

Faith and Sharing



H e a r t - t o - H e a r t

North American Bulletin

April 2022

Volume 48, no. 2

Theme of this bulletin: "**Forgiveness**"

"Forgive us for war, O Lord" (*Pope Francis*)



Image from Diane Marcoux, Sherbrooke

Forgiveness, source of peace...



*By Lise Morin
Sherbrooke*

Greetings,

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” Mark 11.25

Forgiveness surpasses giving, for this purpose forgiveness should easily erase all faults. But humanly, it doesn't always happen that way. Scratches are sometimes slow to fade and divine help is greatly appropriate.

Also, I must remember that no one owns perfection. Everyone's story is different since his conception. The strengths of one can be the weaknesses of another.

So, only God in his mercy can contribute to washing my heart of my scratches. I have to repeat this process over and over again. The Lord never complains about my prayers. He answers them in his own way and I thank him for it.

Heart-to-Heart

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Prayer is like a song when I feel the love of Christ in my neighbor and in me.

Happy Easter !



Theme of upcoming issue
October 2022 (dead line September 15):

Putting “The Word” into practice

Our reconciliation and healing day



By Claire Donovan
Vancouver Island

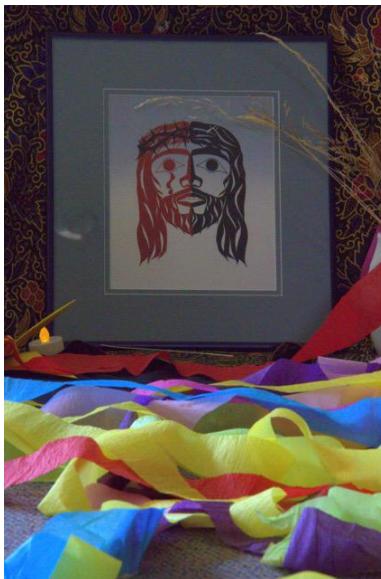
Every year at our 5 day summer retreats we traditionally have a day of quiet mid-retreat.

After a morning talk usually with a focus on a social issue, we spend the day quietly pondering, praying, walking, resting..... or whatever God invites each of us into.

In the evening the core team creates a community reconciliation and healing ritual. Each year is different and evolves from the flow of the retreat, the theme and whatever bubbles up.

This day of quiet and community ritual is for many the most important part of their retreat - a time to go inward with the support of the community around and God guiding the soul into deep reflection, and revealing and letting go.

In the evening we bring a symbol from nature or bless each other or light a candle and pray for and with each other to be healed and freed from the things that bind us and remember that we are beloved.



Forgiveness



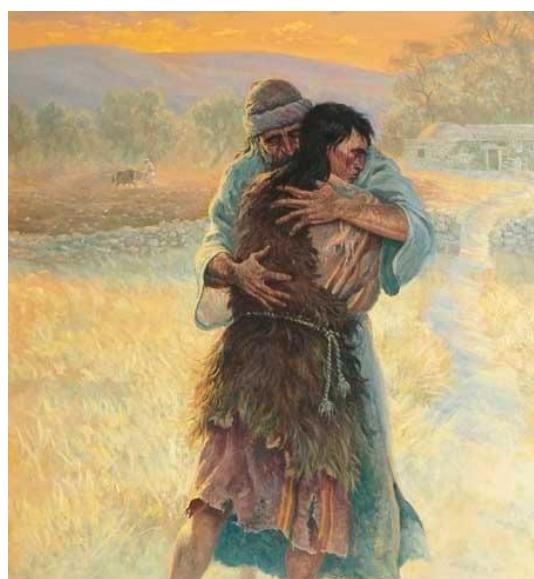
By Angèle Gagné osu
Quebec city

How many times, Lord, must I forgive? What is it to forgive? A dictionary tells us that to forgive is **to let go, to leave free, to re-establish the relationship between two beings, broken because of an offense**, and I add, **of confinement!**

A very down-to-earth image from my childhood comes to me: **To let go, to leave free**. I see these little calves born and locked in the barn all winter. When spring comes, we open the door to freedom! They jump, frolic, fill their bellies with fresh herbs as if to reestablish their relationship broken up all winter with the fresh air they are breathing for the first time! They taste a new green and fresh menu offered to them by the large fields! They gorge themselves on it until their stomachs hurt!



In the “Our Father”, we ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who have offended us. This leaves me to ponder. Am I able to forgive God's way? Could it be that Jesus doesn't doubt our ability to forgive? Do we have within us this strength coming from God like a germ of life which only asks to grow? If we trusted this germ!



I asked myself again: What is **like God? God's way of forgiving?** I believe that Jesus shows it to us through parables, especially that of the Father who welcomes his son returning from his descent into the land of pigs! The son who no longer recognizes himself as a child and who wants to be treated like a slave! I think that's his biggest sin! His father, with open heart and arms, gives him back his dignity and freedom as a son! **You are still and always my son!** We know the rest! What Father Pierre-René told us about the eldest son is magnificent and moving!

I like the chapter on **forgiveness**, written by Father Henri Boulad, in his book *The Mystery of Being: Forgiveness is from God. He who forgives resembles God. Be merciful as your Father is merciful*. And he continues: **If forgiveness is so difficult it is because it touches what is deepest in us: the sense of our dignity, of our honor. This is why forgiveness requires true heroism.**

Forgive yourself! That's hard too! It is not to forget! It is undoubtedly to regain peace, and to welcome each other with open arms and hearts as God welcomes us! Break free and let go!

This dinner that my father offered me to share with him, insisting that he would pay for it, a week before his death! I refused because I didn't feel able to see him eating his soup while shaking and getting dirty! He, so proud, so upright! He who cured the little calves gassed by too much wet grass!

How hard it was for me to forgive myself for this cowardice on my part! I still have tears in my eyes and it's been 30 years!

I end with these other words of Father Boulad: **To forgive is to broaden our heart; it is to absorb our fault in an abyss of love that we open deep inside. To forgive is to grow in humanity.**



Forgiveness



*By Pat Mueller
Detroit*

I recently attended a presentation by Fr. Bernie Owens, SJ, on the topic of forgiveness.

He began with a list of what forgiveness is NOT. Among other things, he reminded us that forgiveness is not a matter of repressing the hurt, anger, and grief that often accompanies the need to forgive. It is also not something that is simple to process; something we can get over soon. Most importantly, it does not involve me thinking that I must have it within me alone to forgive.

Rather forgiveness involves me and God. It is an action centered in prayer. It is God who forgives. Our role in the process is to unite with God into the darkness of the situation and with God, to forgive the other person(s).

From the mystic Julian of Norwich: "In this life, mercy and forgiveness is our way and evermore lead us to grace." Is it possible that Julian is telling us that our own embrace of mercy and forgiveness will be exactly what makes us good? Hmmmm. Something to ponder.



The heart has its reasons

By Suzanne Crête-Legault
Valleyfield

On December 5, 2021, after more than 20 months of the pandemic, without a gathering of our small community of **Faith and Sharing** in the Diocese of Valleyfield, we, members of the Committee, initiated a distribution of candy boxes by going to visit our members. The goal was to see them again, greet them and above all bring them joy and support. Especially since many were confined to their homes, deprived of work, social contacts and the weekly distractions to which they were accustomed.

The Committee was represented by our coordinator, Julie Prégent, her spouse André Leroux, Mélissa Cécyre, Robert Dupuis in the first car and André Legault, my husband, and myself in the second car. Roselyne Lefebvre having been assigned to another task. We were all happily decked out in Christmas finery.



Our first stop was for Benoît and his mom, Lise. Welcomed with great pleasure, we saw the sun in their eyes and the appreciation of our gesture!



We continued on the road directing us towards the family residence of Louise. Her husband was very touched and full of attention! Glad to have us despite the fact that they were dealing with Louise's declining health. She entered God's house a few weeks later, on December 23! We had said our goodbye! 😞



Continuing our visits, we returned to downtown Salaberry-de-Valleyfield to see three other members: Jean-Pierre, Jeannine and Berthe! Coming to meet us, Jean-Pierre made sure that no snow was in our way! Smiles under the masks, sparkling eyes and a warm heart, that's what awaited us!



We changed neighborhood to go to Ghislaine and Michel. But we weren't going to make anyone jealous, we had planned for it and brought treats for all the residents. We sang them a little Christmas tune! They were most grateful, but certainly no happier than we were!



Next the Saint-Charles, a residence for seniors where Laurette awaits us. We learned that Aurore is hospitalized! 😞 A little song followed, no kisses (pandemic requirement).



Then we headed to the Saint-Timothée district to meet Jocelyne. She had prepared notes for us expressing all her affection with great sensitivity!



Grande-Île then opened its doors to us. First, Julie and Jocelyne receive us in the portico, but of course the other residents were entitled to the same treatment!

The pretty candy boxes made by Roselyne, from the Committee, were a source of gourmet desire! 😊



Barely two kilometers further, Christian, Alexandre and all the others awaited us, some of whom had just returned from their work. What a pleasure in the house!



Our last visit arrived, but not the least, at Julie Prégent's dad, André, always smiling and happy to see us.

We thank the employees and owners of the residences who collaborated in the smooth running and welcomed us kindly in a good mood and with respect! Our theme this year being "*Let's open our hearts to happiness*". They opened their doors to us and we were able to say mission accomplished. Since there is as much happiness in giving as in receiving and the heart has its reasons, that we must listen to!

The text and photos are on the website: <https://foietpartage.net/valleyfielddecembre2021.html>



A retreat on Zoom



By Jean Roy,
French-speaking North American coordinator

Doing a Faith and Sharing retreat on Zoom, is it possible?

This is the question that the members of the North American committee asked themselves this year, when it came time to consider holding the North American retreat, which takes place every 3 years.



The answer came on March 4, 5 and 6: Yes, it's possible, and it's even good!

Obviously, compromises had to be made. The retreat only lasted a weekend, because too long in front of a screen is not healthy. The retreat was held in French only, the English translation seemed too cumbersome. A bilingual hour of prayer will take place Tuesday, May 3rd, to bring together French speaking and English speaking members, because we are the same Faith and Sharing family (see announcement below).

Much effort was made to "reproduce" the atmosphere of a retreat. An experienced and dynamic preacher (Pierre-René Côté), full-time participants (invited to register in advance to allow the formation of stable sharing and prayer teams), songs, neat visuals, significant celebrations, invitations to rest and silence between activities on screen, optional times for fraternal sharing,... We found the basic elements of Faith and Sharing, and a very present Spirit.

There were 30 full-time registered participants, and about 20 more people came to each conference. We were "together", despite the physical distance. Fraternity travels well on the airwaves... We saw each other, we heard each other, we shared our faith.

Yes, a Faith and Sharing retreat on Zoom is possible, and it's good!

The screenshot shows a Zoom video conference interface. On the left, a large slide displays a painting of Jesus and the lyrics of a hymn in French:

Jésus, je voudrais te chanter sur ma route
petites soeurs de Jésus

Jésus, je voudrais te louer sur ma route.
Jésus, je voudrais que ma voix soit l'écho de ta joie.
Et que chante la terre et que chante le ciel.
Jésus, je voudrais te louer sur ma route.

The main part of the screen shows a 4x5 grid of 20 participant video feeds, each with a name label below it. The names visible include Lise, Isabelle Frappier, Jean Roy, Guyaline et Miville, Xstiane Jacques, Angèle Gagné, Maude Rioux, Gilles Courtemanche, Angèle Berger, Céline Savard-Rheault, Jean-Claude Lizotte, Nicole, jocelyne, Jacques, Julie et André, Clémentine Uwineza et..., Madeleine Seguin, Pierre-René Côté, Rejeanne, Marc Rioux, Jacques et Lauréanne, Maria, Maryse cyr, denise, and denise.

The documents and some memories of this retreat are on the website, in the "Archives" of the French section: <https://foietpartage.net/retraite2022.html>



“With him, reborn differently”



*By Christiane Dionne
Montreal*

What a beautiful theme to start Lent.

Thank you to Father Pierre-René Côté for his beautiful and enriching teachings. I give thanks to the Lord for giving us Zoom technology so that we can come together to talk about Him.

I followed the talks on the telephone and I was also able to follow the Eucharistic celebration on Saturday. What Grace !

Thank you to the organizers, you have many merits for having brought us together to meet God. It reminds me of the Quebec retreat in 2016, at the Ursulines house, where I felt so good. What marvels, how beautiful and holy it was!

I thank Mr. Claude Lalonde and Sister Yolande Brodeur, CND for introducing me to Faith and Sharing. By rubbing shoulders with the group, I felt at home, it's a "plus", it helps me in order to experience my baptism.

Many thanks for this beautiful retreat! Yes, the Lord is good!

With Father Pierre-René we deepened the love and mercy of God the Father, Our Father.

What love we are filled with. Even through our weaknesses, I leave with a lot of hope.

Thank you!

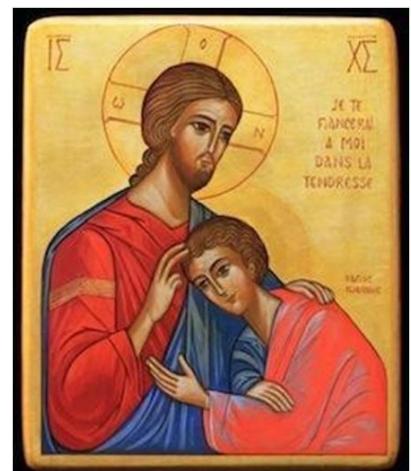


*By Mary Therese Regis
Ottawa*

It's great to love and live together! This moment of retreat gave me the impression of living with the Spirit of God! Thank you to the organizers of the retreat! I would like to mention our preacher Father Pierre-René Côté, and our dynamic Mr. Jean Roy.

During this weekend, March 4, 5 and 6, 2022, I was urged to better fulfill my role as a partner with GOD in his plan to make his kingdom happen. I realized that I am on the right track, even if I am not doing much, but as the Gospel of the day (March 7) said: "You gave me something to drink..." Then the Spirit of GOD teaches us mercy. "All must come to know the TRUTH..." (1 Timothy 2,4)

Amen!



Faith and Sharing still alive...



By Lise Morin
Sherbrooke

Greetings,

About fifty people agreed to take a special time to come and listen, share, pray and sing to God. Yes, Faith and Sharing is still alive and its virtual French speaking North American retreat demonstrated it well.

Each of the retreatants have unique gifts that they share in their own way. My heart was nourished by these gifts offered in all simplicity. A word, a silence or a smile filled me with joy.

In addition, I rejuvenated myself by looking at the faces dressed in beautiful wrinkles, worthy of the services rendered, for many years, with love for their brothers and sisters. I thus heard Jesus say to me again "I am here and I walk with you".



I glorify the Lord for the grace of his benevolence to his children of Faith and Sharing.

Believing in true divine love remains essential.



Bilingual prayer service For all



You are invited to a **zoom bilingual prayer service:**

7 - 8pm Eastern time on Tuesday May 3rd

There will be time to share in song, the Word, prayers and small group sharing.

Come pray with English and French speaking members of Faith and Sharing from communities in Canada and the United States.

To join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172?pwd=WWMzcG9WSkNxYnpuT2pMcTIWekc1UT09>

Meeting ID : 819 822 3172

Access code : 456789

Welcome to everyone !



Activities 2021-2022

Zoom Meetings

Group	Zoom Link	Date	Time	Theme for the year	Person to contact
Cleveland OH	https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74787770_7?pwd=eS9iSXVY3RNS1pjOEEdPVDRhSi9JUT09 Meeting ID: 747 877 707 Password: 056483	Each Sunday	11 am	Mass with Father Jim O'Donnell	Carole Zumack caz11643@gmail.com
Sherbrooke QC	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172 Meeting ID: 819 822 3172	2 nd Sunday of the month	1:30 to 2:30 pm	Your Word is my light	Lise Morin lise.morin52@videotron.ca
Quebec city QC	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4185761789 Meeting ID: 418 576 1789	Each Monday	9:30 am		Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125 Web site: www.foietpartage.org
Prayer time in French , organized by North American committee	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172 Meeting ID: 819 822 3172	3 rd Thursday of the month	10:30 to 11:30 am	Sharing around the Word of God (in French only)	Jean Roy jea_r@videotron.ca
Ottawa ON	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87189648771?pwd=U2ISUhDTW5iS09jN2IVcTBkQnljQT09	These Fridays: April 29 May 13 and 27	7 pm	The conversion of the heart	Isabelle Frappier (613) 565-9435 isabelle_f@hotmail.com
Bilingual prayer service organized by North American committee	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172?pwd=WWMzcG9WSkNxYnpuT2pMcTIWekc1UT09 Meeting ID: 819 822 3172 Password: 456789	Tuesday, May 3rd	7 to 8 pm		Jean Roy jea_r@videotron.ca Claire Donovan merryfish@shaw.ca

Meetings “in person”

Group	Activity	Location	Dates	Remarks	Person to contact
Jacksonville (Florida)	Retreat	Camp St. John, Jacksonville	May 22 - 26, 2022	Animators: Sr Maureen Kelley Fr Ron Camarda	Sister Rita Baum rbaumssj@yahoo.com www.ccbjax.org/faith-sharing
Detroit (Michigan)	“Christmas in July” with Pot luck	Corpus Christi Parish, Detroit	July 2022 (date to come)	To confirm	Pat Mueller: 248-891-9386 patriciasmueller@gmail.com Vivian Spence: viviespence@hotmail.com
Vancouver Island BC	Retreat	Bethlehem Centre Nanaimo (BC)	August 21 – 26, 2022	Animator: Rev Dan Kirkegaard Theme: <i>Moving with the Spirit in Faith</i>	Terri McCormack 250-465-2080 littleriverk9@gmail.com