

## History of Faith and Sharing - Montreal



Pierre Desroches  
1992

*By Pierre Desroches*

Following one of Marylake's first retreats, people who participated in it were at the origin of Faith and Sharing-Montreal: Yolande Brodeur c.n.d, Jean-Marie Côté cssr and a few others. When the retreat was over, people asked Jean to be able to renew the experience, but he was already well taken with the development of L'Arche and Faith and Light and invited them to do it themselves. It was the birth of Faith and Sharing.

A small group started in Montreal and I believe that the first retreat took place at Sainte-Cunégonde parish in the Saint-Henri neighborhood, at the invitation of the pastor who was Guy Bouillé, himself present at Marylake.

Jean-Eudes Bourque, then at the Foyer de Charité in Pointe-aux-Trembles, participated in this event and his life was greatly changed. At the beginning, Sister Yolande Brodeur came from Quebec, I think every two weeks, and the little cell held a prayer meeting in the manner of Faith and Sharing, at the residence of the Redemptorists in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. The Redemptorist community was very involved in the early days of Faith and Sharing-Montreal.

The first retreats were spent in Val-Morin where I personally never went. There were many couples involved including Betty Renaud and her husband Phil. Betty is the founder of Faith and Light for the Montreal area. The first retreats were held in a closed environment during the summer period. I had my first retreat in Saint-Côme in the summer of 1978. I was a seminarian at the parish of Saint-Alphonse d'Youville and was under the responsibility of the Redemptorists.

I was already involved in the Victor-Doré school, a special school of the school board for physically handicapped children. When I registered for the retreat, I received Jean-Marie Côté's phonecall to ask if I would agree to preach it with him. He was to preach it with his colleague Vincent Larouche, but he had to leave before the retreat for his new appointment in Haiti. So I was with Jean-Marie the preacher for that year. At the end of the retreat Jean-Marie confirmed me as a preacher by inviting me not to neglect this gift received from God.



Sr. Yolande  
Brodeur, 2005



Jean-Eudes Bourque,  
2011



Jean-Marie Côté,  
1978



Gilles Dufour, 2011

My presence at the Victor-Doré school encouraged the arrival of my students in the Faith and Sharing group. Many have remained very loyal to Faith and Sharing and Gilles Dufour is still a very active member of the Montreal group.

For a few years, closed retreats continued, but an imbalance in the number of people with disabilities and seeking care forced us to revisit the formula. This was the moment when we started the popular retreats at Saint-Sacrement parish in Montreal. There, every summer, with the participation of parish volunteers and the participation of Faith and Sharing we could meet - more than one hundred people in communion with

homeless people, to live and celebrate the Feast of Faith and Sharing.

Marc Rioux, Rita Gagné, Angèle Gagné, Jacques Pelletier, Mary Munroe, Jana Letourneau, Claude Dussault my son, Stéphane Martin and many others were friends, Brothers and Sisters of Faith and Sharing-Montreal. Today, the small community continues at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Parish and we remain attentive to where God leads us. 💜



Stéphane Martin and Éric Parizeau  
2004



At Notre-Dame-des-Neiges parish, 2011