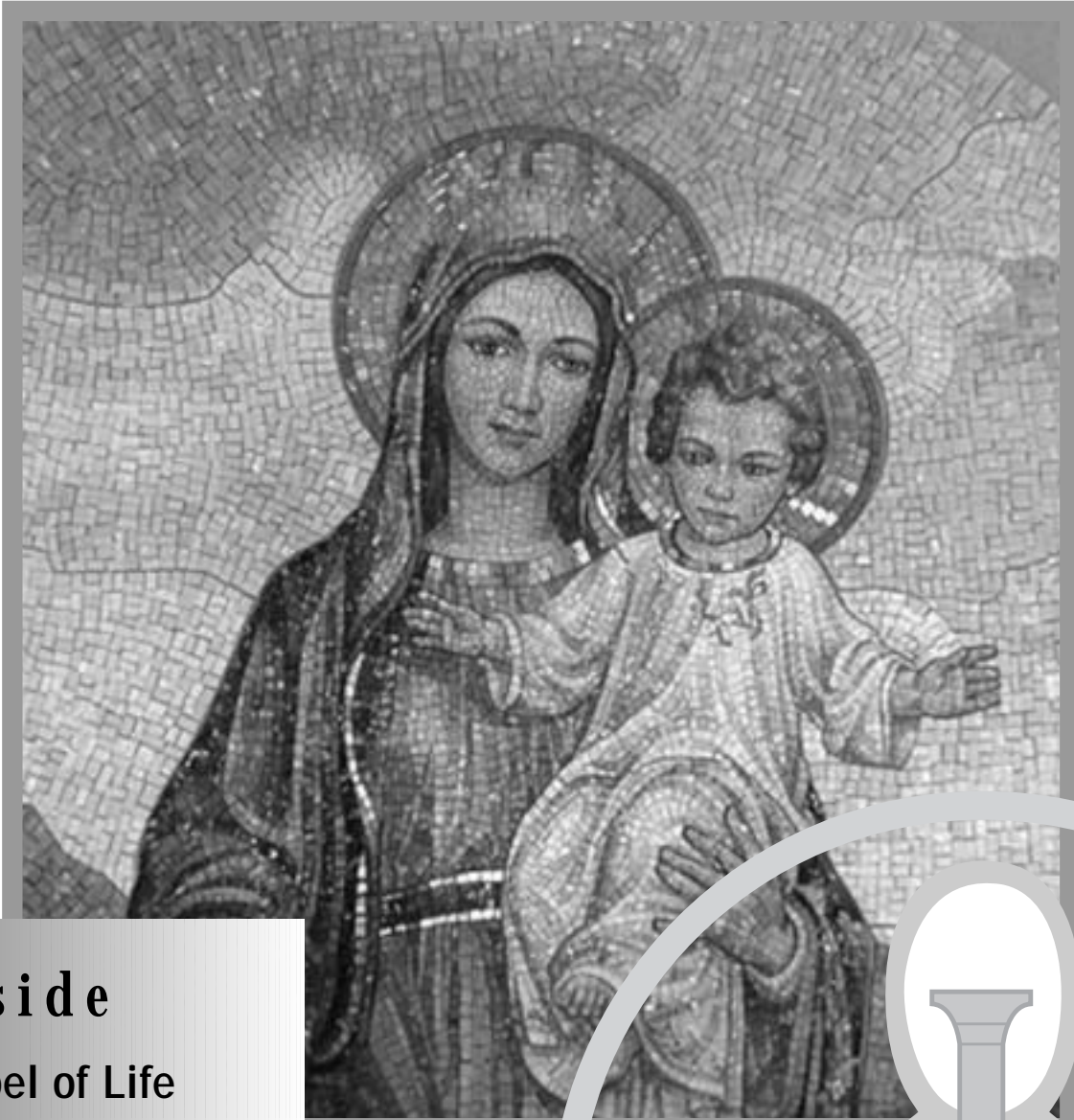


Winter 2008

# Companions of the Cross

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## Inside

Gospel of Life

Theology of  
the Body

Witness to Mercy



# Signs of Hope in Times of Persecution



**“That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses,  
in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.  
For when I am weak, then I am strong.”  
(2 Cor 12:10)**

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Saturday, February 2, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
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Companions of the Cross

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## FEATURE

by Fr. Bob Bedard

**H**ow goes the barque of Peter these days? How is the Catholic Church weathering the storms of the twenty-first century?

Most loyal Catholics would probably agree that, while we're trying hard, we actually are not doing very well. Our efforts at lobbying politicians against abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, compulsory secular sex-ed programs in schools, and a host of other sad developments in our day have not had the success that we've prayed they would have.

Many of us feel we've been banging our heads against a wall. Discouragement has sunk, I'm afraid, deep roots in our souls. What's the use, we complain. We're facing an impossible task.

But is it really impossible? Actually it isn't. I'm convinced we're heading into a powerful move of God.

I think we need more understanding about what really is happening. I don't think we comprehend well the spiritual warfare that rages around us. In the midst of our disappointment, despite our honest efforts, we do have tremendous admiration for such as our pro-lifers who in their dogged determination continue to work so many hours day in and day out – the people of Campaign Life, Action Life, Human Life International and others. The relentless war goes on. Our mistaken impression often is that we're in full retreat.

What can we do to stem the tide, we ask ourselves? We have no weapons. The

## WHY I AM OPTIMISTIC



enemy forces have all the money, the support of the government, the courts, the academics, and the media. In addition the "world" pours down abuse, particularly on the Church. The world sees everything in political terms – the left (their favourites) versus the right (the unenlightened). The worldlings haven't got a clue about the spiritual war – just a manner of speaking, they think. They believe we live in a fantasy world of make-believe.

Weapons? We have them all. Every little prayer, every kind word, every bit of fasting, every good deed, every word of encouragement, every little penance, every song in praise of God, every single virtuous act – all of these are strong arrows pointed at the heart of Satan's empire. Our weapons are a thousand times more powerful than we think they are. They are a steady and constant battering against the forces of evil. And they are taking their toll. Satan and his minions are losing the war and they know it.

They're in panic mode. They're desperate. That is why so many of their plots are getting more and more extreme and disgusting these days. They're going to lose their constituency before too long. Their control of things is slipping.

The odd thing is that, although the balance of power is shifting, most of us are not at all aware of it. That's the way it is with the spiritual war. There may be lots of activity, lots of noise, with the anti-God people claiming victory after victory for their agenda but the Lord's forces customarily operate in silence. And those who are serious prayer warriors, who have become accustomed to hearing from the Lord, are telling us the tide is turning.

Let God's people take heart! When the late Pope John Paul II spoke of the "new springtime" that lay ahead for the Church, he may have been talking about the era that is just beginning to dawn in our time.

So...talk to everyone you see about taking up the cause. Explain to all how, with prayers and good works for the Lord's agenda, the power of the enemy is penetrated and weakened.

If it sounds as if I'm losing it, or engaging in some sort of fantasy gone wild, think if you will, of the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and the unexpected collapse of the Berlin Wall 20 or so years ago. Atheistic Communism in the Soviet Union was, for 70 years, a couple of generations, a brutal heartless regime, with thousands of citizens imprisoned and tortured in the gulags. They exterminated millions of their own (Ukrainian) people.

*Continued on page 2*

Individual freedoms were trampled upon. Without mercy, tanks had put down uprisings in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The Soviets had engaged in cold war manoeuvres with the Americans and the West and had threatened to initiate a nuclear holocaust that could wipe out up to a third of the world's population.

Without much warning, the whole evil empire (President Reagan's appellation) crumbled, seeming to implode. Communism in Eastern Europe fell apart. Several of the Soviet bloc peoples quickly declared their independence from Moscow. We began to hear about newly independent countries like Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Albania, Uzbekistan and Belarus.

The infamous Berlin Wall, having seen thousands machine-gunned to death as

they tried to escape to freedom, almost at an unheard command, collapsed. Why? My take on the principal cause was the weight of the prayers etc. that drove off the forces of the devil and allowed God to get some important things done.

I see the same thing building with regard to the current issues that offend the heart of God and the moral sensibilities of his people and all decent-living folk.

Is the time not coming when the abortion industry will simply be smothered under the weight of its own defiant iniquity? The hideous reality will begin to overtake the so-called "pro-choice" people who will cover their faces for shame. And will not the same type of thing happen to the same-sex movement as it begins to dawn more clearly on supporters just how disgusting sodomy really is. And understanding the tragic damage being done by pornography on the minds of the young and adult men will cause enough outrage in the general population to bring about

massive protests demanding a shut-down of the filth that has been warping and destroying men's integrity. Support for euthanasia will decrease as the Lord's agenda gathers more and more sympathy and active co-operation.

Cheer up, folks. We're on the winning side. ☺

*Fr. Bob Bedard is the founder of the Companions of the Cross.*

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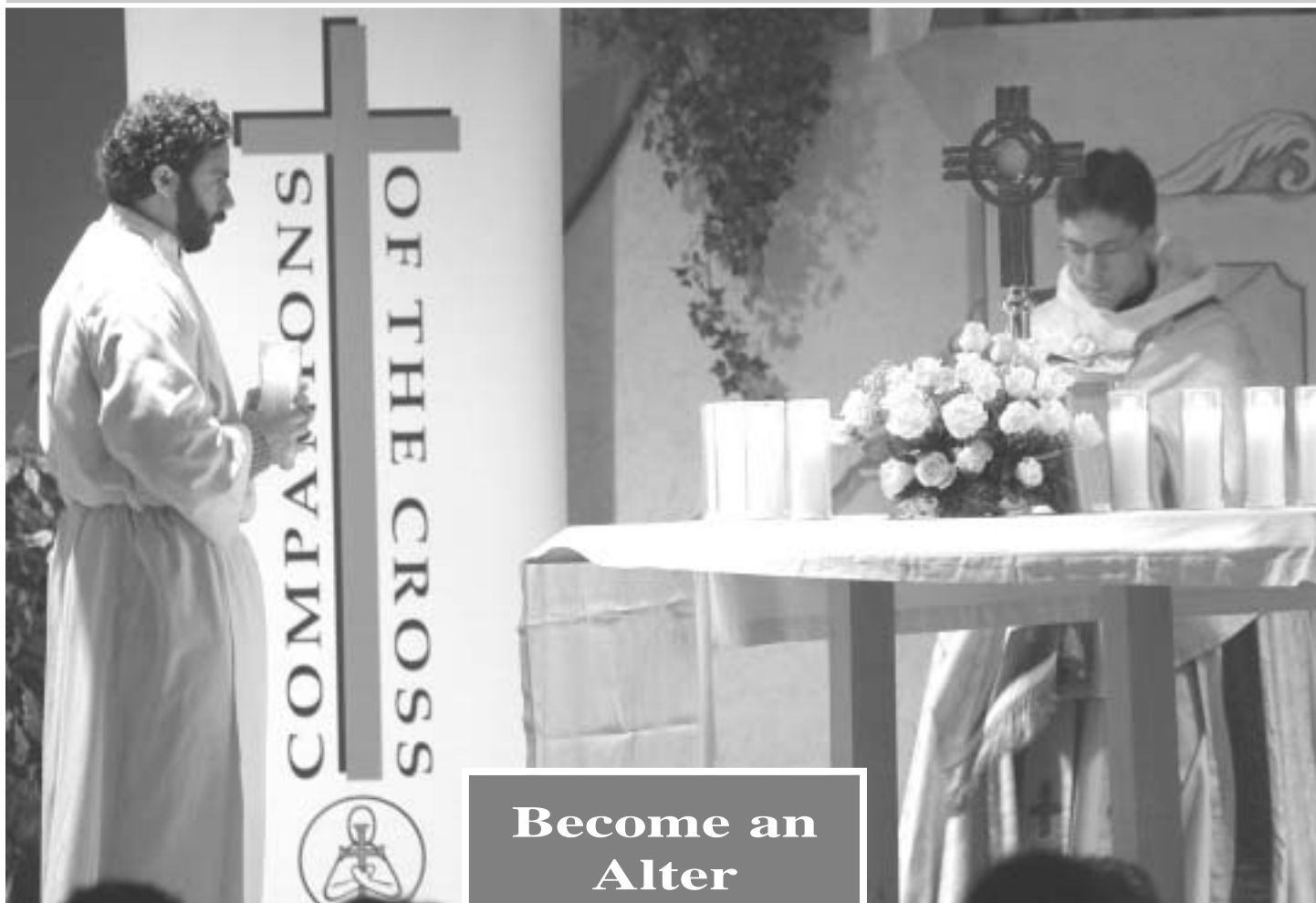


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**“A man offers his humanity to Christ, so that Christ may use him as an instrument of salvation, making him as it were into another Christ... a young man, hearing the words, ‘Follow me’, can give up everything for Christ, in the certainty that if he follows this path he will find complete personal fulfillment.”**

**If God is calling... answer!**

**Don't put your life on hold!**

**Dates for Upcoming *Come and See Visits***

**Houston TX - Feb. 6th to 10th, 2008**

**Ottawa ON - May 5th to 11th, 2008**

Our new class begins every year in late August. Men interested in joining the **Companions of the Cross** must make contact with the Director of Admissions, Fr. Mark Goring, by June 1st, and complete the applicancy process by July 1st.

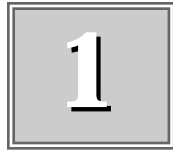
Please Note: If these dates are not suitable for visiting the community, other times could be arranged by contacting **Fr. Mark Goring** at **613-231-4806**.

# THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

## 7 Things You Need to Know

by Emily Stimpson

*This article first appeared in the July 1st, 2007 edition of Our Sunday Visitor. It is based on presentations that were made at a recent Franciscan University of Steubenville symposium. It explores various noteworthy aspects of the late Pope John Paul II's teaching. Used with permission.*



The Theology of the Body teaches that the body expresses the person. That means that our physical bodies reveal the invisible dimension of ourselves. Our virtues, our spiritual lives, our attitudes of love and charity, our struggles with sin — they're all invisible. You can't paint them blue. But they all get revealed through the body, through our eyes, through our posture, through our gestures.

John Paul II gave us an example of this when he said that he found the mystery of Mother Teresa in her eyes. As surprising as this sounds; our inner lives form our bodies. So when people met Mother Teresa they immediately felt her charity and her servant's heart because of her posture and the look in her eyes. They didn't deduce it. They just felt it.

Likewise, just as the visible body reveals the invisible person, what we do with our bodies profoundly affects our souls. A good chunk of contemporary culture rejects that idea. They think, as a radical feminist once said, that "God doesn't care what we do to our bodies. He only wants us to respect each other as persons".

In the classroom, I'll share that quote with my students, then ask, "Isn't it odd that someone who would be consoled by a hug or insulted by a slap, thinks sex, which is a much more physical experience than a hug, is completely divorced from the ability to touch a person interiorly?" That really helps them understand the implications of living a promiscuous lifestyle. They begin to see the immediacy of the connection between their bodies and souls. They see that in the sexual act people reveal more than their naked bodies: They reveal their whole invisible self. And that self, their soul, is touched as much as their body is.

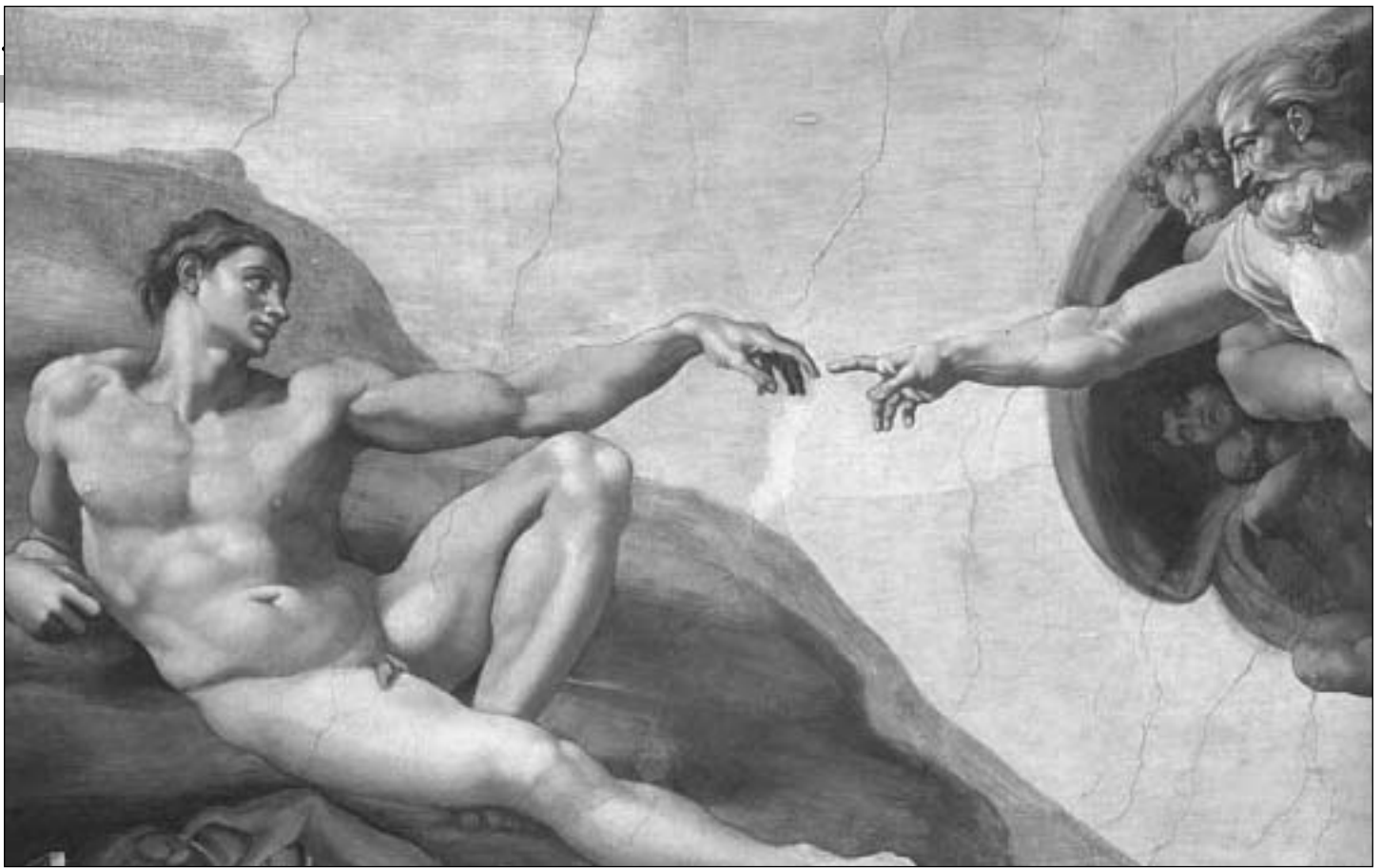
Understanding that gives them a much richer and more attractive reason to reserve sexual intimacy for marriage. When they recognize that connection, they want to protect themselves, and they want to be able to share themselves completely with their spouse and only their spouse. —*Dr. Peter J. Colosi, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Franciscan University, Gaming, Austria*



The Theology of the Body affirms the goodness of sexuality. Now, there are lots of people who never think of God and sex in the same sentence, unless that sentence begins with the words "God doesn't like..." When I was younger, you probably could have classified me as one of those people. I wouldn't have articulated it like that, but on some subconscious level, I thought of sex as some sort of necessary evil.

Learning about the Theology of the Body, however, redeemed and renewed my understanding of sexuality. It taught me that the sexual union between husband and wife images the spiritual union of the Trinity. That's because it's more than just a physical act. When a man and his wife give themselves to each other in marital union, they're not supposed to give just their bodies, but their whole selves — their minds, souls, and hearts. It's the physical expression of their communion of persons, a communion of persons that points to the Trinity.

Of course, sex isn't the only way of manifesting the communion of persons. Husbands and wives are called to live as a communion of persons every day of their married lives in hundreds of ways. But the most complete, most embodied expression of that communion comes about in



the marital union. It's from that act that new life comes. It's a life-giving communion imaging the life-giving communion of the Trinity.

### 3

The Theology of the Body also shows how the call to celibacy affirms the goodness of sexuality. It doesn't diminish it. The celibate doesn't reject sexuality, but rather uses it to make a gift of self to Christ and his Church. Love is what drives us to give, whether it be in marriage or in celibacy. Celibacy actually affirms the goodness of the sexual act by sacrificing it for the sake of the Kingdom. If sex were something "bad" then giving it up wouldn't be extraordinary, but rather expected of every Christian. The very goodness of the sexual act is what makes its renunciation by the celibate so valuable. —Anastasia Northrop, *President, Theology of the Body International Alliance, Chicago, Illinois*

The Theology of the Body is fundamentally an "anthropology". In other words, the Theology of the Body answers the question "Who am I?" Because of that, the Theology of the Body is for everyone, not just for married people. The kernel of the Theology of the Body is that we're made in God's image and likeness to be a gift. We're called to give ourselves away in love, and that's expressed through the body. Therefore, at every age and every state in life, the organizing principle should be, "How can I give myself away in love?" This is exactly the challenge a parent of a two-year-old faces. The "terrible twos" are all about the child wanting the world to revolve around him because he's discovering he can act upon the world. The parenting task at that point is to redirect the child from thinking, "The world revolves around me," to "I can make a gift of self. I can take turns shar-

ing this toy." Now, does that sound like the Theology of the Body? Not on the surface. But when you teach your toddler to share, that's Theology of the Body in action.

The same thing is revisited with teenagers. They have to learn that if they want to make a gift of self, they need to learn impulse control and develop a spirit of sacrifice. Once again, in the elderly population, a recent widow can feel like life has suddenly disintegrated. She has to rediscover her ability to make a gift of self outside the context of her lifelong marriage. John Paul II called this the spousal meaning of the body. Because the word "spousal" is there, we think this only applies to marriage, but for him it doesn't. Spousal means this ability to make a gift of self through the body. Therefore it applies to all of us. All of us are called to live the spousal meaning of the body. It's a way of being. —Katrina Zeno '86, *Coordinator, John Paul II Resource Center for Theology of the Body and Culture, Phoenix, Arizona*

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The Theology of the Body is a defense of *Humanae Vitae*. That was John Paul’s intent from the beginning. He wanted to root out the dualistic understanding of the human person at the heart of the contraceptive culture and at the heart of the problems that have sprung from it, problems such as abortion and embryo-destructive stem cell research.

“What do I mean by a ‘dualistic understanding of the person’? I mean thinking of a person as simply a conscious subject aware of himself as a self and capable of relating to other selves. According to that line of thinking, the body is just some kind of privileged instrument, not in itself integral to the being of the person. It’s just the means by which we experience pleasure and other personal goods.

Now, if that’s how you define a person, then some members of the human species aren’t persons. Unborn babies, embryos, patients in a coma, even elderly persons with Alzheimer’s — none of them meet that definition. They’re not subjects aware of themselves as selves. That’s how those who hold this dualistic understanding justify getting rid of them.

The Theology of the Body unmasks that erroneous dualism by attempting to make people realize that human beings are bodily entities, not just souls temporarily inhabiting a body. It says the body reveals the person; it’s the sign of the person; it is the person. It says that a living human body is a person whether it’s consciously aware of itself as a subject or not. It’s a person because it’s a living human body.

In more concrete terms, embryos don’t have the developed capacity for reasoning and making choices. But they have the radical capacity to do so. The capacity just has to be developed. And even if once it’s developed, the capacity is lost; it’s



still a human being. A little eaglet doesn’t have the developed capacity to soar, but it has the radical capacity to develop it. And even if one day its wings are broken, it’s still an eagle.

By understanding that, by understanding the Theology of the Body, we can respond to what’s driving the great debates over life and bioethics taking place today. — *Dr. William May, Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, Washington, D.C.*

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The Theology of the Body is rooted in Catholic tradition. Not everybody in the Church recognizes that. Some think it departs from traditional Catholic teaching on marriage and sexuality, just as some think the Church’s traditional teaching has been legalistic and more focused on procreation than love.

Those are ideas you can easily get when you study the treatises on marriage written in the supplements to St. Thomas’ *Summa*. Such treatises were written for confessors and priests dealing, for the most part, with legal questions of marriage. You get a very different image when you look in Scripture at the Song of Songs and at the many commentaries written on the Song of Songs. There, you see marriage as the image of the spousal love that exists between the soul and God, between the Church and God. You find a fuller understanding of marriage, one more like the image we see in the Theology of the Body.

Nowhere, perhaps, is that understanding clearer than in the writings of St. John of the Cross. There is a deep continuity between the core vision of love the Theology of the Body presents and the core vision of love St. John presents. He saw the gift of human life reaching perfection in a spousal gift of self to God. This, he believed, was a participation in the life of the Trinity. That same understanding is at the root of John Paul II’s understanding of marriage. He talks about the union between man and woman, using the language of John of the Cross, as a gift of self and a participation in Trinitarian life.

You also find much continuity between John Paul and St. Thomas Aquinas. Both believe that the nature of things is key to understanding love and marriage. For John Paul, the problem with how the modern world understands marriage has a great deal to do with a wrong understanding of human nature. In other words, he believed the fruit of the scientific revolution was a mechanical picture of man’s nature, a vision of man as a chemical machine that just happened to evolve in a particular way. According to that vision, the body has no meaning, what man does with his body has no inner meaning, and so marriage has no meaning.



But in the Theology of the Body John Paul says no, the human body in its deepest nature was formed by God, it has a spousal meaning, and the meaning of marriage flows from the nature of man and woman, male and female, created in the image of God.

– Dr. Michael Waldstein, Professor of New Testament, The International Theological Institute, Gaming, Austria



The Theology of the Body has to be lived. It doesn't matter how much you know about it abstractly if it doesn't connect with your life. But because we live in a world that is increasingly virtualized, it's becoming hard to see how the Theology of the Body does connect with life, let alone how to live it. You see, the Theology of the Body teaches that each of us is called to be a gift, a gift to one another and a gift to God. This giving and receiving requires real presence. Every other relationship in life besides marriage is called to be celibate, but each still calls for a communion of persons expressed bodily as gift.

The increasing virtualization of our world, however, blurs the line between what's real and what's not real. It allows for simulated presence to replace real presence, simulated bodies to replace real bodies, simulated gifts to replace real gifts.

One of the primary ways this happens is through the computerization of our entertainment. Computerization isn't bad in and of itself. I use the computer a lot. But too often people use computers and technology not just as tools to perform tasks, but as means to escape the real world. That escape can be as simple as immersing themselves in the created worlds of others on television and in video games,

worlds that present an alternate view of reality and change the way we think life should be. Or it can be as complex as Web sites that allow you to create your own 3-D virtual world.

There is a tremendous disembodiment that goes with these virtual escapes. It can lead us to see the body as unimportant, as simply one more artifact for manipulation. It can make us think that being entertained is the purpose of our life. And it can convince us that life is whatever we want it to be, that what is real and true is whatever we want to be real and true.

If we want to live the Theology of the Body, if we want to live the deeply incarnational Catholic life and faith, we have to reject the substitution of the unreal for the real. That doesn't mean giving up computers or televisions. It just means examining how many hours and for what reasons we're doing those things. Ultimately, our question has to be "Is what we're doing fostering real relationships in the real world or isn't it?" — Sister Mary Timothy Prokes, FSE, Professor of Theology, Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College Alexandria, Virginia



The Theology of the Body is the articulation of the Catholic sacramental worldview. It gives us the correct way of looking at life, of seeing the divine order of creation, then living according to that. How does it do that? By teaching that invisible realities are made visible through the physical world. Everything in the created order points to transcendent realities, to realities beyond itself. Everything points to God. Just as God reveals himself and the life of the Trinity

through the human person, so does he reveal himself through all his creation.

Once we know that, we have to act accordingly. How we interact with each other and with our environment, how we pray, how we work, how we legislate and vote - all of that should be impacted. We can choose to approach everything we see, touch, and do as something sacred, touching it with the mindfulness that it's connected to God, comes from God, reveals God, or we can approach it without that mindfulness, without reverence.

Ultimately, the Theology of the Body articulates the mystical foundation of our faith. Now, mystical isn't something that's way out there – saints who levitate and have stigmata. Mystical really means seeing and interacting with things as they are, as God intended them to be, as God intended us to see them. Mysticism is the "why" behind everything – why we're human, why we're male, why we're female. And unless we know the "why," we don't know how to be human. We don't know how to be male or female. That's why we're so injured in those areas in our world today.

The Theology of the Body helps us discover the "why". It shows us that the created world, including the human body, is not something to dominate, appropriate, use, and abuse. It's not something bad or unimportant. It's holy. It was made by God and points us back to God.

The Theology of the Body calls us to recognize all of creation, and most especially the one-flesh union between husband and wife, as sacramental, as something that reveals God. It calls us to be mystics. Adam and Eve were mystics before the fall. And the Theology of the Body simply calls us back to our true humanness. — Father Thomas Loya, Host of Relevant Radio's Light of the East ☺



## TESTIMONY

by Fr. Donald Calloway

# Witness to Mercy



*Fr. Donald Calloway is a Missionary of the Immaculate Conception, based in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He has spoken about his powerful "conversion story" at many conferences and other events across North America. This is an edited transcript of one such talk he gave at a 2006 Divine Mercy Conference in Bardstown, Kentucky. Used with permission. To find out more about the M.I.C.'s, visit their web site at <http://www.marian.org/>.*

I was born in 1972 to two non-Christian parents in a rural small town in West Virginia. The only thing my father knew about was cars, women, and drinking. The problem was he didn't stop his crazy ways when he got married; he actually increased them. So that marriage fell apart almost immediately. Then my mother re-married another guy she had known from high school. But this guy was no stellar model of manhood either. He didn't even think he needed to get a job to

support his wife and adopted son. He just lay about the trailer drinking and watching TV all day long. So my mom had to get a job to support the family. That's when she joined the Navy and left town for three months of basic training. While she was gone, husband #2 carried on in exactly the same manner as had husband #1 – drinking, bringing other women home, foul language, etc. So that was how I was being formed as a little boy into what it meant to be a man. It was more

like being “de-formed”. I was seeing and learning things no young boy should see and learn – sick, perverse, and lustful things.

After my mom’s basic training, we had to move to Virginia Beach to be near the naval base there. That’s where her marriage to husband #2 fell apart shortly afterwards. She realized she didn’t need such a “loser” in her life. So she proceeded to marry a third time, to a fellow military officer. Thus, by the age of nine, I had had three dads. None of them were great models of manhood. But at least dad #3 had a superficial sense of Christianity. He had me and my new step-brother baptized in the Episcopal church (mainly at the urging of his parents, who said it was the “American” thing to do!). But he never prayed or went to church a day in his life, and neither did we, not even for Christmas or Easter. So my Baptism, at age 10, was not a very profound spiritual event for me. We don’t even have any photos of it. The only thing I remember about it was the jelly-filled donuts they served afterwards. So that was my introduction into Christianity. And sadly, for many Christians today, it’s the same thing. They know nothing of who Jesus really is. They go to church, if they go at all, grudgingly, and out of habit. And the highlight of their Sunday outing is the donuts they go out to eat afterwards!

We then moved, when I was 11 to southern California, to a new posting my parents had been given. At this point I didn’t believe in God, heaven or hell, right or wrong, truth or falsehood. I was the incarnation of “grey” (spiritually bankrupt). I believed in nothing; was formed in nothing. All my parents knew how to do was consume. They bought stuff, lots of it. They never really used much of this stuff,

but they got it anyway. Like the grand piano they bought for the house. Nobody could play it, but it sure looked nice in the living room! So this was how I was being “trained”.

As a result, in the early 1980’s, I latched on to the pop culture, the MTV generation, where music became visual. I immersed myself in the MTV “creed” I heard proclaimed in the songs they

***At this point I didn’t believe in God, heaven or hell, right or wrong, truth or falsehood. I was the incarnation of “grey” (spiritually bankrupt). I believed in nothing; was formed in nothing.***

trumpeted. I was unwittingly, yet eagerly, being indoctrinated into a culture of sin, rebelliousness, and hedonism. The bands I was listening to were talking about things like hell, but in a way that made it sound very attractive! Like *Highway to Hell*, where the girls are gorgeous, and the party is always thumping. This music proclaimed an “anti-gospel” message that actually made fun of real religious people, who were seen as nothing more than a bunch of hypocrites, geeks, and losers. No wonder I would rather be *Running with the Devil!* What was I thinking? I wasn’t thinking!

Thus at the age of 12 I started drinking, smoking, looking at pornography... the

whole nine yards. My heart quickly became so corrupt, so perverse, so sick, and so foul. And that was only the beginning - first gear. By the age of 20 I was in overdrive, headed towards absolute destruction. My unholy trinity became wine, women, and song. Or you could say: me, myself, and I because that is what I worshipped. I didn’t believe in anything else. And that was what I heard confirmed in all the public schools I went to, where my teachers couldn’t talk about God. All they could tell me in school was that we live on this big cosmic rock called earth that by chance came together from some cosmic goo over millions of years. Okay, I thought, that means there is no point, meaning, purpose, or destiny to life. So why shouldn’t I just have a good time? When I die it’s all going to be over.

So I started to live this crazy life. I rebelled. I hated my parents. We even moved to Japan for a few years in my early teens. At 15 I dropped out of school there. I ran away and began running drugs and money for the Japanese mafia, known as the Yakuza. I had a gun. I had lots of money, but I was completely lost. I started growing my hair long and didn’t cut it for eight years. I got my ears pierced; got a tattoo. I lived in discotechs by night, chasing beautiful Asian women. Every other word out of my mouth was foul. Soon, the authorities took notice of me and began to track me down. Eventually I was apprehended.

Can you imagine what my mom had been going through all this time? Now, my mom at that time was no saint. But she was still a mom. I was breaking her heart and crucifying her with my actions. I had broken off my relationship with her completely when I ran away. I didn’t know what my mother went through until long

*Continued on page 10*

afterwards. Turns out she had been going to counselling; she was on medication. She was getting all depressed. Her maternal heart was dying because her son was dying, and she felt completely helpless to stop it. But my mother, through the grace of God, had a Filipino lady friend. And she said to my mother: "I know what you have to do, go speak to a priest!" She was persistent too with this advice, which wasn't warmly received by my mother. But finally my mother relented, thinking, "What have I got to lose?"

She went and spoke to a military chaplain on the base in Japan. This priest really laid it on the line for her, telling her all about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Soon she found herself irresistibly drawn to the faith, and to the idea of confession. Now my mom had been going to counselling for a long time, and all she had ever heard back from the counsellor was, "So, what I hear you saying is..." Just putting a mirror up to what you just said, but never suggesting any real answers to problems. All they could do was agree that her life "sucked" (but stated in more professional language of course). And more importantly, she never was absolved from her sins, but just kept leaving with them. If you don't encounter the Divine Presence, all counselling ever does is make you perpetually chase your tail, like a dog.

The chaplain told my mother how Jesus, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, not only forgives people, but heals their hearts and helps restores relationships. He also told her the story of St. Monica praying for her wayward son Augustine, before his conversion. How Augustine had been a strong-willed child just like her son Donald. How Augustine had had a child out of wedlock, how he used to mock his mother's Christianity, and how he dabbled in other esoteric religious

belief systems. But Monica persisted with her prayers and supplications, urging Augustine to convert. So what does Augustine do? He ditches her and leaves the country for greener pastures, further breaking his mother's heart - that was Augustine the sinner. But all the while God was listening to the tears of Monica. Remember that Jesus has a mother too. And so a freight train of grace was now headed the unsuspecting Augustine's way.

***I had issues  
you wouldn't believe;  
I had addictions that  
they didn't even know  
how to label. If I could  
smoke it, snort it,  
or drink it, I would.  
And I would do this  
every day.***

So for the first time in her life my mother had hope that things could be different. She realized there was a Messiah, a God-man named Jesus. And we can have new life in him, and unite our suffering with his. And we can find a new spiritual home in the church, which is his mystical body, a repository of grace for all people. She would still have to suffer, only now her suffering was to be of a spiritual nature, offering it up for the salvation of her son. Just as she suffered physically when she brought her son Donald into the world, she was now being asked to do that again spiritually, by becoming an intercessor. And my mom said "yes" to all that. And then she waited. Things actually got worse between me and her after my arrest.

But she knew that love would conquer. It only took three years.

When I got kicked out of Japan, I was forced to enter a rehab program back home in the United States. It was an institution for the treatment of people with drug, alcohol, and sexual addictions. I was a mess. My problems, emotional and otherwise, were so severe, that they didn't know what to do with me. I had issues you wouldn't believe; I had addictions that they didn't even know how to label. If I could smoke it, snort it, or drink it, I would. And I would do this every day. Upon my release from rehab, I ran away from home again. I wound up becoming a Grateful Dead groupie, following the band across the U.S., living out of VW camper vans, smoking up, being promiscuous (even contracting a venereal disease at one point). At one point I was down to 125 pounds, my eye sockets looked hollowed out. I was completely burnt out, my brain was fried. I literally stunk. I was little more than a walking zombie.

Sometimes I would drop by my parent's home for the odd short visit. On these occasions, I began to notice that something was different about my mom, but I didn't know what it was. I soon learned that my mom, dad, and half-brother had become Catholic. I couldn't believe that they were going to church now on Sundays. My mom was also going to prayer groups, and was involved in all sorts of other church activities. Priests used to call home asking to speak to her. Before, all they had done on Sundays was sleep in, and then go out to shop or entertain themselves. So I thought they were the ones who had really gone crazy! I could never stay there for any length of time.

I didn't stop my self-indulgent, self-destructive lifestyle. I wound up in rehab again. One day they picked me up off the street in Philadelphia, so strung out on crack cocaine I thought my heart was going to burst. I woke up strapped to a gurney, because my body was going into convulsions. I was on the brink of death. That's how bad it still was. And so my mother continued to suffer. But she continued to love me and pray for me, despite the suffering, because she was uniting it to the suffering of Jesus on the cross. But I was still so full of darkness. One time, at an airport, she had come to see me off for another stint in rehab. She tried to hug and kiss me goodbye, telling me how much she loved me. All I could do was turn to her, look her dead in the eyes, and exclaim "I hate your guts."

So I left her crying there. I didn't care. I didn't understand faith, hope, and love. All I lived for was my own selfish, egotistical, narcissistic self. That was what I had become now at the age of 20. I became "bummed out" on existence; I didn't want to live any more. I wanted to die. I hit rock bottom. Why? Because I had come to the realization that as beautiful as women are, they are not going to save me. No amount of drinking or drugs was going to dull my inner pain for very long either. Music had no answers for me. I had nothing to live for and no hope anymore. That was when I found myself sitting in my parent's house one day in 1992, thinking about how I could end it all.

I was alone in the house, on my first visit back in years. They were all out at church. And I found it all of a sudden becoming eerily quiet. I was always used to having "noise" in my life. So to distract myself I went over to their book shelf to find something to read. I pulled out a yellow

jacketed book I thought was a National Geographic magazine. The title of this thin book was the funkiest thing I had ever read: *The Queen of Peace Visits Medjugorje*. And I immediately thought to myself "What is this nonsense?" The cover depicted the painting of a beautiful woman standing on a cloud, with her open arms outstretched. And the author was some "Fr." guy. Now I didn't know what "Fr." stood for; I thought it was a typo for "Dr". And he had these initials after his name: A.A. So I thought he was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous! And that he was trying to debunk some religious crap. That's what got me interested in reading more.

So I went into my room and began to read. It told the story of these teenagers in a place called Medjugorje in far off Bosnia, who claimed to be seeing someone they called "the Blessed Virgin Mary". Honest to God, I didn't have a clue who they were talking about. I found the story very weird; yet I couldn't stop reading it for some reason. I couldn't believe what I was reading, because of course God was not real; he was a fairy tale. As I read more, I actually felt more lost and disoriented. I was coming across words and Catholic phrases that I didn't know or understand like: Eucharist; Blessed Sacrament; rosary; scapular; and papacy. Eventually I began to piece together the story that what these six youths claimed to be seeing was some woman from heaven.

That's when I said to myself, "Now wait a minute... heaven?" I have never seen heaven or touched it. Because I lived through my senses, if I couldn't directly sense something, it didn't exist. The other thing that troubled my "grey" heart was that the message of this book was so "black and white". God exists, heaven

and hell exist, Jesus and Mary exist. I began to freak out. I said to myself, "This can't be true, because if it is, it means I have to change. And I can't change; I don't want to change. I want to be my own God." But as I kept reading the message began to grow ever louder in my heart. The words that were reported of this mysterious lady were so loving and so tender, that they totally disarmed me. She was talking about how God was so good, so kind, and so merciful, that she was being sent to seek out people like me – "sinners".

But still I found myself resisting this inner pull of grace. I thought I could never change, even though my life was a mess. But then I read a line that was written for me. It was love's response to the wounded soul: "You don't have to change to love me, loving me will change you." Wow, that pierced me right through. Divine Love changes everything. It can conquer the sin-sick soul. It began to conquer me. I didn't understand it, yet I felt this strange supernatural certainty that this was true. The more I read about Jesus, the more I began to see the world in a whole new light. That day I gave my life to Jesus, through his mother Mary. I was a changed man.



*But that was only the beginning as they say. The next morning Donald went to his mother and told her he wanted to see a priest... You can learn more about Fr. Donald's amazing testimony from his video/dvd entitled: **No Turning Back: Confessions of a Catholic Priest** available from [www.catholiccompany.com](http://www.catholiccompany.com). ☎*



# Companions of the Cross

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Please complete this form, place in postage-paid envelope provided and mail to: Companions of the Cross, 199 Bayswater Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Y 2G5. Your support of our community is very much appreciated!





## Calling All CC Parishioners

Since our foundation in 1985, the Companions of the Cross have been entrusted with the pastoral care of numerous parishes. Beginning with St. Mary's in Ottawa, and including our most recent - Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Houston, we pastor a total of 11 parishes and two university chaplaincies (in Ottawa, Halifax, Houston & Toronto). The feedback we have received from the parishioners we serve in these parishes has been overwhelmingly positive! Many have thanked us for sending them dynamic priests who exhibit a deep faith in Christ, a passion for renewal through the power of the Holy Spirit, and a servant's heart for reaching out to all God's people.

Because we are a relatively small and new community in the Church, not many people outside of our parishes have ever even heard of us! We depend on our parishioners and other friends of the community to help us "get the word out" about who we are. Of course, it takes time to build trust with a new parish community; to make new friendships and garner new supporters. But our hope has always been that over the course of the years parishioners will have come to know something significant about the community that formed the priests who are currently serving them.

Parishioners may not be aware that the Companions receive no regular income from the parish (apart from one annual special collection we are allowed) or the diocese. No parish or diocesan funds were used in the formations costs associated with training and ordaining their pastors. All funding for this and all CC ministry comes purely from individual donors. That is why we are making this appeal. Many of you parishioners are faithful and generous supporters of your parish, as you should be! But please do not forget or neglect the needs of the community that sent the priests who serve you! You are the people who hopefully know us the best. So, please continue to keep us in your prayers. For the many ways you have already shown us your love and support as parishioners, we are profoundly grateful. For whatever "new" support this appeal can garner, we are thankful to you our friends, and to the Good Shepherd, Christ Our Lord!





# Companions of the Cross

Priests 2007 - 2008



**Fr. Rob Arsenault**  
(Temporary Commitment)  
Kingston, ON Ord. 1994



**Fr. Galen Bank**  
Glenavon, SK Ord. 2001



**Fr. Bob Bedard**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1955



**Fr. Daren Bryk**  
Edmonton, AB Ord. 2000



**Fr. Francis Ching**  
Toronto, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Brian Christie**  
Sarnia, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Tim Devine**  
Kitchener, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Terry Donahue**  
Oakland, NJ Ord. 2000



**Fr. Francis Donnelly**  
Montreal, QC Ord. 1979



**Fr. John Fletcher**  
Buffalo, NY Ord. 2001



**Fr. Francis Frankovich**  
Riverside, CA Ord. 1968



**Fr. Jerry Gauvreau**  
Lindsay, ON Ord. 2001



**Fr. Mark Goring**  
Pembroke, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Dennis Hayes**  
Guelph, ON Ord. 1986



**Fr. Randy Hendriks**  
Vineland, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Pierre Ingram**  
Guelph, ON Ord. 1995



**Fr. Rick Jaworski**  
Winnipeg, MB Ord. 1990



**Fr. John Likozar**  
Toronto, ON Ord. 2000



**Fr. Allan MacDonald**  
St. Raphael's, ON Ord. 1994



**Fr. Jim McGillivray**  
Kingston, ON Ord. 1969



**Fr. Yves Marchildon**  
Victoire, SK Ord. 1996



**Fr. Scott McCaig**  
Kamloops, BC Ord. 1995



**Fr. Michael Minifie**  
South Mountain, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Charles Orchard**  
Cobourg, ON Ord. 1995



**Fr. Christian Riesbeck**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1996



**Fr. Mike Scherrey**  
Fort Smith, AR Ord. 2005



**Fr. Jeff Shannon**  
Sudbury, ON Ord. 1997



**Fr. Ben St. Croix**  
Kenora, ON Ord. 2001





# Companions of the Cross

P r i e s t s 2 0 0 7 - 2 0 0 8



**Fr. Fernando Suarez**  
Batangas, Phillipines Ord. 2002



**Fr. Marc Syrenne**  
Saskatoon, SK Ord. 1997



**Fr. John Vandenakker**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1985



**Fr. Roger Vandenakker**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1989



**Fr. Ed Wade**  
Philadelphia, PA Ord. 1972



**Fr. Sean Wenger**  
Vernon, BC Ord. 1995



# Companions of the Cross

S e m i n a r i a n s 2 0 0 7 - 2 0 0 8



**David Bergeron**  
Granby, QC



**Anthony Cafik**  
Victoria, BC



**J.P. DeFleuriot**  
Johannesburg, South Africa



**Paul DeKroon**  
San Francisco, CA



**Daniel Lehw**  
Dallas, TX



**Simon Lobo**  
Ottawa, ON



**Jim Lowe**  
Troy, MI



**Bob Lowry**  
Portland, OR



**Carlos Martins**  
Kitchener, ON



**Brian O'Neill**  
Montreal, QC



**Bryan Sabourin**  
Ottawa, ON



**Ryan Schmidt**  
Winnipeg, MB



**Jamie Utronkie**  
Kitchener, ON



**Deacon J.P. Bolger**  
Cambridge, ON



**Deacon Bernard Messier**  
Stoney Point, ON

*This photo display does not include first year applicants as they were featured in our Fall issue.*



## FEATURE

by Fr. Pierre Ingram

# The Rite of Candidacy: A Stepping Stone to the Priesthood

*The following is a homily given by Fr. Pierre Ingram, CC Director of Formation, during the Sunday August 26th, 2007 Mass, at which several CC seminarians were formally admitted as “candidates” to the priesthood.*

**T**he Companions of the Cross are in the business, if you will, of forming men for the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This is a major part of what we do. Of course, our primary mission is evangelization, but in order to evangelize as a community we have to be a community, we have to exist; and we do not exist by going out and signing people up like sports teams. We exist because the Lord calls people. The prophecy in Isaiah 66 is saying the Lord himself will choose some from among the people to be priests and Levites. Likewise, Jesus chose some from among his disciples to be Apostles. It is always the Lord himself who is behind the call. We call it a “vocation”. It’s not something we human beings can manufacture. We are very blessed in that the Companions of the Cross have many men coming forward, answering the call. Five of them today are to be admitted into “candidacy” for eventual ordination as deacons and then as priests of Jesus Christ.

Now, if you know anything about their formation program, you will know that it is rather lengthy. We have them begin with two years of Applicancy. During this first stage we provide them with human formation, spiritual formation, and intellectual formation (they study philosophy). After that, they undertake five years of

Temporary Commitment with us (symbolized by their wearing of the “white” CC cross). This time of Temporary Commitment is when they study theology, and also do a year of Pastoral Internship in a parish. Finally, God willing, they are ready to make their Lifetime Commitment (symbolized by wearing the “red” CC cross) and proceed with ordination to the diaconate and soon after the priesthood.

Now some of you may say, “Why all this lengthy formation? Why all these hurdles?” I mean, we have so few priests in the Church, why don’t we just shake their hand and say, “Welcome to the priesthood. You feel called by the Lord? We’ll get a Bishop to lay hands on you.” The Rite of Candidacy we celebrate today is another stepping stone to the priesthood. But some may see it as a mere formality, and ask, “What’s the point of this rite? Why another delay? Why have all these stages?”

The change that will take place for these men is a very subtle one. The *Code of Canon Law* says that before this point these men were called “aspirants” to the priesthood. They were aspiring to be priests, they desired it, and they felt the call. But from this day onwards they will be recognized as official “candidates” for ordination. This means the Church is recognizing them publicly and accepting or confirming their call to the priesthood. So it’s changing their identity from something that was more of a “private” matter to something more “public”. Now they still have more formation to experience, and they still have their final major evaluation to go through, but, it’s an important step forward nonetheless. The Church is saying “Yes, we acknowledge these men; we recognize them as candidates for ordination” (in effect, “ready” for the priesthood).



So, why then is the formation process such a lengthy one? Well, there are three reasons I would like to explore with you. The first reason is that these men have to be of solid Christian character. In other words, they have to be living a full baptismal life; living a moral life of faith, hope, and charity. All Christians are called to live this but before even thinking about ordaining somebody we have to be sure that these men are indeed living a life of solid Christian virtue. One of the requirements of the Church is that we not ordain “neophytes” (which means not ordaining people who have just recently been baptized - because a period of time is required for people to grow and mature in the Christian life). This is simply the law of human growth and development. We don’t become Christians overnight. We can have a fantastic conversion experience, and many of the men in our community have gone through a very dramatic conversion from lives opposed to the Lord and to his gospel, to lives fully given over and lives fully surrendered to Jesus. But we can go through that fantastic conversion experience and still not be mature as Christians; and this maturity is required for service in the Kingdom—for any service, not just ordained ministry, but any ministry. We have to have reached a certain maturity in our spirit and that simply takes time and it takes training. We have to listen to the Word of God and we have to put it into practice again and again. The essence of virtue is repetition, doing good and holy



acts repeatedly. We sustain those good habits over a long period of time until they become second nature to us.

The second reason is that these men will not only be called to be examples for everyone else (exemplars), but they will be called to exercise a specific ministry in the Church as priests. In collaboration with the Bishop they have a very important, essential, sacramental ministry within the Church – proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the sacraments: the Eucharist, sacraments of initiation, anointing of the sick, and reconciliation – all of these are essential acts of the Church and they require particular qualities in addition to solid Christian character. Not everyone has these qualities – that is simply a fact. But in order to be a priest we have to see the signs that these men possess those qualities. They have to be men of great discretion; they have to be men of solid, moderate judgment. They are called to be leaders in the Christian community, but they are called to lead in a way that promotes unity in the Body of Christ. And to be a force for unity in the Church, requires a lot of skill, a lot of tact, a lot of patience, to be able to listen to opposing points of view and not to immediately take sides, not to immediately bulldoze over anyone who is not of the same opinion. These men have to be at the rudder of the Church. They have to be holding a steady course, not getting blown off course by the wind from any direction, not jumping on the latest bandwagon, not getting into the latest fad

or craze but men of solid, steady, good judgment.

To discern whether these men have these qualities, takes time. We have to put them in a diversity of environments or situations to see whether they truly exhibit those qualities and whether they can do so under stress because the reality of pastoral ministry in the Church today is that it is extremely stressful. It is a very intense life. I am not sure if it has always been this way, but it certainly is now. You need to have serious time management skills in order to learn to be successful in pastoral ministry. So these men also have to be not just people who pray, but they have to be able to lead others in prayer. They have to be men who lead the entire Christian community to encounter the mystery of God and this requires tremendous internal and external discipline and perseverance, in the practice of prayer, in engaging in the liturgy, in following the approved devotions of the Church, and so on.

In order to admit these men to ministry, they have to exhibit specific qualities that the Church requires in its leaders and in those who will preside over the sacraments. I don't have to tell you how sensitive a ministry reconciliation is – to be able to be a surgeon of souls, to be able to intervene in the most vulnerable of places that people find themselves, in times of moral failure when people come in need of healing to the Church. These men have to intervene with great love, compassion and tenderness for the broken people of Christ,

for sinners and of course, recognizing they are sinners themselves and in need of ongoing conversion. Thus they need a lengthy formation process, to enable them in the Lord to sift and probe their hearts, to “test” their priestly mettle.

The third reason is that, besides being a man of proven Christian character, they also have to have a genuine “supernatural” vocation to the priesthood. As I have mentioned at the beginning, this is not something that we can manufacture or create by simply “willing” it. It's something we can certainly desire and earnestly pray for. But at the end of the day it is a grace, it is an “election”, it is a gift from the Lord. And it is not always given to someone who has all the apparent qualities needed to be a leader in the Church of Christ. So how do we know that it's there? We have to discern. And Christian discernment is an art that takes time and also has to be exercised in community. It's not a “me and Jesus” private affair. It's not a matter of one of these men coming forward and saying “I have discerned it; case closed. I have the certainty that Jesus Christ wants me to be a priest!” Not good enough. It's not a solitary activity – it's something that has to be carried out in community, in the context of the Church – the Church is an active part in the discernment of these men – that they have, in fact, a supernatural vocation. Your prayers, your encouragement, and your prophetic words – all of that enters into the discernment of these men on the way to the priesthood.

In fact, sometimes in times of trial, in times of darkness, that may be all that they have to go on – because they can lose sight of their own sense of call. There can be times that are so difficult and trying that it's gone. It's like an eclipse of the sun – their sense of call has vanished. They don't know where to find it, and they can find it sometimes only in you – in the people of Christ who say a simple, encouraging word to them – who say I was praying and I felt the Lord has chosen you – the Lord has called you – the Lord has a great ministry for you to accomplish in the Church.

*Continued on page 18*

Continued from page 18

Sometimes those little words are enough to keep someone going through very tough times.

The Lord disciplines those he acknowledges as sons. This is true for all Christians, of course, but this is especially true for those who are on their way to ordination. The Lord will discipline you. He will put you to the test. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was put to the test in the desert and in the Garden of Gethsemane. You will have “desert” moments, you will have moments of Gethsemane, and you will be put to the test. This is not because the Lord hates you or has rejected you. This is a sign that he has chosen you and you must rejoice in it, for he is forming you in his image. You must rejoice in the time of testing, but also act appropriately in times of discipline. You have to seek out the means that will help you to get through the times of desolation and not to be destroyed by them. And here again the faithful prayer of the people of Christ is invaluable.

So, besides all this that I’ve already mentioned, the final element, the final piece if you will, in the Church’s call to the man to the priesthood, is the call to Orders by the Bishop, which is the very final piece. All of the discernment, all of the preparation, all of the formation comes to a head at that moment. When a Bishop of the Catholic Church, a successor of the Apostles, says “I call you, I choose you and I consider you to be worthy”. That is the final moment in our discernment, when you can have absolute and firm certainty that the Lord is indeed calling you and will assist you all the days of your life to fulfill that ministry.

So now, as we proceed with the rite of Candidacy, I would invite all of you to pray very earnestly to the Lord that He would fill these men with the Holy Spirit and faith that they may be worthy vessels of His grace and the spirit of election. ☩

*Fr. Pierre Ingram was ordained in 1995. He is a member of the Executive Council for the Companions of the Cross.*

## FEATURE

by Fr. John Vandenakker

# The Gospel of Life

On September 30th, 2007, St Timothy’s parish in Toronto participated in a North American wide pro-life event known as LifeChain. Led by CC pastor Fr. Randy Hendriks, along with CC priests Fr. Dennis Hayes and Fr. Francis Ching, parishioners stood at the intersection of Don Mills Rd. & Sheppard Ave. East in Toronto, to peacefully witness on behalf of the Gospel of Life.

To many motorists passing by, I’m sure these parishioners looked like a bunch of religious extremists, clearly out of touch with mainstream civic values. Tilting at windmills, perhaps. Yet, our Lord was pleased. Many participants at such events testify that they experience a quiet “anointing”, a heightened sense of blessing, God’s smile. We generally don’t do enough witnessing in the public arena as Christians. Yet this is an important part of “evangelizing” the culture, as the late Pope John Paul II called it. If the Holy Spirit used this witness to convict even just one passer-by of the truth inherent in the Gospel of Life, then it will have been worth it.

Malcolm Muggeridge once said that “Christianity will rise or fall on the abortion issue.” Why? Because it is such a crystal clear issue when viewed through the eyes of faith.

*“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (Jr 1:5). “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Ps 139:13).* To claim to be a Christian, yet also support “pro-choice”, is not only a contradiction in terms; it is a denial of Christ. There can be no “grey” area where life is at stake. All life, from the moment of conception, must be protected. It is never “mere tissue” that can easily be discarded.

It is through the easy acceptance of rationalizations such as the above that death by abortion has become the Holocaust of our time. And yet many people, even Christians, don’t want to hear about it. They find it unpleasant to think about, and hope that somehow the whole debate would go away. But it’s not going away. It has become the greatest moral tragedy the world has ever seen. Because it doesn’t just kill the unborn, it wreaks havoc on the living as well. The prevailing anti-life philosophy of the age has affected us all; it has warped and dulled our senses. It has trapped us in a “culture of death”.

We all know that women who face what are called unwanted pregnancies often deal with a great amount of personal anguish. And rarely do we here much talk of the selfishness of the men who are involved. They are just as culpable. But abortion is not the answer. The media has us convinced that most abortions are sought by desperate women who are at their wits’ end trying to make ends meet and who thus can’t financially afford another child or even a first child. But statistics show that abortion is primarily used as a method of birth control by most women in North America. Their pregnancy is simply inconvenient, so they want to get rid of it. That’s the abortion mentality. Life is not a sacred trust, but a problem to be rid of.

I remember attending a Pro-Life rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa back in the late 1980s. The keynote speaker was Mother Teresa. One striking thing she said in response to critics of the Pro-Life movement, who wondered what would be done with all the



unwanted babies that would be brought into the world if access to abortion was denied women, was to reply: “Give them to me.” Now this sounds wildly unrealistic. Yet it was a statement of faith, made with the utter conviction that God would help in this task. And Jesus would of course use his body, the Church, to reach out in a loving, sensitive manner, to take care of both mother and child in whatever ways were needed (i.e. healthcare, education, adoption procedures, etc.). It may require a revolution of love; but with God, “*all things are possible*” (Mt 19:26).

The Gospel of Life is of course much broader than just the abortion issue. John Paul II, in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, quotes Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes* (#27): “Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprison-

ment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practise them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator.”

I hope that what I have shared with you briefly here does not cause people who have struggled with the after-effects of abortion in their own lives to think that they have somehow committed the unforgivable sin. We have all sinned and have fallen short of God’s plans for us, as St. Paul says (cf. Rm 3:23). So we must be merciful as God is merciful, forgiving others and forgiving ourselves. But we must not be afraid to witness to the truth in love. I have counselled women who have had abortions, so I know their anguish and pain. God understands the mistakes we

make. Sometimes as a penance I ask them to sponsor a child in a Third World country for a year or two (it only costs about \$25.00 a month).

Most of our supporters know that the Companions of the Cross are solidly Pro-Life. You would heartily agree with what I have just shared with you. But there are probably some of you who don’t. Why do I know that? Because every time I have given a Pro-Life homily in the various parishes I have been assigned to over the years, I have gotten some flack. People accusing me or the church of being anti-woman, out--of-touch, or just plain misguided. I have had many discussions with these so-called Pro-Choice Catholics, and I have patiently and respectfully listened to their arguments and protests.

But do you know what I invariably ask them halfway through our discussion? I ask them whether or not they have prayed about their position. They usually don’t understand the question. They think I’m being sanctimonious or something. You see, it’s easy to have an opinion. But it’s

*Continued on page 20*

not so easy to humble our intellects and beg God's enlightenment. I can guarantee you that if you sincerely pray about this matter, your heart will change.

So prayer is for all of us the greatest weapon we have as believers. Use it. Intercede for the cause of life. Help women in need of our support (by supporting various Pro-Life agencies around town). Pray that people may be converted to the Author of the Gospel of Life. There are so many ways that our spirits can be attuned to the battle that is going on. So don't give up just because we have a long way to go. Always witness to the truth in love. People might get angry at us for speaking the truth, but speak the truth anyways. And in all things, imitate the Lord, and call on the intercession of the Blessed Mother and all the saints. As John Paul II reminds us:

"Mary thus helps the Church to realize that life is always at the centre of a great struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. The dragon wishes to devour 'the child brought forth' (cf. Rv 12:4), a figure of Christ, whom Mary brought forth 'in the fullness of time' (Ga 4:4) and whom the Church must unceasingly offer to people in every age. But in a way that child is also a figure of every person, every child, especially every helpless baby whose life is threatened, because - as the Council reminds us - 'by his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every person'. It is precisely in the 'flesh' of every person that Christ continues to reveal himself and to enter into fellowship with us, so that rejection of human life, in whatever form that rejection takes, is really a rejection of Christ. This is the fascinating but also demanding truth which Christ reveals to us and which his Church continues untiringly to proclaim: 'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me' (Mt 18:5); 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Mt 25:40) (EV 104). ☪

*Fr. John Vandenakker teaches theology and serves as Academic Director for the Companions of the Cross.*



## COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

by Fr. John Vandenakker

### CC Prayer Vigil

On Friday November 9th 2007, the Companions of the Cross hosted a special 12-hour prayer vigil at St. Monica's parish in Ottawa. The inspiration for this event came from our CC Intercessory Ministry group led by Viola Rochefort. In the course of their prayers for the community they had been sensing a strong word from the Lord to gather the Companions communally before the Blessed Sacrament and seek his blessing, protection, and anointing. The vigil began on Friday night with Mass, and ended the next morning with another Eucharistic celebration. In between, there was all-night exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We are so grateful for everyone who came out and prayed whatever amount of time they could, be it one hour or 12!



### Welcome Back Ryan Schmidt

From the Desk of the Moderator Fr. Scott McCaig: "Some good news I would like to share is that Ryan Schmidt, who was an Applicant with us for two years, will be returning to the fold. After much prayer and discernment he feels the Lord is calling him to 'finish what he began'. He also believes that his call is with the Companions of the Cross. On Wednesday December 12th the Executive Council approved his reintegration into our Society. I will be investing him with the Applicants' Cross at the beginning of our Brothers' meeting on Saturday December 15th at Holy Rosary Parish. Please keep Ryan in your prayers."

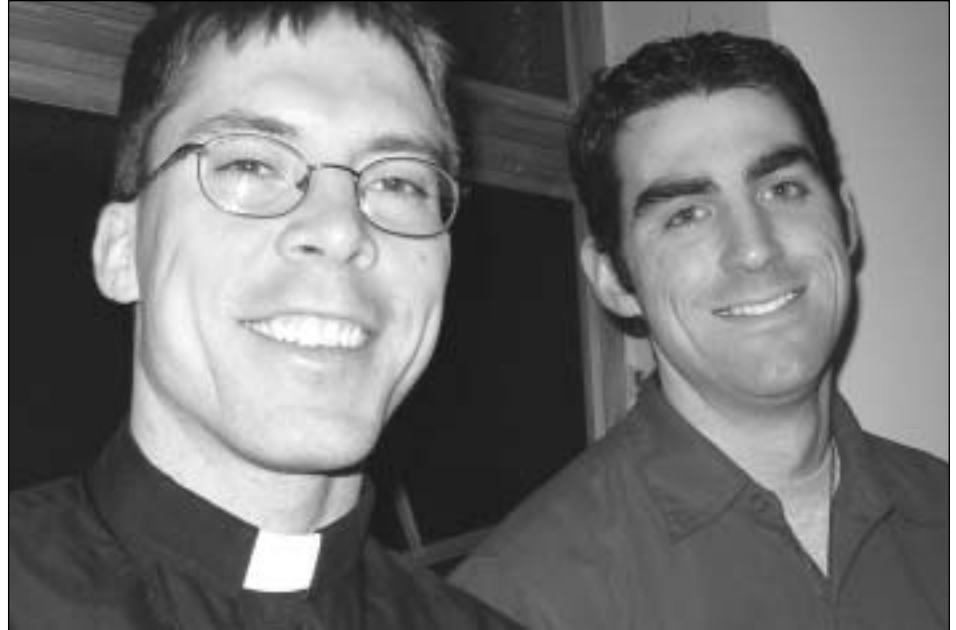
## Fr. Mark Goring Ministry Report

Some of our young people are having too much fun. They've struck gold. They've found the hidden treasure and they're not trying to keep it a secret. They've entered the Kingdom of God and they love it! As a priest who does a lot of ministry with young people, I'm privileged to be part of this phenomenon fairly frequently.

One example took place this past November. The Montreal youth group, "Eucharist for Life," asked us if we could put on a Life in the Spirit Seminar for them. Rosemary Ballard the youth minister from St. Mary's Parish put together a team of mostly teenagers, she came up with a program and off we went. We drove to Montreal with two cars and our eager team, nine of us in all.

It was a fairly standard ministry engagement: awesome worship music, dramas, talks, testimonies, confessions, Mass, adoration, individual prayer for the grace of the Holy Spirit, good food, games, small groups etc... When I sat down with my small group for the first session, one of the boys started by saying: "My mom dropped me off here. I never chose to be here." "Was he in for a surprise," I thought to myself. It was one of those weekends where you didn't need to be reminded that Pentecost isn't over. Every one of the young people was profoundly touched by the Lord, including the boy in my small group.

The young people from Rosemary's team prayed over the youth from Montreal for the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was poured out in a generous measure. Many of the youth rested in the Spirit. There was no question that God was



*Fr. Mark Goring and Seminarian Ryan Schmidt*

impacting these kids' lives. When it was all over we packed up our cars and our team went looking for a restaurant which unexpectedly led us to the front steps of St. Joseph's Oratory. We all decided that we were meant to make a visit. Our unexpected pilgrimage allowed the grace we were all experiencing from the weekend to continue to overflow. The weekend was an absolute blast!

What was it that made for such a life-giving weekend for the young people on our team? Certainly some of the essential factors were there: being away from parents, spending time with friends, staying up late, travelling to another city, music, good food, games and other fun stuff. But the distinguishing feature that made this weekend a whole other category of fun was that the youth went back to Ottawa knowing that a few kids would never be the same again. The youth from Montreal experienced God. Our team was privileged to be the instrument that ministered

the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. Rosemary had no trouble finding volunteers for the weekend. As a matter of fact, she had to select a few from the many who would have liked to have gone. Why? Because we all want to be part of the mission. We all want to be part of a revolution that is changing the world and will mark history. Nobody wants to sit on the sidelines. We know that it's in giving that we receive.

As a person who grew up enjoying life and trying to find fun at every opportunity, I see myself as a bit of an expert in the area of having a good time. The fun had by Christian youth who have stepped out of the current of a shallow secular world and plunged into the radical and profound life of Christian discipleship is unparalleled. Young people who are not ashamed to confess Jesus before others are rewarded for their courage even in this life. The world cannot know the abundant life enjoyed by those who lose their life to find it.

The point I'm trying to make in this report is that the Kingdom of God is being found by a few teens who have heard the call to be witnesses of Christ in this world of darkness. A teen's desire to have a good time cannot be more perfectly met than when he or she is going about the Father's work of bringing God's Kingdom to a lost generation. Few will find this narrow way. Those who do find it are blessed.

## Companions in Ministry

Here is an example of what just some of the Companions were involved in by way of "extra" non-parish ministry this past year:

**Fr. Ed Wade:** Began in December of 2007 to host a weekly radio program (1hr) on Radio Maria between 2-3PM central time (visit <http://www.hmwn.net/> for more info).

**Fr. John Likozar:** Served as spiritual director for the 121st Ottawa Men's Cursillo (December 6-9th, 2007). He is also a member of the Archdiocese of Ottawa preparatory team for World Youth Day 2008 (Sydney Australia).

**Seminarian David Bergeron** was in Quebec City for the month of August 2007 serving as a volunteer at the Information Booth for the preparation of the International Eucharistic Congress there in June 2008.

**Fr. Mark Goring** (all dates 2007): February 10th - Speaker at "Called to be Saints Youth Conference" in Toronto; March 3rd-7th - led Lenten Mission at St. Andrew's Parish, Oakville, ON; April 16th-21st - served as chaplain for the CCO Staff Retreat at Camp IAWAH, ON;

May 5th - ministered at Youth Fest "Dance Fest" at Annunciation of the Lord Parish, Ottawa; May 18th-20th - was the main speaker at "Raising up an Army Youth Conference" at Amherst, NS; September 7th-9th - led CCO Fall Retreat in Vancouver, B.C.; October 13th led Youthfest "Gangsta" theme night at St. Maurice Parish, Ottawa; November 9th-11th - led a Life in the Spirit Seminar for the "Eucharist for Life" youth group in Montreal, P.Q.; December 28 - January 1 - spoke at a workshop at CCO Rise up Christmas Conference, Calgary, AB.

**Fr. John Vandenaeker** (all dates 2007): January 26th-28th - led the annual Diocesan Men's Retreat in Ottawa; March 17th-21st - led Lenten Mission at St. Vincent's Parish, Buffalo, N.Y.; April 16th-28th served as spiritual director for a pilgrimage to Peru; May 5th - conducted a Day of Recollection for the CWL of St. Isidore's parish in Ottawa; October 13th - led a Marian Day at Merciful Redeemer parish in Mississauga, ON; October 19th-21st - led a retreat for the Legion of Mary in Ottawa; November 3rd - led a Eucharistic Workshop Day at St. Joseph's parish, Belleville, ON; November 24th - led a Day of Renewal at Our Lady of Good Counsel parish in Deep River, ON.

**Fr. Francis Donnelly** (all dates 2007): December 30 - January 1: spoke at the CCO 'Rise Up' Conference in Quebec City; February 5th - 17th: Mission with Lift Jesus Higher in Peru; February 23rd - March 2nd: Parish Mission in Brandon, MB; March 9th -19th: Parish Mission in Magnolia, TX; March 24th -25th: Parish Mission in Pakenham, ON; May 17th: Healing Mass in Toledo, ON; May 25th - 27th: Retreat for People of God's Delight of Oswego, NY; May 31st- June 10th: IPF retreat for seminarians in Omaha, NB; July 6-8th: Intercessors' Retreat in Pembroke, ON; July 17th: Evangelization

Materials for Pan African Congress in Ghana; Aug. 19th - 21st: Retreat talks for Missionaries of Charity in Houston, TX.

**Fr. Scott McCaig** joined a team lead by Peter Thompson of Renewal Ministries for several weeks of mission in Kenya in December. They preached open-air rallies and trained catechists in Nairobi, the Taita highlands, and Mombassa. They were well received and the mission trip was very successful.

**Fr. Bob Bedard** (all dates 2007): Led the annual community retreat for the Companions of the Lamb in Michigan (August); gave several talks this fall on "The Holy Spirit & Ministry in the Church" at St. Mary's, Almonte, ON, St. John's, Perth, ON, and St. Mary's, Carleton Place, ON.

## Pilgrimage Updates

The pilgrimage originally scheduled for this spring to Malta & Sicily had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers. But we know the Lord can work in mysterious ways. No sooner was this trip (with myself as chaplain) cancelled did then a need arise to help out with another pilgrimage to France and Italy. This trip, scheduled for March 25th-April 7th, 2008, is being organized by the Ottawa Divine Mercy Centre (through Gail Goshko). Fr. Dan Dubroy, Director of the Centre, was unable to serve as chaplain, so I have stepped in to replace him. This pilgrimage takes us first to France with stops in: Lourdes (which is celebrating the 150th anniversary of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception's apparitions to St. Bernadette in 2008); Nevers (where St. Bernadette is buried in the convent



chapel); Paray Le Monial (where our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary and gave her the Sacred Heart messages); Ars (made famous by the ministry of St. Jean Vianney – and where we will be celebrating the Feast of the Divine Mercy); and La Salette (site of Our Lady’s 1846 apparitions). Then it’s on to Italy, where we will visit: Rome (including the Vatican & celebrate Mass with the Holy Father on the closing day of the International Divine Mercy Congress being held there); Subiaco & Montecassino (site of St. Benedict’s famous monasteries); and San Giovanni Rotondo (where the cherished St. Padre Pio lived and died). For more information visit [companions.org](http://companions.org) and click on Upcoming Events.

Another upcoming pilgrimage with a CC connection is one to Medjugorje (April 29th-May 9th, 2008). This trip is being organized by Patricia Duggan of Combermere, and has Frs. Marc Syrenne & Allan MacDonald accompanying it. The pilgrimage includes visits to all the sites in and around Medjugorje (St. James Church, Mt. Krizevac, Podbrdo) as well as side trips to visit Fr. Jozo in Siroki Brijeg, the statue of Our Lady in Tihaljina, and the chapel of the Merciful Jesus in Surmanci. Only a limited number of seats remain. For more info visit [companions.org](http://companions.org) and click on Upcoming Events.

**Note:** “...concerning pilgrimages to Medjugorje which take place in a private manner, this Congregation holds that they are permitted, on the condition that they not be considered a validation of events in progress and which still call for examination by the Church.” (Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 26 May 1998).

### Join our Email List

If you would like to receive periodic announcements of upcoming CC activities and links to our online photo album to view recent postings there, simply send your name and email address to [ccjohnv@sympatico.ca](mailto:ccjohnv@sympatico.ca). We will not share your email address with anyone else. But you are free to share our news with whomever you please!

### Photo of the Month



Queen of Peace School in Houston, Texas celebrates its 60th Anniversary (Oct. 5th, 2007).

.....  
 Fr. John Vandenakker teaches theology and serves as Academic Director for the Companions of the Cross.

## COMPANIONS OF THE CROSS

### STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended

August 31, 2007

#### REVENUE

General Donations	\$ 1,283,998
Legacies and Bequests	187,734
Gifts-in-Kind	6,815
Other Income	157,175
Reimbursed Expenses	339,340

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**TOTAL REVENUE** **\$1,975,062**

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#### EXPENDITURES

Administration	\$ 145,402
Amortization	62,265
Communications	133,442
Financing Charges	5,670
Fundraising	139,415
Intra-Community	208,379
Programs for the Laity	75,666
Non-Local Priests	298,746
Residential Operations	237,420
Seminarian Formation	300,393

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**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** **\$1,733,525**

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**Operating Surplus** 241,537

**Gain on Disposal of Investments** 14,876

**Excess Revenue over Expenditure** 256,413

#### Notes:

We carry liabilities of \$131,666 which are primarily mortgages owing on our properties.

The Statements of the Companions of the Cross have been audited by our auditors Parker, Prings, Seel, Chartered Accountants.

We are grateful to all our spiritual and temporal benefactors for their prayers and financial support over the past year. May the Lord bless you abundantly for your generosity.

## CC LAY FORMATION COURSE



### AN INTRODUCTION TO IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT

March 31 - May 12, 2008  
(Monday Evenings)

St. Mary's Church Hall, Ottawa  
Presenters: Fr. Terry Donahue & Claire Johnson

**How can you determine whether a particular thought or feeling comes from God?**

**How can you find out God's will for you in the important decisions of life?**

In this introduction to St. Ignatius of Loyola's method of discernment you will discover...

How to identify the origin of spiritual influences on your interior life: interior motions, consolations and desolations.

How to properly respond to these interior motions in order to grow closer to God in holiness.

How to establish the essential conditions in your spiritual life in order to discern God's particular will for you.

How to use the Rules for Discernment of Spirits and Discernment of God's Will presented in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

For information on how to register  
call our CC Office at (613) 728-3175  
or (866) 885-8824.

KINGDOM BUILDERS YOUTH CONFERENCE

# SEARCH



Praise & Worship  
Talks, Dramas  
Testimonies!

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Submit your video  
and win a prize!

# RESCUE

*"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

- Luke 19:10

**Join teens from  
ministries,  
apostolates &  
youth groups in  
Ontario & Quebec**

**Get equipped  
for the Lord's  
Search & Rescue  
operation!**

## **Time & Location**

Saturday, March 1, 2008

9am — 4pm

Tudor Hall, Ottawa

Pre-registration required (Cost \$20)

Pick up a registration brochure  
or contact Fr. Mark Goring, CC

Phone: 613-231-4806

[vocations@companionscross.org](mailto:vocations@companionscross.org)



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***“Before I formed you  
in the womb, I knew you,  
and before you were born  
I consecrated you”  
(Jeremiah 1:5).***