

Heart - to - Heart

Theme: Small Group Sharing

At Faith and Sharing

The purpose of the small groups of sharing and praying is to:

- say what I have heard
 - say what I have contemplated
 - share what I have perceived
- of the Word of God



It is not for chattering.
It is not to talk for the sake of talking.

It is to:

- meditate on the Word of God
- keep it in one's heart
- say only the things that the Holy Spirit inspires me to say

Because that is what I share with the others:

- what I have enjoyed
 - what I have contemplated
- of the Word of God

Theme: Small Group Sharing

The Group in our Spiritual Meeting

The monthly gathering contains a variety of activities: THE WORD OF GOD - ADORATION - SHARING OF A MEAL - EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION & "SHARING AS A GROUP". Each activity is very important and together they constitute a day of spiritual replenishment.

The group is a means to nourish our experience of faith, to bring forth to one another what has struck the members in the Word of God received in the morning, and to share one's real life experience according to that Word of God.

VERY IMPORTANT: Everything is lived with great respect and with the complete freedom to share or not. We live intense moments of prayer, of sharing, of silence, and of helping one another.

And at the end of the day, as we leave, we must not forget to journey spiritually with one another during the whole month and to give a little of those spiritual richness to the people around us.

Faith and Sharing is a lot more than a one-day per month affair; we are invited to carry it constantly throughout our daily routine.

Heart-to-Heart

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BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, let us be witnesses to HIS PRESENCE at the very heart of our world.

Hélène Verret
Québec



Themes of upcoming issues

October 2010 (dead line: Sept. 15, 2010):

Where do you find Hope in Faith and Sharing?

April 2011 (dead line: March 15, 2011):

Celebrate the Lord

Theme: Small Group Sharing

Group Sharing: precious moments

What beautiful moments I experienced while sharing with the group! It was really a special school! I must even admit that, in a certain way, it saved me, because when I entered Faith and Sharing, I was going through some difficult times and I needed a place where I would be welcomed and listened to with great love and compassion.

Here, in Chicoutimi, we were privileged to have experts on the subject. Having organized a long popular retreat with Jean Vanier and Rita Gagné in 1989, the organizers, with the help of Jacques Pelletier, recognized the importance of giving a sound formation to the leaders of the sharing groups. They were seconded by people of experience and certainly made use of what had been done in the past.

I know that Sister Yolande Brodeur has written very interesting material on the subject. Because we found that such a step was important for our Faith and Sharing days, we have spent several days of formation and reflection on the subject, during all the 20 years of our existence.

The atmosphere throughout the sharing with the group was unique. Elsewhere, in other meetings, I would notice a difference. I could not perceive the same quality of listening and compassion. Those responsible for our own community would see to protecting our way of functioning, and for that, we wrote down clear instructions that each leader had to read and apply to his small group. One of those directives was to pray for the person who was doing the sharing, and believe me, that stopped us from intervening or to enter into a discussion. Such moments are really precious for me; to keep silent so as to listen is the least we can do to be respectful.



“Where two or more are gathered together in my name, I am in your midst”. With such a Guest, no wonder the moment is beautiful and so great! If I am truly attentive, I can feel God in my brother or sister who is suffering or full of gratitude.

Faith and Sharing has allowed me to live very intense moments full of graces.

I have learned a lot about life as a result of my sharing with others.

I have learned a lot about people as a result of my sharing with them a part of life.

I would even say that they were darn good moments, not to mention that they were also sacred moments.

As we are people of communion, it is not surprising that for part of our days we continue these nourishing moments, moments so precious that they must be lived with great respect. I must humbly confess that I really miss such nourishment that satisfies both heart and soul. Never was I disappointed by attending such meetings made up of listening and praying. Thanks to all those with whom I was part of the group.

Andrée Vigneault
Chicoutimi

The Role of the Sharing Group In Faith & Sharing

I've been calling them Small Groups...the gatherings during the retreat to talk with each other about our story of faith. Our Faith & Sharing documents (*The Grace of Faith and Sharing* – 1988- and *The Practical Guide for Retreats and Other Meetings* - 1988) call them Sharing Groups or Prayer Groups. What's in a name? More than we might think!! “Small” describes the size of the group; “sharing” describes the purpose or reason for the group; and “prayer” describes the atmosphere of the group, a setting where there is “sharing in a spirit of prayer; praying in a spirit of sharing.” (*The Practical Guide*, 2.2.2.2)

As we contemplate what name to use, let us also look closely at our documents for guidelines about this important element of a Faith & Sharing Retreat. All the quotes are from *The Practical Guide*, Section 2.2.2.2, except as noted.

How important is the sharing group?

“Since the first retreat in 1968, the meeting of small prayer groups...is an essential feature of the retreat: the sharing group is just as important as the proclamation of the Word, the Eucharist, and adoration in the Katimavik.” 2.1.3

Why do we meet in sharing groups?

“The first aim and the main reason for meeting in sharing groups is to learn to speak together with Jesus believing that He is really present in the group.”

Is there a specific structure?

“...there is no scenario or structure. The leader does not have to organize what will take place. Each person tries to be open to welcoming life.”

How many people should be in a group? “...6 to 8 people...”

How much time should be given to the sharing group? “...about one hour”...so the gathering has “a better chance of being fruitful.”

How often should the groups meet? “...usually meet twice daily.”

Where should the groups meet? “...in an appropriate setting.”

What are we to share?

- ❖ “...our faith and our life in the light of the Word of God”
- ❖ “...the Word we have listened to and received in the preaching, the celebrations , or read in the Bible”
- ❖ “...spontaneous prayers”
- ❖ “...readymade prayers”
- ❖ “...generous periods of silence.”

Why should there be periods of silence in a sharing group?

“To allow each person to reach deeply within himself/herself...to that zone of poverty where we all are equal. This is how people often experience something new...an experience of Jesus in the heart of their being, in the center of their lives.”

What atmosphere is expected in a sharing group?

We always should share with “the greatest respect and freedom for each individual. No one is obliged to express himself/herself but everyone is invited to participate in the sharing group...”

What effect do the sharing groups have on the members?

The group “opens us to each other in truth, respect, simplicity and humility. Such a meeting allows us to let go of our fears, our masks, our blocks and to live in the [community] to which Jesus invites us.”

The Grace of Faith and Sharing offers a thoughtful summary of the Sharing Group:

“Small groups, that reflect the variety of gifts and calls of the people, meet regularly during the course of the retreat. It is here often that people, through the sharing of themselves and their faith and carrying each other in prayer, are able to touch more deeply their own woundedness and experience the healing touch of Jesus through His people, His body.”

Let us pray for each other, that whatever the name we use (Small/Sharing/Prayer), the groups who share together at retreats, days of reflection or monthly meetings are faithful to the guidelines of Faith and Sharing!



Pat Mueller
English Coordinator

Theme: Small Group Sharing

Enriching Oneself with the Word in the Group

At Faith and Sharing, we are privileged to benefit from the Word of God by different means.

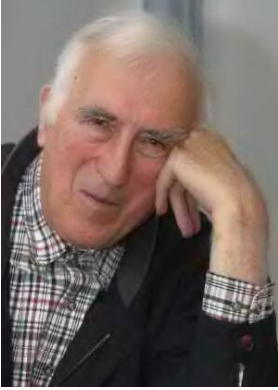
Actually, at each of our monthly meetings, persons who are invited to give us a talk or to celebrate the Eucharist open our hearts to the Gospel in a variety of ways which nurture our spiritual lives.

Furthermore, by the very important means of sharing as a group, we are invited to express, to verbalize, even to actualize the Word that we have heard previously. And if we wish to do so, we are free to disclose to our neighbors, without being judged, the wounds and frailties that we carry within us. Our strengths could eventually appear under a more positive angle. The group represents a living unit that brings together the confidentiality and the trust that we seek.

I firmly believe that total simplicity in our sharing as a group and in the persons that are present reflects the beauty of our communities of Faith and Sharing so deeply inspired by the spirituality that inhabits our dear friend Jean Vanier.

Let us dare to become a group that will give birth to a truly lasting fraternal communion.

Lise Morin
Coordinator for Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke



Heart to Heart with Jean Vanier

Welcoming other people as they are

I realize more and more that loving means welcoming other people as they are, with great respect because they are different; they are someone, they are a child of God. Others have their gifts, their vulnerability, their beauty and of course their fragilities. When we welcome others, we free them so they can be themselves.

Jean Vanier

Change the Outlook of your Heart

«*Change the outlook of your heart...*» These words remind us of Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees: "You have a stony heart".

The person with a hard heart is the one all trapped in himself or in herself. He or she sees himself or herself at the center of the universe. With time, a shell seals up the heart, and consequently we have the expression: to have a stony heart. This means that the person is deprived of love and, like a snail in its shell, the outlook is blotted out.

In other words, the person with a stony heart refuses to love or to be loved. But what is the consequence of rejecting love?

In his book, «*Choose God*», Jean Lafrance tells us what his thinking is on this:

When, in our relations with our brothers, we deal with the hard part of our heart, we are rude and aggressive, while on the other hand the Spirit, established in us, motivates us to be gentle and meek. After all, every time we feel bitterness, anger or unkindness, let us not try to fight it at the level of our will to get rid of the threats, but let us reach deep in our heart, where the Holy Spirit is. He is the one who will move us towards peace and kindness.

To carry out a conversion

- is to change our attitude towards our own environment;
- is to change our way of accepting what we cannot change;
- is to welcome with love those we meet everyday.

It's easy to write down a list of these changes, but to achieve them successfully is more difficult. What is impossible to do by myself is possible to accomplish with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is why I pray to the Lord to change my stony heart and to replace it with a natural heart.

*Lord, come to my assistance.
Change the outlook of my heart.*



Carmen Dallaire
Chicoutimi



Seeking Nominations for English Coordinator



As announced in the October Heart to Heart, it is time to call forth someone from our English speaking communities to serve Faith & Sharing as the new English Coordinator beginning in July 2010.

The English Coordinator works closely with the French Coordinator, is a member of the North American Committee, helps prepare the North American retreats and communicates with local English speaking communities. The nomination is for a 3-year term with the possibility of a 2-year renewal.

The person nominated should be active in a local Faith & Sharing Community and have a commitment to and a love for the mission of Faith & Sharing.

The North American Committee depends on your insight and knowledge of local members to help us nominate candidates for this leadership position. Please take this challenge and prayerfully reflect on possible nominees to serve as the English Coordinator of Faith and Sharing.

Please send the name of a nominee (yourself?) with a few sentences about why you are nominating this person to

Pat Mueller, English Coordinator
29640 Vista Ct, Farmington Hills, MI 48331
248.661.9041
ppmueller@att.net

Is It Time to Downsize Faith & Sharing? (Part 2)

In the last issue of Heart to Heart (October 2009), I outlined some of the questions the North American Committee (NAC) began asking about the current structure of Faith & Sharing. Our questions arose because the Regional structure began feeling cumbersome and no longer relevant in our current reality.

The October 2009 article lists further questions, conclusions, first steps in the process and a number of points that will stay the same. I will not repeat them here.

The NAC's overall conclusion: Let us draw closer to one another by suppressing the Regions and reorganizing our structure. This process has moved forward in the last 6 months:

1. Two drafts of the new structure have been written and reviewed.
2. Questions about changes were emailed to NAC members. Decisions were based on the wisdom of their comments.
3. Jean Roy, French Coordinator, corresponded with Corporation Canada to inquire about the need for both an Executive Committee and a Board of Directors (the North American Committee). Their answer: A Corporation does not need to have an Executive Committee. It is optional.
4. A final draft was written and sent to NAC members for comments, corrections, additions etc.

What is different in the new structure?

1. The Regional structure is suppressed.
2. There will no longer be a separate Executive Committee.

3. The NAC decreases from 10 members (7 Regional Coordinators, 2 NAC Coordinators and a Spiritual Guide) to 4/5 members (2 NAC Coordinators, a Spiritual Guide, a Secretary and a Treasurer who may also hold another position). In the current structure the Secretary and Treasurer are volunteers among the NAC members.
4. The titles of NAC leaders are Co-Coordinator rather than Coordinator and Vice-Coordinator.
5. The role of the Local Coordinator is included in the document.

In addition to the items listed in the October 2009 bulletin, what else will stay the same?

1. Terms of office for the Co-coordinators
2. The Role of the Spiritual Guide
3. Co-coordinators selected through a discernment process
4. Secretary and Treasurer appointed by the NAC

Next Steps:

1. Approval of the New Structure and By-laws by the General Assembly in July 2010.
2. Send Corporation Canada a letter with our new documents for their approval. There is no fee for this service.
3. Print copies of the new documents for NAC and the leaders of all local communities.

All members are welcome to review the new document, especially those attending the NA Retreat & General Assembly in July.

For English: paulmueller1@juno.com

For French: jea_r@videotron.ca (The document is being translated into French so a brief delay is possible.)

The 2010 General Assembly will be held during the NA Retreat in July. In order to efficiently complete the business of the General Assembly and not use precious retreat time, please submit any questions, suggestions or proposed amendments BEFORE the Assembly. The NAC will then have sufficient time to discuss your recommendations and, if needed, to prepare alternative proposals. We are happy to take as much time as needed to work out this new structure BEFORE July in order to have a smooth and fruitful General Assembly meeting.

Please continue to pray that the changes to our structure will support the mission of Faith & Sharing and revitalize us all in the Spirit of Faith & Sharing.

Pat Mueller
English Coordinator

Could You Assist Faith & Sharing? (or know someone who could)

Once the new structure is accepted by the General Assembly, the North American Committee will need to appoint a Secretary for the Committee. Would you consider this ministry for Faith & Sharing?

The role of the Secretary will include the typical tasks of:

- Being a member of the Committee
- Being responsible for the minutes of all proceedings (NAC meeting and the General Assembly)
- Taking care of the Faith & Sharing documents & the book containing the minutes.

The role also has the **option** of growing to fit the interests and talents of the person appointed, such as

- Being NA Treasurer
- Assisting with the preparation of the retreat (every third year)
- Preparing for the NAC & General Assembly
- Gathering articles for and promoting Heart to Heart
- Managing a Faith & Sharing website

While being bi-lingual is not essential, it would help!!

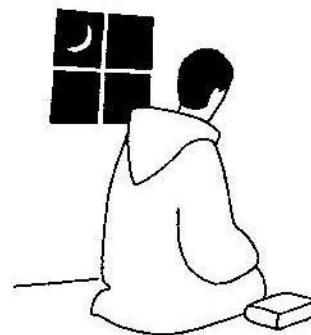
Are you willing to explore the possibility (or know someone who might be interested)?

Contact Jean Roy: jeanr@videotron.ca

Thank you for considering the possibility.

Turn Down the Volume! Listen to God's Call.

This is an invitation to YOU to “turn down the volume”: the noise and business in your life and to accept God’s call to attend the Faith and Sharing 2010 North American Retreat. This retreat is much like your own local retreat, except you have no details to worry about!!



Date: Sunday July 18: registration from 2 – 3 pm (retreat begins at 3 pm) through Wednesday afternoon July 21st at 1 pm.

Animator: Fr. Pierre Desroches from Montreal, a former French Coordinator for Faith & Sharing. The talks will be given in both languages, alternating between French and English. Translation equipment will be provided.

Theme: “Behold, I make all things new” Rev. 21, 5

Place: Centre de l’Amour, Plantagenet, Ontario in the countryside fifty kilometers east of Ottawa. (www.centredelamour.org)

Transportation: Arrangements can be made to pick you up from the airport or bus station and drive you to the retreat center. Please note this on your registration form.

Registration Form: enclosed in this Heart to Heart

Registration Deadline: June 15th

Cost: Deposit - \$20 non-refundable for all
+ \$140 for room and board at the Retreat Center

Please consider “turning down the volume” in your life and coming to pray and share with other F&S members. What a golden opportunity to develop closer links with other communities and to drink deeply from the well of God’s Word.

Pat Mueller
English Coordinator

2010 Retreats

R	Location	Dates	Theme	Animator	Person to contact	Remarks
1	St Ambrose Parish Center Yarmouth (NS)	August 19-22	Come, See, Celebrate	Rosaire Blais	Raymonde Doucet (902) 742-2822 raydoucet7@hotmail.com	
2	Ste-Angèle (St-Malo) Québec city (Qc)	August 16-18		Sr. Angèle Gagné F. Pierre Côté	Louise Bergeron (418) 651-2880	Open retreat
3	St. Augustin Church Valleyfield (Qc)	June 2	"Do you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" 1 Co 3,16	Pierre Charland, Secular Franciscan	Julie Prigent (450) 373-1956 julie.pregent@sympatico.ca	Shared meal
3	N.-D.-des-Neiges Church Montréal (Qc)	July 5-7 9:30 – 16:00	Eucharist: Source of Healing	Father Léon Robichaud, I.V.Dei	Mary Munroe (514) 481-1387	Open retreat Bring your lunch
3	Camp Fatima Rouyn-Noranda (Qc)	July 26-29	Love, as I am	Robert Larouche	Gisèle & Émilien Labelle (819) 762-2515	Family Camp
3	Précieux-Sang church Sherbrooke (Qc)	August 22 15:00 – 20:00			Maison Béatit. (819)563-7609 Lise Morin (819) 565-0307	Mass & Corn roast
4	Mary Lake Toronto (Ontario)	August 13-15 August 15-20			Monica Donovan (416) 425-9944	
5	Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre Saskatoon (SK)	October 15-17	Love one another as I have loved you	Rev. Paul Facet, OMI	Lucie Leduc, (306) 242-1916 programming@queenshouse.com	
6	Bethlehem Retreat Center Nanaimo (BC)	August 8-13		Michael Hryniuk	André & Mary Catherine Ruel (250) 338-9072 amcruel@shaw.bc.ca	With children and youth programs
7	Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, near Cleveland (Ohio)	June 17-20	Make Me A Channel of Your Peace	Rich Clarke	Chris Alvarado faithandsharing@gmail.com	
7	St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center Detroit (Michigan)	August 5-8	All the Ends of the Earth have Seen the Power of God	Socorro Truchan Katherine Paul	Rita Neal: beatzelb@lycos.com John Fitzpatrick: jmfitzpatrick@msn.com	
7	Camp St. John Jacksonville (Florida)	August 29 - September 2	Mary	Fr. Ron Camarda Sr. Maureen Kelley	Trisha Kee (904) 230-7447 tkee@dosacamps.com	