



Spring 2008

Companions of the Cross



Inside

A New Sisterhood

Sevenfold in
Your Gifts

From the Farm



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Interested in Community Life?

Burning with the Love of God?

Priests on fire!

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Introducing the Servants of the Cross	1
News from the Farm	4
Lay Associates Corner	6
Sevenfold in Your Gifts	9
Men's Day of Prayer at Houston's Catholic Charismatic Center	14
Testimony: Luke Jalsevac	16
Community News & Notes	19

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Companions of the Cross

FEATURE

by Sr. Anna Chan

Introducing the Servants of the Cross



A transformation. That's what happened to me on Pentecost Sunday, 2003. **Are you ready now?**, the Lord asked me. At the time I was on retreat. The theme of the retreat was asking Jesus for "total person healing". I was not aware of any specific healing I needed, but I did know that total healing was what I wanted.

Are you ready now? The moment hit me like a ton of bricks. It came unexpectedly. The Lord was asking me to accept a call to the religious life, a call to be a sister. He wanted me all to himself, married to him through a religious calling. I was surprised by his invitation. Two years prior, I discerned a call to the sisterhood and after visiting many different communities and not sensing a call to join any of them, I closed the idea completely from my mind and heart. "The matter is discerned," or so I thought.

I could not believe what I was now experiencing. The Lord was speaking personally to me. It was loud and clear. I heard his invitation with no attachments, expectations or ambitions in my heart. I felt God's wisdom and power in a very extraordinary way. It was a **Now** word. I realized I was facing a new reality in my relationship with God. My heart came alive. It responded to the Lord's request with a loud "Yes".

In Fr. Bob's book, *We are Called to be Companions of the Cross*, he writes, "The word that gives us his direction is known as wisdom. It is, then, his '**Now**' word for us. When we think we are hearing it from him, we have to discern it properly and test it out." Having visited a number of religious

orders, I had a good sense of what was available out there. None of them moved my heart. Now I know why. The Lord focused my vision on the Companions of the Cross, the community with which I had become familiar through my parish: Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Ottawa.

It was not difficult to approach the Companions. Their spirituality and charism resonated within me. You simply can't help but experience the vibrating effect of the fire and zeal these men have in their love for God. They are an inspiration and living witness of the renewal of the Church. I was convicted through the Lord's **Now** word that women needed the opportunity to build a community with the same vision and spirituality.

And so, the journey began, five years ago, when God invited me to come forward in taking the lead in this new and exciting commitment. Soon after I stepped forward in my call I was joined by Monique Bisson, a young woman whom I've known for many years. In September 2007, we were joined by Stephanie Koch and Melissa Delaney. Our time together has certainly been well spent in formation, in ministry, and in learning. Praise be to God, at least one other young woman will join us this fall. We see God meticulously forming us into our calling as religious as we continue to wait and pray for the women he is calling forward.

Personally, God continues to teach me about my identity in him. The passage from Ezekiel 36:25-28 comes
Continued on page 2

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Lord's request with
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alive for me, “*I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you your natural hearts*”. Ezekiel is speaking about a change that brings about completion. I can hear Fr. Bob’s words at the *Catch the Fire* conference at St. Timothy’s Church in Toronto 2006: “Make God the offer”. And so I did, “Lord, I will do whatever you want me to do. Show me my natural heart. I give you permission to do whatever you want. I will stay clear out of your way”. A great philosopher of the 20th century, St. Edith Stein, has helped me to formulate into words my pursuit for a natural heart. She writes, “Woman’s destiny stems from eternity. She must be mindful of eternity to define her vocation in this world. And if she complies with her vocation she achieves her destiny in eternal life”.

As I give God more and more permission to do what he wants in my life, the pieces fall into place. St. Edith Stein’s words help me to continue to connect with the prophecy of the natural heart from Ezekiel. They help me to seek God’s **Now** word which has led me to my vocation, showing me the path he has chosen for me. I see my natural heart – my new heart given to me by God – in my call to build a community of women whose spirituality and vision is akin to the Companions of the Cross.

Our Work Together

Our main ministry, that which all others flow out of, is evangelization. Our current ministries include: intercessory prayer (we offer formation in intercessory prayer to other young women who sense a call to intercession); the needs of the poor (we serve daily at Our Lady of His Mercy Friendship Apostolate, a drop-in home for the poor in Ottawa); adolescents and young adults (we minister as leaders to the teens at Holy Redeemer parish and to



Srs. Monique Bisson and Anna Chan

the young adults at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary parish); and the work of the Pro-Life movement. We continue to remain open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as he directs us into new areas. Our desire is to collaborate with the Companions of the Cross in this task.

Our Prayer Life

We are committed to both personal and communal prayer. Our personal prayer is a time of active listening, of open dialogue, and of being together with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We commit to at least one hour of personal prayer each day. In communal prayer, we utilize the gifts of the Holy Spirit through spontaneous prayer, praise and worship, and the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. We have two periods of communal prayer daily.

We recognize that it is only by being steeped in prayer that we can even begin to adequately serve others. We acknowledge the importance of listening to God’s word, and we always seek him and ask him for it when making decisions. We regularly engage in intercessory prayer missions where we act as a prayer support, asking God to pour down his grace upon whoever it is we are praying for. In this we give priority to the members of the Companions of the Cross and to the Church.

Our Life Together

Community is at the heart of our identity. It lies at the centre of our vocation. To be in community is to be in a family, a place of fellowship, rest, nurturing, support, accountability, life; the place where God sets his people (Ne 4:13). We take to heart the words of Fr. Bob: “The quality of our ministry flows from the quality of our life



Stephanie Koch and Melissa Delaney



Serving at His Mercy Drop-In Centre

together.” In order to minister effectively in our various ministries we need to first minister to one another, to fill ourselves with the love that each of us has to offer one another. Community living is a commitment to which we give priority.

There you have it, a taste of the journey set in motion for us. Our Lady has played such a crucial role in our perseverance. She continues to strengthen us in our call to carry our cross daily. Living out our association with the cross will be a challenge. It will not always be easy to be joyful in taking our cross daily but it is one which we accept with humble and glad hearts. Our brother Companions are a blessing. We feel a genuine connection with them as within a family, one that prays and works together for the building up and renewal of the Church.

When I look back at the question the Lord asked me five years ago – **Are you ready now?** – I am amazed at what has come through my “Yes.” I know that there is more to come, for I continue to give God permission. I commit to a life with Christ, married to him through a vocation in a community. I commit to listening to his **Now** word for me. I commit to the renewal of the Church in the spirit of the New Evangelization, heralded and prophesized by Pope John Paul and by our Spiritual Father, Fr. Bob Bedard. I could not think of anything I want more in my life than to embark on this adventure. *Sub Cruce salus!* From the Cross flows salvation!

I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to all who have persevered with us. Your support is a huge encouragement for us. And we ask you all to pray for God’s anointing upon our endeavour in fulfilling his plan. For further inquiries you can contact me at (613) 729-8710 or annachan29@yahoo.ca. ☺

FEATURE

by Fr. Tim Devine



News from the Farm

The Priests of the Companions of the Cross begin their formation at Assumption Farm in Combermere, Ontario. We consider ourselves to be very blessed to have this place in such close proximity to the main headquarters of the Madonna House Apostolate. Many people comment on the tangible nature of the Lord's and Our Lady's presence in the surrounding area. It is a beautiful, yet rustic facility nestled in at the center of roughly 87 acres of forest. The property is a continuous slope from the southern end down to its northern bottom where little Johnson's Creek runs down to the Madawaska River.

We lovingly call this place "The Farm". It is quite the misnomer because we don't farm anything here. It is more wilderness than farm, but we have become attached to this name.

Over the past 15 years or so, Assumption Farm and its formation program has

evolved from a summer program in an eight bedroom house, to a 32-week program in the same house with a wonderful addition of a large kitchen, chapel and 12 bedrooms. I am currently assisting Fr. Marc Syrenne in facilitating this program. Though we still try to improve things here and there, we feel we have reached a healthy plateau for the foreseeable future. Much of this is due to Fr. Scott McCaig's tenacious dedication in developing this first-year program to where it is at today.

The community often gets raised eyebrows and quizzical looks when we mention the first-year applicants as being "at the farm", or, if one of us mentions that we are going to "visit the guys at the farm". It is my hope that this particular article will help to paint a clear picture regarding what the priests and first-year applicants are actually up to from mid-August until the end of April.

Imagine yourself having the opportunity to spend 32 weeks in a beautiful country setting, away from the busyness of life, in order to focus on spirituality, prayer, personal growth, community living and your relationship with God. Before diving head-first into studies in philosophy and the rapid pace of life in Ottawa, this "first year at the farm", as we call it, is a treasured beginning to a man's journey toward ordination to the priesthood and lifetime membership in the community. It establishes a clear sense of our priorities; namely spirituality and community life. It is our hope that the lessons learned at the farm will be carried through all the consecutive years of formation and beyond. It is definitely a year that our guys never forget.

This is what a weekly schedule is like: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are study days. The day begins with our personal hour of prayer at 7 a.m. in the chapel, and then at 8 we have Morning

Prayer together. Beginning at 9 a.m. mornings are set aside for 90 minute talks, presentations or discussions. At 11:15a.m. we celebrate holy Mass together. At 4:15 p.m. we have a Holy Hour before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. This hour involves praise and worship music with spontaneous vocal praise. We listen for the voice of the Lord and share any “now words” with one another, then we pray Evening Prayer together. After a communal supper, we pray the Angelus and those who did not prepare dinner do the dishes. We also pray a Rosary together at 7 p.m. in the chapel. At 7:30 we have another 90 minute talk. We observe silence from 10 p.m. until the next morning. From lunch until 4:15 p.m., we do household chores and cleaning on Mondays, groceries on Tuesdays and we alternate between share group and free time on Wednesdays. Thursdays are a free day after Mass at 9.am.

Fridays are our spiritual days. They begin with a 30 minute talk on prayer/spirituality at 8:30 a.m. After that, there is Mass at 9:30 a.m., with a Madonna House priest, followed by silence and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 10:30 to 4:30 p.m. We then pray the Stations of the Cross followed by Benediction. Friday is observed as a fast day. During the evening, we take turns reading out loud to one another from good Christian literature. Michael O’Brien’s *Father Elijah* is a farm favourite.

Saturdays are work days. We get up for an early Mass and Morning Prayer at 8 a.m. After a short breakfast, we have work projects until 3 p.m. with a brief lunch break. The most typical work project involves cutting, chopping, transporting and stacking wood from somewhere on our own property. We heat our house with wood, so there is always a need to keep the wood coming, especially in prepara-

tion for the cold Canadian winter. If we are not acting as lumberjacks, we are clearing paths in the woods, mowing the lawns with the tractor, shovelling snow, or fixing odds and ends around the house. Saturdays are a welcome change of pace. Our working together builds character and strengthens our brotherhood. At 3 p.m. we have a break to shower and change clothes; maybe even to steal a quick nap. At 4:30, we have a Holy Hour with Evening Prayer. Saturday Evenings are a lot of fun. We have a nice meal with wine or sparkling grape juice. We even have dessert. After that, we wash the dishes. We pray a Rosary at 7 p.m. and spend the rest of the evening playing games or watching a movie together.

On Sundays, we go to Mass at the local parish. The rest of the day is free to spend together or to visit with some of the local families. It is always nice for us to have the chance to spend time with the beautiful, and often large, families in the area. We are ever grateful for their hospitality.

As you can see, there is a lot to do in a week. After a while, the rhythm provides a nice balance of prayer, lessons, chores, work, free time and social time. As each week goes by, the Formation Team gets a good idea about the character, strengths and weaknesses, of the first-year applicants. We see men from many perspectives. We see them praying, playing, working, learning and relating with others. For example, we see if someone is great at praying and learning, yet, doesn’t like working or relating with others, or vice versa. When we see someone who maintains a consistently healthy attitude when involved in ALL the aspects of life at Assumption Farm, we know we have a good fit. We also see a lot of men grow in character and virtue as the year goes on. This further justifies, in our eyes, why we need a program such as this.

Throughout the weeks, we cover many themes regarding our spirituality. We learn about growth in holiness according to the Saints. We teach about the Eucharist, Mary, the Magisterium and life in the Holy Spirit. We discuss Evangelization and practicalities of community living. We also teach about human formation, celibacy, inner healing and building character. It is our hope that this year will provide the men with good information about the priesthood and the Companions of the Cross in order to help them have good discernment. Because of the intensity of this first year, some men leave or are asked to leave during or at the end of the year. Though it is not always easy to say good-bye, this always shows that there is good discernment going on. The men who return for a second year of applicancy can continue in confidence because they “survived the farm”.

We are so very blessed to have Assumption Farm and to have the program in its present form. Despite having to get rid of mice caught in mousetraps, putting wood in the fire during a stormy night, resorting to plan B when the tractor breaks down, having to tolerate practical jokes and pranks, long winters and five minute time limits on showers; for us, this place is a little slice of heaven on earth. Most men remember the beautiful lakes for swimming, the vivid colors of autumn leaves, the starry nights, the dazzling northern lights, the deer and wildlife, the crisp, quiet winter landscape, the joy of a spring thaw, and the awesome privilege of living in the same house with the Blessed Sacrament. May Our Lady, assumed body and soul into heaven, pray for vocations to the priesthood and for all who support them out of the goodness of their hearts. Our Lady of Combermere, pray for us! 🙏

LAY ASSOCIATES CORNER

by Fr. Terry Donahue

During the winter we held several lay formation events in the Ottawa and Toronto regions. On February 1-2, 2008, Ottawa held its annual lay conference on the theme *Signs of Hope in Times of Persecution*. We would like to extend our thanks to the following guest speakers: Rev. Glenn M. Penner, Chief Executive Officer of The Voice of the Martyrs, Canada; Carl Hetu, National Secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association; Rev. Roman Rytsar, Doctoral Candidate in Theology at the Sheptytsky Institute; and Rev. Peter Jarvine, Curate at the The Cathedral Parish of the Annunciation in Ottawa. Maria Pirrone, a CC lay associate and parishioner of St. Maurice Parish, offers her testimony on the theme of persecution below.

In February and March, the *Keys for Growth in the Spiritual Life* lay formation course was offered at St. Timothy's Parish in Toronto. Speakers included Fr. Randy Hendriks, Fr. Dennis Hayes, Fr. Francis Ching, seminarian Brian O'Neill, and Fr. Terry Donahue. Victoria Nisce, another CC lay associate and parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena in Mississauga, shares her experience of this course below.

On March 1, 2008, Ottawa held its first *Kingdom Builders Youth Conference* on the theme Search & Rescue. Speakers included Fr. Mark Goring, Fr. Pierre Ingram and Fr. Terry Donahue. Seminarians Simon Lobo and Daniel Lehew added much humour to the day as MC's "Hanz and Franz". Brian O'Neill organized the afternoon Film Festival. Many thanks to Joe Zambon for leading us in worship and to St. Mary's youth group for all their hard work!



Joy in Persecution

by Maria Pirrone

After my initial conversion in 1992, I still had difficulties with forgiveness. I would ask myself constantly, "How can I forgive them? They hurt me!" I would read the words of Jesus again and again: "*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*" (Mt 5:44). On the cross he said, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (Lk 23:34).

It wasn't until October 1995, at St. Mary's Adoration Chapel that something inside me was transformed. I can't explain it, but God revealed to me his tribunal of mercy – his true presence in the Eucharist. Thanks be to God. I was so excited about my faith that I started to evangelize my family and friends. They responded by calling me a Jesus Freak. Jesus was the lover of my heart and soul and I didn't care who knew about it. I felt like I was being constantly persecuted.

My husband and I were trying our best to practice our faith and raise our daughter

in the Catholic Church. She welcomed our conversations about the Lord, until she met a non-Christian man whom she eventually married. There were tears, tears, and more tears. I was praying earnestly every day for Our Lord to reveal his presence in their lives. I would ask myself, "Where did I/we go wrong?" But with the prayers and help of wonderful priests and friends, I understood it was her own free will.

Although we felt like we had failed, somehow by the grace of God we started to pray for our son-in-law in a deep way. My husband and I looked at the good side of this man and tried to love him as Christ would, after all he was God's child, too. We wanted to help him understand and embrace Christianity, but to no avail, he was not accepting.

We were then introduced to *Voice of the Martyrs* and *Arab World Ministries*. They understood how we felt and told us about Christians in persecuted countries being tortured daily for the love of Christ. The stories were horrifying and heartbreaking. Tears began again. They also explained

the interior joy persecuted Christians experience even though they are suffering. I started to pray for the persecuted Church every day, thinking of these poor people that God has called to himself.

The persecution I have experienced is nothing compared to what I was introduced to – where the real persecution happens. Being tortured for Christ in countries where non-Christian religions predominate. It broke my heart. I said to the Lord, I will try never to complain again about my own personal persecutions.

Brothers and sisters, we are so blessed in this western hemisphere. Daily, we go on our merry way to church, receive the Eucharist, go to work, do errands, eat good meals, watch TV, read a book peacefully, etc. We are free to practice our faith and exercise our ministries. The persecuted Church does not enjoy these luxuries.

Do you ever ask yourself, “Are we as courageous as those who bear witness to their love for Jesus, knowing they can be killed for Christ at any time?” Let us pray constantly for one another that our triune God will empower us with a heart full of compassion and forgiveness. The children of God in these countries need our prayers of protection. When we receive the Eucharist, let us unite our hearts to the heart of Jesus upon the cross, and intercede for our true martyrs, the persecuted. Let us pray also for missionaries who lay down their lives in these countries sharing the joy of knowing Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

After attending this year’s lay conference on *Signs of Hope in Times of Persecution*, I would like to thank Fr. Scott McCaig for his inspirational and touching homily on the Beatitudes and Fr. Terry Donahue for his excellent presentation on the crisis of faith and Christian hope. I also thank the

invited guests who shared how they have laid down their lives to help the persecuted Church. Many of the faithful who attended are now inspired to seek more of an interior martyrdom in their lives.

In her diary, St. Faustina shares messages about persecution from our Lord:

“With my heart I encompass the whole world, especially countries which are uncivilized or where there is persecution. I am praying for mercy upon them” (*Diary*, #742).

“As God has made us sharers in his mercy and even more than that, dispensers of that mercy, we should therefore have great love for each soul, beginning with the elect and ending with the soul that does not yet know God. By prayer and mortification, we will make our way to the most uncivilized countries, paving the way for the missionaries. We will bear in mind that a soldier on the front line cannot hold out long without support from the rear forces that do not actually take part in the fighting but provide for all his needs; and that such is the role of prayer, and that therefore each one of us is to be distinguished by an apostolic spirit” (*Diary*, #539).

In our late Pope John Paul II’s teaching on the martyrs of our century, he said, “Today, I would like to reach out in thought and with the heart of the Church to all those who suffer persecution in our day.” Martyrs speak to us in the language of the cross. Theirs was a heroic sacrifice, a heritage in which “life and death face each other in a wondrous duel. They participate in the divine plan of salvation.” These martyrs will forever be in my heart.

Our daughter’s ex-husband has left to go back to his country permanently. Thanks be to God, my daughter returned to our

faith. Truly, God had a plan. “Sufferings gladly borne for others convert more people than sermons.” – St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Mother of Mercy, Queen of the Martyrs, pray for us.

The Keys to Spiritual Growth

by Victoria (Vicky) Nisce

One of the gifts I received this Christmas was a book by Ralph Martin entitled *The Fulfillment of All Desire*. I was indeed pleasantly surprised to find out that this was going to be the book that would be referenced during the six-week formation course on the Keys for Growth in the Spiritual Life. Imagine that, I had the “keys” all along and did not know it!

There are many things I will always remember about these teachings. First, on all the Tuesdays when these talks were given, we were challenged with the worst snowstorms and most dangerous driving conditions ever to hit Toronto this season. My spirit has been stirred up by all the talks and I don’t think any snowstorm could ever deter me from finishing this journey.

Secondly, the poignant examples that were used by our speakers to drive home a point, to emphasize a message, will certainly remain with me as reminders of what the Holy Spirit spoke to me through these talks. As an example, a few days after the talk on the “Obstacles to Spiritual Growth,” I found myself in a casual conversation with a sister in Christ, which was slowly turning into negative talk about a certain individual. Before I could say a word to agree with her senti-
Continued on page 8



ments, I remembered the image of the “camel’s nose poking into the tent’s opening” reminding me to conquer temptation at the door. Instead of saying something uncharitable, I quietly thanked God for the gentle reminder and prayed for the person I was speaking with and the person she was talking about. Also, while examining my conscience one night after listening to Father Terry’s talk about “affection for sin”, I was surprised to discover that I do carry affections for several sins. I now find that every time I feel an affection for a certain sin, the image of me dragging a melon on a string comes to mind and immediately, I am able to pray the feeling away.

Lastly, but most importantly, I will remember the depth and quality of the

talks that were given by our gifted speakers and the comprehensive handouts that were distributed, which I have now set apart from the rest of the notes from other teachings that I have compiled over the years. Some were new, eye-opening concepts for me – the Double Abyss, Distorted Notions of Perfection, The Four Voices of God, etc. – while some were already familiar, gathered from different teachings and lectures I have attended over the past 11 years since coming back to the faith. However, I have to say that they have never been presented as effectively as they have been during this series.

My morning worship has been infused with a new life as I now find myself meditating more and more on the “all-ness” of God as the backdrop of my own “noth-

ingness”. I’m starting to see my story in the struggles of St. Augustine in his search for God in beauty, and St. Thomas Aquinas in his search for God in truth. I find myself meditating on the role of holy friendships in our spiritual journey and the caution that we were given about the danger of exclusivity and possessiveness, which could enter even holy alliances – something that I have been exposed to but could not quite identify until I heard it in one of the talks.

I certainly will not remember all that has been presented during these talks but there will always be the gentle reminders (the camel in the tent, the melon on a string) and the handouts that I can always go back to for reference for many years to come. ☺

FEATURE



Excerpts from Chapter X of
Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa's 2003 book
Come, Creator Spirit
(used with permission)

The third verse of the famous medieval
Latin hymn *Veni Creator* reads:

*You are sevenfold in your gifts,
you are the finger of God's
right hand,
you are the Father's solemn
promise giving tongues the
gift of words.*

In the previous verse the author of the hymn had us contemplate the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the Spirit's action within us, transforming us, but now the hymn invites us to contemplate the charismatic work of the Spirit which is manifested in a variety of gifts and charisms. All the titles and the themes brought together in this verse link back more or less directly to this particular activity of the Spirit: The Holy Spirit gives the seven gifts; the Spirit is the "finger of God's right hand," driving out demons, working signs and wonders; the Spirit is the promise of power from on high fulfilled at Pentecost; the Spirit is manifested through the gifts that relate to the use of speech – preaching, teaching, prophesying, the gift of tongues...



Frs. Francis Ching, Raniero Cantalamessa and Dennis Hayes

1. What Is a Charism?

If we want to define a charism, we need to take account of two elements. First of all, a charism is a gift given "for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). In other words, a charism is not ordinarily or primarily given for the sanctification of the individual who receives it, but for "the service of others" (1 Pe 4:10). Second, a charism is a gift given "to one" or "to some" in particular, and not to all equally in the same way. This is what distinguishes charisms from sanctifying grace, from the virtues of faith, hope, and love, and from the sacraments, for these are given in the same way to all and they do not differ from one person to another.

There is also the question of talents. What are we to say of them? Do we need to widen the concept of charisms, in order to include the natural giftedness that we call talent, as some modern writers tend to do? It is a fact that the whole of life, lived in faith, is grace, and that life is not divided into parts, one religious or sacred and the other secular or profane. Nevertheless, we do not find the New Testament using charism to indicate an enhanced or transformed natural human ability. Charism is always "a manifestation of supernatural power." Talents and charisms come to us in very different ways: talent as the result of natural birth, and charism by a free and sovereign act of God, linked to our baptism. For this reason, talent is often a matter of heredity, but charism never.

Continued on page 10

2. Vatican II: The Rediscovery of the Charisms

In one of the most important documents of the Second Vatican Council we read: “It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the People, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (see 1 Cor 12:1), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written, ‘*The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit*’ (1 Cor 12:7). Whether these charisms be more remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church” (22).

To give due value to the renewing impact of this text, we need to know what happened to the charisms after their tumultuous appearance at the beginnings of the Church. The charisms did not disappear from the life of the Church. If we run through the history of the Church with the New Testament listing of charisms in mind, we have to come to the conclusion that, with the possible exception of “speaking in tongues” and of “the interpretation of tongues”, not one of the charisms was lost. Church history is full of charismatic evangelizers, of the gifts of wisdom and knowledge (one needs think only of the Doctors of the Church), of stories of miraculous healings, and of individuals endowed with the gift of prophecy or of discernment of spirits, not to speak of gifts such as visions, raptures, ecstasies, illuminations, all of which are counted among the charisms.

History is also full of instances of charismatic “awakenings”, that is, of periods when the manifestation of the gifts and works of the Spirit was particularly intense: the age of the martyrs, the burgeoning of monasticism (which, as a phenomenon, is charismatic more than it is ascetic), the first evangelization of Europe, the mission to the Slavic peoples noted for the abundance of the charisms in evidence, the Franciscan movement and the incredible growth of religious orders, each one of which is rightly committed to live out the “charism” of its founder. Pius XII was therefore right



*“The manifestation
of the Spirit is given
to everyone for profit”
(1 Cor 12:7)*

when he said that the Church had never lacked, nor could ever lack, “prodigiously gifted” members. Just as no one can prevent the wind from blowing where it wills, no one can prevent the Spirit pouring out his gifts where and when he decides.

If that is so, what is new? What allows us to speak of a reawakening of the charisms in our own time? What was previously missing? The charisms had been progressively removed from their proper sphere which is the community, the common

good and the organization of the Church, and confined more and more to the sphere of the purely private and personal. They were no longer allowed any impact on the basic functioning of the Church, for the Church considered itself “more than sufficiently assured of continuity by the existence of a sacred hierarchy”.

In the life of the primitive Christian community it is clear that the charisms were not private concerns, something over and above the necessities, or a luxury. The charisms worked in close unison with the apostolic authority (office) to produce the actual structure of the community. The community as a whole lived by the same two fundamental relationships as Jesus: with the Father and with the Spirit. The community, however, does not look to Jesus only as a model to follow in its own experience of these relationships: it depends on him totally, living, moving, existing in him and so sharing in his own unique relationship with the Father and the Spirit.

Having said this, we have to admit that at an early stage, and for various reasons, the interplay of the two components of community life, charism and office, began to get out of balance, and the imbalance favoured office. From then on, charism was seen as something conferred along with ordination, to be exercised by the ordained ministry. One of the factors that led to this change was the emergence of false teachings, especially those of the Gnostics. It was on the pastors, those who held office, that the responsibility of guarding against false doctrine largely fell, and this tilted the balance more and more toward them. The crisis brought about by the spread of the Montanist movement in the second century in Asia Minor was another factor that served even more to shift the emphasis away from charisms.

This imbalance is the fundamental fact from which follows all the negative consequences for the charisms. The charisms came to be relegated to the fringes of the Church. There is evidence that some of them persisted here and there for a time. Irenaeus, for instance, says that in his day there were still “many brothers in the Church who have the prophetic charisms, who speak in many tongues, who reveal the secrets of men’s hearts to their benefit, and who explain the mysteries of God”. But it is a phenomenon that was gradually fading out. The charisms that were chiefly exercised in worship and in the assembly were the ones that disappeared almost completely: the inspired or prophetic word and praise in tongues. Prophecy came to be seen as exclusively the charism attached to the teaching office of the Church, the magisterium, to ensure infallible and authoritative interpretation of revealed truth.

3. Pentecost Is Today!

I believe that, having said all this, we are now able to understand what it was that the recent Council once again brought to light and what was so new in the text on the charisms that we quoted. The charisms are brought back to the very center of the Church. The document that speaks of them is the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church! This shows clearly that they are an essential part of the very nature of the Church that is both hierarchical and charismatic, institution and mystery: the Church that lives not by sacrament alone but also by charism. The two lungs of the Church body are once again working together in full accord. The Holy Spirit breathes into the Church from two directions, and both are now again

fully recognized: from above, channeled through the sacraments that Christ instituted and entrusted to the apostolic ministry, and from below, channeled through each cell of the body, that is, through all the members of the Church.

The text of Vatican II has not remained nothing more than a document put out by the magisterium. The charisms typical of Pentecost have come back, not only as a subject for theologians to consider, but also into the life of the Church. We could try to explain what a charismatic event means, by reading an actual account of



...the Church that lives not by sacrament alone but also by charism.

one of the many little local Pentecosts now taking place in the Church. A young African layman wrote to one of his personal friends:

“Last month we organised a ‘New Life in the Spirit’ seminar. Those who attended were mainly university students and several nuns. At a certain point the participants were filled with the Holy Spirit in a way that we have never seen before. There were some who wanted to ask God to hold back a little because they were

afraid they would never sleep again for the overflowing joy that filled them. Some lay flat on the floor, some cried like babies, others danced like angels in heaven. The people were overcome by the love God was pouring into their hearts. On Pentecost Sunday, two of our group were invited by the celebrant to say a few words. One of them began by saying, ‘Today is Pentecost Sunday, but we do not want only to remember the Pentecost of two thousand years ago. We want today to be truly Pentecost!’ When, a little while later, I stretched my hands over the congregation (there were about a thousand people there) and began to pray, saying, ‘Come, Holy Spirit!’ the Spirit answered the call immediately and hundreds of people, from the strongest to the most frail, fell to the ground as they were given the experience of resting in the Spirit. Others were set free from bondage to the occult and demons. Some were healed of physical ailments. Many renounced sin and turned their lives to God. I have never known such an abundant outpouring of the Spirit of God.”

Just as charisms are adapted to the temperament of the one who receives them, so also to the temperament of the age and culture into which they are given. Charisms therefore do not need to be manifest in every age and in every culture in the same form as they came in the beginning. There is no need to try to “standardize” the Holy Spirit. The past was not right in that it thought the only charisms were the “spiritual” ones, intended for our sanctification; it would be wrong of us in the present to think that the only charisms are the ones we call “Pentecostal,” intended for the mission: speaking in tongues, healings, prophecy, and so on. Let the Holy Spirit lead us! ☩



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FEATURE

Men's Day of Prayer at Houston's Catholic Charismatic Center

by Jonah Dycus

(used with permission)

From the January 4th, 2008

Texas Catholic Herald

Candid testimonies about life's journeys, struggles and decisions served as focal points for more than 450 participants attending the Archdiocesan Men's Day of Prayer at Houston's Catholic Charismatic Center, December 15, 2007. Daniel Cardinal DiNardo celebrated Mass to close the morning's slate of events, which featured speakers and discussion for those seeking spiritual guidance.

Father Michael Scherrey, CC, Director of the Catholic Charismatic Center and Men's Day of Prayer organizer, told the congregation about his purpose on earth, which is a mission we all share. He said, "The only reason I exist is to get my soul to heaven – there is nothing else," he stated. "My life is for you, for all of you. And your call is to share your faith with everyone around... not just your family, but everyone at work, everyone you encounter."

Rich Donnelly, the third base coach for the Los Angeles Dodgers, delivered the day's keynote address. The former major league player was a "fallen away Catholic" as a young man before experiencing a major faith conversion following the death of his 17-year-old daughter, Amy. Although he offers uplifting advice today, Donnelly urges those in attendance not to fall into the same traps he did as a younger family man. "Don't waste time. I'll be 62 years old soon ...What happened? I look at the days I wasted, I look at the days I wasn't with my chil-



Fr. Michael Scherrey, Director of the CCC

dren. I look at the days I didn't tell my kids we are going to church," he said.

Prompting the participants not to simply "drag" their children to Mass, he suggested "show them – it is even better than taking them," Donnelly said. "If you show

them (that example), I'll bet you they will come. Get them involved in the game, not by just taking them to church – but by living it. You have to live it, you have to show them how nice you are to your wife ...things that your wife appreciates. Even if that means not watching a televised

football game on a Sunday afternoon,” he said to big laughs from the audience.

“The Chicken Runs at Midnight” is a phrase coined by Donnelly’s daughter as a nonsensical explanation of what coaches shout to base runners, and it remains a reminder of Amy’s fight with illness. “The Chicken Runs at Midnight” has become the Donnelly family motto, as well. Donnelly’s story about that phrase and his family has been published numerous times. Amy’s life was an inspiration to the baseball coach, and he uses her example to lead others as they find their way in the world. “The ones who are good have a burning desire to succeed in what they do and have passion for their work ethic and game,” Donnelly said. “Have passion for your faith – don’t be afraid. And my wish for all of you is that some day, your chicken will run at midnight.”

During his homily, Cardinal DiNardo referred to the day of prayer as an ideal opportunity to celebrate liturgy “after you have reflected on God’s word on your life, which is meant for the disciples of the Lord. Married men, single men...deacons, priests – faithful disciples all, this morning of reflection is perhaps one of the most important things we can do to get ready for Christmas,” he said. “For all of those privileged to be here, it is one of the few times where we can perhaps step back. That is what renewal is. We are all about rediscovering the intimacy in the face of Jesus. And from that brilliance, (our faith) materializes. It is what we need prayer time for. That is why this is a good day.”

Stepping back for a day of reflection, “a moment aside,” is essential to a faithful life, along with a dedicated church life, the Cardinal said. “We need our daily prayer, we need our liturgy on Sunday.

The liturgy is what pumps me up all of the time. I am privileged to be able to celebrate day by day.” If football fans are so eager to get to games for pre-game tailgate parties, Catholic families can find a way to get to an hour-long Mass service on time, the Cardinal said with a smile. “The Word of God is always brilliant,” he added. “The liturgy is supposed to make us hungry. Days of prayer are important; going to services with your family is

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important.” With his elevation to Cardinal, he said the limelight is not only on him, but the whole Archdiocese. “We are (under) the microscope now. They are watching everything we do. Are we craving the Holy Spirit? That is the challenge. We need to set an example for others to follow.”

Norbert Medina of St. Augustine Church said he decided to attend the Men’s Day of Prayer because “I’m hoping for a renewal of my faith – a new beginning.” Medina found the speakers “very inspiring – I can relate to the things they are talking about. I want to know about having that yearning and craving for the Lord.” The experience also helped him understand the virtue of patience in regards to his family. “I am an uncle, and I have a niece who is four and very active,” Medina said. “Sometimes, when I come home I’m very tired, I don’t want to do anything, but she wants to play. I try to remember that she hasn’t seen me all day and I hardly ever see her. I think back to

my father. He would come home from work and be tired. But he would then spend that time with us; he would be with us.” Medina said he hopes to take more from his experience at Mass. “I think it is very important to take time for your own personal prayer. At church, we come together in community and pray, but we also need that alone time with God, with Christ... so we can share that with the rest.” He continued, “Also, it is very important to take care of yourself – how are you going to take care of others if you are not feeding yourself, nourishing yourself spiritually as well as physically?”

Jesus Garcia, a Charismatic Center member and volunteer at the Day of Prayer, said there is a lot to take from such gatherings. “Everybody here really enjoys being together. This helps us live in the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” he said. “It is important that we all understand the importance of bringing our families back to the Lord. We have to push ourselves to a higher level of standards.”

Bob Bruno, a parishioner from St. Helen’s in Pearland, said he sees a standard being set with the Archdiocesan Men’s Day of Prayer. “This has been wonderful – we’ve had very good witnesses, very good talks,” he said. “It has all been very applicable. We are all touched by other people’s experiences, and hopefully learn from those experiences.” He said the time of reflection has helped him appreciate as a man how important it is to share experiences with other people who have been through similar trials. “It is always good to know that people can come through with a stronger faith,” Bruno said. “I hope to take that ability and courage to go out and share it with other people – family, friends and community.” ☺

TESTIMONY

by Luke Jalsevac

How the Companions Fostered My Vocation

In 2005 Pope John Paul came to Toronto for World Youth Day and spoke directly to me. No, I never met him in person, never got closer than a few hundred feet from him, but like many of the young people he had gathered from around the globe, I felt as if our beloved Holy Father was speaking only to me. The words of his closing homily set my heart on fire: “The world you are inheriting... is a world which needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God’s love. It needs witnesses to that love. It needs you.” The shockwave of his message reverberated in my heart and mind for a week until I knew clearly what I had to do - discern the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood.

After much prayer, research and soul searching I decided to join the Companions of the Cross. Nowhere else did I encounter such prayerful joy, total fidelity to the Church, evangelical fervour, and genuine brotherly affection than during my time visiting the Companions on a “Come and See weekend.”

Two and a half years into the Companions’ seminarian formation program, I made the extremely difficult decision to leave as I sensed God had other plans for my life. I consider myself truly blessed to have been given the opportunity to grow in my faith and develop relationships with the other brothers that I expect will last a lifetime.

I felt compelled to write this article because I want all supporters of the Companions to know how instrumental

my time with the community was in deepening my faith and preparing me for future ministry as a married layman. I am convinced that formation programs today have a dual mission. The primary end of formation is always to form men with genuine vocations to be holy priests in love with their priesthood and the flock they serve. A secondary end, one that is often overlooked, is the formation of strong Catholic lay leaders.

The reality today is that many Catholics know little about their faith, so it is no surprise that they don’t develop any great love for it. Part of the problem is that our Catholic education system is failing to educate its students in the faith (obviously there are exceptions). We have all heard stories of watered down or even anti-Catholic teaching being promulgated in our Catholic schools. The days when Catholic schools were staffed by dedicated priests and nuns are long gone. All of this has created a “formation gap” which communities such as the Companions play an important role in filling.

We often hear about the “vocation crisis” and how it could potentially be solved in a number of ways: ordaining women, allowing priests in the Roman rite to marry, or allowing lay people to

do even more, such as actually presiding over Mass. Of course none of these are a real solution. Although there is a real crisis in regards to the number of priests, there is an equally grave - and related - crisis in the area of lay vocations. In addition to various dynamic Catholic lay organizations which have sprung up in



recent decades, formation programs faithful to the teachings of the Church can, and do, play a role in responding to this crisis.

Speaking from experience, it is not saints who enter religious community but broken, wounded men genuinely seeking to do God’s will. While many seminarians have stories of profound conversions that led them to consider the priesthood, their time in the formation program – an extended retreat of sorts – is always a period of further conversion, as is every step in the Christian journey. Even though a man may leave the community, he leaves a different man than when he entered, one more prepared to spread the Good News.

Nevertheless, there is, I think, a frequently held opinion (often more subconscious than openly stated) that when a man leaves a community it is because of some failure along the way. He shouldn’t ever have been admitted some will think, or the formation program is too lenient, too tough, too long or too short others will argue. The debate can be endless, and doubtless with many excellent points being made. Certainly the formation program is never perfect and always in need of improvement. Yet through the eyes of

faith we know that God is quite capable of writing straight with crooked lines.

Indeed, when a man leaves a community's seminary program, there is reason for some sadness, particularly if he was close to ordination or it appeared that he would make an excellent priest. On the other hand there is a cause for joy that he has taken the counter-cultural step in the first place of considering the priesthood and has discerned after much prayer that it is not his call. Every Catholic would love for there to be more priests, but the last thing the Church needs is unhappy priests who are poor witnesses to the joy of living the Gospel. To remain in the community therefore, merely out of duty would be the height of folly.

Although leaving the community was a difficult decision to make, the excellent formation I received with the Companions gave me deeper understanding of my lay vocation. Like the majority of Catholics, I am called to respond to Pope John Paul's call to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world in the midst of daily life.

In *Cristifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II articulated this fundamental teaching: "The entire mission of the Church, then, is concentrated and manifested in evangelization..." and "...the lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the Church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel: they are prepared for this work by the sacraments of Christian initiation and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (CL 33). The harvest is plentiful, and we are all labourers in the vineyard of the Lord.

Of the men I studied with who are no longer with the community, many, if not all, are involved in some manner of ministry. One is teaching RCIA at his parish,

another is working for a pro-life politician. One is studying theology to be a full-time Catholic lay evangelist, another to be an army chaplain. And the list goes on. Even those men who are not directly involved in full-time ministry are still dedicating their talents in some way to the spreading of the Gospel.

In my case, I am currently employed in Toronto in the financial industry with a bond brokerage firm. It certainly has been a drastic shift, but it has provided all manner of opportunity to witness. Most people I meet are quite intrigued to discover that I spent time in the seminary – on Bay

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St. you don't often meet someone who seriously contemplated priesthood – and it shatters their preconceived notion that all priests are over 80 and that no one in their right mind even considers the priesthood anymore.

I am now married to a wonderful Catholic girl, in fact the girl I was dating before I entered the seminary. (There's something to be said for women's intuition. Because she is a prayerful woman she never told me until I left the seminary that she thought I probably didn't have a vocation. But having such great respect for the

priesthood she never intervened or pressured me, knowing that this was something that I had to work out with God on my own.)

Upon returning to the business world I found there to be little in the way of support in the faith for my particular age group and state in life. So, together with some friends I helped found a group for Catholic Young Professionals called *Civitas*. There are many excellent university groups and programs that have sprung up (eg, CCO, NET, the Companions of the Cross ministry at York University), but there is little for those students when they graduate and enter the working world. After the incredible support I received from the priests and brothers in the community, and the many opportunities for prayer and meditation, I felt I needed some measure of support and solidarity to live my faith in the "secular" world.

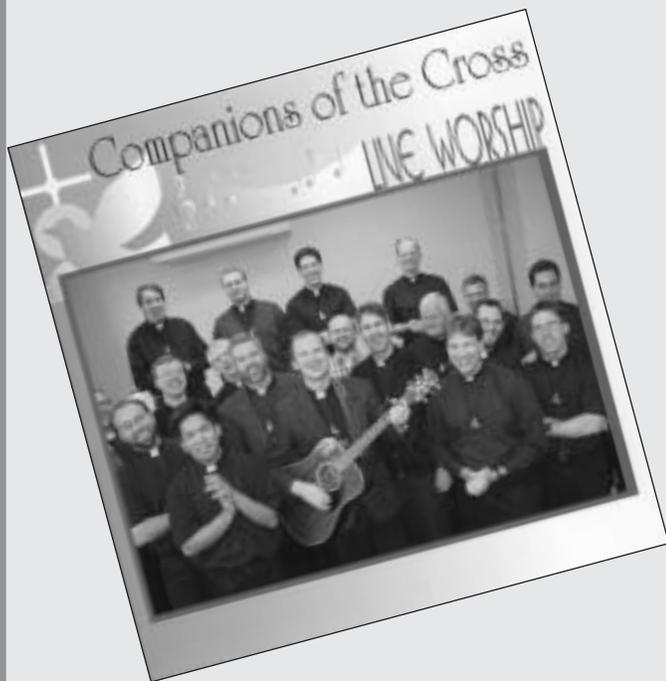
We meet about once a month for Mass, fellowship and a talk by a speaker on some aspect of the faith. In January we held an evening with Archbishop Collins who gave an inspiring, hope-filled talk on Building JP II's civilization of love. Over 110 young professionals attended! The Holy Spirit is certainly working!

Thus I extend to all supporters of the Companions of the Cross my thanks and gratitude for all your prayers and financial support during the grace-filled time I spent discerning whether I was called to the priesthood. May God bless you for your generosity and for all you do for the spreading of the Gospel of which you are not even aware. Let us continue to pray for our priests and seminarians, and that all young men and women considering the religious life may have the courage to follow God wherever he may lead. ☩

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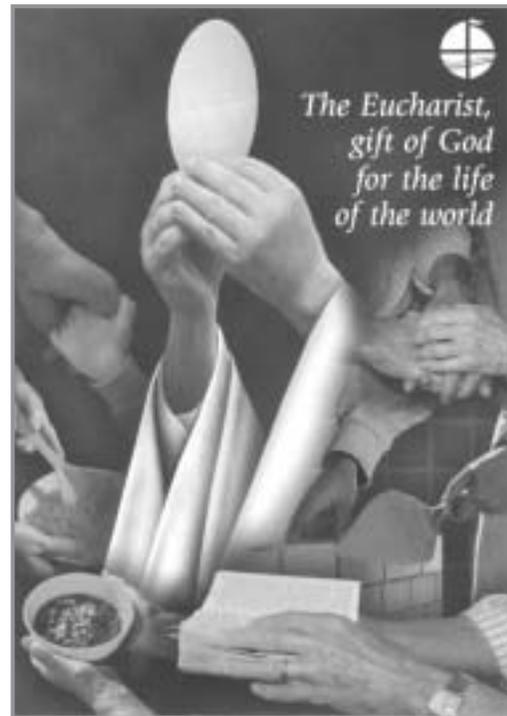


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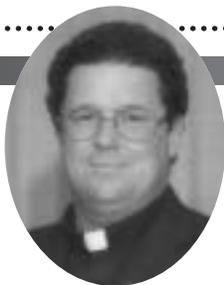


15 priests & 6 seminarians of the Companions of the Cross will be at the IEC in Quebec City. We have been asked to lead Holy Hours at 2 official Eucharistic Adoration Sites at the Congress, assist with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and help out with NET & CCO's Youth Ministry. Hope to see you there! Please pray that this event will be a powerful witness to all in Quebec, Canada, and the world, of what a gift we have been given in the person and presence of our Eucharistic Lord.

For information on Congress activities (including liturgies, workshops, and cultural events) and how to register, visit their official website: www.cei2008.ca

Note: many local dioceses are arranging group travel, registration, and accommodation packages for interested participants.





COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

by Fr. John Vandenkaker

Ministries Mass

On Sunday February 3rd The Companions celebrated their annual "Ministries Mass" at Holy Rosary parish in Ottawa. CC Seminarians Paul De Kroon and Anthony Cafik were "instituted" as acolytes, while Jim Lowe and Bob Lowry were instituted as lectors. Both Anthony and Bob reside in our Holy Rosary CC residence, so the parishioners were extra delighted in seeing these two men take this step forward, especially because they will be exercising their new

ministries in their midst! Let us keep all our seminarians in prayer as they make steady progress in their formation program on the journey to the priesthood.

Training Days

Lifetime members of the Companions gather on a biennial basis for what are known as "Training Days". As the name implies, their purpose is to assist the priests of the community in carrying out our ministry through various means of

professional and spiritual development. This year's session was held January 15th -18th in Houston, Texas, on the grounds of our newest household: St. Teresa's Priory. The focus for this year's gathering was "Leadership & Teamwork". Our animator was Brett Powell, Canadian National Campus director for Catholic Christian Outreach (www.cco.ca).

Brett is an excellent speaker and led us in a dynamic presentation of important insights he has gleaned from the business world as they pertain to issues such as:
Continued on page 20



Jim Lowe installed as Lector by CC Moderator Fr. Scott McCaig



leadership; accountability, trust and communication; effective delegation; common team dysfunctions; and developing a thematic goal. But the foundation upon which he shared these insights was entirely scriptural and in keeping with the Tradition of the Church. Although we intuitively “know” a lot of what is essential to keeping communication and trust alive in any organization, sometimes carrying it out is another matter. In preparation for these Days, we were all required to read *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, by Patrick Lenconi.

Brett peppered his presentation with many personal anecdotes and testimonies of what he has seen the Lord accomplish through the implementation of these leadership and teamwork principles at CCO. He spoke of his joy at being able to share some of this wisdom with the Companions. But he was also concerned about his wife (who was feeling under the weather) and seven children he had to leave behind to come out for these Days. Remarkably, it was his family who was praying and interceding for us! As one of

his young children once told Brett after he was forced to remain at the dinner table for two hours in order to finish eating his vegetables: “I am Powell, I persevere.” Thank-you Brett and all the Powells!

An added benefit of this gathering was the chance to see and touch base with our brothers from other foundations. Although our agenda was packed with the task at hand, there was also time for fellowship and community prayer of course. The “Texas-style” meals we were served were also a delight (more “pulled” pork anyone?). They were lovingly prepared by volunteers from Fr. Sean Wenger’s Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish (which is adjacent to St. Teresa’s Priory). Thanks go to these volunteers for their wonderful hospitality and to Fr. Sean and his team who helped in the planning and preparation for these Training Days. We definitely felt “blessed” to be there.

One of the last topics covered by Brett in his presentation was something he called “Developing a Thematic Goal”. The idea behind this involves taking some key insights from the Training Days and applying them to our community’s needs over the long term. In this way, the issues raised by these Days do not simply get “shelved” after we all disperse. Instead, they become the focus for some ongoing “community-building” exercises. So as a result, the Executive Council has decided to adopt as our thematic goal for the remainder of the year: “Building Trust as Brothers”. We trust it will bear fruit and help us become even stronger and more secure as a community in the Lord.

Los Angeles Mission Trip Report

(by Bryan Sabourin)

“And he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick” (Lk 9:2) Over Spring Break (February 2008), CC seminarians JP de Fleuriot and I had the opportunity to participate in the ministry of Fr. Fernando Suarez and Fr. Jeff Shannon in Los Angeles, California. We experienced God moving powerfully in the lives of so many people and were welcomed into the lives of some amazing families. What was abundantly clear was that God has such a great love for his people and desires them to be whole. God is using Fr. Fernando and Fr. Jeff to minister that healing touch to literally millions around the world.

We were able to see first-hand the power of healing in people’s lives. There was a healing Mass almost every day. Every Mass that we attended was packed to capacity and overflowing. There were people lining up outside of the church, and there was usually a hall or gymnasium to provide for the overflow. So many people desired to receive healing, to come to encounter God for the first time or in a deeper way.

What JP and I witnessed was a truly biblical event. The blind could see, the deaf could hear, and the lame leapt with joy. One could not help but rejoice in the work that God is doing. I remember one healing that touched me in a particular way. At Mary Star of the Sea in San Pedro, there was an elderly lady who could not see. After Fr. Fernando touched her eyes she regained her sight. We were all astounded by the miracle that the Lord worked in front of us. Fr. Fernando asked the woman’s grandson and then her daughter,



Fr. Jeff Shannon, J.P. deFleuriot, Bryan Sabourin and Fr. Fernando Suarez in Our Lady of the Valley Sacristy, Canoga Park, LA, California

“She couldn’t see before? Now she can see?” For Fr. Fernando, the healings that happen every night are always awe inspiring. He does not know how it happens, except that it is the power of God. It is a mystery to him, and he is continually left in amazement.

God is pouring out his healing grace on all who are open to receive it. Only God can bring about such healing in the lives of his people. Fr. Fernando will say at each and every Mass, “It is God who heals; I am only God’s instrument.” In this way we are all called to be instruments of healing to each other in a very

powerful way. With all the people attending healing Masses, Fr. Jeff has begun to pray with people. The Lord is providing healing for his people through Fr. Jeff also. This makes it all the more clear that it is God at work through the hands of his priests. Every Mass is a healing Mass, because healing flows from the Eucharistic celebration. It is Jesus we receive, the Lord our Healer. This is why so many are now being healed during the Mass. What an incredible reminder of how powerful each and every Mass is! We should approach each Mass with the desire to be healed and draw closer to God.

The mission trip was truly edifying for us. God is truly alive and at work in his Church. The most miraculous healings are the spiritual healings, when hearts turn to Christ. Many people, including young people, were forever changed by encountering God at one of the Masses. As I reflect on what I have learned, I realize that the most important thing is to remain in awe of the great gift of the Eucharist, and to take an attitude of thanksgiving with me wherever I go. To be in God’s presence is to seek God’s will in every moment and to eagerly do it by his grace.

Continued on page 22



Fr. Francis Frankovich's 40th Anniversary

This year the Companions will be honouring Fr. Francis Frankovich as he celebrates his 40th anniversary of ordination! Join us on Mon. Aug. 25th at St. Maurice parish in Ottawa for a Mass of Thanksgiving at 7:00 p.m. followed by a "champagne & dessert" reception in the hall. Tickets for the reception are available from Mary at our CC Office (613) 728-3175. More information will be posted in our next newsletter and online soon at our CC web site (www.companion-cross.org).

Letter to the Editor

We would like to congratulate you on the article, *Gospel of Life*, by Father John Vandenaeker. We so seldom see articles about pro-life in many of today's religious papers, and if they are usually critical to some degree or simply condescending. This was a well-balanced view of pro-life, including the seriousness of an abortion, and that there is forgiveness for this sin. Many people are hurting out there and are reluctant to come forward, and the Church needs to welcome these women and men into the sanctuary of the Church, where Jesus' blood washes them clean.

An interesting insight is the negative reaction Father John received by some parishioners, and this seems to be quite common in the mainline churches. Even though we have a definite pro-life position, many people do not grasp that this is our stance, and that it is a long-standing historical fact, that Christianity has always been pro-life. Only in the last 50 years or so, has the position come under question. Nonetheless it is a long-standing tradition that we have allowed to happen in modern day society.

Thanks again, and God's continuing blessings and guidance!

Cliff Pyle *President*

- *Lutherans for Life - Canada.*

Nicole Pyle *Saskatchewan representative on Life - Canada Board.*



Santiago de Compostella Pilgrimage

Last summer CC seminarian David Bergeron spent some time prayerfully hiking along the famous pilgrimage trail that leads from France to the Shrine of Santiago (St. James) de Compostella in Spain. You can read about journey by visiting his online blog: <http://davidbergeroncc.blog.ca/>.

Continued on page 24

Photos of the Month



Halifax Archbishop Anthony Mancini with Nova Scotia Companions Fr. Brian Christie, Fr. John Fletcher, Fr. Gerald Gauvreau, and Fr. Rob Arsenault on the deck of St. Paul's rectory, Herring Cove, N.S.



Frs. Christian Riesbeck & Michael Minifie with some Queen of Peace "saintly" school children celebrating "Catholic Schools Week" in Houston.

With Joy & Thanksgiving



Stanley and Marjorie Bolger
&
Paul and Céline Messier
together with the Companions of the Cross

Invite you to celebrate the ordinations to the priesthood of

John Paul Bolger
&
Paul Bernard Messier

To be conferred by
The Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast
Archbishop of Ottawa

on Saturday, May 10th
Two thousand and eight
at ten o'clock in the morning
at the Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica
Sussex Drive, Ottawa

A reception will follow the ordination
in the Hall of the Basilica.

You are also invited to their 'Masses of Thanksgiving':
Bernard will celebrate his at St. Mary's, Ottawa, on Sunday, May 11th at 2:00 p.m.
John Paul will celebrate his at St. Patrick's, Cambridge, on Sunday, May 18th at 2:00 p.m.



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***“Eye has not seen, ear has
not heard, nor has it so much as
dawned on man what God has
prepared for those who love him”***

(1 Cor 2:9).