

Heart - to - Heart

North American Bulletin

April 2023
Volume 49, no. 2

Theme of this bulletin: ***“Bless the Lord, O my soul”***

Bless the Lord O my soul



*By Michel Denis
Sherbrooke*



I must admit that this suggested theme of the “Heart-to-Heart” bulletin is, for me, a beautiful wink and reminder of the Lord Jesus to bless him; it is timely because, on March 1st, at La Maison Les Béatitudes, the community celebrated my 70 years of existence as well as the 70 years of Thérèse Drouin; yes already!

I assure you that our God had a great time, with his tenderness which is from always to always, his fidelity therefore. It was a party full of life, joy, creativity, and all to the honor of our party committee, not to mention everyone who got involved in one way or another. The Lord Jesus reminds me that nothing is due to me and that everything is grace. And, in this time of Lent, it seems that the Lord wants to stimulate, even more, the “being of blessing” in me.



Bless the Lord O my soul, for me, it is synonymous with praise. For some time now, there has been a song on the “YouTube” channel that is very popular and is called: “Comment ne pas te louer” (“How not to praise you”) ... when I look around me. Yes thank you Lord Jesus for inviting me strongly not to be embarrassed to praise you, not because you need it but because it is good for my heart, it regenerates me.

You are so great my Lord, you who love so much to take the first steps to reach me.

I really like a quote from a Carthusian monk: “What people are looking for is to meet a being of peace”; but I dare to say, by way of conclusion: “What people are looking for is to meet a being of blessing, of praise”. Thanksgiving!





Bless the Lord, O my soul



By Jean Roy
Sherbrooke

I like to recite the first 4 lines of psalm 103 (102):

*Bless the Lord, O my soul;
all my being, bless his holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and do not forget all his gifts*

Bless..., bless..., bless..., do not forget...

Here I am giving orders to my soul, to my being!

What is "my soul", "my being", for me to speak to him like this?
In these few lines, the whole mystery of existence is expressed.

With an order: "to bless".

An attitude to be happy.

A life path.

From which I sometimes turn away.

Thus the psalm continues:

*Who pardons all your sins,
and heals all your ills,
Who redeems your life from the pit,
and crowns you with mercy and compassion*

The essential is said.

Love is within me.

Do not forget it.

Bless the Lord, O my soul...



Heart-to-Heart

Subscription :

3 years : \$ 6.00

Supporter : \$ 5.00 per year

By email: free

2 issues per year :

October and April

Next dead line :

September 15, 2023

Aussi disponible en français

Bulletin Foi et Partage

2295, Galt West

Sherbrooke (Québec)

J1K 1K7 (819) 822-3172

To receive the bulletin by email:

jea_r@videotron.ca

Web site:

www.faithandsharing.net

Theme of upcoming issue

October 2023 (dead line September 15):

"I hear you calling"

A poem from Leslie



By Leslie C Dobson
Orillia, Ontario

My mother, Donna Patterson, who has been a long time Faith and Sharing member, suggested I send you a poem I wrote the other day.

I remember as a teen going to Faith and Sharing at Marylake in Ontario Canada. Every year my mom went. I would go on Thursday just to see everyone, bring some food and a gift for Carol. Carol, a lady in a wheelchair that couldn't talk but we communicated through our eyes and smiles of the Spirit. Oh the joy we had when years later she received a keyboard with a voice and had put all her questions and answers so we could sit in a corner talking, a beautiful gift from God that I will always cherish. I started going there as a teenager, looked forward to it every year and was saddened when it stopped a few years ago.

Be With Me Always



In the quiet places
I seek you
in those silent spaces
my heart yearns

I know you are there
I know you are there
I know **you**, are there

Amidst all the noise
I seek you
with dignity and poise
soul listens

I hear you
I hear you
I hear **you**

In the countryside
or the mountain range
so far and wide
always on display

I see you
I see you
I see **you**

The morning star
the midnight moon
kiss of the wind
song of the loon

I feel you
I feel you
I feel **you**

The gifts of life
and that of friends
of Spirit fire
that never ends

I love you
I love you
I love **you**

Be with me always
when I am in trouble
when I am at peace
never leave my bubble

I need you
I need you
I need **you**

For each and every splice
all the gifts given
for your great sacrifice
for each nail driven

I praise you
I praise you
I praise **you**

I am nothing without you
I am all because of you
I know you are there
so strong and so true

I thank you
I thank you
I thank **you**

Oh, God, my God
how great thou art
wondrous is thy name
let us never part

I know you are there
I hear you
I see you
I feel you
I love you
I need you
I praise you
I thank you



Bless the Lord, O my soul!



By Angèle Gagné osu
Quebec city

I wondered if the Lord really needed to be blessed by my soul! To bless is to wish well to someone, it is to consecrate! The Lord is already consecrated and he is the Good par excellence!

You can bless water, rosaries, medals, etc.

When it is God who blesses, no risk, the blessing is worth 100% efficiency! But when it is my soul that blesses?

Come to think of it... The genes of God, his DNA constitute my soul! The genes of my mother and my father are my body! For example, I have hands exactly like my mother's and I have my father's blue eyes! I think that when I bless, my blessing is true, because I am close to God, so close that He dwells in my heart! I'm supposed to look like Him...

When, in my pastoral mission, the faith of sick people asked me to bless their rosaries, their medals, etc., in my own faith, these objects were truly blessed.

Without doubt, when my soul blesses the Lord, it is more than a wish, it is a crowd of thanks, an overflow of love and praise!

Yes, bless the Lord O my soul, do not forget any of his blessings.

In the Book of Tobit (12,6-7), it is written:

Bless God and give him thanks before all the living for the good things he has done for you, by blessing and extolling his name in song. Proclaim before all with due honor the deeds of God, and do not be slack in thanking him. A king's secret should be kept secret, but one must declare the works of God and give thanks with due honor.

My soul therefore blesses the Lord for the "good things done" in my life!

What has been done well throughout my life comes from God!

So bless the Lord O my soul for the "inner factory" of my body!

My brain, my eyes, my ear, the inner work of my organs! The blood that circulates day and night in my body without my being aware of it!

Bless the Lord O my soul for my body! Bless the Lord O my soul for the snow that keeps the bulbs from freezing in the ground; for mother bears hidden in igloos to give birth to their cubs! Bless the Lord, oh my soul, for the little chickadees and the crows that sing romance to me when I go to mass in the morning!

... For these young people who come to school, for the parents who come to take their little ones to daycare, with all their hearts contain!

Bless the Lord, O my soul, for digging in me new paths of freedom and love!

Finally, YES, **BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL!**



Bless the Lord, O my soul



By Claire Donovan
Vancouver Island

*"Bless the Lord, my soul
and bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul
who leads me into life."*

This is one of my favourite Taizé chants, uplifting words and a gentle melody that calms and soothes and reminds me that all will be well. Yet there is much in the world, in my life and the life of my loved ones that suggests otherwise – war, climate disasters, more harsh truths about our founder's secret life, sickness, inequality and discrimination...

Every day I have a choice about which stories I focus my attention on and how I choose to respond. In Faith and Sharing we focus on the Good News of God's ever-present love, presence, forgiveness, gifts and blessings, so that we can reflect the face of God in a suffering world. As a long time participant in Faith and Sharing retreats I choose to live my life that way, with God's grace.



Blessed are you, Lord!



*By Julie Prigent, coordinator
Faith and Sharing Valleyfield*

For 2022-2023, the theme of our Faith and Sharing Valleyfield community is “Our Father”. We were able to experience all the love that the Father has for each of us, especially during our February meeting.

A time in small groups allowed us to talk about love and more particularly to name gestures of love that we can do to show the other that we love him or her. Everyone wrote their answer on a small paper heart. Subsequently, at the end of the discussion in the large group, everyone came, in turn, to stick their hearts in the great heart of Jesus.

Blessed are you, Lord, for all the love that unites us all to Faith and Sharing. Blessed are you, Lord, for my lover Dédé who has been in my life for 4 wonderful years! Blessed are you, Lord, for loving me through Dédé and that I love him through you!

Blessed are you, Lord, because at the end of the exchange, my Dédé had written on his heart: “To ask Julie in marriage” and on mine I had written: “To say yes to the marriage proposal”!!!! This was the great official request in all simplicity, in front of the community and in front of God!

Blessed are you, Lord, for Dédé and all the people you put on our way! Let us be living witnesses of his love today and always! Let's share the good news that God is love! 💜



The peace of the soul...



*By Lise Morin
Sherbrooke*

Greetings,

When I live in less easy times, I have to draw from the source of my soul. God awaits me there with all his blessings, his gifts.

If I really believe in his tenderness, his forgiveness, his mercy, his peace and his love, then what would I fear? But being human, I sometimes forget the essentials and my cross therefore becomes heavier to bear.

As in the beautiful song of Taizé, only in God my soul can find peace... 💜




Bless the Lord, O my soul

Wonder...



*By Luce Beaulieu
Rockland, ON*

Yes, to open a path of wonder before the works of God, before His presence in our lives, in our communities, in the midst of peoples and nations, in order to recognize him, to hear him and to receive him among us, for our happiness. 

The North American Committee



*By Jean Roy
French speaking coordinator*

In the past

The North American Faith and Sharing Committee began around 1973. Its purpose was to bring together people from all over in order to:

- Share what was happening in local communities
- Make known the spirit of Faith and Sharing
- Provide communication tools, for example the bulletin
- Encourage links between members.
- Offer spiritual support to communities

The committee organized large retreats.

In 1984, this North American community was incorporated in Canada under the official name of "FAITH AND SHARING FEDERATION FOI ET PARTAGE". This made it possible to issue receipts for charitable donations, and to make the structure permanent.

The number of committee members varied, ranging up to a dozen people, including representatives from the various regions.



Now

The committee is made up of 5 members. Its administrative structure can be found on the website <https://faithandsharing.net/pdf/organizational%20structure.pdf>, but it is a document that is not often referred to. Committee meetings are held on Zoom.

There are 2 active English speaking groups: Vancouver Island and Jacksonville, and 4 active French speaking groups: Ottawa, Quebec city, Sherbrooke, Valleyfield. The committee aims above all to nurture ties between people. Several participants of former active local communities keep links with Faith and Sharing.

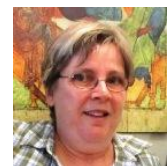
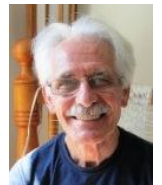
The main ways:

- The Heart-to-Heart bulletin
- The website
- The prayer time of the 3rd Thursday of the month for French speaking participants
- The annual general assembly
- A North American retreat every 3 years. That of 2022 was held in Zoom, in French only.

The corporation still exists, but there has been little financial activity since Pickering North American retreat in 2019.

Here is the current committee:

- English-speaking coordinator: Claire Donovan
- French-speaking coordinator: Jean Roy
- Spiritual Animator: Marc Rioux
- Secretary: Julie Prigent
- Treasurer: Isabelle Frappier



The future

The committee has reflected on the future. The decline of Faith and Sharing is evident almost everywhere, but what is happening is still good.

My term as French-speaking coordinator will end at the next assembly, which will take place in September 2023. After having rendered this service for 10 of the last 11 years, I will be happy to have someone else take my place. I remain available to take care of the website, the Heart-to-Heart edition, the technical organization of the Thursday Zoom prayer.

The mandates of Claire, Marc and Isabelle will have reached or exceeded 5 years **this year**. According to the structure, proposals to replace them will have to be considered at the next general assembly. However, knowing that candidates are rare, Claire, Marc and Isabelle agree to continue to render their service if needed.

Being a member of the committee will surely be less demanding than in the past, since meetings can be held without traveling, and there are no large retreats to prepare. The Spirit continues to be at work... If you see someone who could be of service to the committee, or if you feel called, speak with a committee member.

Bless the Lord, o my soul

I received so many blessings by being a member of the North American committee... I met committed people, I saw the Lord at work in the communities, I made friends there. Thank you Lord for allowing me to be part of the great family of Faith and Sharing.



Souvenir photos
Members of Sherbrooke and Quebec
2011



Activities 2022-2023

Meetings “in person”

Group	Activity	Location	Dates	Remarks	Person to contact
Sherbrooke QC	Monthly meeting	La Maison Les Béatitudes 2295, Galt W.	2nd Sunday of the month 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Tune our hearts to your peace”</i>	Lise Morin lise.morin52@videotron.ca
Valleyfield QC	Monthly meeting	“Salle des Oeuvres” of the Cathedral 66, rue du Marché	One Monday per month 6:45 pm to 9:15 pm	<u>Theme:</u> “Our Father” <u>Dates :</u> April 24, May 8, June 5	Julie Prigent 450-373-1956 pregent.julie@bell.net
Quebec city QC	Monthly meeting	Church Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance 290, ave Bélanger	3rd Tuesday of the month	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Love without measure”</i>	Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125 Website: www.foietpartage.org
Jacksonville Florida	Retreat	Camp St. John, Jacksonville	May 22 - 25, 2023	<u>Animators:</u> Sr Maureen Kelley Fr Ron Camarda	Sister Rita Baum rbaumssj@yahoo.com
Vancouver Island BC	Retreat	Bethlehem Centre, Nanaimo (BC)	August 13 – 18, 2023	<u>Animator:</u> Carma Gjerner <u>Theme:</u> <i>“Unveiling the Holy”</i>	Terri McCormack 250-465-2080 littleverk9@gmail.com

Zoom Meetings

Group	Zoom Link	Date	Time	Remarks	Person to contact
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
Prayer time in French, organized by North American committee	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172 Meeting ID: 819 822 3172	3rd Thursday of the month	10:30 to 11:30 am	Sharing around the Word of God (in French only)	Jean Roy 819-822-3172 jea_r@videotron.ca
Ottawa ON	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87189648771?pwd=U2lSUnhDTW5iS09jN2lVcTBkQnljQT09	Two Fridays per month	7 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Our Father, the prayer Jesus taught us”</i>	Isabelle Frappier 613-565-9435 isabelle_f@hotmail.com