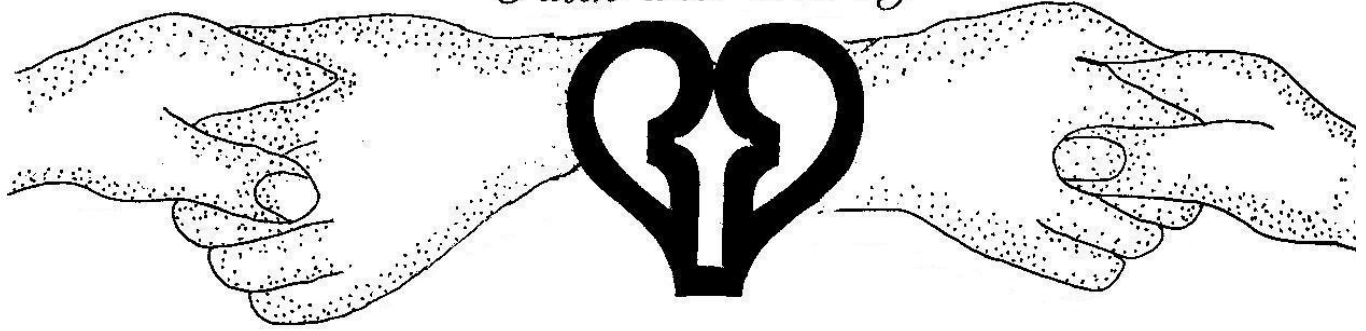


Faith and Sharing



Heart - to - Heart

North American Bulletin

April 2025
Volume 51, no. 2

Theme of this bulletin: *"All invited to God's table"*

All Invited to God's Table



*By Louise Pelletier
Quebec city*

Who Do We Eat With?

At the heart of our lives, among the most important gestures, is the meal: everyday meals, festive meals, meals where we are invited, meals where we receive. There is nothing sadder than eating alone! It seems as if the meal is expressly made for sharing, for talking, for revitalizing our lives.

Community meals are understood and experienced with "self-giving", in a convivial atmosphere. We give and we receive. These are the two necessary aspects of any meal.

In ancient times, for the Jews, the choice of a meal was an almost spiritual one. Hence the intuition that one does not eat just anything, anyhow, with anyone. There is respect there, a mark of one's human vocation. We are nourished by the words, by the experiences of each other. Eating with certain people is a sign of the peace we pursue, of the harmony we desire for the human family. This is why quarrels during meals are the saddest and show their great significance for interpersonal relationships.



As believers, we are asked to become aware of how we experience our meals, of the food we consume, which are gifts from God. May our shared meals already become covenant meals.



The Meals of Jesus

Jesus breaks with the Baptists' fasting and "he invites to the wedding". It is a prophetic act; with him, celebration is back.

Indeed, Jesus inaugurates a new way of being. He is a friend, a pastor, a host. A climate of joy is established. Jesus loves to participate in meals. He invites himself to the home of Lazarus and his sisters; he accepts the invitations of the Pharisees like Simon; he multiplies the loaves for the crowd. And what is most important is that Jesus recognizes that he and sinners are invited to the same table.

How difficult this is to comprehend, even for his disciples. This is a call for us today: the table where we commune is open for the healing of sinners.

No existence is excluded from the invitation. We are invited to "put on the wedding garment", that is, to take on the spirit of celebration, to be joyful, to have an open heart, to join in the dance... What joy!

All the meals eaten with Jesus on earth are "eucharists", thanksgivings. Jesus is there and already he gives himself. We only need to place our poverty in his hands for him to transfigure it. Then, he multiplies the "bread of our poverty" and fills it with his presence to offer it to us, to nourish us. But unfortunately, we always have this possibility of leaving the table and feeding on little crumbs, little nothings... But Jesus knows the heart of every person. Let us trust Him.



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Theme for the October 2025 bulletin:

" Keeping our eyes on God "

Blessed are those invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb

The Eucharist is not a small personal devotion. The entire universe is welcome to this invitation.

Since the beginning of humanity, this is what God intended: to live with us, to become a human being in order to give himself entirely, so that we may know who we are for him. God's plan is to give birth to us so that we may live a new life. And this is also our mission: to encourage birth in others so that we may all recognize ourselves as beloved children of the Father.

This is the profound meaning of the Eucharist: thanksgiving for God who gives himself and at the same time receives everything from us; thanksgiving for the whole world which becomes one body in Christ; thanksgiving for this love that makes the world fruitful.

All are truly invited!

Here is this magnificent text from Saint John Chrysostom to meditate on:

Let all who seek God and love the Lord come and savor the beauty and light of this feast.

For the Lord is generous; he receives the last as well as the first. To some he gives; to others he shows mercy.

So, all of you, enter into the joy of your Lord.

Have you been generous or lazy? Celebrate this day.

You who have fasted and you who have not fasted, rejoice today!

The banquet table is full. The fatted calf has been prepared: let no one go hungry. Come, all of you, and taste the banquet of faith. Come, all of you, and draw from the riches of mercy.

Let no one grieve over his sins, for forgiveness has flowed forth from the grave.

Let no one be afraid of death: the death of the Savior has delivered us from it.



All invited to God's table



*By Guylaine Garneau
Sherbrooke*

Christian or not, all are invited to God's table. Forty years ago, I was a regular at a synagogue in Edmonton, Alberta, called BETH SHALOM. They were open to the ecumenical movement of yesteryear, fortunately for me. Every Saturday morning, as a practicing Catholic, I was very welcome. On Sundays, I went to Mass. I felt truly blessed to have such a beautiful and enriching experience.



In everyday life, I'm a little too THOMAS. Unfortunately, I don't have a Faith that could move mountains. The flame of my Faith is weak, but it has always held on. I feel called daily to trust in Divine Providence. From a very young age, I dreamed of a wonderful higher education to accomplish great things. But that wasn't the case. The Lord welcomes me to His table and He LOVES ME as I am.



All invited to His table



*By Angèle Gagné osu
Quebec city*

This theme took me back quite a long way... to my childhood! At home, the table was always ready to welcome! Fearlessly, my mother invited the deaf-mute who sharpened the knives to lunch or dinner. She welcomed the "beggar" we called "Wooden Leg"! How many children and grandchildren have enjoyed my mother's delicious dishes and my father's warm welcome! So many things happened around the table!



There are a multitude of tables in our world, in our daily lives. A work table; a table for examinations and operations. The tables of the Law. A reading table, a table d'hôte, a bedside table. A Holy table that separates the nave from the altar and welcomes everyone for Communion. I saw this at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Quebec City.

All invited to His table! What is His table? I've been thinking about this for a bit. I tell myself that all our tables can become His tables! At the residence for the elderly where I live, there are tables for four people. I notice that some tables are always occupied by the same people! It's difficult to welcome to our table someone who eats poorly, who talks all the time, who makes noise while chewing, etc. I'm sure that these tables are His tables.



I remember the visible and invisible tables that marked Jesus' life. The table at the wedding at Cana where our water is changed into festive wine. Jesus overturns the money changers' tables in the Temple. My house is a house of prayer... (Mt. 21:12) These tables weren't quite His tables. They weren't in the right place. The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man: Lazarus would have liked to be satisfied with the crumbs from the rich man's table. (Luke 16:21) The gentleman was too rich to invite a poor man to his table.

I remember an Easter day! I was returning from Mass and the table was set for dinner. Someone rang the doorbell! A poor man well known to all of us. Spontaneously, I made room for him at the table next to me. But... unfortunately, he was not welcome because he smelled bad and ate badly! My heart became very sad. Yet it was the table of the Resurrection! HIS table!

Another very touching scene from the Gospel speaks of an invisible table, easy to see with the eyes of the heart. It is in Mark 7:24-30. A Canaanite woman, a pagan, Syro-Phoenician by birth. The Jews considered these women worse than dogs. And Jesus, a Jew, is in that world! She begs Jesus to expel the demon from her little girl. Jesus' response is surprising, disconcerting. "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Phew! But the woman has an answer that converts Jesus, that makes him "turn around." "True, Lord, but the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And Jesus replies to her: "Because of this saying, go; the demon has left your daughter." I sometimes savor the crumbs that fall from His Table.

I end with another table, His Table, the one at the Last Supper. "Know this, he who is going to betray me is at this table with me." (Luke 22:21)

At this Table, everyone is invited! And I'm pretty sure that at the Last Supper, around the Table, there weren't only the male apostles. The women who followed Jesus, who welcomed him to their table, were also there at that first Eucharist.

Finally, these words of Jesus, at His Table, are for us "Pilgrims of Hope": "Therefore, I do for you as my Father did for me by giving me the kingdom: you will eat and drink at MY TABLE in my kingdom." (Luke 22:29-30)



Men and Women at His Table



All invited to God's table



*By Claire Donovan
Vancouver Island*

Yes all are invited to God's table. At Faith and Sharing on Vancouver Island we take that literally. We welcome all people to form community and receive Jesus' body and blood. Bishop Remi De Roe, Roman Catholic Bishop of Vancouver Island from 1962 - 1999 insisted that as a community of faith we must welcome the whole community to receive communion during Mass. He would quote Vatican II teachings to back up his progressive and inclusive stand point.



So we started doing that in the 60s when the church was grappling with putting into practice the teachings of the second Vatican council. Our retreats attracted more and more people from different Christian backgrounds. We began inviting priests and ministers from other Christian denominations to pray with us and lead eucharistic services. We learned about other traditions and ways of praying together.

We also expanded our understanding of God's table and celebration of Eucharist and being a Eucharistic people out of church, to break bread together outdoors, and with other food elements.





At our retreats, picnics and our daily meals were also seen as important to our building of community, inclusion and sharing our lives, nourished by good food and good sharing.

Faith and Sharing celebrations always involve sharing food together and being grateful for gifts from God celebrated with shared food lovingly made.

As we discern our future on Vancouver Island, we will be guided by our 50 years of traditions and evolution, to develop new ways of keeping our community vibrant and true to the Christian values Jesus modelled for us.



Sacred Vessels




*By Leslie C Dobson
Orillia, Ontario*

I saw a true gift fulfilled,
His own eternal promise;
a heav'n'ly light did descend,
sacred vessels giv'n a kiss.

In mem'ry we did partake,
and did as He once had bade;
sipped the wine and ate the bread,
in Him, now one we are made.

He'll feed us on our journey,
and He'll quench our dying thirst;
He gave us the best of Him,
when we gave our very worst.

So turn yourself not away,
but run straight to Him instead;
He gave His own life for us,
by His blood and flesh we're fed 



All invited to God's table



By Michel Denis
Sherbrooke

How can I not see Lise Morin at the table of the Lord Jesus? My heart refuses to see her anywhere else.

One day while I was praying at the Canadian Montmartre, and when Pope John Paul II had just died, someone dared to say: "Saint John Paul II, pray for us." This is to tell you that I also heard a beautiful tribute to Lise when Brother Yves Légaré dared to say, at the funeral home: "How can we not see Lise as a saint?" This also reminds me of the words of Father Yves Girard, a Cistercian monk, who liked to say powerfully: "The saints above are in awe as they watch us live." Yes, Lise, the Lord Himself took the time to admire you in your daily routine, before drawing you to him forever.

Thank you, Lise, for your wonderful loyalty, among other things, as coordinator of Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke. Thank you for your acrostics during our celebrations at La Maison Les Béatitudes. Thank you for your trust and your sharing during our many kayak trips at Camp Bel-Air. And what about my many encounters at your home, encounters that always ended with your dazzling smile?



I know and I believe that you are very close to us up there. You knew how to be truly human. I think you would like to say to each and every one of us: "I am still with you, be yourselves, trust in Jesus who has prepared such a beautiful place for us at His table."

Big kisses, Lise!

Michel xxx



Lise Morin
Died on January 8, 2025



Jubilee of People with Disabilities Sherbrooke - June 1, 2025



*By Jean Roy
Sherbrooke*

In December 2024, the Diocese of Sherbrooke asked La Maison Les Béatitudes to organize "something" in 2025 called the "Jubilee of People with Disabilities." Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke joined the organization.

The Vatican is organizing a "Jubilee of People with Disabilities" on April 28 and 29. In Sherbrooke, what could we organize? Approaches were made to another group. Two reflection and preparation meetings were held, in which approximately 14 people participated in a "synodal" manner. The final choice was to organize a day that would closely resemble a Faith and Sharing Day: songs, testimonies, sharing in small groups, celebration, a shared meal, and a prayer of thanksgiving. The "Faith and Sharing color" will be offered to the entire diocese, and anyone can participate.

Several people have chosen to get involved in organizing the day. In the preparation, there have been wonderful reflections and beautiful testimonies about the situation of disability, which involves challenges, but also graces and opportunities to grow in love. To feel God's presence there. It truly deserves a celebration, a jubilee!



Some web pages for more information about Jubilee of People with Disabilities:

Faith and Sharing activity in Sherbrooke : <https://foietpartage.net/jubile.html>

Invitation by the Diocese of Sherbrooke:

<https://www.diocesedeshbrooke.org/evenement/jubile-des-personnes-en-situation-de-handicap/>

Vatican Jubilee:

<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/pellegrinaggio/calendario-giubileo/GrandiEventi/Giubileo-delle-Persone-con-Disabilita.html>



Pilgrims of Hope



*By Maude Rioux
Quebec city*

The theme of the Jubilee
Is Pilgrims of Hope
It is an invitation to go
Toward those who are suffering

Following Jesus
Let us follow the path
Of true happiness in Salvation
Toward our neighbor
Who is afraid of tomorrow

Let us build Peace and Unity
In Faith, Love, and Charity
Let us proclaim the Good News
Of Eternal Life



Faith and Sharing Activities 2024-2025

Meetings “in person”

Group	Activity	Location	Dates	Remarks	Person to contact
Sherbrooke QC	Monthly meeting	La Maison Les Béatitudes 2295, Galt West	2nd Sunday of the month 1:45 pm to 3:30 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Let us have a gaze full of God”</i>	Jean Roy 819-822-3172 jea_r@videotron.ca
Valleyfield QC	Monthly meeting	“Salle des Oeuvres” of the Cathedral 66, rue du Marché	3rd Monday of the month 6:45 pm to 9:15 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Sharing faith and joy”</i>	Julie Prigent 450-373-1956 julie1971.pregent@gmail.com
Quebec city QC	Monthly meeting	Church Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance 290, ave Bélanger	3rd Tuesday of the month 10 am to 3:30 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Faith, source of joy”</i>	Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125 Website : www.foietpartage.org
Jacksonville Florida	Retreat	Marywood and Camp St. John	May 19-22, 2025	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Called to Be Wounded Healers”</i>	Sister Rita Baum rbaumssj@yahoo.com
Vancouver Island BC	Renewal Day	Brechin United Church, Nanaimo, BC	Saturday June 7th, 2025 10 am to 4 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>“Designed for the Divine”</i>	Claire Donovan merryfish@shaw.ca Invitation
Québec QC	Retreat	Church Notre-Dame-de-Recouvrance	September 8 – 10, 2025 1:30 pm to 8:30 pm	<u>Animators:</u> Louissette Pelletier Raymond Brodeur	Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125 jclizotte@gmail.com

Zoom Meetings

Group	Zoom Link	Date	Time	Remarks	Person to contact
Quebec city QC	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4185761789?pwd=qH6Oae8E8VX3zHzbYbpHthrMFUzJhR.1	Each Monday	9:15 am		Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125
Prayer in French by North American committee	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8198223172 Meeting ID: 819 822 3172	3rd Thursday of the month Break during the summer	10:30 to 11:30 am	Prayer and 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	2nd and 4th Friday of the month Break during the summer	7 pm	<u>Theme:</u> <i>Faith and growth, my personal experience</i>	Isabelle Frappier 613-565-9435 isabelle_f@hotmail.com