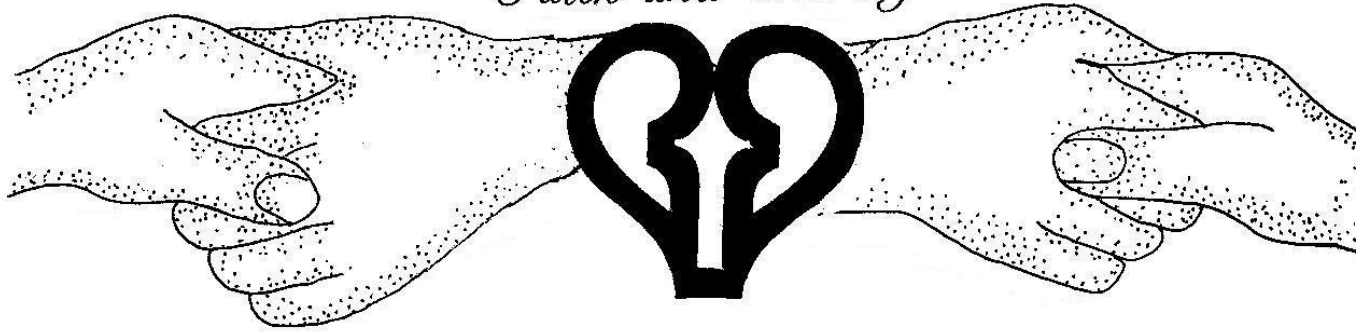


Faith and Sharing



Heart - to - Heart

North American Bulletin

October 2011
Volume 38, no. 1

Theme: Welcoming the Stranger

Welcoming the Stranger



By Sr. Claudette Dumont, Quebec

When I read the theme suggested for the October bulletin “Heart to Heart”, immediately wonderful memories from my childhood filled my heart. Our very small house was always very hospitable even though we were a family of eleven. We were called: “The Dumont on the Hill”. We were close to Saint-Michel-Archange Hospital (psychiatric hospital, today the Centre Robert-Giffard - Dufrost and de la Jemmarais Pavilions), and we frequently met, with great respect and dignity, the residents of those Centers that many would call “the strangers”. When one of them came to stay with us to help my father with the farm, my mother insisted that we call him “Mister” before saying his name.

Then, there were neighbors that were not natives of Quebec, and who spoke more often in English than in French and who were not Catholics. “They are our neighbors”, my mother would say and she always greeted them with a beautiful smile. Those “strange” neighbors would babysit us, the two small ones, while the rest of the family would go to midnight Mass. On Christmas day, it was our turn to babysit their children while they went to their religious services in the afternoon. We found it strange that they would leave in the afternoon to go to “their Mass”. This took place in the 40's and 50's.

So throughout the years, we were brought up to welcome and respect each person with dignity, no matter what were his origins, his music, his mother tongue, his religion or his mental health. I give thanks to God for my mother's open heart attitude.

I firmly believe that my desire to become a missionary in foreign countries was a result of what I had lived at home. But how could that be done, since in grade five, during the Geography courses, my sisters and I, heard that the city of Sherbrooke was the “Queen of the Eastern Townships”. Because of the family’s poor financial situation, it was way too far from our small village. Well, during the 60’s, I was a teacher for three years in Sherbrooke.

My wish to become a missionary was finally realized in 1968 as I left to go and live on the INDIAN RESERVATIONS in Northern Alberta. Then, in 1990, I left for RWANDA, Africa, and in 1992, I found myself in MEXICO. How beautiful the years when I was fortunate to live among them all.

I was leaving as a “missionary to foreign countries”, as it was said at the time and even today most probably. Once among those “different” people, I came to realize that I was the “Stranger” coming to live among them. A “stranger warmly welcomed” by the Amerindians, the Rwandans, and the Mexicans. What wonderful riches they have shared with me: their prayer, their spirituality, their music and their songs, their celebrations and their family life and also their work... etc... Such riches still nourish me today.

In today’s multi-cultural societies, the person that we look upon as a “stranger” is a sister or a brother who is different from us and who has a right to be respected in his or her dignity as a human person.

I put an end to this sharing today, September 19, in the afternoon. This morning at Mass, the prayer was the following: “Lord, nobody is a stranger for you and no one is so far gone that you cannot help him. Do not forget the refugees, the exiled, the children separated from their parents. Put an end to their sufferings and give us, for those rejected by the world, the same love and respect that you have for them. This we ask you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Yes, may it be so! ■

Heart-to-Heart

Subscription :

1 year: \$ 3.00

2 years : \$ 5.00

3 years : \$ 6.00

Supporter : \$ 5.00 per year

By email: free

2 issues per year :

End of October and End of April

Next dead line :

March 15, 2012

Aussi disponible en français

Bulletin Foi et Partage

2295, Galt West

Sherbrooke (Québec)

J1K 1K7 (819) 563-7609

To receive the bulletin by email:

jea_r@videotron.ca

Web site:

www.faithandsharing.net

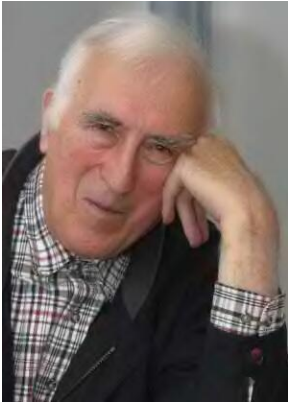
Themes of upcoming issues

April 2012 (dead line: March 15, 2012):

Jean Vanier and me

October 2012 (dead line: Sept. 15, 2012):

Make Me a Channel of your Peace



Accepting Our Humanity

The knowledge that we belong to a common humankind and that this belonging is more fundamental than any other belonging has greatly changed my attitudes and my perception of the human being. It helped me to liberate myself from self-centered compulsions and from interior wounds; it prompted me to better accept those who are different, the “strangers”, and even those who attack us, the “enemies”. To go from selfishness to love, from slavery to freedom, from locking oneself up to being open to others, is to grow; it is the road to full human maturity.

We are all called to a liberation of the heart, to be open to others and to discover the very depths of our being, our common humanity. But such a liberation supposes a long journey, from the anguish and the self-centeredness dispositions in which we feel cut off from the others right up to a love that transforms us and allows us to help others to change themselves. Such a journey, we cannot accomplish by ourselves. It implies that we belong at one time or another to a group that helps everyone to live in harmony with the others, whether within the group or outside the group. [...]

We are astonished that the weak and the ostracized can be specialists in humanity, but such is the truth that I discover by living with them. ■

Jean Vanier
From the book “*Becoming human*”

Theme: Welcoming the Stranger

The Stranger in Us



By Lise Morin
Sherbrooke Faith and Sharing Coordinator

Greetings,

Thinking about creation, I realize that God is an astounding productive being and has a very fertile imagination. In fact, since the beginning of time, he gave life to hundreds of thousands of human beings without any of them being identical. Physical appearance, personality and other characteristics speak of multiple differences instilled in each individual.

Even though he is unique and amazing, the human being appears to be very complex. This is quite normal, because he is always in constant evolution. Regularly, new strange areas, positive as well as negative, with which we have to adjust, take shape in each one of us. That is why I think it is impossible to really know oneself. Therefore, in the hope of a full development of our growth, we are invited to discover, to tame and to welcome the stranger in us.

To help us in that perpetual process of learning to achieve “a greater love of oneself” in view of “a greater love” of our neighbor, prayer, the Eucharist, and the fraternal resources seem to be, for me, quite appropriate. The Word of God transmitted in various ways is an absolute requisite because true love is ever present.

Definitely, the welcoming or the acceptance of the stranger will be reflected in my attitude and the willingness to go forth and grow within an absolute confidence so difficult to totally acquire. To accept to live in unknown territory is a reality that cannot be avoided if our heart is to grow in faith.

Only God really knows us because He is the one who made us with unconditional love. He accepts and loves “the stranger” within us even before we become aware of his presence. We are his beloved sons and daughters. ■

News from Rouyn-Noranda

By Émilien Labelle



Without knowing it, the “Oasis de la Charité” community welcomed us as the Stranger of the proposed theme. To be received in a community such as the “Oasis de la Charité” is like being welcomed by Jesus himself. Indeed, we had arrived in a new place for the annual retreat. We were 15 people registered for the retreat preached by Father Gilles Chauvin, Vicar General of the Rouyn-Noranda diocese.

The theme that he had chosen to help us in our journey was taken from Jesus’ parables. The atmosphere was heartwarming and we shared the Word of God and the noon lunch with two couples of the Oasis who later joined the Faith and Sharing group. Thus, we also have welcomed the Stranger.

We are very optimistic for the upcoming retreats.

The monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of each month. The group is made up of the team responsible for Faith and Sharing, that is four persons, and we alternate between the Granada church and Guylaine’s home. We have no specific theme or topic. We share the Gospel of the day and end the meeting by reciting prayers from the breviary and the Faith and Sharing prayer.

Dates for the next retreat: July 31st, August 1st and 2nd, 2012. We have made reservations for the same place:

L’Oasis de la Charité Sainte-Famille
833, rue Perreault Est
Rouyn-Noranda (Québec) J9X 5H5

Contact persons for more information:

Carmel Thériault	819-764-6331
Gisèle et Émilien Labelle	819-762-2515
Guylaine Boisvert	819-797-9771 ■

Welcoming the Youth



*By Eileen McIlwee, Cleveland
North American English Coordinator*

At our most recent North American general assembly, one of the questions posed was “How can we welcome more young people to Faith and Sharing?” The Cleveland Faith and Sharing team, like most communities, addresses this question every year while planning our annual retreat.

As part of our preparation for our annual retreat, our brochures are distributed to area high school campus ministers and at church youth groups. However, it has been our experience that it is the personal invitation to a young person to “Come and See” that has been the most effective way to welcome young people to Faith and Sharing. Many times, we have young people that come to our retreat with their family, but it is the grace of Faith and Sharing that keeps them coming back year after year.



We encourage our young people to become actively engaged in the experience by asking each person to take on an important responsibility during the retreat. Many of our young people are asked to be small group leaders; some are invited to assist with the children’s program or to help with a core member. By taking on a responsibility, each person feels valued by the entire community.

We have one young lady who has been coming to Faith and Sharing with her family for many years. She was becoming less and less interested in making another retreat, and did not want to be a part of the community. She was late for every conference, small group meeting or other activity, sat at the back of the room and really did not participate in the group at all.

We asked her to be a small group leader and suddenly, everything changed. She was on time and up front for every conference, taking notes so that she would be an effective group leader. She was engaged and committed to helping her small group grow as a community. The adults in her group were committed to supporting her leadership but were prepared to step in should she need assistance. Her group members later commented that her sharing was thoughtful and insightful and she posed questions that encouraged everyone to participate in the sharing. By entrusting this responsibility to her, we all experienced one of the many gifts of Faith and Sharing.

So, as we continue to journey down this road, consider inviting the next young person you meet to “Come and See.”

Much Peace to All. ■

I Have Chosen to Continue my Work in this World



*By Jean-Eudes Bourque
with the help of Marie Julien, my speech therapist*

Introduction

I have chosen to pursue my work in this world, a world troubled by wars, earthquakes that happened at the beginning of the year, etc.

I was ready for the trip of my dreams, a trip to Rome in October 2010, a project that I had in mind since my childhood, and my ticket had already been bought. This happy event coincided with the beatification of Brother André. Robin, that I've known for the past twenty years and with whom I had made a wonderful trip to Niagara

Falls, had accepted to accompany me with her new friend Sylvie that I had met only once. But, suddenly, everything was shattered.

A matter of life or death

On Saturday, September 18th, I attended, as I usually did, the monthly meeting of Faith and Sharing. I ate a ham sandwich for lunch. I came back to the Centre and had, like most of the time, a couple of toasts to eat with a portion of chicken. Toward the end of the meal, I noticed that I had some difficulty swallowing it, a problem that I've been having during the past several years. But during the evening, I felt some sharp pains in my stomach. This happens often enough after each meal, but the pains tend to disappear with time. I did not dare take any medication, hoping that the discomfort would disappear by itself. I went to bed at my usual hour. But the pain was always there. I sat up in bed and did some exercises. The coordinator saw me and asked me what was wrong. I told him that the pain was always there. He suggested that I go to the St. Luke hospital not too far from here. I said yes; it was one o'clock in the morning. They discovered that I'd had three aspiration pneumonia. They set me up with an intravenous because of a very high fever. I was so sick that I felt very close to death. So, what should I do? I was in a state of great anxiety. I am scared. Is my life already over? I'm very sick and I don't know what to think. The following day, they take me back to my nursing home because I don't want to stay at St. Luke's. But that was not for long. I was coughing as though I was a two-pack-a-day smoker. I began to have a fever. They took me back to St. Luke's the same night because I was in a very serious condition.

I was highly agitated and was asking myself what was happening. I was really angry with myself. And talking to myself I would be saying: "Calm down, Jean-Eudes, control yourself". But I was in great pain.

September 23rd, the doctor at the St. Luke hospital talked to me trying to convince me that I should have a gastro-jejunostomy tube, a sort of probe or feeding tube. That had been suggested to me for the past ten years by the specialists at the Jacques-Viger Centre. But I was strongly against it. And what had I gone through the past several days? My doctor, Dr. Jacques Marchand and my nurse Francine from the CH Centre-Ville then came to see me that same day to ask me questions and to check with the doctors at St. Luke's. They were referring to my biological testament signed by two witnesses in which it is stated that I do not want to be revived. "DO YOU WANT TO DIE?" IS SUCH A QUESTION A CHOICE OR A THREAT? I ask myself. WHAT A QUESTION!!! I answer NO. An answer that would not have been the same a year ago because I was in a state of anxiety and feeling quite depressed.

Conclusion

Ever since I cannot eat, I live in solitude, I stay in my room and pass a lot of time in front of my computer and TV and I read and look back at what has happened. There's no doubt that people struck by brain paralysis have more difficulty in swallowing as I do, and with time the difficulty will increase.

It is not easy to be in such a condition and not taste the food that we enjoyed so much in the past, even though I already had some difficulty in eating. I'd say to myself: "I will accept to have that darn tube put in", but I always hesitated because I truly enjoyed the taste of a good coffee and of the delicious wine that André Paquette brought me free of charge every Friday when he came to help me have supper. I stroll through the streets of down town Montreal and see many restaurants and people savoring their food.

Jean Vanier tells us that community begins by a meal; also that the time for a meal is a time to get together. How many times in the Bible do we see people getting together to eat? The Last Supper was the scene of Jesus with his disciples. And it is during a meal that we enjoy the best moments of our lives. Think of a marriage, of Christmas, of an anniversary.

It is a difficult time for me. Before, my friends would come and share a meal with me and help me to eat. Now, I don't have as many visitors as before.

However, I must admit that I feel better since being fed by a tube. I have no more stomach pains, I feel less tired and I don't have to take three meals a day and I don't salivate as much as before. In everything, every rose has its thorn. I lost weight but I feel fine. Nevertheless, it's still difficult especially at meal times.

But the situation cannot be ignored and I must live it day by day and not worry about tomorrow. I must accept the different seasons of my life and not worry about tomorrow. ■

The Fortieth Anniversary of Faith and Sharing (Quebec)



*By Jean-Claude Lizotte
Coordinator, Quebec*

Last June the 17th and 18th, we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of Faith and Sharing (Quebec).

150 people from all the regions of Quebec, Ottawa and Cleveland attended the event.

The theme of the 40th was: "During 40 years, accepting the difference".

For this occasion, we received a message from Jean Vanier, the main idea being that we should accept and welcome the person who is different. That person who is different is very important and is a friend of Jesus.

Many were meeting after many years of separation. Souvenirs of long ago, but unforgettable, were talked about by many. And there we noticed that Faith and Sharing was a great family made up of persons connected to Jean Vanier's mission.



Louise Brissette's handicapped children performed a play that lasted one hour and a half. It was really touching to see them act so brilliantly. Many of us had a tear in our eye.

The celebration, in its recreational part, satisfied all those present. To begin with, while underlining Bishop Couture's 60th anniversary as a priest, we started the festivities by singing and dancing. We noticed that a celebration is very important as mentioned by Jean Vanier during his retreats.

It is then that joy reaches its climax. There were many smiles and many tears among us as we participated in the songs interpreted by several persons usually very silent during our meetings.

During the meal, we saw true fraternity as we shared not only the food, but also the joys and the sorrows that make up our respective lives.

We give thanks to God who has given us a faith that we can share with others during our Faith and Sharing meetings. May such a grace be always present in our community so that it may continue to be a place of welcome, of sharing and of fellowship.



Each one of us will keep an unforgettable souvenir of that meeting. As many have said, it was a great time in which God was present among us. His presence was felt and seen in those that we lived with during those two days. ■

What Faith and Sharing has given me



By Yvonne Barthe, Quebec

Here is my answer to the question that was asked at the 40th anniversary of Faith and Sharing (Quebec), the question being: "What have you received from Faith and Sharing?"

For me, Faith and Sharing was and still is an occasion to grow spiritually. My participation goes back to 1973 when I was following a popular retreat at the General Hospital of Quebec. That is where I found quite an awesome treasure. First of all, by contact with the others: a discovery and a better knowledge of myself, an appreciation of the life that was given to me, even in times of trial because God is also in the midst of those trials, and a desire for all that is good for my friends that is good for me. I've learned to appreciate what is beautiful in each person, and also the diversity of thoughts and behavior of each individual. Because of my faith, I've learned to greatly appreciate the wonders of God's creation (Psalm 19: 1-5). During the sharing sessions, I've learned to thoroughly study the Gospels and noticed that the smallest acts of generosity can lead to greater things: "The mustard seed" (Matthew 13:31). If I have discovered all those things, it is due to prayer and the encounter with my brethren. And what keeps on growing in me is a thirst for the Word of God, the willingness to share and the praising of the Lord. ■

For you, what is Faith and Sharing? Tell us.

By Quebec 40th anniversary participants



During the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Faith and Sharing (Quebec), the participants were asked the following question: "For you, what is Faith and Sharing?" Here are some answers.

For me, Faith and Sharing is like reliving the faith of my family with friends who are full of joy and love. When I go to the meetings, it fills my heart. Thank you for being there.	For me, to be part of Faith and Sharing is simply being with... Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be with you all.
Living Faith and Sharing is being very close to God.	It helps me to open my heart and to be loved by others.
For me, Faith and Sharing is: People who believe in love and are willing to share it. Thank you!	Faith and Sharing for me, it's the welcome, it's unconditional love.

Montreal Summer Retreat 2011

By Céline Garneau, Montreal

For the three days of July 26th, 27th and 28th, the basement of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges church became a place of peace.

The talks by our good Father Yvon Jutras warmed our souls. Thanks to him something within us began to speak louder than the word.

In the background an angel was circulating. It was Mary, who was piloting the ship. Her presence brought joy to our desert places.

Near Father and Mary we saw the smiles of our three handicapped friends. Their silence spoke louder than words. Aren't they God's favourite people? Their joy opened more space within us to let loose the great winds of God's tender love. ■

Montreal Summer Retreat 2011



By Gaëtane Laroche, Montreal

Theme:

**From the Table of the Desert to the Table of Emmaus,
There will always be bread on the Table of God**

At Faith and Sharing Montreal this summer we were nourished by the “good bread” from the Table of God shared with us by Father Yvon Jutras, m.s.a. At the end of each talk, we were invited to reflect, either personally or within the prayer groups, how we were touched by the Word, from the Table of Creation to the Table of the Eucharist.

We began by being filled with wonder by the free gifts of God to nourish the body at the Table of Creation, the harmony created between creatures and the invitation made to man to grow. Then wonder also for the fruits of the Holy Spirit Jesus left us to bring us to the Table of the Kingdom.

Am I a good guest at the Table of Creation?

What fruits would I like to see grow in me?

As for Moses and the Hebrew people, the Table of the Desert is present in our lives, in our Church: it is “the desire, the loss, the hunger for God”. “It is the Table of Faith” he said. We must not wrap ourselves in nostalgia for the past, but see today buds opening up to new growth. One retreat participant expressed herself: “When my heart is dry, I know that a desert rose can flower there.” Someone else felt called, like Father Jutras, “to focus on what is going well around me and in the world”.

Am I asleep (seated) or alive (standing) in the deserts of my life, of my Church?

Next came the Table of Mercy, the day when, in the presence of Jesus, the “fragrance of the bread of forgiveness” wafted through all the gathering: the sinful woman offered her past life to Jesus as well as the best of herself. True regret is experienced in the heart: there is where Love lives and what Jesus looks at, not sin. Father Jutras told us that the wish to pardon puts pardon in our hearts; give ourselves time and respect the other’s rhythm. Afterwards there was a strong invitation to go and meet the Lord, the Vine-grower, so that he could revive our dry, fragile stems through his Mercy.

The talk on the Beatitudes made several participants want to integrate these into their daily lives, for it is the Table of Happiness. Easy to say: happy those who mourn, etc. Speaking about suffering, which he took from Jean-Paul II, Father Jutras said that the person who unites his/her suffering to that of Jesus becomes a peacemaker and suffering which sometimes provokes death in God’s plan often leads to a transformation of the heart, something that keeps our hearts in a spirit of joy.

The Table of Mary was not forgotten. She was standing at the foot of the cross and she is near the altar. She is the Eucharistic Woman; she gave us Jesus, she gives us the Living Bread.

Regarding the atmosphere and what made the retreat participants happy, everyone was delighted with the retreat. It was a Table of Grace and Love. Father Jutras’ teaching, truly integrated in his life as a man and priest, was given simply with concrete examples, fruit, sand, a bust of Moses, sitting on the table. A priest, it was noticed, of great sensitivity and depth, with a delicate ability to reply to each person’s questions. He was able to include everyone. A new widow at Faith and Sharing was impressed by the welcome and respect for each individual, regardless of age, nationality and physical condition.



At Faith and Sharing, they say there is always friendliness, fraternity and openness to others.

May we, and this is also the wish of Father Jutras, always remain in wonder, hope and love. Let us respond generously to the mission left to us by the Lord, to build the Vine of the Kingdom by revealing his Love. ■

Our Retreat, an Encounter



By Lise Morin
Coordinator - Faith and Sharing - Sherbrooke

Greetings,

In quiet happiness, I become aware that the “communion of hearts” was part of the retreat of Faith and Sharing that took place in Sherbrooke last August. Indeed, each brother and sister, by their very presence, truly created community by holding each other’s hand so as to blissfully live in harmony the various encounters with God.

Endowed with a wonderful gift, our beloved friend Brother Yves Légaré s.c. took the time to put into practice the Word of the Gospel that he was preaching. Also, by his capacity to listen, by his compassion and touching simplicity, he made himself close to one and all. It was a great privilege and a bountiful grace that God gave us by making available to us the services of such a sincere man.



To embellish a small part of the retreat, the fortieth anniversary of our wonderful Sherbrooke community was celebrated joyfully, fraternally and with great faith. Many wonderful memories were recalled: the Eucharist was really lively and nourished our hearts; the supper, truly delicious, united all those present; the evening was enchanting and brought out all the creative talents of the thirty participants. So it was in all simplicity that our forty years were celebrated.

“If you only knew the gift of God”, as explained by Yves Légaré, is an invitation to live all our lives in a heartfelt relationship with Christ. Therefore, our retreat is far from over.

Have a beautiful Autumn! ■

For me, what is the meaning of Faith and Sharing?

During the Sherbrooke retreat, the participants were invited to answer the following question: “For me, what is the meaning of Faith and Sharing?”

For me, Faith and Sharing is my family. It’s a treasure of love among sisters and brothers, a rare diamond of the love of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in an atmosphere of silence and meditation.

Faith and Sharing, a gathering of friends!

How can I describe the pleasure of being with you: love, prayers and songs!

Faith and Sharing, it’s a question of forgetting one’s selfishness and the pleasure of being with friends that we can love and help; it is a source of joy in a milieu of prayers and hymns.

Faith and Sharing, a page from the Gospel, a way of living like Jesus while living our own lives.

Faith and Sharing: a small and new family, a Church overflowing with love.

Faith and Sharing: for me, a real encounter with Jesus with no make-up. No faking. Faith and Sharing has changed my life and, I hope, gave it a true meaning. Thanks to my brothers and sisters; for me, you are Jesus truly living today.

I'm really happy to be with you. I like to help and sing. We continue to pray for Maryse and her children and for all those whom we love. And I pray for Michel, the guitar player and Claudette the singer.

Faith and Sharing, a place to meet and where we discover life, what really makes us live, the bread of love, the bread of friendship and the bread of mercy. The place where we learn to share this bread with others and that brings us peace.

Faith and Sharing: my spiritual family.

Relationships, mutual help, simplicity, fraternity, prayers, faith, love, graces.

It is within Faith and Sharing that, for the first time, I have met the REAL world. During my whole life, it was a + that helped me along my journey. I give thanks to God for the very existence of Faith and Sharing.

Faith and Sharing, a place for healing and miracles! A place for words and for the Word. A place where one can meet others and HIM!

May love, peace and joy shine upon your 40th. I love you and pray for you.

Congratulations on your 40 years of existence. Faith and Sharing, a place of sharing, but especially a place of love.

I need to nourish my faith and Faith and Sharing truly gives me that invigorating food. "Man does not live on bread alone, but on the Word that comes from God". Truly, that bread of love is life.

Faith and Sharing, a place of welcome and sharing, a sharing of love and faith.



Faith and Sharing, a family of love where one meets God by means of others.

Faith and Sharing, a time to meet simple, authentic people full of the love of God and faith. May the Holy Spirit be your guide!

A peaceful time where I can live my faith and share it with others.

A meeting full of peace, full of love for myself, for the others and for Jesus, the God that I love so much.

A place where one beholds fraternity and grace, astonishing love and the sharing with others and where one can truly be oneself. Thank God for such a grace!

Faith and Sharing is a time of sharing, of peace and of love with my brothers and sisters. ■

Faith and Sharing Detroit Celebrates 35 years



*By Pat Mueller
Detroit*

The Detroit Faith and Sharing Community celebrated our 35th anniversary at the annual August retreat. Posters with the brochures from most of the past 35 years decorated the walls of the dining room where we enjoyed a giant cake, delicious ice cream and other foods. We remembered our members who have died and prayed for those who are sick. Fr. Larry Kaiser, who was on the organizing committee in 1976, spoke of the origins of Faith and Sharing in Detroit. (In 1975, Detroiters attended a F&S retreat in Windsor animated by Fr. George Leach and decided to organize a similar retreat across the river.)

We praise and thank God for 35 years of blessings for the many people who have attended our retreats.

For Me, What is Faith and Sharing?

At one of our monthly meetings, members were asked this question. Here are some of the responses.

Faith and Sharing...

- *Helps deepen my faith in God;*
- *Encourages me when I see the faithfulness of others;*
- *Sharing my faith with friends;*
- *Believing in Jesus and spreading His love;*
- *Learning to live my life better through the good example of others;*
- *A special time of gathering with others who have disabilities in any of the areas of human life e.g. mental, spiritual, intellectual or physical;*
- *Accepting one another with our weaknesses and strengths while sharing faith and fellowship;*
- *Coming together with other people and sharing faith with them which makes us more aware of the needs, sufferings and joys of others;*
- *Gaining a better understanding of love through sharing Christ and also receiving love through hugs and hearing the faith of others;*
- *I love the talks. They are heavenly! ■*



Wanted: The Next French Coordinator



By Jean Roy, North American French Coordinator

During the summer of 2007, I agreed to serve as the French North American Coordinator. The mandate is for a period of five years. Since then, I had the opportunity to meet outstanding people, people of Faith and Sharing. They were not the kind of people who made the headlines, but people who were committed, who dared to live the Gospel and to put forth the Word of God during the retreats or renewal sessions. The Faith and Sharing communities can be compared to the leaven that we put in the dough. Our society is not quite aware that they exist. However, as with other groups of faith, they are a necessity so as to prevent our world from becoming a “hardened dough”, but on the contrary, becoming a delicious bread made fresh by hope, faith and charity.

And if you keep track of the years, you will notice that my mandate as coordinator finishes next summer. Another person will have to take over. I would ask the French groups of Faith and Sharing to come up with some suggestions as to who could be or would be available for that position.

But beforehand, it would be wise to know what the duties of a French North American Coordinator are.

In 1984, some “wise people” responsible for Faith and Sharing decided to form a corporation so as to establish a link among the communities. The official name is “Faith and Sharing Fédération Foi et Partage”. So, as you can see by such a bilingual name and the word “Federation”, that the Corporation was registered in Canada, a bilingual and federal country and very much so... Beyond its Canadian administrative dimension, the aim of the Corporation is to establish a link among all the various groups of Faith and Sharing that are in North America. We often talk about “North American Faith and Sharing”. Being that the Faith and Sharing groups are found only in Canada and the United States, we could say “Universal Faith and Sharing”; but that would be quite pretentious...

The Corporation can gather funds, give out receipts for tax purposes and render many services. Its biggest task is the organization, about every three years, of a meeting or a retreat comprising members of all the Faith and Sharing groups, English and French.

To manage that corporation requires a board of directors like in all other corporations. Often, we prefer to say the “North American Committee”. Following the restructuring adopted during the 2010 Summer, that committee is made up of 4 persons; they meet once a year.

- A **secretary**: Isabelle Frappier has accepted the position
- A **French coordinator**: It is me !
- An **English coordinator**: Presently Eileen McIlwee.
- A **spiritual advisor**: Father Jacques Pelletier with all his vast rich experience.



And what does such a committee do? Mainly:

- Manage the corporation, prepare the annual general meeting and meet once a year.
- Prepare the North American retreat every three years.
- Establish communication with the communities.

In other words, the French coordinator strives to give life to all Faith and Sharing groups.

Thus, I invite you to take the time for discernment, to pray and talk with the others in such a way that names of persons capable of fulfilling the position could be suggested. If a name does come up, please let me know. Discernment will be made by the North American Committee to choose my replacement before next summer. Thank you! To reach me:

Jean Roy
3852, Grignon, Sherbrooke, QC, J1N 2W2
819-822-3172
jea_r@videotron.ca



Cakes of the year 2011



Valleyfield



Quebec



Sherbrooke

Getting together again



Louise Bergeron, Gilles Beauchemin, Maurice Thériault, Madeleine Séguin, Marc Rioux, Jacques Huppé
For the 40th anniversary of Faith and Sharing, Quebec, June 17th, 2011

Meetings, 2011-2012 Season

French speaking groups

Group	Location	Dates	Time	Theme for the year	Person to contact	Remarks	Next Retreat
Montréal QC	Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Church 5320 Côte-des-Neiges	3 rd Saturday of the month, except: - September 24 - October 29	9:30 am to 4:00 pm	Who is my neighbor? Lk 10:29	Mary Munroe (514) 481-1387 munroe80@videotron.ca	Bring your lunch	Summer 2012 Open retreat Date to come
Ottawa ON					Isabelle Frappier Robert Cronier (613) 741-8769		
Québec QC	I.R.D.P.Q. Centre François-Charron, 525 Wilfrid-Hamel	Last Saturday of the month, except: - December 17 - June 16	10:00 am to 3:45 pm	Building a more humane world	(418) 651-2880 (418) 831-0125 Web site (French only): www.foietpartage.org	Bring your lunch	
Rouyn-Noranda QC	St. Guillaume of Granada Church OR Guylaine's home	1 st Monday of the month	7:00 pm to 8:30		Gisèle and Émilien Labelle (819) 762-2515	Praying and sharing the Gospel of the day	July 31, August 1-2, 2012 Open retreat
Sherbrooke QC	- Précieux-Sang Church OR - Maison Les Béatitudes	2 nd Sunday of the month, Except October, April and May: 3 rd Sunday	1:30 pm to 7:00 pm	Let yourself be loved	Lise Morin lise.morin52@videotron.ca	Shared Meal Mass & Corn roast: August 26, 2012, Précieux-Sang Church	
Valleyfield QC	Saint-Augustin Church 110, Mathias Street Salaberry-de-Valleyfield	3 rd Monday of the month, except : - December 2 - June (to come)	6 :45 pm to 9:15 pm	You are my home, Jesus	Julie Prigent (450) 373-1956 pregent.julie@bell.net		June 2012 One day retreat Date to come

Meetings, 2011-2012 Season English speaking groups

Group	Location	Dates	Time	Theme for the year	Person to contact	Remarks	Next Retreat
Cleveland (Ohio)	2186 E. 35th Street, Cleveland	2 nd Tuesday of the month	7:00 pm		faithandsharing@gmail.com		Summer 2012 Date to come
Detroit (Michigan)	Corpus Christi Parish	3 rd Sunday of the month, Sept.-Nov., Feb.-May + Dec. 11 th Christmas Party	3:00 pm to 5:30 pm		John Fitzpatrick: jmfitzpatrick@msn.com Pat Mueller: paulmueller1@juno.com		August 2-5, 2012
Jacksonville (Florida)					Rebecca Aleman (904) 230-7447 dosacamps@gmail.com www.dosacamps.com		May 29 to June 2, 2012
Halifax (Nova Scotia)	Senior's residence Leppert Street	3 rd Wednesday of the month	7:30 pm		Terry Wigle (902) 465-6890	Date to come: Christmas dinner	
Saskatoon (Saskatchewan)					Lucie Leduc, (306) 242-1916 programming@queenshouse.com		
Toronto (Ontario)	Downtown Toronto	Days of prayer: - November 19 th - March 2012			Monica Donovan (416) 425-9944	Advent and Lenten Day of Prayer	August 12-16, 2012
Vancouver Island (British Columbia)	Bethlehem Retreat Center, Nanaimo (BC)				Andre and Mary Catherine Ruel (250) 338-9072 amcruel@shaw.ca		Summer 2012 Date to come
Yarmouth (Nova Scotia)	St. Ambrose Cathedral Parish Center	1 st Wednesday of the month	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Studying Jean Vanier	Raymonde Doucet (902) 742-2822		Summer 2012 Date to come