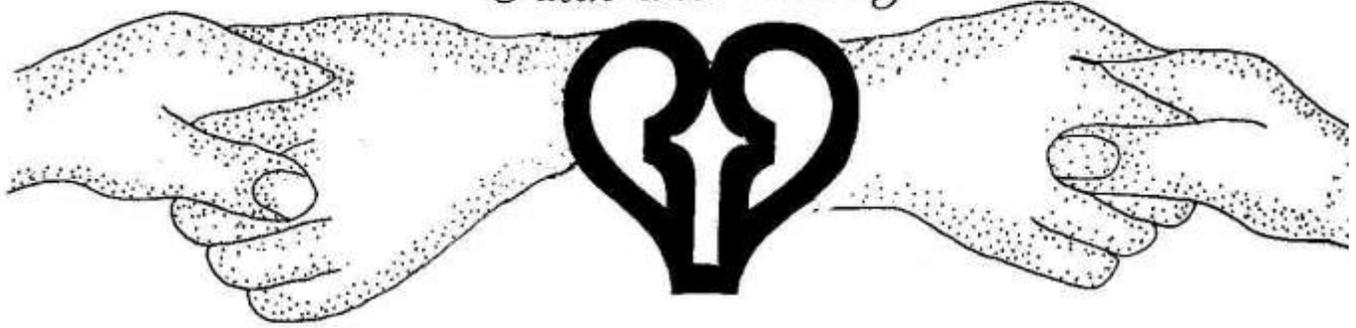


*Faith and Sharing*



## *Heart - to - Heart*

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**North American Bulletin**

October 2018  
Volume 45, no. 1

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Theme of this bulletin:

*On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Faith and Sharing:*

### ***The fruits of Faith and Sharing***

*What Faith and Sharing has brought me, brings me, what has changed in my life, my gratitude*

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### **Celebrating 50 years**



*By Jean Roy  
French coordinator*

In 2018, to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Faith and Sharing, there was no big gathering of all the communities.

I remember that in 1993, to celebrate 25 years of Faith and Sharing, I had participated in a multi-day retreat in Guelph, Ontario, with people from all over North America. It was a beautiful celebration. I also remember that Guelph is far from Sherbrooke! In 2018, with the aging of our members, any place chosen for a large gathering would have seemed too far for many...

However, the Faith and Sharing communities celebrated those 50 years, each in their own way. I had the chance to participate in many of these celebrations: in Montreal, Nanaimo (Vancouver Island), Valleyfield, Quebec City, Ottawa, Sherbrooke. What beautiful encounters! Everywhere, the same desire to give thanks for the gift that is Faith and Sharing.

In this newsletter, around 45 people wrote about the fruits of Faith and Sharing, what it has brought to their life. I thank them for taking the time to share these fruits, so that we are in communion of heart, despite the distance. May the Spirit of Jesus continue to inspire us! 



**Faith and Sharing**

**1968 — 2018**

## 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 :

**March 15, 2019**

*Aussi disponible en français*

Bulletin Foi et Partage

2295, Galt West

Sherbrooke (Québec)

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## Faith and Sharing, a true gift from God!



*By Madeleine Séguin*

*Ottawa*

My thirst for God called me to let myself be penetrated by his Word and to open myself to the presence of the poor around me and to my own inner poverty. All the retreats of Faith and Sharing, whether local, regional or North American, have more than once opened my eyes and my heart to the needs and sufferings of my brothers and sisters. This journey, I do with you all, thank you. What I am today, I owe to you, dear friends of Faith and Sharing ... Thank you.

**Happy Anniversary Faith and Sharing!** 



Drawing by Robert Dupuis, Valleyfield

### Going paperless

The team who create, print and distribute the Heart-to-Heart bulletin would like to reduce costs and labour by encouraging more people to receive their copy by email instead of through the mail. If you have an email address and easy access to a computer please consider this option. Otherwise we are happy to continue mailing you your copy.

To receive future editions by email send a message to Jean Roy at: [jea\\_r@videotron.ca](mailto:jea_r@videotron.ca)

### Theme of upcoming issue

April 2019 (dead line : March 15, 2019) : **"Blessed are the poor"**

## Faith and Sharing and the history of L'Arche

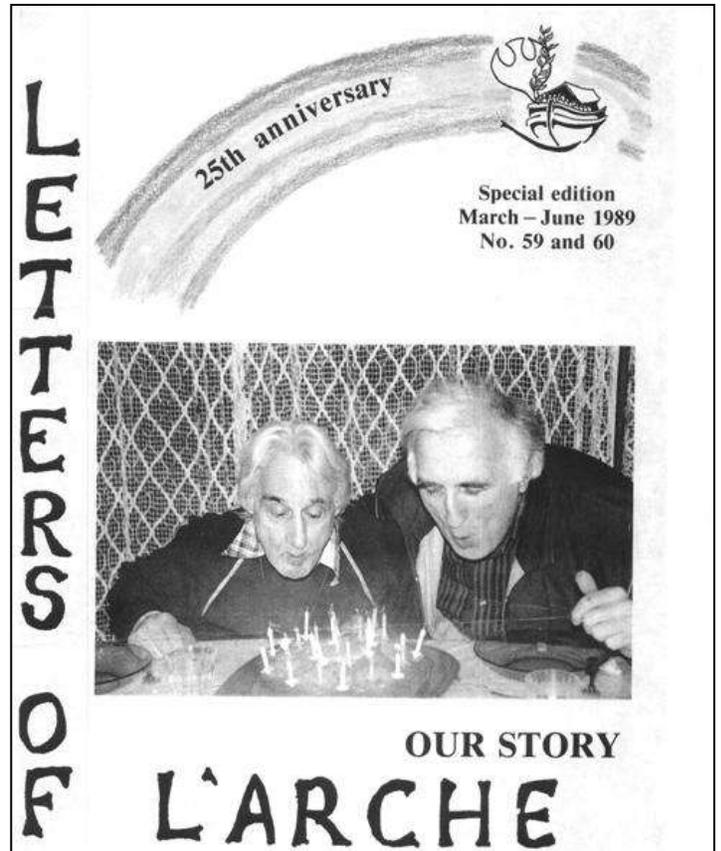
From: *Letters of L'Arche*,  
special edition for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of L'Arche  
March – June 1989

### - *Lectures in Canada*

After a lecture series on Philosophy I gave in 1964 at St. Michael's College (affiliate to the University of Toronto), I was invited to return each year to give some classes. These classes, on various subjects : artistic inspiration, friendship and feelings, and the cry of the poor, attracted many students in search of witnesses of faith. I was also invited by other universities. It was the Post Vatican II era when there was a lot of confusion in the Church and amongst students. It was at these classes that I met people like Robert Larouche who later became involved in L'Arche. In 1965 I was invited, along with William Stringfellow, to a large ecumenical meeting in Montreal for theology students from different traditions. Bill Clarke and Steve Newroth were at that meeting. Later, they both came to Trosly.

### - *Faith and Sharing Retreats*

Following the lectures which, through the grace of God, attracted many students, I was asked to give a retreat to the priests in the diocese of Toronto. This invitation took me by surprise. I felt incapable of giving any immediate answer. I needed time to pray and reflect.



Finally, it seemed quite clear that Jesus wanted me to answer “Yes” but under three conditions: that it be a silent retreat, that it last 8 days, and that it be open not only to priests but also to religious and to lay people. The retreat took place in August 1968, in Marylake near Toronto. I was naive (as always) and petrified, yet at the same time trusting in Jesus. I had entrusted this retreat to the prayers of the French Carmelites in Abbeville and in Cognac (where I prepared my talks). I must admit, however, that when I went into the office marked “Retreat Master” I didn’t feel very sure of myself.

The retreat was grace-filled, the talks, the Eucharist, our times of silence, our times of sharing in groups of eight, where each of us could share our faith (but *not* discuss!), and the times of adoration, seemed to touch people. I had learned the importance of times of adoration at the Little Sisters of Jesus in Montreal. At the end of the retreat there was such a deep unity between us that nobody wanted to leave. That is why a group of retreatants decided to prepare two other retreats the following year, one organised by Sue Mosteller for former retreatants, and one that I would give, at Marylake.

There were about 60 people at the Marylake retreat. Amongst whom were Sue Mosteller, Gabrielle Einsle, Colleen Walsh, Marie Paradis and John Dare. Each of them became very involved in L’Arche later on. Sister Rosemarie Donovan, the Superior of Our Lady’s Missionaries, was also there. At the end of the retreat, she offered L’Arche the house of their former noviciate at Richmond Hill. This is the house where, in 1969, on their return from Europe, Steve and Ann Newroth began Daybreak. That is how L’Arche was born in Canada. Also, from that first retreat, Faith and Sharing in Canada and the United States was born - a movement to organise retreats of the same kind. I would go to cities where I had been invited and after the retreat a group was appointed to prepare a similar retreat the following year. It was often after such retreats that new L’Arche communities were born. George and Doris Myers started a community in Edmonton, Pat and Jo Lenon in Calgary, Jan Risse in Mobile, Pat Wehner in Cleveland, Margaret O’Donnell in Victoria, Marie Paradis in Winnipeg, Fr. George Strohmeier and Sr. Barbara Karznia in Erie, Paul Rancourt in St. Malachie, and later still, the communities in Ireland.

As I re-read our history I realise how important these retreats have been both for me personally and for L’Arche. They helped me discover the power of the Word of God That Word that is the Good News announced to the poor, the promise of the presence, forgiveness and the support of Jesus. The Word that awakens in us new energies of love. The Word that purifies, liberates and reveals to each of us our true identity as a beloved son or beloved daughter of the Father. As I announce the Word, I often feel that I am the first one who needs to hear it! It does me a lot of good, even though I realise that I am far from living what I announce.

These retreats have been important for L’Arche not only in enabling its expansion, but also as a reminder that L’Arche is first of all founded on the Gospel. Before being a good home for people with a disability it is a reminder that, even more than “normalisation”, the destiny of people with a disability, as for everyone, is first growth in love, in welcoming others, and in service and in holiness. This growth does not in any way exclude doing all we can to help each person to gain all the knowledge, independence and know-how possible, to grow and progress according to their human capacities, and to be better integrated into society and into the church. It does, in fact, emphasise the importance of these. 💜



## Faith and Sharing Toronto

*By Toronto participants*

*Patrick Treacy:*

The Toronto Faith and Sharing retreat took place at Marylake from August 12 to August 16 as we celebrated fifty years since Jean Vanier gave the first Faith and Sharing retreat here in 1968. Forty-two people attended including some who had attended over thirty of the retreats at Marylake and eight people who attended for the first time. Monica Donovan has attended every retreat since 1970. Her sister Sr Rosemarie attended the first retreat.



Seated: Fr. George Strohmeyer and Monica Donovan

Fr. George Strohmeyer from Erie Pa shared the Word. We were all touched by his talks as well as his sense of humour and down to earth approach. Fr. George has been involved with Faith and Sharing, Faith and Light and L'Arche since the 1970s. In his talks he reminded us to meet Jesus in the silence of our hearts. Jesus speaks to us there. Trust in the Lord. God is looking for places to live. Our hearts can become temples for God to dwell. Become contemplatives and receive the fruits of the Spirit. Don't be bowled over by evil. Focus on Jesus and be grateful. Reflect more peace in our world. Pray without ceasing.

We were blessed to have six people from the Erie Pa L'Arche community attend. They brought so much joy to all who were there. We were reminded that Faith and Light came out of the Faith and Sharing retreats. Many shared memories of past retreats and of old friends and expressed thanks for the blessings received. There was some sadness as a few retreatants and special friends stated they may not be able to attend in the future as their age and health would make that difficult.



Overall we are all thankful to God for giving us the gift of Faith and Sharing through Jean Vanier. Through Faith and Sharing we learned to live out our Faith in our everyday lives and see Jesus in all those whom we meet. Each person is a gift. May we always be mindful that we are loved despite our imperfections and that Jesus walks with us. May we grow in love and faith as we continue on our journey home.



*Carol Douglas:*

Faith and Sharing has been for me, from the first moment at Marylake some ten years ago, absolutely extraordinary.

I have felt an uncommon sense of welcome from warm, wonderful, caring and generous people.

We all have our wounds. That goes without saying. But by our Faith and by our Sharing, we help each other to heal.

Jesus never calls us alone - it's such a blessing that we journey together!

*Catherine Lococo:*

At our recent Faith and Sharing retreat in the middle of August, I found myself reminiscing a lot about my time over the years visiting Marylake and also remembering our Advent and Lent day retreats at Tobias House. I remember walks with others over the years on the winding path to the Basilica and to the gift shop. Walks by myself to the little chapel further up the hill often accompanied by the geese flying overhead or just honking. Good memories of people who have passed on, their presence perhaps in sharing their music or picking us up at Finch subway. Others who made us feel welcome and taught us how to be welcoming. Walking down the old hallway to the chapel, enjoying the quiet there and the presence of others.



This August having the people from L'Arche Erie with us brought new life to us and made us remember the gifts of L'Arche. At our gathering some of us even danced!!!!!!

Good memories, appreciation, hope, belonging, this is what Faith and Sharing means to me.

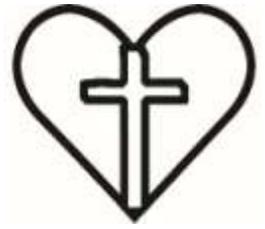
*Mila Santiago:*

The Faith and Sharing retreat is a wonderful experience. Everybody is welcome, the team spirit is alive, and the talks and group sharing are uplifting. Each day brings moments to enjoy and cherish.



## Reflecting on the Fruits of Faith & Sharing

*By Detroit participants*



*Kay Satko :*

The Faith and Sharing retreat was an opening of my heart by the Holy Spirit to teach me more about Our Lord Jesus.

Our coordinators are filled with God, and our group was filled with the Holy Spirit's Gifts and Fruits.

It's so nice that Father Larry [a "founder" of Faith and Sharing Detroit] is always here for us in our time of wonderment; we were blest. I hope to see you all in 2019.

God's Love and mine.

*Paul Flynn:*

Without Fathers George Leach, SJ, Bill Clark, SJ, Mario Galiazi, and Al Williams; original Detroit committee members Harry and Grace Gomula, Pat Mueller, Cathy Ondrizek; and especially my brother Fr. Don Flynn, SJ, I would not have been involved with Faith and Sharing. Most important of all, I met my wife Anita at the Faith and Sharing Retreat at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit MI in 1978 when Fr. George Leach and Fr. Bill Clark were the animators.

*Anita Flynn:*

Our Faith and Sharing family has been a light on my faith journey. Someone once said to me that I have good friends. I say, I have found them in Faith and Sharing and in my years of study at St. Norbert College in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

*Maureen O'Reilly:*

Most of all, I treasure the life-long friends I've gained through Faith and Sharing! A host of them have gone before us to heaven, yet almost every Faith and Sharing gathering brings someone new into the family. Learning to listen as each one shares is skill that is still challenging, but always bearing fruit. Thank You, God, and all of you who have worked so hard and faithfully over the years to keep us going!

*Pat Mueller :*



**G**reat friends

**R**emarkable insights from Animators

**A** time to renew self

**P**ondering the wisdom of Jean Vanier e.g. We all have handicaps; some are just more visible than others.

**E**nriched by experiences and cultures shared at Retreats for Leadership where I interacted with members from across Canada and the United States.

**S**haring faith with other grapes as we grow and cling to the Vine. 💜

## Faith and Sharing Quebec City

By Quebec city participants

Huguette and André Rousseau:

Song:

*Every person is a sacred story  
Each of us builds the community  
Tell me, tell me your story  
Your life for me is a path of hope  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia*

The retreatants were asking again and again for the marvelous words of this wonderful song by H el ene Anctil during our super retreat in Sainte-Angele of Saint-Malo Church in Quebec City.

Our theme: "To be well in solitude", and the Word from Isaiah 49:15, "I will not forget you":

Claire L eger:

I give thanks to the Lord for his great MERCY for the poor manifested by the Faith and Sharing community. I have benefitted for many years.

The monthly retreat days and especially the summer retreats in St-Malo helped me taste the living Church of Jesus Christ where I can serve him humbly by singing, shared with my soulmate - artist MAY.

THANKGIVING and MAGNIFICAT !

Jocelyne Martel:

I had the opportunity on many occasions to gather with this group who share the word of God, the bread of life, prayers and songs.

In addition, we share meals together, helping us through listening and presence.

It is truly a beautiful healing that helps me grow in love with my brothers and sisters, as Jesus taught us by the Lord's Prayer, to pray to his Father.

Thank you to all who contributed to this beautiful continuity of fraternal sharing. Happy 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

Marie-France Gagnon :

*Merciful Goodness of the Heart of My Jesus  
Have mercy on me.  
Assist me in my great weakness,  
In my inextricable misery.*

The happiness of knowing and living *Faith and Sharing* on a daily basis was given to me at Cap-Esperance, at the Ursulines of Baie-Comeau, 35 years ago.

Thank you to them and to each one of you. In Him & Her, I love you. 



**FOI ET PARTAGE**



**Apprivoiser la solitude**



**Je ne t'oublie pas**  
(Is 49, 14-15)  
**Retraite Populaire**

** GLISE SAINTE-ANG LE  
DE ST-MALO**  
275 RUE MARIE-DE-L'INCARNATION, QU BEC

**DU LUNDI 20 AO T AU  
MERCREDI 22 AO T**

avec H el ene Anctil  
et l'abb  Pierre-Ren  C t 

  **gratuit**  
entree adapt e  **pour tous**

## What is the special gift I have received from Faith and Sharing?

*By Atlantic Canada participants*

*Carolyn Muise:*

Lasting friendships and an appreciation of those with disabilities and what they can teach us through their own goodness, love, talents and freedom.



*David Meinert:*

The gift of seeing some of my own goodness – I help many others in my daily walk with Jesus.

*Marilyn Moore:*

Faith and Sharing awakened me to see the gifts in everyone. Each person no matter their abilities or disabilities have gifts to offer the world. Faith and Sharing introduced me to L'Arche and helped me on the road to becoming a L'Arche assistant for which I am forever grateful!

*Donna Newell:*

A deeper understanding of the gospels and what it means to love unconditionally – no matter our age, the colour of our skin, or our intellectual abilities – everyone is accepted as an individual and how we can all learn from one another what God teaches. Authenticity is just one more gift of many that I have received.



*Fr. Pat O'Meara:*

The special gift I received from Faith and Sharing was the understanding of the importance of accepting others as they are and their acceptance of me as I am.

*Doris Pasley:*

I always found Faith and Sharing people so out-going and loving, especially those who had challenges. They are mostly so happy. I have always enjoyed attending the retreats. I have received so many graces, one of course is that of belonging to a loving group who are so diverse. These loved ones seem to know all your hurts and troubles and love you just the same.

*Nancy Lesser:*

When I went to my first Faith and Sharing retreat I had MS but was not too disabled. As time went on the MS progressed and escalated to me being in a wheelchair full time. At Faith and Sharing all people are equal and treated the same whether they have a mental or physical problem or not. It is the ultimate example of inclusion. It is a very humbling experience. By the end of the retreat we became so close that it is almost a challenge to get back into the "real world" – but we become "recharged" to face the world.

*Raymonde Doucet:*

When I passed the threshold to my first Faith and Sharing retreat, I felt like I had come home. I came there with a broken heart and when I saw that the others accepted me as I was, I began to accept myself. My masks fell and healing started. The weekend also opened my heart to others in a different way. It was a blessing for me and still is – Faith and Sharing means the world to me.

*James Gidney:*

From attending the retreat I have been given the gift of humility and love. I have felt love among the group, and I feel humble to be with all those who have handicaps – they show more abilities than what they are given credit. How can I not feel love just by being accepted into their world?

*Jannette Jarvis:*

The special gift I have received from Faith and Sharing is to give and receive love of my neighbour who can sometimes only speak with their heart. Words don't always need to be spoken or heard – they can be felt. I experienced this a few years back while attending a retreat - one of the non-verbal participants went and stood in front of another retreatant who was having difficulty and I could see that without words a very special bond was established between them.



*Mary McKenna:*

A deeper sense of personal prayer in my daily life journey. 💜

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### **What Faith and Sharing has brought me...**

#### **A meeting like no other**

*By Luce Beaulieu  
Rockland, Ontario*

Faith and Sharing was the occasion of a meeting that marked me for the rest of my life. Indeed, I met the Living One, the One who died and rose for me, simply because He loves me. I discovered lay people who spoke to Him as we speak to a friend, without embarrassment, such as we are. I understood that we are all children of the same Father and that the arrival of the Kingdom will be enriched by our contribution according to our strengths and talents received. I hope that the grace of Faith and Sharing will spread as far as the horizon for life to finally triumph over death.



Peace in Him who strengthens us. 💜

## What is the gift that Faith and Sharing has been to you?



By Terri McCormack  
Vancouver Island

On Vancouver Island, on the afternoon of August 16th, during our summer retreat, a Faith and Sharing 50th anniversary celebration was held. We opened the doors to former retreatants and our sponsors to come celebrate with us in a lay-led service, fellowship and cake. It was an honour to have Bishop Remi De Roo, who encouraged our community's beginnings in 1974, to join us. During our service, cards and pens were handed out and we were asked to reflect and write down our response to the question "*What is the gift that Faith and Sharing has been to you?*"



Each person was then invited to come forward and pin their card on a banner. The banner was repurposed from the 1983 Faith and Sharing retreat held at the University of Victoria, BC which Jean Vanier animated.

62 cards in total were created with these words and sayings on them :

*appreciation - belonging - calling - caring - community - encouragement - everything - faith - family - fellowship - forgiveness - friendship - frolic - giving -*

*happy - hope - Jesus - joy - love - loving - music - open heart - peace - place - renewal - sharing - simplicity - spiritual home - support - truth - wonder - a way of live and path to wisdom - a fully human, fully alive community where everyone is welcome, everyone is a friend and everyone belongs - a week of kindness - beauty of place and people - being inclusive - Faith and Sharing has given me joy, fun, Jesus and friends - Faith and Sharing has given me my new and old friends and it has made me happy - friends of community - gift of understanding and compassion - giving my time and myself to the people - hope for unity - I am awesome! - I love being*



*here with my best friends, Michael and Susan - intimate friendships - it is the call of Faith and Sharing which is my life - my openness and faithfulness - Jesus present in my brothers and sisters - love my sisters and brothers in Jesus - the ability to let go - we are a faith and sharing family - my presence, also WIFI - opening my heart and my eyes - my spiritual roots and foundation in God's fellowship from age 6 to 51 - reunion with family - the beautiful spirit and energy that you bring here - the gift of love, thank you faith and sharing - the power of love, love one another*

Wow! So many gifts that our Faith and Sharing community has been and is to so many people. 💜

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## A fruit of confidence



*By Angèle Gagné, osu  
Gaspé, Quebec*

A fruit that fell into my heart like a ripe apple in the fall!

I was in the plane taking me to Cleveland. As French speaking coordinator of the North American Faith and Sharing Committee, I was going to lead the annual meeting. I was on my way, on the same day: Gaspé - Quebec - Montreal - Toronto - Cleveland. All my correspondence was scheduled, phones made to make sure I was picked up at the Cleveland airport.

In Toronto, heavy fog prevented the aircraft from landing on time. Three quarters of an hour waiting in the air! Three-quarters of an hour of anguish wondering what would happen to me in the huge Pearson airport! Three-quarters of an hour to ask myself, in tears, how I was going to tell Father Jim not to pick me up at 10:15 pm. Me, la little country mouse who squeaks only in French, lost in this big city!

Then the little mouse turned to God and told Him with faith, "If it is you who send me to Faith and Sharing in Cleveland, take care of me!" And I closed my eyes and abandoned myself...

When I reached the long corridor of the Toronto airport, I could see from a distance a man I knew... the organist of the cathedral where I sang 25 years in the choir! He was my guardian angel all evening, night and the next morning. He helped me in everything. God had answered my prayer.

I then crunched, like a good apple, in the fruit of confidence, which then created peace, joy and love. 💜



Angèle Gagné and Raymonde Doucet in Cleveland around 1998 - 2000

## Faith and Sharing Valleyfield A Spring rich in emotions!



By Julie Prigent, coordinator  
Valleyfield

In March, we experienced an encounter through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We let ourselves be molded by the Divine Potter, who created us in his image with so much love!

Sometimes we tend to feel like a "jug", because of our weaknesses, we are not always recognized for our true value ...

Through a process of interiority, each had his block of clay from which he could model a vase.

But you Lord, you come to fill us with your Love so that we, too, in your wake, we can fill other "jugs" ... Lord, you tell us again and again "*you are priceless in my eyes and I love you*". By your infinite mercy, you grant us your forgiveness. You transform our weaknesses and make life come out of it! Lord, there is no failure when you create! Thank you for the beauty of your creation!

Always present in each of us and in the heart of the community, you have accompanied us in more difficult times ... Indeed, three people have returned to the Father's house: Michel Lefebvre, Chantal Carrière and Richard Branchaud.

In April, following the death of Michel, who in a moment of distress took his life, the community held a special meeting in his memory. We celebrated Michel's life by remembering beautiful memories with testimonials and a photo montage. We made a symbolic gesture for a last goodbye: to the sound of soft music, each one, in turn, was going to choose a flower and then put it in a vase on the altar. The Eucharist was then



celebrated with texts and songs chosen with reference to Michel. It was very touching and very deep! Michel was among us, that's for sure! The Holy Spirit blew on the whole community so that everything went calmly despite everything ...



In May, we experienced the departure of Chantal and Richard in a special way too. Each wrote a word or phrase to give thanks for their lives. These little words were read during the homily.

To end the year on a happier note, our June meeting was festive to the delight of everyone! Music and games were there. Fun, for sure ! 💜

## 40th Anniversary of Faith and Sharing - Diocese of Valleyfield

### 40 years of warm welcome



By Suzanne Crête-Legault  
Faith and Sharing Committee - Diocese Valleyfield



Monday, September 10 was a day of celebration for our community: 40 years of existence, we emphasize this! Made up of about forty members, our history is written just like that of families with people united, not by blood, but by their gifts and talents in a spirituality initiated by Jean Vanier. It pursues its mission in joy and simplicity despite the normal worries that life brings.

The day started with the story told by Louise Larivière, one of the founders of the community. She took the opportunity to give us a crucifix under which was confirmed the decision to found Faith and Sharing Valleyfield, when a ray of sunbeam shined unexpectedly on this cross.



We continued with a testimony of Jean Roy. Recalling that at the beginning, he did not like his first meeting with Faith and Sharing, not feeling close to Jesus. Then, after listening to cassettes of Jean Vanier, he changed... He lived many retreats, always in the same spirit, in the simplicity, the Word of God being said in words connecting our life and our poverty. He has often said "no" to requests for commitment until his heart was ready! Thank you Jean, for listening to your heart, we are the lucky beneficiaries! ♥☐

Punctuated by songs, Max, the coordinator of Faith and Sharing Montreal spoke with a splashing dynamism. Inhabited by a deep faith and an extraordinary passion, he described himself as a man of service! Impossible not to believe it! I even renamed the rotini salad, "Max salad", because it had a lot of "spring"! He asked for a break so we could tell each other that we loved each other, which gave a magic moment of happiness and love! Thanks to Faith and Sharing Montreal for their participation (Max and Flavie).





A shared meal followed. Each brought a dish to share. There was abundance, the variety and the pleasure of discovering new dishes. A cake was then cut into "parts" by Bishop Noël Simard and distributed. He used this image to illustrate his homily during the Eucharistic celebration. In addition, the birthdays of those born in September were highlighted.

Team exchanges took place where the graces brought by Faith and Sharing were compiled. They were evoked during the Mass presided over by Bishop Simard and

concelebrated by priests who had links with us: Father Richard Wallot and Father Jean-Chrysostome, as well as the Vicar General, Father André Lafleur, who accompanies our community during our meetings. He took over from our chaplain, Father Gilles Desroches, after he was affected by a stroke.



To close it off, a festive moment was planned with people dedicated to Quebec folklore.

Songs to answer, dance, spoons, jigs, etc., nothing was spared so that the joy of living was manifested!

Yes, it was a beautiful day! Yes, it is possible to communicate with each other despite our differences, despite our heart, body or spirit handicaps. No place is better to welcome oneself and the other in all truth, in all humanity in this great mystery of divine love. 💜



## Thanksgiving of August 30, 2018



*By Jean Roy  
Sherbrooke*

Today, August 30, 2018. I wake up at 1:00 am (it happens to me sometimes). My first thought: "It's been 50 years today. 50 years since the beginning of the first retreat preached by Jean Vanier in Marylake. 50 years that Faith and Sharing exists. And fortunately for me, Faith and Sharing exists. "

However, it was not love at first sight when I went to my first monthly meeting (in 1984, I think). I did not like this meeting. "Weird people", of all conditions and all ages, who spoke of God and Jesus as if they knew them personally. While on my side, I was in doubt and looking...

In the following years, I had the opportunity to hear Jean Vanier's Word, in person or on tape. I was touched deep inside me. He spoke of Jesus in the poor. He helped me understand that I was also the poor man in whom Jesus lived. And I believed it.

So, 4 years later, I dared to return to a monthly meeting of Faith and Sharing. I let myself be tamed. Since then, I have participated in hundreds of monthly meetings, I have lived many retreats, local, regional or North American. Conferences often touching, sometimes boring. Sharing in teams often deep, sometimes superficial. Celebrations often significant, sometimes insignificant for me. Human encounters often pleasant, sometimes difficult. Faith and Sharing is not a perfect community, but a gathering of humans who want to journey as brothers and sisters, guided by the Spirit of Jesus.

In me, there was no sudden conversion, but a discreet and profound change of heart. I am still looking for God, this "beyond all", I see traces of him everywhere, I speak to him as a loving Father. Faith and Sharing is a privileged means of my human and spiritual blossoming.

Now, I am concerned that others can also know this "treasure in the field", this "precious pearl" that is Faith and Sharing. I'm working on it, with my gifts and my limits.

Today, August 30, 2018, I think of this small plant that came out of the ground on August 30, 1968, to become the great tree that is Faith and Sharing, so I and so many could enjoy its fruits. And my prayer can only be an immense Thanksgiving. 💜

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## Faith and Sharing, a springboard on my way



*By Brother Jean Beloin s.c.  
Sherbrooke*

It was in 1977. After a few years as a missionary in Zaire, I came back paralyzed for a stay of five months of hospitalization at the University Hospital of Sherbrooke followed by another six months at the Youville Rehabilitation Center. It was during my rehabilitation at Youville that I experienced Faith and Sharing in December 1977.

Nana Mouskouri is one of my favorite singers, because of the purity of her voice. While strolling in the corridors of the institution, I suddenly hear, in a room, a voice that sang and that strangely resembled that of Nana Mouskouri. A bit like Moses in the Burning Bush, I approached, I listened and, since there were already other people gathered around a person very handicapped by arthritis, Rita Girard, and the one who sang so well, Laurette Rouleau, I dared to come in and come up to see and listen better.

Later, I recognized Rita at the daily Eucharist that took place, at that time, in the great chapel of the venerable institution founded by the "Gray Nuns" of St-Hyacinthe, the daughters of Saint Marie-Marguerite d'Youville. We then got to know each other and soon she invited me to Faith and Sharing, who had sent a small group of people to conduct a monthly meeting in this same chapel.

After the first meeting where I was invited, she invited me for a second meeting the following month. Subsequently, no need for an invitation because I had found my new home group that welcomed me wonderfully as I was and where I already felt like "home".

Some time later, after leaving the rehabilitation center, I became coordinator for the main group of Faith and Sharing, which was then meeting in a room of the Sherbrooke Seminary. At that time, working in Magog as an industrial draftsman, when my hours of work were over, I was available to visit the people of the Faith and Sharing group, at least those who wanted it and who had reachable rent because I had become paraplegic.

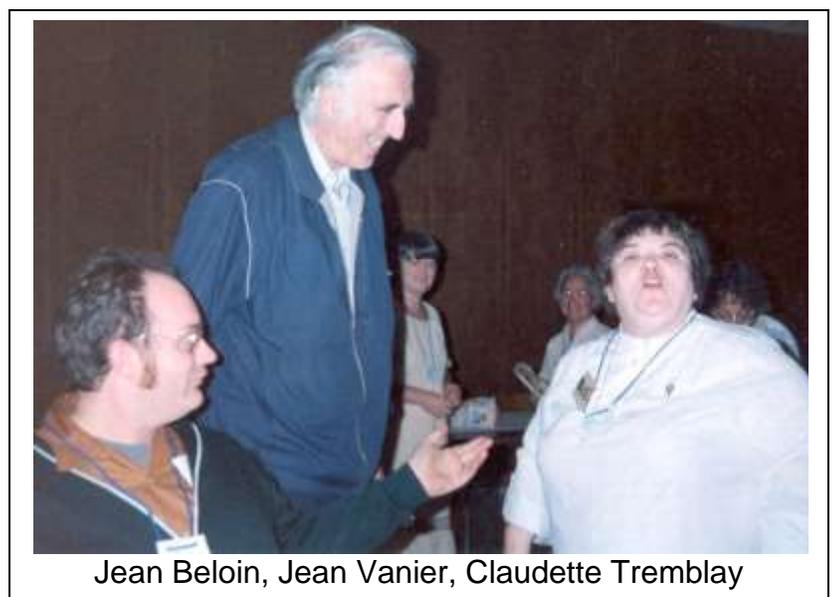
It was in the fall of 1979, probably in November, that a great request was made to me during one of these meetings with Mrs. Claudette Tremblay, a person of Faith and Sharing for several years, a very poor person in several dimensions of her life but endowed with a big, very generous heart. Claudette told me: *"I wish there was a house in Sherbrooke where we could **live Faith and Sharing every day** and not just a few hours a month. A house where we could pray together, where we could welcome other people injured, disabled in all kinds of ways and vulnerable like us, a house where we could share tasks according to our abilities."* And, in the same breath, she added, as if to add something concrete: *"As I like to cook, I could cook there."*



Claudette Tremblay

Hard to be more direct. This request instantly touched my heart because, intuitively, without ever having succeeded in naming or verbalizing it, I thought to myself that there must certainly have been people who wanted to live a community life but who, because of their marginality or their deep wounds would never be accepted in a conventional, traditional community. Being very happy in community, I could only wish other people to live, too, this beautiful experience. But the problem with this request is that it was addressing me and it was not within my reach. It exceeded me almost infinitely. The project presented was laudable and very beautiful but I said to myself, if I am concerned with this call (which I already sensed as a call from the Lord), how is it going to be done? It seemed obvious to me that I did not have the necessary qualifications to respond to such a request. Yet I prayed and asked others to pray for what seemed to me to be a beautiful project but I really had no idea of "how it could be done" and who, what people, could accomplish.

In my heart, there was already a wound, an opening that called for something new, for a change. Having engaged myself, younger, as a religious, to follow and serve Jesus in my brothers and sisters, I wondered what was the



Jean Beloin, Jean Vanier, Claudette Tremblay

meaning of my life now to scribble on paper as an industrial designer. It seemed to me that even though I was doing well in this new job and the boss was happy with my work, I was no longer in the right place and could not go on indefinitely like that. It seemed obvious to me that I had not engaged, as a religious, to do this kind of job, alone in an office. It could go temporarily, in the meantime, but not for the rest of my working life.

I would say that this beautiful seed, deposited by the "gardener" Claudette, was at this moment buried in the "earth" of my heart but there was a long time of waiting before a tiny sign of life arose and became perceptible. In fact, the trigger that



arose about 15 months later is an event that, in itself, was commonplace: the news that a house next door, belonging to my community of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, would be on sale. The very night moment that I heard the news, it was as if there had been a veil that had risen suddenly, and that what seemed to me impossible for long months, now seemed to me as achievable. In just a few days, the pieces, of what seemed to me like an insoluble puzzle, had been put in place almost by itself. Quickly

the project was encouraged by my community and also by several people of Faith and Sharing and, about six months later, on August 24, 1981, it was the opening of *La Maison Les Béatitudes* (*The Beatitudes House*).

With the passing of years, I still do not understand how I could, one day, have the audacity to launch me almost blindly in such an adventure. My basic insecurity and lack of self-confidence should have forbid me from such madness. Alone, it would have been totally impossible, but together with the presence of the Spirit in our midst, the impossible has become reality. Today, I thank God for daring to believe in me much more than I myself would have had the audacity to do it.

*La Maison Les Béatitudes*, this offshoot of Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke, is still alive 37 years later and remains grafted on the "tree" that transmitted its life. I would almost dare to say that Faith and Sharing has completely redirected my life, or rather allowed me to live my life in a different setting that



I never would have imagined before. As best as we can, with all the limitations associated with the fundamentally poor people we are, we continue, even today, to try to "... **live Faith and Sharing every day** ..." We do not change the world but we try to let Jesus change our hearts so that, little by little, He teaches us to love each other better, as He does for each and every one of us. **With His grace**, our differences, our failings or our sometimes turbulent characters, are no longer considered as impassable walls but rather as opportunities for growth in tolerance, forgiveness and love. Our community life together is a bit like a school where we have lots of opportunities to do practical exercises that help us learn ... to love like Him.

THANK YOU to God, to Faith and Sharing, to Jean Vanier and to all those who took over afterwards so that this grace of Faith and Sharing has one day reached us. Thank you to Rita Girard and Claudette Tremblay, two very humble people of Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke, who allowed Jesus to go through them so that, in August 1981, La Maison Les Béatitudes was founded, a home where I have the privilege to live since that day. 💜

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## What Faith and Sharing brought me



*By Jacqueline Noel  
Sherbrooke*

First, the grace of Faith and Sharing has inhabited me for about 45 - 46 years. Even though I am less active now, at my age, I always like to give small services that I am asked.

At meetings, I have encountered poverty in all its forms. What Grace! It allowed me to discover my many poverties.

For the first time in my life, I did not need a mask. I could finally be myself. People loved me for who I was.

It is also at Faith and Sharing that I learned to pray with simple words from the bottom of my heart. Faith and Sharing has given me confidence in myself, by entrusting me with more and more responsibilities. In recent years, I left room for younger people and "I have lived Faith and Sharing" here at *La Maison Les Béatitudes* for 36 years.

My heart is filled with gratitude as I look back on this past, this time at Faith and Sharing which really put me on the right track.

I cannot end without highlighting the fact that for me, Jean Vanier is a role model, as all the spiritual animators at retreats, North American, regional and local.

What good and sweet memories filled my heart.

Long live Faith and Sharing and let's praise the Lord together! 💜



## The fruits of Faith and Sharing



By Michel Denis  
Sherbrooke

It is impossible for me to name all the fruits of *Faith and Sharing*. It's a bit like all of the varieties of apples that exist, it's staggering. Of course, the fruits of the Holy Spirit come to me: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, temperance" (Gal 5:22); there are many fruits for me, in these twelve years of attendance at *Faith and Sharing*.

It's like a family, not a family composed of kin, but a family that shares and desires to share as Jesus did. This is for me the wealth of our small community and an important wealth for the future of our Church.

*Faith and Sharing* is made up of people who have faith, and want to be in contact with others; people who share their faith in Jesus to nourish their faith and feed each other. The centre of our meetings is Jesus, bread of life, bread of life in our poverty; Jesus, bread of life present in each of our hearts; Jesus who



comes to give us life in abundance; who tells us above all, it is in contact with your brothers and sisters with their poverty, their limits. Fruits, I see so much: the sharing of the word, the smiles, the listening, the services that we give each other, the outstretched hand, the laughter, the tenderness, the goodness, the joy, the celebrations, the silence, the beauty, the prayer. Each may be touched by the faith, by the sharing.

*Faith and Sharing* is also 50 years of fruit passed around in each of our communities and between communities. I also think of all those people who have left us and who have brought us so much, a beautiful heritage that comes to tell us how love is eternal.

I want to quote these words from Jean Vanier, about the prayer - precious food of our faith, of our sharing: "Prayer in community is an important food. A community that prays together, enters into silence and adoration, united in the action of the Holy Spirit. The cry of the community is listened to, in a special way, by God. When we ask God together for a gift, a grace, God hears and answers us."

I will conclude by telling you our theme for *Faith and Sharing Sherbrooke* this coming year, because it is a theme so dear to *Faith and Sharing*; it is the title of a song by Jean-Claude Gianadda: "I will bless the Lord at all times". 💜

## The beautiful garden of Faith and Sharing



*By Lise Morin  
Sherbrooke*

Greetings,

Anyone who humbly acknowledges his "poverty or fragility" can be part of the Faith and Sharing community.

A place is therefore offered to anyone who wishes to live fraternal and spiritual renewal in a beautiful simplicity. This is the important source of fruit, no matter our differences. Our heart, although unique, constantly seeks hope and love.



Sweet happiness comes from abundance of the gifts collected from our brothers and sisters.

Welcoming, mutual help, service, authenticity, prayer, forgiveness and gratitude spring from the breath of generosity born of trust. Together, it seems possible to grow with dignity in the acceptance of who we are. This journey can be sometimes circuitous but necessary to the experience of Faith and Sharing inspired by the Evangelical Word of Jean Vanier.



In sharing and faith, let's savor the precious taste of good fruits that have become more mature with the wind. Let us bless the Lord to always watch over his sheep like gifts. 💜

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## A beacon of goodness



*By Rita Gagné, osu  
Quebec City*

Faith and Sharing, by each person I met, was for me a beacon of kindness and tenderness on my way! My heart has fed on it like a manna in some deserts of life. Every retreat was a place where the Word became life close to the ground. I saw the fruits of divine seeds! I will never say thank you enough for this gift of Faith and Sharing. The memories are full of faces and names! My heart remembers and gives thanks for 50 years of beautiful meetings at heart level. Thanks for holding on! 💜



## Seeking Silence



*By Barend Jonel  
Victoria, BC*

That silence is so elusive, is a mystery.  
As I try to contain it, to hold it close.  
It evaporates in a nervous giggle or an unexpected sneeze.  
What frightens me so about the silence?  
My despair? My sorrow? My tears? My conviction? Myself?  
When the silence tries to hold me,  
I wriggle to get free. I struggle to resist it.  
But maybe, the silence can teach me.  
Is not Jesus in the silence?  
Is He not my hope, my comfort, my forgiveness, my acceptance?  
Why do I resist that moment to see Jesus?  
Perhaps, if I wait in the silence, great gifts will I mine.  
What might Jesus teach me, about my strangers,  
That only in silence could I hear?  
He would teach hope, courage, forgiveness and acceptance.  
But only when I am still.  
What I hear now in the silence, is the voice of my silent Jesus.  
I matter, you matter, I am, you are. 💜

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## How the Holy Spirit Blows on Faith and Sharing



*By Jannette Jarvis,  
Saint John, NB*

It was back in 2012 down region 1 Yarmouth NS when I came over a few days before from Saint John to help out the team setup. While Marilyn went up to Digby, I had decided to duck into the prayer room to give thanks for the animator, and the participants who would be here together. When I came out of the prayer room Marilyn had just pulled up with the Saint John people. So I greeted each of them with a hug, then helped them take things to the room they were assigned to. I did this with all the participants.

We were all being sung in with our theme song so everyone would know it by heart by the end of the retreat. One of the participants from Saint John got up without a word, went over to a lady who was from Yarmouth whose son died the day before the retreat, and just stood there. Without knowing, she allowed the Holy Spirit to blow on the lady from Yarmouth. This is how I seen "How the Holy Spirit blows on Faith and Sharing". 💜

## My journey with Faith and Sharing



*By Jean-Claude Lizotte  
Quebec City*

I joined Faith and Sharing 30 years ago in November 1988. Micheline and I were invited by Yvonne Paradis and one of her friends who is now deceased. Micheline was the first to come to a meeting, a month before me. The next month, she was not free so I tried the experiment.

I was unenthusiastic and unaccustomed to such communities as Faith and Sharing. Yvonne welcomed me and I attended my first lecture given by Father Gilles Beauchemin s.j. After the lecture, there was a shared meal with more than 60 people. I was not interested in staying, seeing many people with disabilities.

I headed for the exit, passing through the busy tables. I thought I could sneak out, but at the last table near the door, I met two people who changed my mind. They welcomed me with their beautiful smiles. I introduced myself awkwardly to Louissette, looking at her hand deformed by severe arthritis. I also introduced myself to Louise, sick, living in a home for sick people. And I saw that the unconditional welcome is the first important gesture made at Faith and Sharing. It allows us to see each other with our hearts. And that's when the Lord came to me through them. I also met Him later among all the others in our community.

I was deeply involved in all the activities, prayer days, closed retreats and popular retreats in St-Angèle of St-Malo parish for 20 years. The sharing of the Word after the talks, the Eucharist, the songs, the washing of the feet, are all important moments for me.

I want to note a significant period that we had for 10 years during the Christmas holidays, on December 26 each year at the house of the Catholic brothers. 6 of us organized these celebrations. At first we welcomed 35 people. The number grew rapidly to 100 people. Everything was planned, the transport, the lecturer, the Eucharist, the Christmas meal and the big party. We had to stop these celebrations because it took a lot of effort for us. All have fond memories

Today I can say that Micheline and I have many friends at Faith and Sharing with whom we share our faith, our life. We love them because they are part of our lives. We think and talk about them daily and pray for those who need the help of the Lord. After 30 years we are happy to be with them. We also pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us and continue to give us new members to lead in the future. We are also in solidarity with all the other communities of Faith and Sharing created by Jean Vanier so that his work continues for many more years.

Let's be in prayer union. 💜



Meal at the monthly meeting  
September 29, 2018

## What a school of life!



*By Andrée Vigneault  
Chicoutimi (Quebec)*

When I was young, my mother often spoke to me about the Vanier family and their attachment to Christ. I found that more than interesting. Also, when I heard about Faith and Sharing, inspired by the spirituality of Jean Vanier, trying to take root in our region, I did not hesitate, as soon as I could, to join this small group .

I have lived several retreats and what a school of life!

Finally, I could find people who had the same thirst for discovering and experiencing the Word revealed to the little ones but hidden from the wise and the learned.

I can say that Faith and Sharing was a blessing in my life and shaped me with certainty.

The group saw several dozens of witnesses draw their inspiration from the Word of God. We have lived a good twenty years hosting 30 to 60 people each month.

Personally, Faith and Sharing was for me a school of life, a place where I felt at ease and solidarity with all participants and where simplicity reigned from beginning to end. I think it's the authenticity in general that held me there.

In 2009, I felt that the time had come to bow down after 10 years as head of the group. It was not an easy decision, but I had thought about it for a long time and I think I had concrete signs that I had to leave. If my request for a new coordinator had produced the necessary echo, the succession would have continued, but unfortunately, I saw for some time the decline and the end arrive. It was with great regret that I had to accept that reality, hoping that the Lord would visit other hearts to work in different ways in the Mission but through Him, with Him and in Him.



I will always be grateful to all that Faith and Sharing has given me to live so pure and so beautiful and also to have allowed me to meet so many beautiful people, credible witnesses of the Word to experience the sweetness of hearts to hearts.

Thank you so much! 💜

## Montreal Retreat



*By Johanne Chiasson  
Montreal*



Dear friends of Faith and Sharing,

The retreat of July 2018 brought me a lot of peace and serenity in my heart. I came to receive energy needed to continue my daily routine.

It allowed me to socialize and make new acquaintances in order to share faith, that is Jesus Christ, as well as the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of God.

The visit of people from other groups from Ottawa, Sherbrooke and Valleyfield, was wonderful!

It brought me a lot of joy and happiness. 💜



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## News from the English speaking coordinator



*By Claire Donovan  
English speaking coordinator*

50 years of Faith and Sharing! I've been involved for 29 years and as for many of you, Faith and Sharing has changed my life. The community that forms during our summer retreats is gentle and strong and caring. Over the years I have made deep friendships and the experience of living together in loving faith-filled companionship for a few days each retreat has offered a glimpse of the kingdom of God that Jesus talked about and gives me hope for our potential as human beings.

Since I accepted the role of English speaking coordinator in February I have learned a little about the other communities across North America. Some are big, others small. Some are vibrant, others fragile. Some organize a few hours of coming together and others organize longer retreats. All are unique, yet we share a common vision.

I have been in touch with contacts in each of the English speaking communities. I have heard how each community planned their meetings, retreats and celebrations for this 50th anniversary year.

People gathered in Florida in May, and Detroit and Toronto in August. I was invited and welcomed by the Cleveland community to join them at their retreat in July. It was a rich time, full of delight and laughter and inspiring stories.

I listened as the Nova Scotia community discerned back and forth whether to have a retreat this year. In the end they felt the need to cancel it due to low numbers and a few last minute cancellations. A tough call, and hard to let it go. The reality of a fragile aging community.



Fun sketch in Cleveland



During the retreat in Vancouver Island

On Vancouver Island we welcomed the North American Federation committee, Jean, Isabelle and Marc along with their travelling companions Bob and Edouard. We gathered for Federation planning meetings and then the five of them joined us to take part in our summer retreat. It was a geographically wide spread retreat with these visitors from Quebec and Ontario and other visitors from Ireland, the Philippines and Korea. All adding their unique gifts and presence among us.

I was thrilled to reconnect with Cathleen Corbett of the Portland community in Oregon, USA, through an old phone list I had. It turns out that a small group from the Portland area have been meeting faithfully every Spring at a Trappist monastery, creating an experience they call Abbey Days, and following the traditions of Faith and Sharing retreats. They are now reconnected with the Federation through the website. We welcome you back!

I have witnessed the Spirit moving among us, fanning a flickering flame in the hearts of our communities, spreading love and deepening our faith. 💜



## Meetings, 2018-2019 Season French speaking groups

Group	Location	Dates	Time	Theme for the year	Person to contact	Remarks	2019 Retreat
<b>Montréal</b> QC	Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Church 5320 Côte-des-Neiges	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month	9:30 am to 4:00 pm		Max Saint Louis 514-735-5884 <a href="mailto:maxstlouis15@gmail.com">maxstlouis15@gmail.com</a>	Bring your lunch	Date to come  Open retreat
<b>Ottawa</b> ON	La Maison La Charité, 1982 ave Marquis, Gloucester, ON	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Friday of the month	7:00 pm to 8:30 pm	"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" Mt 6:21	Isabelle Frappier (613) 741-8769 <a href="mailto:isabelle_f@hotmail.com">isabelle_f@hotmail.com</a>		
<b>Québec</b> QC	I.R.D.P.Q. Centre François-Charron, 525 Wilfrid-Hamel	Last Saturday of the month, except - December 15 - June 15	10:00 am to 3:45 pm	"Disciples of Jesus"	Jean-Claude Lizotte 418-831-0125 <a href="mailto:jclizotte@gmail.com">jclizotte@gmail.com</a> Web site (French only): <a href="http://www.foietpartage.org">www.foietpartage.org</a>	Bring your lunch	<b>August 19 - 21</b>  Open retreat
<b>Rouyn-Noranda</b> QC					Gisèle and Émilien Labelle (819) 762-2515 Guylaine Boisvert (819) 764-4660 <a href="mailto:guylaine.boisvert@hotmail.com">guylaine.boisvert@hotmail.com</a>		Date to come  Open retreat
<b>Sherbrooke</b> QC	Précieux-Sang Church Except : March and June: La Maison Les Béatitudes	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, except: - February 17 - March 17 - May 5	1:30 pm to 6:45 pm	"I will bless the Lord at all times"	Lise Morin <a href="mailto:lise.morin52@videotron.ca">lise.morin52@videotron.ca</a>	Shared Meal	
<b>Valleyfield</b> QC	Salle des Oeuvres 66, rue du Marché	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, except: - June 3	6:45 pm to 9:15 pm	"Together in peace with Jesus"	Julie Prigent (450) 373-1956 <a href="mailto:pregent.julie@bell.net">pregent.julie@bell.net</a>		<b>June 3</b> One day retreat

## Meetings, 2018-2019 Season English speaking groups

Group	Location	Dates	Time	Theme for the year	Person to contact	Remarks	2019 Retreat
<b>Cleveland</b> (Ohio)	Our Lady of Angels Church 3644 Rocky River Dr.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month	6:00 pm				Date to come
<b>Detroit</b> (Michigan)	Corpus Christi Parish, Detroit	- December 16: Advent/Christmas Mass & Pot Luck - March 17: Lenten Reflection	3:00 pm		Pat Mueller: <a href="mailto:patriciasmuellet@gmail.com">patriciasmuellet@gmail.com</a> Vivian Spence: <a href="mailto:viviespence@hotmail.com">viviespence@hotmail.com</a>		<b>August 3</b>  Day of Reflection
<b>Jacksonville</b> (Florida)					Rebecca Aleman 904-230-7447 <a href="mailto:r Aleman@ccbjax.org">r Aleman@ccbjax.org</a> <a href="http://campiamspecial.com/fait h-sharing/">http://campiamspecial.com/fait h-sharing/</a>		Date to come
<b>Portland</b> (Oregon)					Cathleen Corbett <a href="mailto:cathleencorbett33@gmail.com">cathleencorbett33@gmail.com</a>	"Abbey Days"	<b>May 13 – 16</b>
<b>Toronto</b> (Ontario)	Tobias House, 695 Coxwell Ave, downtown Toronto	- December 1 (Advent) with Fr. John Muthengi			Monica Donovan 416-425-9944 Patrick Treacy <a href="mailto:patrickthink@yahoo.com">patrickthink@yahoo.com</a>	Advent and Lenten Day of Prayer	Date to come
<b>Vancouver Island</b> (British Columbia)	Bethlehem Centre, Nanaimo (BC)				Terri McCormack 250-465-2080 <a href="mailto:littleverk9@gmail.com">littleverk9@gmail.com</a>		<b>August 11 – 16</b>
<b>Yarmouth</b> (Nova Scotia)					Marilyn Moore 902-881-2107 <a href="mailto:marilyn_moore@eastlink.ca">marilyn_moore@eastlink.ca</a> Raymonde Doucet 902-742-2822	No meetings planned for the future at this time	