

The origins of Faith and Sharing in Sherbrooke

*Two separate prayer groups came together to form Faith and Sharing in Sherbrooke.
Here is the story of each group.*



Denise and Gilles Croteau, 2011

By Denise Croteau

In 1971, following a retreat of Jean Vanier at Val Morin, people begin a prayer group in the spirit of this retreat: Lise St-Arnaud, Denise and Gilles Croteau, Sr. Yolande Brodeur, Yvonne Croteau, Michel-André Chénard and some others. Their meetings were weekly. There were some people with physical or intellectual disabilities. Meetings took place at the Sisters of Mercy, at Michel-

André Chénard home, at “Mont Notre-Dame”, at the parish “Perpétuel-Secours”, and recollections at the Poor Clares of Lennoxville and at our cottage.

I went to the annual retreats in Val Morin, for about 10 years, preached by Jean Vanier, then by Father Jean-Marie Côté. Returning from the retreats, I was stimulated. It made me live. Faith and Sharing was pleasant, motivating. I learned to pray, a prayer shared with others. I have had great friendships, which I do not forget. 💜



Yvon Bilodeau and Janvier Caron,
about 1982

By Yvon Bilodeau, priest

In January 1973, during the week of prayer for Christian Unity, a small group of people gathered at the “Christ-Roi” parish of Sherbrooke at the invitation of two priests of the pastoral team, Guy Labrecque and Yvon Bilodeau . The purpose was precisely to pray for the unity of Christians.

The following week, the two pastors, after consulting the people, decided to continue the prayer meetings. Young people and adults (about a dozen) met up. The prayer formula was simple, inspired by the retreats of Jean Vanier, to which some participated.

Then the meeting place moved to the residence of the Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart, Wellington Street

South. The prayer group, which had no name, was growing and continued to meet every week. In the year that followed, the meetings were held at the Youville Hospital, where Brother Jean Beloin, who had just arrived from Africa, became a member of the group.

In August 1975, several members took part in the Faith and Sharing Retreat in Quebec City. It became obvious then for them that they belonged to the same spiritual family. The group now had a name: Faith and Sharing.

Links continued to be forged with the Quebec and New Brunswick retreatants. Finally, a Faith and Sharing retreat was organized in the Sherbrooke area. Then in Lennoxville, St-Ferdinand of Halifax, Waterville and Bromptonville, in addition to the monthly meetings held at the Sherbrooke Seminary. Since then, these meetings and retreats have continued to take place. 💜



1985 Retreat



Claude Gendron, 2004



In Montreal for the visit of the Holy Father, 1984



At the hospital, pray around Claudette Tremblay, about 2002



Sharing team at "Camp Bel-Air", 1994

The love at Faith and Sharing since its beginnings



At "Séminaire de Sherbrooke", about 1990



Mgr Gérard Cambron
and Lise Morin, 2004

By: Lise Morin, Sherbrooke

Greetings,

"Love one another as I have loved you." Jn 15:12

The Word of God inspired the Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke Community, more than forty-five years ago. Indeed, Christ passed through the heart of Jean Vanier whose message of loving the little ones joined the fertility of various beautiful other souls. By their inspiration to offer a place to anyone who recognizes his "poverty", Faith and Sharing was born.

Faith and Sharing is therefore a mission to which the Lord has called us. Let us thank people for their "yes" to build community to welcome brothers and sisters. These pioneers, in simplicity and trust, believed that every person deserved an undoubted dignity. To elevate every human being from their wounds, poverty and fragility, dressing them in various ways, such was their prayer.

The essence of our beautiful community is love. Without prejudice, we invite our neighbor to reveal his sacred history. The doors of Faith and Sharing are always open to discover the gifts that spring from the heart. This sharing enriches our faith.

As we grow older, we put our hope in God so that he guides our steps for the continuity of Faith and Sharing. In what aspects will we be signs of the Gospel for each other? Let us be attentive to the breath of the Holy Spirit in our service garden.

Faith and Sharing is an important drop of life created by love for love. 💙