools, terminology and guidelines to assist in discerning God's will in your life.

**In spiritual
consolation the sea
is calm and the wind
is at your back,
making it easy to
reach your goal in a
straight line.**

**In spiritual desolation,
the sea is rough and
the wind is against
you, making for
rough sailing.**

The course was well-structured and flowed logically, making it fairly easy to grasp the important concepts. The facilitators, Father Terry Donahue and Claire Johnson, both had a sense of humour which was much welcomed, especially when discussing the more challenging topic of spiritual desolation. The weekly notes, practical case studies and numerous examples enabled me to absorb the information more firmly.

One concept I found very interesting is God's preferential will. Although in any particular situation there may be a number of specific options that are morally good, God's preferential will is always the option that will bring about his greatest glory in us. It's our job to determine

which option that is through careful discernment and prayer.

It was also helpful to learn about spiritual and non-spiritual consolation and desolation, as well as practical guidelines on what to do (or not to do) in each. In consolation we can grow through the sense of light, peace and energy given to us by God. Conversely, in desolation, we grow through resisting the tactics of the Enemy. The analogy of the sailboat helped me to better understand. In spiritual consolation the sea is calm and the wind is at your back, making it easy to reach your goal in a straight line. In spiritual desolation, the sea is rough and the wind is against you, making for rough sailing. To reach your destination, you must use the rudder and sails to chart a zigzag course. Although it takes more effort, patience and perseverance, we often make greater spiritual progress in spiritual desolation because there is greater merit in choosing the Lord in difficult circumstances. I often ask myself in prayer: "Am I seeking the consolations of God, or the 'God of all consolation'?" (2 Cor 1:3).

This course has provided me with a strong foundation needed to practice good discernment. With everything practice is important: "Leave room for the misses." Wise advice! We won't always get it right, but God delights in our faithfulness. I was pleased to hear that a second course will be offered in the fall, entitled "Ignatian Discernment: Practical Applications". I look forward to learning more! ☺

Linda Dupré is a parishioner at St. Leonard's in Manotick, Ontario.

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NOTE: As this is an advanced course, students should be familiar with the material in the previous course: *An Introduction to Ignatian Discernment* (or its equivalent). Binders and DVDs of this prerequisite course are available for purchase.

COURSE PRESENTERS



Fr. Terry Donahue, CC is the Director of Lay Formation and Chaplain to the Lay Associates for the Companions of the Cross. He is also an English Secretary for the Papal Nuncio to Canada.



Claire Johnson, STL teaches undergraduate theology at Saint Paul University while pursuing her Doctorate. She has extensive knowledge of Ignatian discernment and its practical applications.

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By Rev. Mark Goring CC



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Fr Mark Goring, CC, Ottawa, 2008

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"Our Lady of Sheshan, sustain all those in China, who, amid their daily trials, continue to believe, to hope, to love. May they never be afraid to speak of Jesus to the world, and of the world to Jesus. In the statue overlooking the Shrine you lift your Son on high, offering him to the world with open arms in a gesture of love. Help Catholics always to be credible witnesses to this love, ever clinging to the rock of Peter on which the Church is built. Mother of China and all Asia, pray for us, now and forever. Amen!"

- Pope Benedict XVI (May 24th, 2008)



COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

by Fr. John Vandenakker

New Companions' Foundation

CC Moderator Fr. Scott McCaig: "The Executive Council has approved the establishment of our first local community outside of North America. Fr. Charles Orchard, Fr. Fernando Suarez, and Fr. Jeff Shannon will be heading off to the Philippines on behalf of all of us. They will be joined in their first year by seminarian David Bergeron. Once the household is properly established we will begin investigating and discerning the possibility of a house of formation in the area and our level of involvement with the Shrine project (www.montemariashrine.com) - which is already

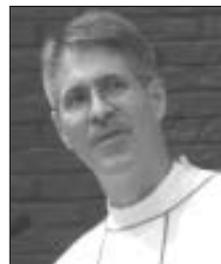
well underway (see Fr. Charles Orchard's report elsewhere in this newsletter for more info).



The site of the household will be at MonteMaria near Batangas City (about two hours due south of Manila). It is a remarkably beautiful location overlooking the Bay. Please pray for them all. This is a big step for us as a community!

New Appointments & Moves

The Companions of the Cross are pleased to make the following announcement regarding new appointments for some of our Companions' priests, deacons, and seminarians (effective summer 2008). Over 1/3 of the community will be on the move! Please note that any and all appointments to diocesan positions have been made by the respective bishops in charge, with the consent of the community. Other internal CC appointments and moves have been made by the Moderator



and the CC Executive Council. A complete roster of CC households will be published in our next newsletter. Here are the new appointments and moves:

David Bergeron will undertake a year of Pastoral Internship at our new CC Foundation in the Philippines.

Fr. John Paul Bolger is appointed Associate Pastor of Queen of Peace parish, Houston.

Fr. Daren Bryk is appointed Associate Chaplain of York University, Toronto.

Fr. Brian Christie will undertake a year of investigating the contemplative dimension of his own vocation.

Fr. Tim Devine is appointed Associate Pastor of St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.

Fr. Dennis Hayes is appointed to the CC Formation Team in Ottawa.

Simon Lobo (Deacon - Sept. 2008) will serve at St. Maurice parish, Ottawa.

Carlos Martins (Deacon - Sept. 2008) will serve at the Catholic Charismatic Center, Houston.

Fr. Bernard Messier is appointed Associate Pastor of St. Timothy's parish, Toronto.

Brian O'Neill will undertake a year of Pastoral Internship at the Catholic Charismatic Center, Houston.

Fr. Charles Orchard is appointed Vicar of the Moderator to oversee the administrative and personnel needs of the new CC Philippines Foundation.

Fr. Christian Riesbeck will pursue studies in Canon Law at Saint Paul University, Ottawa.

Fr. Ben St. Croix is appointed Associate Pastor of the Catholic Charismatic Center, Houston.

Fr. Marc Syrenne is appointed Chaplain at Dalhousie University, Halifax.

Jamie Utronkie (Deacon - Sept. 2008) will serve at St. Mary's parish, Ottawa.

Fr. John Vandenakker is appointed Pastor of Queen of Peace parish, Houston.

Fr. Roger Vandenakker is appointed Pastor of St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.

Letter of Thanks from Houston

“Hi Father John. Father Christian Riesbeck and Father Daren Bryk have been a great gift from God to all of us at Queen of Peace, we have truly been blessed having them here in Houston, Texas. Although we are saddened to see them leave, we know that they must go where they are needed most. They have really made a difference in our parish. What is so amazing to me about the Companions of the Cross is that we have seen young people at church before they came, but to see so many young people at church in the evening when they could have been somewhere else or at the movies was something so “awesome”. Sometimes when we went by there in the evening, there in their midst was Father Mark and then Father Randy (as seminarians). How wonderful they were with these young ones. These days we need to know more about God’s love, and all of the Companions share this with us. Thank you Companions for giving us all the priests and seminarians not only at Queen of Peace but those at the Charismatic Center, and now also at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. We congratulate you on your new assignment at Queen of Peace. Joe and I look forward to seeing you again.” Sincerely - Blanca Sánchez

Farewell & Godspeed

Every year we say “fare thee well” to some of our CC seminarians and applicants who take their leave of us. This is always sad but inevitable, for not everyone who comes to us is called to the priesthood and/or to our community way of life. All of those leaving us this year report that their time spent with us has resulted in much personal blessing, and has helped clarify their vocational discernment. We too have been enriched by their presence (however long or short their stay with us has been). And so we say a fond farewell and Godspeed to the

following who have taken their leave of us this past year: Fr. Tomasz Jegierski (Applicant), Justin Yu (Applicant), and Ryan Schmidt (Applicant).

Renovations to St. Timothy’s

Toronto Pastor Fr. Randy Hendriks: “Please keep St. Tim’s on your prayer list as we are moving into an intensive 10-week capital campaign to raise a minimum of 1.2 million dollars for renovations to our church. Basically we’re doing an upgrade to the interior space with new carpets, paint, refinishing the pews, reconciliation room, devotional area, providing some handicapped washrooms and elevator, replacing the boiler and putting in air conditioning. That’s about all you get for a million bucks these days! I’ll give you an update next month or so and let you know how we’re coming along.”



From the Mission Field

Fr. Francis Donnelly sent along the following report of his recent missionary efforts in Peru: “I went to Peru for two weeks this past winter (Feb. 28 – Mar. 10). An evangelistic ministry known as *Misioneros de Jesus* took me in hand. Gustavo and Liz Llerena are a married couple who, along with Martin Ramos, lead this ministry out of their home in Lima these last 10 years or so. They have three small children and live by faith in Divine Providence, full of joy and thanks-

giving for the marvels the Lord works with them. They run three prayer groups weekly in Lima, run an internet radio program, produce a “testimony” magazine, and travel around Peru to preach and heal and to bring people to baptism in the Holy Spirit. They have a wonderful shepherd in Bishop Francisco Gonzalez Hernandez O.P. of Puerto Maldonado who agreed to collaborate with the Companions in handling our funding for their *Cristo Movil* traveling ministry.

“These *Misioneros* met me at Lima airport in their borrowed taxi with great love and celebration at midnight and took me home to their community. Next morning it was out to sea in the Pacific where I made a great catch of small fish and enjoyed the fisherman’s view of Lima. A much needed siesta revived me to do a small teaching for a prayer group and pray over all comers that night! Early Saturday morning I joined Father Manny Rodriguez in his televised monthly healing Mass for about 2,000 in an arena. All his healing prayer takes place from the altar with exposition of Blessed Sacrament. A number of impressive testimonies came forward. That night I was in his TV studio for a live discussion about my Companions’ life and ministry - in French and Spanish! Meanwhile, we drove an hour to a retreat for teenagers where Gustavo and I prepared them to receive the encounter with the Holy Spirit. Nearly all 40 people had the wonderful experience!

“On Sunday we gave a day of renewal in St. Nicholas parish for military families with great teaching from the lay men and dramatized apologetics against Jehovah Witnesses by the “Apostles of the Word”. I celebrated in my crippled Spanish and prayed over the whole congregation for their experience of Jesus and his Holy Spirit with great effect. On Monday we went shopping for a projector (\$775) to use in the missionary teaching, and we met with Maria Palomino and family for lunch. That night I got to talk to a birthday party of prosperous friends of the *Misioneros* and pray over them too.

“Tuesday we took our borrowed car for an oil change and tune up and drove down the coast three hours to Chinchá where we had Mass and brunch with Father Joe Devlin OMI of Ottawa. He brought us around the earthquake devastated city of 60,000 where OMI run 13 chapel stations, most of them still without their roofs. I invested \$1,000 in cement and rods to help restore one or two of those roofs (to have Mass in from the hot sun) and I gave another \$500 for helping his poor there.

“Wednesday morning Gustavo, Martin and I flew over the Andes to the jungle city of Puerto Maldonado to meet with Bishop Francisco and to do a prayer meeting, Mass and ministry for a prayer group of 75. The Bishop is delightful. He told me how Gustavo’s evangelizing had converted a hardened mine owner and changed the “landscape” of the city. He wants them in the diocese, but he also wants them travelling the country with the “fire”. We looked at a 50 hectare “ranch” that might become a retreat center for the *Misioneros*. I heard also that the Bishop sent Gustavo to convert a cannibal tribe in the jungle – with striking results after six weeks in their midst. This is a man of fierce faith, trust and assertiveness!

“Montezuma’s revenge got to me that night, but I survived the ride to downtown on a motor bike the next morning and to cruise the great Madre de Dios River that runs into Brazil’s Amazon River. Our return flight took a stopover in Cusco, gateway to Machu Pichu, the Inca World Wonder. What a modern looking city of Italian style housing, clean and classy – result of tourist money obviously, whereas the rest of Peru outside the enclaves of the affluent is poverty ridden. The one hour taxi ride home cost 35 soles –about \$8! I skipped the prayer meeting that night to rest up for the next adventure.

“Early Friday morning we had another one hour drive to the bus station with a team of five. Then we took a 10-hour bus ride over the Andes Mountains. We had a break at a station 10,000 feet up and climbed maybe 2,000 more feet before



Fr. Francis and Gustavo in Peru.

descending somewhat to the plains. Then into the hills again to approach the spectacular valley city of Huanuco. We went to a retreat center in a mountain setting, had supper, and did a two hour worship and teaching session from 10 p.m. to midnight with 35 young retreatants from the St. Francis Cooperative Banking Association, most of who had little or no church practice. Next day I had the major teaching at 9:30 am on conversion and openness to the personal experience of God. Martin translated for me and we brought them into worship and prayed over them at length. They had a talk with silent time until Mass late in the afternoon. Only a few of the retreatants received Communion at that Mass! The night was given to Exposition and confessions with three Capuchins from town. At Sunday Mass next day nearly all of them received Communion! My sermon/teaching was preparation for encounter with Pentecost, and most of them manifested strong signs of the Holy Spirit in the session after Mass. It was an amazing transformation of a whole body of people! Sunday evening we visited the barrios and the food center for poor school children,

built largely by funds from Canada (Lift Jesus Higher and the government). The Capuchins organize the work there. I gave them \$500, but they need \$5,000 more to complete the second floor facility.

“The overnight bus brought us back to Lima where I verified I had lost my wallet with \$250 and cards, etc in it. I spent the day arranging my affairs, celebrated house Mass, packed my goods, left another \$500 with the *Misioneros* to purchase a camera for producing TV quality programs and headed for the airport for a second overnight in a seat. Back in Houston I hastened to the vehicle bureau to replace my lost driver’s licence. An afternoon phone call informed me that my wallet had shown up at the Canadian embassy in Lima—minus the cash, but containing the personal stuff. That night Fr. Fernando’s mission in Houston engaged us in hours of confessions.

“The trip proved most worthwhile and prepared the way for more and larger collaboration with the *Misioneros* in their exciting evangelization work in Peru.
Continued on page 24

Next year they speak of my bringing a team and having large rallies in Lima and elsewhere. So, thanks to Companions of the Cross, to the Knights of Columbus, Houston, and to individual donors who allowed me to take the team of *Misioneros* to various places and to donate generously to the works in Lima, Chincha and Huanuco." Dios los bendiga - Panchito Francis.

Houston CC Fundraiser

Each year friends, parishioners, and Lay Associates of the Companions in Houston host a festive fundraising dinner in support of the community. This year's dinner will pay tribute to Fr. Francis Frankovich as he celebrates his 40th anniversary of ordination. The dinner will take place on Saturday evening Sept. 13th at the

Catholic Charismatic Center. For tickets and more information please contact the CCC at (713) 236-9977. Come join the fun. Watching Fr. Francis dance is priceless!

A Word from Fr. John

My new appointment at Queen of Peace parish in Houston means that I will be letting go of my current duties. These include the positions of Academic Coordinator & Director of Public Relations. Fr. Rick Jaworski has been appointed the new Academic Coordinator for the Companions. Please pray for him as we are currently in a period of transition and discernment regarding our academic needs and resources. I will miss teaching theology to our seminarians and

to other lay students. But at the moment I am needed more elsewhere.

Christine Labrosse, as Managing Editor of our Newsletter, will now assume even more responsibility for overseeing the gathering of content for publication. She will be aided by a newsletter committee. I wish to thank Christine and Dyann Bernard (our Graphic Designer) for their outstanding dedication and creative contribution over the years. The newsletter will be in good hands! Dale Balkovec will continue to help with the publication of our yearly CC calendar. Someone TBA will look after coordinating our CC Bulletin Board project, web site updates, general advertising, and specialized ministry requests (i.e. parish missions, etc.). But you'll be happy to know that I will keep up the arduous task of leading yearly pilgrimages (at least for next year)!

Photo of the Month



Fr. John Vandenkaker and Pilgrims at Padre Pio's Shrine in Italy.

CC Permanent Commitments & Ordinations to the Diaconate



Jamie Utronkie



Carlos Martins



Simon Lobo

With praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, the Companions of the Cross joyfully announce that seminarians Simon Lobo, Carlos Martins, and Jamie Utronkie will soon make their permanent commitments to the community followed by their ordination to the Diaconate.

Simon Lobo and Jamie Utronkie will make their permanent commitments on Sunday, Sept. 7th during the 11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Mary's church in Ottawa. Their ordination to the diaconate will be conferred by Archbishop Terrence Prendergast in St. Mary's church the following day - Monday, Sept. 8th (the Feast of the Birth of Mary) at 7:30 p.m. Reception to follow in the parish hall.

Carlos Martins will make his permanent commitment on Sunday, Sept. 14th during the 11 a.m. Mass at St. Paul church in Herring Cove. His ordination to the diaconate will be conferred by Bishop Claude Champagne at 3:00 p.m. that afternoon at St. Michael in Spryfield. Reception to follow in the parish hall.

Everyone is welcome!
**Please pray for these Companions as they give their all to the Lord
for the sake of his Kingdom!**

Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become.

Believe what you read,
teach what you believe,
and practice what you teach.

From the Rite of Ordination of a Deacon



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“Then, taking bread and giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying: ‘This is my body to be given for you. Do this as a remembrance of me’”

(Lk 22:19).