

North American retreat



*By Claire Donovan
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I am just back from the North American retreat in Pickering. 39 of us gathered - participants from eleven communities across Canada and the U.S. It was lovely to meet leaders and members of each English speaking community, that until now I have been communicating with by phone and email, since I took on the role of English speaking coordinator a year and a half ago. Plus I got the opportunity to meet and get to know participants from the French speaking communities in Quebec and Ottawa.

It was a typical retreat with much singing, sharing, prayer and laughter. We were a diverse group with participants from 22 to 92 years of age, from Vancouver Island to Nova Scotia and Florida to Quebec, English, French and quite a few Franglais. Old friends reconnected and many of us met and bonded anew.



Through the lens of his deep faith and trust in Jesus, Fr. Bill Clarke shared familiar gospel stories with such insight that we had much to reflect on. It sparked for me a deeper realization of how completely Jesus embraced his humanity, making our suffering his own; how much God loves us showering us with gifts even if he is sometimes “poor at wrapping gifts”; that sin is more about broken relationships than breaking rules, as well as the relevance of the gospel stories in my life.

In 5 days deep bonds were formed and a renewed love and appreciation for Faith and Sharing were experienced by many. Our communities are changing and most are becoming smaller. We continue on with gratitude for the gift of Faith and Sharing and trusting in the Spirit to guide us.

