

Adelante Junt@s

Forward Together

Vol.13 No.2 – Nov. 2012

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Adelante Junt@s

November 2012

From the Editor:

Welcome to the November 2012 edition of “Adelante Junt@s”! I think that you will be as inspired as I have been by the variety of presentations and experiences shared in this newsletter. Thank you so much to each person who has contributed and thank you to you, the readers. If you would like to make any comments, please do so in care of tksmithfcj@yahoo.ca.

Theresa Smith, fcJ (Terry)

Adelante Junt@s

Noviembre 2012

De parte de la editora:

¡Bienvenid@s a la edición de noviembre 2012 de “Adelante Junt@s”! Creo que estará tan inspirad@ como yo por la variedad de presentaciones y experiencias compartidas en este boletín. Muchas gracias a cada persona que contribuyó y gracias a ustedes, l@s lectores/as. Si quiere hacer comentarios, por favor hágalo a mi correo electrónico: tksmithfcj@yahoo.ca.

Theresa Smith, fcJ (Terry)

BECOMING BEAUTY

When giving goodness
 kindness
 love
With no thought for self
Becomes your life,
The only authority
 you need recognize
Is God's will.
In the doing of this,
 you become beautiful.

Douglas Krefling, CiM

AN OLD TIME HARVEST

A few weeks ago, I received a phone call from my niece, Mary Malyk Morris who lives on a farm south of Edmonton. "Auntie Margaret, would you like to come to a Tractor Harvest Show?

A lot of the family will be coming including Mom (my sister) & Dad and there's a pot-luck supper about 5:00 pm." Well it sounded good to me so Marilyn and I set off for an afternoon of renewing our experience of farming days, not quite knowing what to expect.

Mary's husband, Darrell, and his Dad have a hobby of collecting and restoring old machinery and had decided to put on this show on their land. So in the spring, they had set aside a 5 acre piece of land to plant, grow and harvest as in years gone by. The wheat was planted, cut with a binder (which tied the straw into bundles/sheaves) and then stooked (put together pyramid style) by hand and now we were out in the field, sitting on bales of straw to witness the sheaves being loaded onto wagons and brought to the threshing machine which separates the grain from the straw. What a lot of heavy work but the guys seemed to be enjoying it!

The afternoon was well-attended by friends, neighbours from the area as well as numerous members of my sister, Kay's, family of seven.

After the harvest demonstration, everyone returned from the field to a large building (a Quonset), normally used for storing machinery, where long tables had been set up for the pot-luck supper. The tables were decorated with baskets of a variety of squashes, zucchini and sunflowers and the meal was ready to be enjoyed. What a fine selection of many home-cooked dishes! A lot of work had gone on for the sole enjoyment of those who had come and at no financial cost.

A Harvest Prayer

Lord, in the rhythm of the seasons, we find a revelation of your beauty and goodness. Grant us the mercy of cleansing rain, the fertility of rich soil and the bounty of steady growth. Strengthen the hands of the farmers and all those whose labour helps to bring food to our tables. Through your mercy, may we have enough nourishment to strengthen our bodies and enough love to share what we have with those in need Amen

(from a devotional booklet)

Margaret Mary Benoit, fcJ

Hello from Saint Philomena School in Rhode Island

In May 2012, St. Philomena School Chorus staged the Beauty and the Beast Broadway Musical. This is the twelfth annual musical production by the Chorus to benefit the FCJ mission in the Philippines.

Last September, our school celebrated Marie Madeleine D’Houet’s birthday with a beautiful prayer service. A short skit about her life was presented by Grade Three. We sang “Gigi”, “Companions on a Journey” and “Happy Birthday”.

Our campus was decorated with balloons and all the students had cupcakes after. Sister Imelda, FCJ came to celebrate with us.

On November 8 and 9 we had the International Folk Dancing Festival at St. Philomena School. Our program started with the song “It’s a Small World”, with a parade of flags representing their country’s dance. The dances were: Kindergarten - Country Dance (USA), Grade 1 - Chesobogar (Hungary), Grade 2 - Mexico , Grade 3 - Sweden (Fjaskern or Hurry Scurry), Grade 4A – Lithuania, 4B - Africa, Grade 5 - Italy, Grade 6 - Cuba (Salsa), Grade 7 - Argentina (Tango), Grade 8A1 Philippines (Tinikling or Bamboo Dance), 8A2 - USA (American Indian Dance) and Grade 8B - USA (Rock and Roll). Each class came to school dressed in their costumes! After the dances, I asked the parents and students to remember the Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus who work throughout the world and pray that more women will join the FCJs to spread the word of God. Sister Imelda and Sister Madeleine were present. I also asked the community to support the projects in Bagong Silangan Payatas Development Center in the Philippines. Sister Paola Terroni sent arts and crafts made by the Payatas women which were sold in the lobby of the Auditorium.

We closed the program with the song “What the World Needs Now Is Love”, written by Hal David and Burt Bacarach. It was a joyful and colorful celebration of dances from around the world!

Cecilia Heredia, CiM

Pictures: St. Philomena School Broadway Musical Production of Beauty & the Beast to benefit the FCJ mission in the Philippines (May 2012); Grade 6 doing the Salsa; Kindergarten –country dance; Grade 2 after their Mexican dance

St. Philomena School International Folk Dance (November 2012)

Something to Share

The Companions in Mission in Durham, North Carolina USA have begun supplementing our October meetings in this “Year of Faith” with a journey through Margaret Silf’s book, Simple Faith. 2012. We are hoping that through our discussion, the guidance her book provides will assist us in experiencing new freedoms and joyfulness as we deepen our ever changing relationships with God.

The book only contains 63 pages. It is a small book that offers large ideas that are valuable to discern and act upon during this year of faith. There are simple discussion questions suggested at the end of each chapter to reflect upon or discuss.

The chapters cover: Our images of God. Relating to God. God as a mystery. Life and meaning. Who is Jesus? Following Jesus. Entering the Gospels in Prayer. Faith is as Faith does. Can my life make a difference? Journeying alone, journeying together. I want to ask God... I want to ask myself... I believe...

One of the chapters of her book discusses an area I find myself often resisting: What is My Life’s Center? She says...

“To be a person of faith is to make a choice to center one’s life around the deeper center of gravity we call God, and the greater good of all creation, rather than primarily around one’s personal gain and benefit. It is to act with loving kindness, to ourselves and to one another.” This alone could take us a lifetime to accomplish, and probably should.

The chapter ends with a powerful and direct quote.

“Everyone must decide whether to walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.” – Martin Luther King

Jo Ann Burden, CiM

Picture: Migdalia Pérez, CiM, with crosses she made for CiM group in Durham, NC.

Relating to the Past

What is the primordial wellspring of meaning on which everything in the universe is based? According to Diarmuid O’Murchu it is the capacity to relate. This is very much in tune with what I had learned in moral theology several years ago, that relationships with God, self, others and creation are the basis of morality.

Perhaps subconsciously it is from this theological perspective that Pat Molesky-Brar and I operate in the Provincial Archives. While working together to preserve and “weed” documents and photos and research information as requested for particular people or events, we begin to relate to our earlier sisters and to find ways to invite community and visitors to see what we have discovered. It is interesting to learn about the undertakings of our early missionaries that often involved challenges as well as enjoyable situations.

Artifacts and different seasons spark our imaginations to arrange the display cases in various ways. When I found two metal stamps in June or July, one of St. Joseph’s Convent, Brandon and the other

of our St. Louis Mission in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, I marked these FCJ missions of the late 19th century on a map and also the places from which or to which the sisters had come or gone from Brandon and Fond du Lac. Copies of articles about the missions of Brandon, Duck Lake, Prince Albert and Rat Portage were placed in the exhibit. A brass kettle invited an arrangement of fancy cups and a world map. Each cup represented a different country where we have Companions in Mission. There they were having tea together, sharing our one charism!

Because a number of our sisters were celebrating significant jubilees in 2012, Pat found photos and created very attractive tributes to those who made vows 70, 65, 60 and 50 years ago.

Our eldest member of the Province of the Americas celebrated her 94th birthday on October 6. Pat has a shelf dedicated to Sister Rosaline McGrath.

October 17 the Edmonton Catholic Schools celebrated the official opening of Mother Margaret Mary School. It was a privilege to find some articles and pictures about Sr. Margaret Mary Hickey for Sister Bonnie Moser, our Provincial Leader, who was to be at the opening along with FCJs from Alberta and Sr. Margaret Mary's family.

Lethbridge Catholic Schools had an Open House at their office (formerly St. Basil's School) on Oct. 19 to thank the various religious orders that had contributed to Catholic education in Lethbridge and area over the last hundred years. One of the organizers had asked for a list of all the FCJs who had been in the schools. Going through catalogues and having lists previously drawn up by Sister Elizabeth Fitzgerald, I was able to find the exact years in which the sisters had been part of the Catholic School System from 1891 until 1987.

Requests for pictures of our sisters often have us wishing that discretion and modesty had not had such great value before Vatican II! There are very few photos of our early missionaries or of FCJs who followed them.

An historian from the University of Brandon, Tom Mitchell, is trying to make a documentary on the schools there with special emphasis on the question of religion. He wants people to know about the struggles the Faithful Companions of Jesus had. Mr. Mitchell believes most residents of Brandon today have no idea of the bigotry that existed.

It seems then, that our role as archivists is to relate the past to the present.

Theresa Smith, fcJ

Paris

First of all, it must be noted: the offer to be in Paris on 21 September was an incredible one, one that words will never describe adequately. Paris is 'home' to me as I entered from there and it has been one of the few 'stable' places in my personal and FCJ life, despite only returning sporadically. So when Sr. Katherine Mary asked if I would like to be present for the translation of Marie Madeleine's Relics to her final resting place, I could not believe it. No hesitation or discernment needed here! Plans were quickly made to take vacation time from work, to meet with friends and family while in Paris, but the highlight then and still now, is just the pure joy of anticipation and of being present at such an event.

When the third week of September finally arrived, and Paris was no longer a dream but a reality, and despite the many changes that have occurred over the last 50 plus years, at one level it seemed as if nothing had changed. Paris as a city, felt the same, looked the same despite some newer buildings in other arrondissements, yet Marie Madeleine's room, as did the whole house, exuded that same aura of strength, humility and simplicity as it has always done. The Chapel simply decorated with floral arrangements and the Reliquary which had quietly and reverently arrived earlier in the afternoon of Friday, 20 September, left one feeling 'really present' in 1858, not just 2012. It was almost overwhelming and yes, exciting, to be 'with' Marie Madeleine in her own home where she had lived and had died.

Saturday, 21 September, Marie Madeleine's 231st birthday was a day of pure joy. FCJs had been arriving over the past few days, and the meetings and greetings outside St. Dominique were a sight to behold. Many were the FCJs I personally had not seen in 40 years or more; others whom I had never met who now have names and faces "attached".

Leaving to others the description of the Liturgy itself, I think seeing direct descendants of Marie Madeleine, and other family members, was the highlight for me. I was particularly moved to see the youngest generation who fully participated in the Liturgy (as did the full congregation of parishioners and other invited guests.) So often one is left feeling that some people are present at celebrations because they "have to be" or it is "politically correct". In this case, it was so clear that everyone was present by choice and feeling privileged to be there. Joy, reverence and hope filled the church.

The Social at the Lycee afterwards was a marvel of organization, as only the French can do. School, Parents, Students, and all the invited guests were intermingling, making connections or reconnecting. Joy, laughter, memories, all were present, and all because Marie Madeleine was now back home in France and we were celebrating this fact on the very property she had bought and where she had lived her latter years and had died. This was such a humbling and immeasurably renewing, revitalizing hope-filled experience. Thank you.

Seraphina Kimball, fcj

The Ministry of Spiritual Direction: Conference led by Sr. Maureen Conroy, RSM

**October 19-21, 2012
North Carolina, USA**

Picture: Sally, Maureen, Jennifer, Joanna

About 18 months of planning and preparation culminated in a wonderful conference on spiritual direction, under the able leadership of Sr. Maureen Conroy, RSM, author of several books and articles about this subject. Friday was devoted to *The Ministry of Spiritual Direction*. Friday night through Sunday focused on *Supervision Training*. Both sessions were based on the approach explained in Looking into the Well. Most people attended Friday through Sunday – about 40 in all.

Steeped in the Ignatian method, Maureen emphasized the contemplative, experiential nature of this ministry. She explained that a spiritual director helps people to “savor” positive experiences of God and to “explore” difficult experiences. The sessions included a good deal of demonstrations by Maureen and practice among us participants. A *well* was a central image of her teaching. The spiritual director is companioning the directee down into the well –at the bottom of which is God. She quoted Meister Eckhart as saying that God is like a “great underground river that no one can dam up and no one can stop.”

For me, a key element of this whole experience was being part of the planning team. Jennifer is a spiritual director, therapist, and long-time member of The Navigators, an interdenominational, international evangelical organization. Sally is a writer and speaker -- wife of an Anglican bishop (North American Missionary District of the Anglican Church of Rwanda). These women in 2003 launched JourneyMates, a group spiritual direction process based on several other programs. <http://journeymates.org/our-history/>. JourneyMates now has branches in Virginia, Connecticut, and Nebraska.

This was yet another opportunity for me to work ecumenically towards a common goal and to experience the resonances of Christians working together to foster peoples’ spiritual journeys. Both Sally and Jennifer have consistently shown appreciation for the rich heritage of spirituality brought to the table by Roman Catholicism and by religious life, in particular.

Another positive result of the Conference is a new list of trained spiritual directors who are interested in forming a network in this area. With the growing requests for this ministry, such a list has been sorely needed.

Note: In the 10-year period between 2000 and 2010, the Catholic population in the 54-county Diocese of Raleigh has increased approximately 42 percent from 152,493 to 217,125 registered Catholics, with an estimated 200,000 plus unregistered Catholics, mostly of Hispanic origin. The Diocese covers some 32,000 square miles.

Joanna Walsh, fcJ

Interview with Vera Alston, CiM (North Carolina, USA)
(Kitchen of FCJ House in Durham)

In late September Vera made her first commitment as an FCJ Companion in Mission. This coincided with her retirement as Administrative Officer for the Durham County Manager.

Adelante: What are you going to do with your free time in your retirement?

Vera: I have already begun volunteering at the *Durham Crisis Resource Center*, an agency to help women and men who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Women victims outnumber men by a considerable number.

Adelante: Of all of the volunteer opportunities in this area, why did you select this one?

Vera: Having experienced domestic violence in my first marriage, I know the kinds of challenges one faces from abuse -- what it does to your self-esteem, the way you view the world, and the way you view yourself. I realize how hard it is to overcome the interior damage of the abuse...so that you can see yourself as a valuable person.

Adelante: You want to pass on to others what you have received?

Vera: Yes, I want to help others feel the same empowerment that I did. The abuser's opinion of you is not who you are. You are valuable.

Adelante: In what ways do you see this connected with your new commitment to live as an FCJ Companion in Mission?

Vera: Well, we all need to be healed . . . from the human condition . . . from the results of original sin. We all experience pain in some way. When I look at Christ, I see a healer. If I am going to follow in the footsteps of Christ – and not simply look at him in admiration – then I have a responsibility to reach out and help. I think I am able to help in this healing way because of what I have experienced in my own life. I can help with the healing process. I can let the hurting person feel that “someone really cares about you”.

Adelante: What have you been learning about abuse issues here in Durham?

Vera: Well, I realized that a special court has been set aside to handle domestic violence. It used to be in session twice a week. Now court sessions have increased from two to four days a week. There is a lot of hurt and a lot of disconnect in this city. People need healing.

Adelante: So, what's been your involvement so far?

Vera: Well, I have completed the required 26 hours of initial training. People talked to us about the four aspects of this support work:

- Crisis line
- Court advocacy (for those seeking a protective order against domestic violence)
- Faith and community education (giving talks to bring awareness about domestic violence issues in community).
- Hospital response (accompany the victim if he/she ends up in the hospital from abuse)

Adelante: Which area did you choose?

Vera: Well, I wanted to do court advocacy and faith and community education, but I won't be able to attend the training class for that until February. So, I have begun with the crisis line -- people in trouble calling in for information.

Adelante: What's that been like for you?

Vera: Very informative. They gave us a huge list of resources related to things like counseling and shelter (relocation). I realized that different shelters have different requirements: some don't allow kids, others don't allow boys. They trained us in how to talk to the people when they call. We're not there to fix, but help empower the person to fix his/her own problem... give the people the support they needed to fix it themselves. Reminds me of the FCJ Training in Spiritual Direction that I did a few years ago!

Adelante: How will our CiM meetings connect with your new volunteer work, Vera?

Vera: Our CiM meetings will connect with my volunteer work by the support it offers. One of the things the Durham Crisis Resource Center encourages is for the volunteers to take care of themselves. They realize the work can be stressful and we will need some means of letting it go. Our meetings allow us an opportunity to ask for prayer. I feel I can bring my request to the group and they will hold me in their hearts and prayers.

Statistics from the Durham Crisis Resource Center:
(<http://durhamcrisisresponse.org/learn-more/agency-stats>)

Adelante Reporter, *Joanna Walsh, fcJ*

Bed . . . Bible . . . Bread – 24 Hours with Jesus

About once a month I head over to the Marian Centre in the Inner City of Edmonton for a hot date. The Centre is home to 10 members of the Madonna House Community, the second oldest of Catholic lay communities inspired by Catherine de Hueck Doherty. In addition to being a prayer presence in the inner city, the community serves a hot soup lunch to up to 250 inner city folks and has a clothes cupboard. Each day 15-20 volunteers from churches, high schools, and businesses help prepare and serve the lunch together and also share in a time of reflection and prayer at the coffee break.

My "work" there, however, is a bit different. I am not chopping onions or drying soup bowls but meeting with Jesus. The place of prayer called a *poustinia* (literally the Russian word for desert) which means entering a lonely place, a silent place, where I can listen to God in my heart and pray for others. In practice I sit in a small bedroom in the upstairs women's dorm for 24 hours in the company of a couple of translations of the Bible, my journal and prayer beads and loaf of bread. No email, no iPod with my favorite music, no phones, novels, or books on spirituality, nothing to distract me from listening to Jesus. There is a lovely icon of Mary on one wall, a large, stark cross with a small icon of Jesus on another and a 1950s hospital style bed.

Sounds idyllic when one is in the midst of a busy ministry but it is really a challenge. Try to relax, Catherine said, you are about to have a rendezvous with Christ, all you need to be is calm and open. To be honest, at first I am restless and think about my favorite lunch, the email I sent or didn't, worrying about my parents, and missing my husband, Doug. It usually takes my mind time to let go of the usual planning and relationship "noise" but after a cup of tea and sometimes a nap, I begin to fold the wings of my intellect and open the door of my heart (another lovely phrase by Catherine). It is amazing how fast the time passes.

I am reminded several times over the 24 hours of some of the reasons I am here by reading this guideline given by Catherine to her community:

To fast.

To live in silence.

To pray.

*So that I might die to myself quicker,
so that Christ might grow in me faster.*

*So that I might give him to the world faster,
this world that is hungry for him.*

To become a lover of Christ in truth and deed.

To imitate Christ.

*To become aware of my sins, somehow atone for them
and those of others.*

To pray for humanity.

To pray for peace.

To pray for unity among all people of faith.

To learn total surrender to God,

*I have made Christ wait long enough. **

It is easy to pray for the folks in the inner city. I am in the middle of it. I hear the police cars, know the hour when the mission opens for sleeping, hear the fights outside my window. But prayer is not always easy. I sometimes find myself praying deeply for forgiveness when a line from one of the Gospels that I have read a hundred times before hits me over the head. Another time it is realizing the darkness of some self-absorbed habits. Recently I found myself in tears when Jesus reminded me that on the cross he gave his mother over to John and that Jesus was inviting me to give him my mother (who has Alzheimer's Disease). Some months the pousinia feels as dry as the desert and the whole 24 hours is a practice in waiting. It is these times when I am encouraged by the fact that all the members of the Madonna House community are accompanying me in prayer. Before I leave, I usually meet with Miriam, one of the Madonna House community, for spiritual accompaniment. She listens patiently while I try to put into words my experiences of the past 24 hours that most often include a consoling intimacy with God and a scary call to go deeper.

I am not sure why God draws me to this particular way of praying but I know I need it and see it as another way of following the deep heritage of prayer left to us by Marie Madeleine.

*Adapted from the book *Pousinia Encountering God in Silence, Solitude, and Prayer* written by Catherine de Hueck Doherty

Laura Krefting, CiM

Pictures:

The Lord's Prayer

Prayer for Justice

by Ronald Rolheiser

In the world's schema of things, survival of the fittest is the rule. In God's schema, survival of the weakest is the rule. God always stands on the side of the weak and it is there, among the weak, that we find God. Given the truth of that, we might occasionally pray the Lord's Prayer in this way...

Our Father,

who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who by victim of circumstance bear the heat of the day...

Who art in heaven...

When everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.

Holy be Your Name

May we always acknowledge your holiness, knowing that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards.

May our reverence for you pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of your neighbor.

Your kingdom come...

Help us to create a world, where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and with each other.

Your will be done

open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins and this the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor

Give us...

life and love; help us to see always everything as a gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them. Give us the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone including those who are very different than the narrow us... give your gifts to all of us equally.

this day...

not tomorrow. Do not let us push things off into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.

Our daily bread...

so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just our surplus.

Forgive us our trespasses

Forgive us our blindness towards our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own.

Forgive us the capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.

Do not put us to the test

Do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.

Deliver us from evil...

that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more.

Amen

Caring

Here is a picture of our Christmas Cactus that is in the care of Genevieve Snipes CiM. Tuscaloosa volunteers are phenomenal in every way!

Helen Kampel, fcJ

Opening of Mother Margaret Mary Catholic High School - Edmonton

The official opening of Mother Margaret Mary School, named in honour of Mother Margaret Mary Hickey FCJ took place on October 17th. It was perfect!

We delighted in having FCJ visitors: Sister Bonnie from Toronto, Sisters Alice Daly, Mary Shea, Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Donna Marie Perry from Calgary. We were to arrive at the school for 4:30 for a supper preceding the public ceremony. We were greeted by a vibrant contingent of students and staff.

The warm, energetic principal, Kim Brophy, introduced us to Mother Margaret Mary's family members, 13 in all. Then we were shown to the staff room which was carefully set up with tables. After grace, wine, a tasty catered supper and plenty of reminiscing followed. Then, those who wished, toured the new modern school with its chapel, fully equipped weight and fitness room, an elevator to the second floor, rooms with banks of computers, a dance room with a special floor that we could not walk on, a band room, home economics lab, science labs, a full-sized gym with large video screens and a stage opening out to gym and to a small lunch area with kiosk.

The school is semestered, and has a much – advertised Flex time and teacher advisor system. The school offers 5-Flex blocks per week. All the students, in consultation with their teacher advisor, take advantage of their Flex Block in one or more of the following ways:

Meet with a subject area teacher for assistance with concepts they would like reviewed

Meet with a subject area teacher for the purpose of acceleration or extension

Pursue personal interest projects or portfolio development

Pursue post-secondary and career related information

At 7:00 the formal ceremony began in the gym/auditorium. This opened with a carefully-prepared blessing service led by our new auxiliary bishop, Gregory Bittman. Since he had been at supper at our home a few days earlier, we experienced a warm mutual rapport as he prayed over and blessed us. He is very simple, had been a nurse, and obviously enjoyed the solemn sprinkling of all present.

Appropriate music was interspersed throughout the program. The principal moved between presiding and being one of the musicians. Following the blessing service we heard the guest speakers: the Superintendent of Edmonton Catholic Schools, the Chairperson of the School Board, and Sister Bonnie. Sister Yvonne introduced a graduate of the old St. Mary's School (where M. Margaret Mary had been principal) who gave a donation on behalf of the 'Old Grads' towards the stained glass window planned for the chapel. Then two city-political men spoke and the principal, Kim Brophy, made closing remarks. A symbolic ribbon cutting ended the formal proceedings. Refreshments followed. Kim told us that his wife scolded him for not seating us in the very front row. We did have special seats (with our names on them) in the second row. Clergy and civic government folks were in front.

Marilyn Matz, fcJ

Buds to Blossoms

As a cluster we gathered: FCJs from Prince George, B.C., Edmonton, and Calgary on November 10 and 11. The amaryllis plant given to Sr. Ann Marie in thanksgiving for coordinating the meeting seems a fitting symbol of our gathering as being buds of hope and then blossoming beautifully, still full of outrageous hope.

Theresa Smith, fcJ

Diminishment turned on its heels!

A Privileged Time in Paris

When I think of the weekend of September 21st, 2012, in Paris, the words that come to mind are beauty, generosity, hospitality, talent, dedication ... purposeful, peaceful, joyous, vibrant.

I think of the beauty of the casket and the reliquary, the radiant faces of FCJs, the peacefulness on the face of Père Slavik (Parish Priest), the joyousness of the music and singing, the simplicity and apparent ease with which one event led to another (obviously the fruit of careful, generous planning), the involvement of so many, the faces of Marie Madeleine's family, the interest of parishioners of St. Dominique.

As I stood behind the video camera and looked at the FCJs, of course I saw aging, but far more importantly I saw 49 strong, committed women who were genuinely glad to be with each other. I saw women of 3 or 4 continents, depending on how one defines a continent. I saw seven women (of five nationalities) who had been part of 'Courage to Dare', a gathering of younger women in the Society. I saw happy women, rightly proud of their heritage and enthusiastic to share with the whole Church the woman whom God had called to have the name 'Faithful Companion of Jesus', a name for which she was willing to give everything, 'even my only son for whom I would give a thousand times my life!'

I remembered from her *Memoirs*, the time when she had been to Paris where she was diagnosed with a mortal illness and then returned to Amiens to find Mère Louise (her only adult companion), whom the doctors thought was also dying. Believing that the Society was God's work, she called Julie Guillemet and entrusted the work to her. 'Julie promised to do her utmost. So it was, that after two years of effort and most painful crosses, all now depended on a child of thirteen, obliged to work for her living'.

I felt her present with us in Paris, I felt she would look at us with love and pride and say, 'Go for it, Look at you, What's your problem?'

Mary Rose Rawlinson, fcJ

A Surprise Meeting

When travelling, I am always appreciative of the assistance the airlines give to those of us who are 'less agile'! The men or women doing wheelchair assistance are usually very friendly and talkative. While changing planes at Toronto to return to Calgary, the assistants changed as I went through the custom area. The woman who picked me up for that run was somewhat quiet. But, as she came to the front to assist me, she noted the FCJ cross and said in French, "Fidèles Compagnes de Jésus ". I said, "Yes" and she got down beside me, grabbed my hands and her eyes filled with tears. She waved the other people in the customs line on and began to tell me that she had been a boarder at Brussels from about 7 to 13 years of age and Mère Thérèse was an angel to her! She spoke so highly of the love and care that she received there. She said that for years she had kept up with Mère Thérèse and used to visit and phone her. One day, the Sister who answered the phone told her that her calls brightened up the day so much for Sr. Thérèse. This woman, whose name I cannot recall, said that Sister Thérèse had given her one of the FCJ badges! She smiled as she said it, and added that, "I know I should not have one but I do!" Her love and gratitude for what the FCJs had given to her in her childhood was so evident and so wonderful!

This woman was so pleased to see an FCJ again. I reminded her that we had a community in Toronto and she said that she had visited them once years ago. It was a very special moment for me and one that made me realize again how we never really know the impact we have on another person. Sister Thérèse probably never fully knew how much her kindness had meant to this young child who now, in her later life, still recalls her care with deep affection and appreciation.

Ann Marie Walsh, fcJ

August 25, 2012

This was truly a day of joyfulness as I celebrated 60 years as an FCJ. Wow!

The afternoon began with Mass at St. Angela Merici Church. The pastor, Fr. Patrick Basca, was the main celebrant. Fathers Don McLeod and Terry Kersch, Basilian Fathers, concelebrated.

I was grateful that Sister Bonnie Moser was here to welcome all present - FCJ Sisters from Calgary; FCJ Edmonton community; and a special mention for Sr. Marjorie Perkins, fcJ (we entered the community together in 1950); my family and friends and co-workers. Music was provided by members of L'Arche community, Edmonton. Their accompaniment on guitar, flute and keyboard really made us sing out loud and clear. Thank you. After the Mass we met again in the decorated Church Hall where we enjoyed refreshments, coffee, tea and anniversary cake.

After three months I am still enjoying the memories of that special day with so much thanksgiving for these 60 years. Thank You, God. Thank you, my FCJ companions. Thank you, my wonderful family and thank all of you for your love and support all through the years.

Thanks to all of you who sent congratulations and beautiful cards.

Yvonne Grace McKinnon, fcJ

What does it mean for me to be a Companion in Mission?

On September 12, 2005, I received a letter from Sr. Ita Connery inviting me to attend an Information Meeting re the Companions in Mission program being offered at the FCJ Christian Life Centre in Calgary. My how the time flies! Recently, on October 14, 2012, five of us - Mary Balasch, Cathy Heaton, Jesús Marquez, Vallerie Ross, and myself made our third recommitment as CiMs.

In our ceremony we were asked to bring our personal wrapped gift of what it means to be a Companion in Mission. I chose a heart shaped box which Joan, my adopted grandmother, had given to me and my twin, Pauline, for our birthday at one time. Joan was a very special lady whom we met while serving in the Lay Ministry program at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in downtown Calgary in the 1980s. We got to know Joan quite well as she would often come to Mass then go to the Parish Hall afterwards for refreshments and socialize with other parishioners. Joan was often by herself, lonely, and lived in a subsidized apartment on her own. As we became more acquainted with her, we would meet more regularly and often go out for Sunday brunch and other outings. Joan had health issues re her heart and high blood pressure, so she was delighted when we would accompany her to wherever she went. She became our “adopted grandmother”. That was a blessing in disguise as both of my grandmothers are no longer living. It was nice that Pauline and I could have Joan’s companionship and friendship. We spent many hours listening, sharing about anything including our religion and spirituality. Since then, Joan has passed away but has left me many fond memories.

Stories like this make me forever grateful to the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus and the Companions in Mission in the FCJ Society. I don’t know where I would be now if I hadn’t met them. Mother Teresa often said that the most lonely people in the world are those ones living in the developed countries. Also, I’m reminded of the song “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers/sisters, that you do unto me”.

Patricia Molesky-Brar, CiM

Picture: Cathy Heaton, Mary Balasch, Jesús Marquez, Vallerie Ross, Pat Molesky-Brar

Mi experiencia en Inglaterra

El estar en Stella Maris fue una experiencia hermosa, sobre todo por conocer el lugar donde muchas hermanas nuestras han experimentado la presencia de Dios en sus vidas, a través de la oración, de la comunión en el compartir sus vidas, en el servicio que ofrecían a través de la escuela.

Realmente un lugar esplendido, lleno de vida, en sus colores, y con una hermosa vista al mar. Para mi fue la primera vez que conocía el mar, fue como un sueño, pero era real.

Foto: Camino al Mar

Cuando llegue en Inglaterra la primera hermana que encontré fue Margarete Hill de la casa de Pope John, mientras nos conocíamos tomábamos un rico chocolate caliente.

Cuando salí a Broadstairs me esperaban allí Susan y Paula, la verdad fue lindo el reencuentro.

En la primera semana que estaba allá tuve clases de Inglés junto a Hartini y Meta, recuerdo que un día pregunté al profesor el significado de la palabra INDEED, y él se sonrió y me dijo: ¿Lo preguntas porque yo lo uso mucho tiempo? La verdad no era por eso sino porque es una palabra muy común, diríamos algo así como un amuleto.

Cuando todas llegaron a Inglaterra nos encontramos en Londres, un grupo se hospedó en la casa de Somers Town, y el otro la casa de Pope John y nuestras hermanas nos acogieron con generosidad y amor.

Recorrimos la ciudad de Londres y cada una regresaba con algo lindo para contar, y eso lo hacíamos en la oración comunitaria. Algo lindo que siempre se escuchaba era: “Gracias Dios por la oportunidad de conocernos y compartir la vida juntas.”

Éramos 26 hermanas de las que habíamos ingresado en la Sociedad de la Fieles Compañeras de Jesús desde 1999, de varios lugares del mundo, las Filipinas, Indonesia, Rumania, Inglaterra, España, Canadá y yo de Argentina.

Visitando Gumley

Cuando estuvimos en esta casa fue una sensación de estar con la fundadora, pisando sus huellas, mirando como esa casa aun podía mantenerse con el cuidado y el amor de las hermanas que lo hacen posible. Escuchar la historia de Marie Madeleine estando allí era diferente, porque nos hacían caminar por cada lugar, aunque hoy en ese lugar hay muchos cambios.

Esta foto muestra el amor de Marie Madeline por los que menos tienen, pero una cosa que esta foto muestra son los rostros de los niños, su color, y origen, una mujer que mantenía abiertas las puertas de su corazón a todos los que necesitaban llegar a Dios, sin distinción. Esta pintura se encuentra en la Capilla en Gumley que es parte del Colegio.

Foto: Marie Madeliene mujer de fe y amor

Luego regresamos a Broadstairs y comenzamos con nuestros talleres. En la primera semana estuvimos acompañadas por una hermosa persona que es religiosa y se llama Nikki. Con ella trabajamos sobre el desarrollo humano y a cada una nos ayudó a conocernos un poco más, y algo lindo fue hacer este taller con personas que comparten un mismo ideal o meta en seguir a Jesús.

En la segunda semana compartimos sobre nuestro carisma y el carisma de San Ignacio. Nuestras compañeras del tercer año compartieron lo que habían experimentado en ese tiempo sobre Marie Madeleine, y fue grato escuchar como el espíritu habla a cada una de una manera diferente pero que al final tiene un mismo sentido y valor de fe.

El 6 de Agosto tuvimos Misa de Acción de Gracias por los años vividos en Stella Maris donde llegaron muchas hermanas mayores de la provincia de Europa. Fue grato recibirlas y dialogar con ellas.

Francia

El 22 de Septiembre de 2012 los restos de Marie Madeleine llegaron a la casa en Francia y por la tarde fueron trasladados a la Iglesia de Santo Domingo en Paris. La misa fue presidida por el Obispo y el párroco, quienes nos recibieron y recibieron a Marie Madeleine con gran gozo. Estábamos presentes 50 FCJs de todas partes del mundo y también estaban presentes 7 generaciones de la familia de Marie Madeleine y otros de la familia de Bengy.

El relicario es donde hoy está depositado el cuerpo de Marie Madeleine. Fue una gran experiencia, y gesto de amor por su vida y entrega al servicio de los hermanos, y al servicio de nosotras las Hermanas Fieles Compañeras de Jesús.

Otro momento de gratitud sobre la vida de nuestra fundadora fue al maravillarnos en conocer el cuarto donde Marie Madeleine, murió, y donde ella pasaba parte de su tiempo en oración con su Señor. Fue reconocer en ella una vida sencilla, llena de humildad, pobreza y caridad. Y eso era todo lo que necesitaba para vivir de acuerdo al Evangelio.

Fotos: Su cuarto. El arpa

Fue una gran experiencia el compartir mi vida con hermanas de muchos lugares, y conocerlas un poco más, conocer sus países aunque no haya estado allá.

Algo que a mí me hizo sentir muy contenta es haber podido estar en todo el traslado de los restos de Marie Madeleine y haber compartido con la familia de ella. Otro momento especial fue haber tenido la experiencia de vivir en la casa general en Broadstairs junto a nuestra Superiora General y sus Asistentes y mirarlas desde otro punto, descubriendo en cada una de ellas, su sencillez, su alegría y amor aunque estén cansadas o agobiadas, pero reconocer que al único que deben y debemos acudir es al Señor que nos consuela, anima, alienta y nos quita la carga de nuestros yugos para que sea menos pesada.

Por toda esta gran oportunidad quiero dar gracias a Dios y a Marie Madeleine. Amen.

Ely Peralta, fcj

My Experience in England

Being in Stella Maris was a beautiful experience, above all getting to know the place where many of our sisters had felt the presence of God through prayer and union with one another by sharing their lives and service that they offered in the school.

Truly it is a splendid place full of life with its colours and gorgeous view of the sea. It was my first time getting to know the sea. It was like a dream and yet it was real.

Picture: Road to the Sea

When I arrived in England, the first sister I met was Margaret Hill of Pope John House. While we were

getting to know each other, we had a delicious hot chocolate. When I went to Broadstairs, Susan and Paula were waiting for me. It was so good to meet them again.

In the first week that I was there I had English classes along with Hartini and Meta. I remember one day asking the professor the significance of the word “indeed”. He smiled and said to me, “Are you asking because I use it a lot?” Actually, that was not why I had asked but because it is a very common word. We might say it is something used as an amulet.

When everyone arrived in England, we met in London. One group stayed in Somers Town and the other in Pope John House. Our sisters received us with generosity and love.

We travelled around the city of London and each one returned with something lovely to relate which we shared in our community prayer. A nice thing that was often heard was, “Thank you, God, for the opportunity to know each other and share our lives together.”

We were 26 sisters who had entered the Society of the Faithful Companions of Jesus since 1999 from various parts of the world: the Philippines, Indonesia, Romania, England, Spain, Canada and myself from Argentina.

Visiting Gumley

When we were in this house, it was a sensation of being with the Foundress, walking in her footsteps, seeing how this house has been maintained with such love and care by the sisters. Hearing the story of Marie Madeleine while being there was different because we walked everywhere where she had been although today this place has had many changes.

This photo shows us the love Marie Madeleine had for those who have less but one thing about this photo is that it shows the faces of the children, their colour and origin and a woman who kept the doors of her heart open to those who were needing to reach God without distinction. This painting is found in the Gumley Chapel that is part of the college.

Marie Madeleine, Woman of Faith and Love

Later we returned to Broadstairs and began our workshops. In the first week we were accompanied by a lovely person who is a religious and is called Nikki. With her we worked on human development and it helped each of us to know ourselves a little better. It was nice to do this workshop with people who share the same ideal or goal of following Jesus.

In the second week we shared about our charism and the charism of St. Ignatius. Our companions from the tertianship shared about what they had experienced in their time regarding Marie Madeleine. It was nice to hear how the Spirit speaks to each one differently but in the end, it is the same meaning and faith value.

On August 6 we had a Thanksgiving Mass for the years lived in Stella Maris. Many senior sisters from the Province of Europe arrived for the celebration. It was pleasant to welcome them and speak to them.

France

On September 22, 2012 the remains of Marie Madeleine arrived at the house in France and in the afternoon they were moved to the Church of St. Dominic in Paris. The Mass was presided by the Bishop and the Parish Priest who had received us and received Marie Madeleine with great joy. We were 50 FCJs from every part of the world and as well there were seven generations of Marie Madeleine's family and others from the de Bengy family.

The reliquary is where the body of Marie Madeleine is now deposited. It was a great experience and a gesture of love for her life and devotion to the service of others and to the service of our Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus.

Another moment of thanksgiving on the life of our Foundress was the marvel of becoming acquainted with the room where Marie Madeleine died and where she spent part of her time in prayer with her Lord. It was to recognize in her a simple life full of humility, poverty and charity. And this was all that she needed to live in accordance with the Gospel.

Pictures: Her Room; The Harp

It was a great experience to share my life with sisters from many places and to know them a little more, to know their countries although I have not been there.

Something that made me feel very happy was to be able to be present for all of the transfer of the remains of Marie Madeleine and to have shared with her family. Another special moment was to have had the experience of living in the Generalate in Broadstairs together with our General Superior and her assistants and to see them from another point of view, discovering in each of them their simplicity, joy and love although they may be tired or overwhelmed but to recognize that the one that they and we ought to turn to is the Lord who consoles us, cheers us, encourages us and removes the weight our burdens in order that they may be less heavy.

For all this great opportunity I want to thank God and Marie Madeleine. Amen.

Ely Peralta, fcj

REFLECTION ON COMMITMENT

"We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light." -Mary Dunbar

As I continue to reflect on the reality of celebrating 50 years of vowed FCJ life, I am reminded of how my siblings and I reacted to our parents' reminiscence of events in their lives from ten, twenty years previously. We could not imagine anyone having lived that long and were sure that we would never be able to say, "twenty years ago I ..."! Now, that I can say, "fifty and more years ago ..." it feels equally unreal! And yet the proof is there in old photographs, in personal and historical events through which I have lived!

On July 2, Canada Day weekend and three weeks early, I celebrated my 50 years of FCJ vows, in the presence of my local community, Lois Anne Bordowitz, Anouska Biggin, Bonnie Moser, three of our Toronto Companions in Mission, Loly and Francisco Rico, Carlos and some friends and colleagues.

Roger Yaworski SJ presided at Eucharist and all shared in the homily, offering greetings and good wishes to me. There followed an excellent meal, courtesy of Bonnie, Lois Anne and Anouska. There was much conversation and taking of photographs. Indeed an afternoon to remember for the rest of my life.

As I reflected on a theme and readings for the liturgy, I was surprised that together with the need to express gratitude and hope, I felt strongly that I must include the choosing of life. Hadn't I already done that a long time ago? Yes, of course, however the urge to do so again at this milestone in my life was very present. It has something to do with a new appreciation of being alive, of not wanting to waste any day, of needing to commit again to living fully. One of my favorite lines gleaned initially from my brother, Gerard, is,

“to be alive is power;

existence in itself –

without a further function –

omnipotence enough.” (Emily Dickenson)

In this vein I pray John O'Donohue's prayer daily,

May I have the courage today

To live the life that I would love,

To postpone my dream no longer

But do at last what I came here for

And waste my heart to fear no more.

Too I find that I am moved by the commitment of others; in particular, Pakistani Malala Yousufzai, the fourteen year old girl who continues to put her life on the line by drawing attention to the need for education of her young female compatriots. Malala continues to inspire young girls and women everywhere to do likewise even though many of them fear for their lives too. What an all-time witness Malala will be if the call for her to receive the Nobel Peace prize is realized!

I am equally moved by a man I know who suffers from a serious mental illness – now in control – who seeks every opportunity to speak to social and health agencies about living with mental illness daily. This gentle, intelligent, sensitive man sees this as his mission, his calling in life. He has much to teach and inspire me in his committed life.

A young woman who has taken on the role of supporting her widowed mother in dealing with some very troubling family matters continues to inspire me as she steps in when emergencies occur, even at the cost of absenting herself from her professional work as well as from aspects of her personal life.

These are three ordinary people at different stages of life, who truly live out the commitment of interdependence that is human living. For them, I am truly grateful. Each supports me in living my commitment, just by being who they are. Truly, “*to be alive is power ...*”

In addition I have been thoroughly blessed, heartened and encouraged by the numerous greetings I received, not only from family and friends but especially from my FCJ sisters and Companions in Mission. They remain a source of grateful reflection for me as I re-member my relationship with each one / group who celebrated with me. I am grateful all over again to Marie Madeleine and to the grace of God working powerfully within her as she courageously followed her calling to found our “little Society” with its rich charism of companionship with Jesus and of every person and every aspect of this sometimes wild and wonderful life.

*i thank You God for most this amazing
day; for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes
(i who have died am alive again today
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)
how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any – lifted from the no
of all nothing – human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?
(now the ear of my ears awakes and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)*

-e.e.cummings

In continuing my reading on our evolutionary cosmos I am more aware of the challenge to enable the growth in consciousness to which evolution draws us humans as the thinking species of our home, planet Earth. This work excites me as I observe it in the greater consciousness of children which already includes a readiness for living in our computerized world. In me this growth is slower and is evidenced in the fact that I now dream on occasion of working on the computer! I have a better understanding of our innate evolutionary urge to transcend the current self which I perceive as a spiritual gift available to all of us. Living more consciously in this vein brings energy and excitement

into daily living as the material earth and all it contains continues to move in the direction of spirit. This was Teilhard de Chardin's great insight, which as we know he named the Omega Point, the Cosmic Christ of which we are all a part. One of my favorite quotations of Teilhard's describes this movement:

"Some day after mastering the wind, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harvest for God the energies of love, for a second time in the history of the world."

Jane Galvin, fcJ

My experience of participation in the translation of Marie Madeleine's remains

I was in Great Britain for a family visit during September and October so had the opportunity to travel to Paris for this historical event. My niece, daughter of my brother who lives in Vancouver, lives in Paris, so I was able to combine our FCJ event with a visit to my niece's family.

I travelled to Paris on the Eurostar on Friday, September 20, the day before the ceremony in Paris. Most FCJs were to travel on the next day so I was alone in my allotted seat. When the train stopped at Ebbsfleet, what was my surprise and delight to see two FCJs, Mary Fitzpatrick and Lynn Baron pass down the carriage and take their allotted seats, just across the aisle from me! I had not met Mary for at least 20 years! The three of us had an enjoyable journey with time to share experiences and desires...and we agreed that "Le Bon Dieu tout conduit lui même" even the details such as our meeting!

The next day I went to find my lodging with the Sisters of Cluny as arranged by Claire Sykes fcJ, left my bag there and decided to walk down to the church of St. Dominic. As I was nearing the Church, suddenly Claire Sykes appeared and invited me in to a nearby café where there she was chatting with an FCJ-no less than Seraphina Kimball! A group of FCJs also appeared and soon we were quite a large group all delighted to meet each other! Claire invited us all to go back to Rue de la Santé where there was a delicious meal ready. What a joy to meet so many FCJs (I think that we were fifty), from all over the Society!

We had a few hours to rest before the Mass. I spent the first hour or so in the chapel where the casket with Mary Madeleine's remains was resting, in the simple adjoining room where she had loved, prayed, planned, suffered and died among our first sisters, then in the garden of the college Notre Dame de France. Then, with other FCJs and friends of the Sisters helped to prepare a room and part of the garden for the buffet to which all who attended the ceremony were to be invited.

Soon it was 18:30, time for Mass, so a group of us walked together to the lovely Parish Church of St. Dominic. The casket had been placed before the altar. As we entered the Church, each FCJ was given a lovely blue scarf to distinguish us and were invited to take our places together on the left side of the Church. Members of the de Bengy and Bonnault D'Houet families sat on the right side of the Church. There were also other members of the parish and friends in the congregation. The choir from Notre Dame de France was placed to the left of the altar and the choir and congregation were ably conducted from the left side of the altar by one of the teachers. The liturgy was dignified, joyful and uplifting. Katherine Mary gave everyone a lovely welcome in impeccable French and the parish priest for his part also welcomed us. The Bishop, who had arrived on his bicycle, gave a fitting though rather overlong homily. A little human touch was noted when the small altar boy who was holding the Bishop's mitre and his companion who had the Bishop's crosier, were given a sign to sit down and gave an almost audible sigh of relief.

Among other significant moments for me was the time of the intercessions which were prayed in French, English, Romanian, Spanish and Indonesian.

At the conclusion of the Mass it seemed very fitting that a member of each of the de Bengy and of the Bonhault D'Houet families carried the casket to the niche in the wall of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, where they inserted it with great care. The narrow band of ribbon in the French national colours which in Broadstairs had been placed around the casket and sealed by the French Consul Representative was plainly visible and seemed to say "this is my country where I belong". Our French sisters certainly expressed that thought during the day; they were openly delighted. The Magnificat, the closing hymn, was the perfect finish to this whole beautiful ceremony.

At the end of Mass Sr. Katherine Mary had invited everyone to go back to Rue de la Santé. As we arrived, we found the path illuminated with lanterns from the gate to the area where the buffet was ready. It was a mild evening, the end to a perfect day. It was such a lovely event as Marie Madeleine's descendents, her FCJ family, students and staff from Notre Dame de France and other community friends all shared the delicious buffet and toasted this amazing faith filled woman.

The organization at every level had enabled the translation of our Foundress' remains to truly be a highlight of our Society's history. I feel grateful and greatly honoured to have had this unique opportunity. I had a sense that all of us were present and remembered every one of you, my FCJ sisters.

Marquerite Goddard, fcj

A Historic Moment

In late September, 1962, Michael Bestoso and I had just made first vows when we were called over to Broadstairs. Mother Mary Alice Mahoney was put in charge of the two of us and, with great excitement, we set off by boat to Southampton via Le Havre. There was a surprise waiting for us! The first day we set sail we discovered that Bishop Francis Carroll – the Bishop of Calgary - was on the same boat. Of course he was travelling first class. When he heard that three FCJs were travelling on the same boat, two of whom he had just witnessed making their vows, he came to visit us and invited us to Mass each morning in the First Class Lounge. He was on his way to Rome for the Second Vatican Council. We were aboard the ship on October 4th so he and I celebrated our feast day together (in those days I was Sister Mary Francis.) At Le Havre we said good-bye to Bishop Carroll, little knowing what Vatican II would mean to all of us!

Donna Marie Perry, fcj

Picture: Bishop Francis Patrick Carroll, the Bishop of Calgary from 1935-1966

Remembering with a Grateful Heart

In March of this year I had the great joy of celebrating with a grateful heart the 70th jubilee of my vows as a Faithful Companion of Jesus. As I looked back on those 70 years, I found that so much has changed since the day when I made my vows in Stella Maris chapel. In January 1938 I was one of ten young women who were entering the Society that year. We were introduced to the Spiritual Exercises by Mother Catherine Windle before leaving for Brussels as the war clouds were gathering over Europe.

Our postulancy passed happily under the gentle guidance of M. Euphrasia Fagan and M. Margaret Donworth. (I had the added joy of silently admiring my older sister, Sr. Mary Bernard Daly, then a second –year novice.) In July nine of us received the habit in the lovely Montjoie chapel. In November 1939 the progress of the war obliged us to leave Brussels. We were welcomed back to the Foreland and installed in St. George’s and St. Augustine’s.

In March 1942 I made my vows in Stella Maris Chapel. I am the only one left of those ten young women who started out on this great adventure in February 1938. My life, like most lives, has had its ups and downs. It has been a happy and fulfilled life, enriched by the formation, education and life experience the Society has given me so generously. It is with a grateful heart that I look back over the years in Ireland, England and Canada. I pray that many more women will avail of the opportunities with which my life has been blessed.

Alice Daly, fcj

Confidence to Dare

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to attend Confidence to Dare in July 2012. I was one of 26 women in our Society who attended, most who entered from 1990 on. We ranged from 32-50 years old and each person helped to make up a very vibrant group. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to build relationships with these women. Doing just that gave me great life! Below you will see some of us after a fish and chip evening in Broadstairs.

Since our gathering I have reflected on many relationships and insights that touched me. I would like to share a couple with you that came in particular from the human development sessions we had with Sr. Niki Angel.

One insight for me was that places where we have been hurt in the past and have not healed stop us from being fully ourselves and fully effective in our lives and ministry. A question: Where do I need healing and what do I need to do about it? A second insight is that each judgment we make about another comes from a value. But some of the judgments we make are destructive and may come out of values we no longer hold dear to our heart. Another question: What values do I want and need to let go of so that I come out of my true self and are more loving?

I hope you can reflect with me so that together we may grow in our confidence to dare!

Pat Desnoyers, fcj

On this 50th anniversary of Vatican II – papers I wrote for a 2006 course

We Do Solemnly Swear To: Educate the Child, the Whole Child, Nothing but the Whole Child,

So Help Us God!

The unique and holistic mandated partnership of parent, teacher and Church in the education of the Catholic child is one of the underlying themes of *Gravissimum Educationis*. This attention to the “interpersonal” has been present throughout the entire structure of the documents of Vatican II, and is

again stressed in its document on Education. Consistently, the document admonishes pastors, parents, teachers, and indeed the Church itself to insure that not only knowledge in religious studies consistent with gospel values and morals is imparted; but that attention must also be given to all the arts and sciences, that in so doing just practices, ecumenism, and civic knowledge and service may further the spread of the Gospel.

The document is decidedly advanced in its teaching that all students must be educated in the art of personal choice, “The holy Synod likewise affirms that children and young people have a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice, and to know the love of God adequately.”[1] Training for teachers, parents, priests and educators for higher learning is espoused as necessary for the spread of the gospel. The mandate to educate well is stated clearly, “Since every Christian has become a new creature by rebirth from water and the Holy Spirit, so that he (she) may be called what he truly is, a child of God, he (she) is entitled to a Christian education.”[2] This education again is not just for the sake of education, but has the signature thrust of being on mission that so characterizes the documents of Vatican II.

The document is a brief one, with the proviso that postconciliar bodies will develop and further the themes introduced here. Thus in 1972, the Bishops of the United States produced a document called *To Teach as Jesus Did* further outlining developments in the education of the Catholic Christian. Both documents outline the importance of learning, then with that learning proclaiming the gospel values in deeds and words, and then using that learning not only to make the community of believers a more just society but of bringing that Christ centered justice to the world. And only in the holistic education of the student is this possible. The student must not only read the world, but must be read by it.

Christus Dominus

Christ the Lord, a title given to the Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral office of the Church, holds both hope and promise and clear potential for danger. The decree was born from the preliminary documents regarding the “care of souls.” It is theologically and scripturally based in the examples of the Apostles who under Peter had “care for the souls” of the first century church. In the preface there is a clear explanation of the collegiality and subsidiarity sought through the document. (1) This collegiality was a new or renewed function within the Church itself. Up until the time of Vatican II the “particular” and “local” diocese were directly linked and responsible to the Curia and the Pope. With the clear delineation of Dioceses headed by Bishops who are supported by auxiliary and coadjutor bishops, priests, religious and the laity, who have taken the responsibility of “full and active participation” in the life of the Church, the life of the Church in the context of a particular place attentive to the “signs of the times” and the needs of the people is a clear witness to love of God that is Trinitarian.

Just as Christ the Lord came to bring unity and to bring the faithful into the light of the Holy Spirit, so too is the function of the Diocese. However, even in the best of structurally sound designed Dioceses, there is potential for disaster. Because the Bishop is a “Lord” himself, the potential for the abuse of power, and or the separation from the reality of the “ordinary” people is there. We saw clear evidence of the total breakdown not only of Diocesan functionality, but the breakdown of the Councils of Bishops in the United States over the sexual abuse scandals. “Care of Souls” became secondary to “collegiality” where certain members of the episcopate chose to “circle the wagons” and protect themselves and their “lordships” rather than care for the needs of the people entrusted to them. No clearer example of this can be offered than that found in the Archdiocese of Boston. “Care for Souls” became the least important function of the bishop and thus a complete and total breakdown occurred not

only of collegiality but also of faithful members of the church. This was the result of the clear abuse of power. Unfortunately in this situation it seems that no one stopped to ask, “What would Christ the Lord do?”

Dei Verbum – How can Scripture function as a critic of the church’s life?

It is interesting that the aspect of the function of scripture as critic of the church’s life, that we today take so for granted, is sorely missing from the document itself. In reading the supporting documents, both Schnier and Senior point out that it was the intent of the Fathers that Scripture function this way:

“What Vatican II strongly recommended was, in many respects, what Trent had also been interested in: a re-discovery of the Word of God as a norm for Church life and teaching” (Schnier 94). “There is no reference in the entire document to the critical function of the Scriptures in the life of the church” (Senior 130).

And again Senior drives home the point, “Since the Council, of course, appeal to the Biblical word has challenged many of the church’s most cherished assumptions about its authority, its order, its doctrinal formulations and its moral priorities”(Senior 131). He concludes by saying that it is the failure of the church to be read by Scripture that is still the cause of division in many circles of the church today.

The assumption can be made that because of the pastoral call and tone of the entire Council, “that what is good for the goose should be good for the gander as well.” The church in this document implored all Catholic Christians especially the ordained and the religious – the laity unfortunately is only implied – to be well read and informed and formed by Scripture. By this very edict, the Church herself has opened the doors and all the windows for the free flowing breath of the Spirit to bring forth and direct any future changes in how the church sees itself as part of this now post-modern world. It is not a question of if the Scripture can be a critic of the church’s life, but it is the understanding today that it must be. The Church above all other organizations must be open to the all changing and powerful Word of God. One needs only to read and be moved by the Gospels to know that they contain revolutionary directives for living a Christian life.

Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Well – almost...

Nostra Aetate – opened the window to the spirit of reconciliation but a crack. Yes, the Holy Spirit is capable of working in small spaces and in “all times,” but the cracked window speaks more about the owner of the house than to the movement of the Spirit for change, reconciliation, dialogue and reform. The document, only five articles long, is the smallest of all the Vatican II documents (the footnotes outweigh the document in length!), and it addresses more the future of right-relationships with non-Christian communities than it does about healing the wounds of the years of wrong-relationships. Reconciliation is tantamount to any open dialogue for unity through diversity. The document is but a first step on the way to finding what unites us as children of Abraham rather than what divides us.

“In our times,” it took until the year 2000 for the first faint whisper of the mea culpa to be spoken. A frail, aging Pontiff stood before the Western Wall in Jerusalem and slipped a small scroll into a crack praying, “We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer.”(JPII) Yes, it was an epic, emotional event in the history of inter-faith dialogue, but was it enough? Today, another aging Pontiff, after he himself “mistakenly?”

angered a large population of Islam, is making yet another historical step towards the maxima culpa as he begins the dialogue with Muslim leaders in Turkey.

The Church and world of Vatican II were recovering from the effects of two major world wars. Today we find ourselves yet again on the brink of potential worldwide catastrophic war. We can no longer afford to be cavalier about how and what we say in our world, because it is watching, and waiting and hoping for answers that will bring unity and not division. Maybe, just maybe, these small efforts at reconciliation will ensure that the vision of that original aged Pontiff, John XXIII, for a Church aware of the signs of the times, open to inter-faith dialogue, working for a unity of all peoples, proclaiming together the coming of the Kingdom, may just begin to be realized just in time.

Gaudium et Spes

Reading this document I found myself having WOW (!) experiences. To me it was made obviously clear where all the more attractive things about being Catholic today came from: peace and justice, creation spiritualities and theologies, liberation theologies, our understanding on globalism and missions, enculturation, views on war and peace, the justice movements, and the dignity of the human person and the holiness of all of creation!

Here too I see the birth of the modern laity movements. Here the church opened the windows and the doors not only to the Holy Spirit, but too to the working of that spirit in ALL of humanity. I found the notes of dialogue playing under this great symphony of Vatican II genius. I see how a Cardinal Bernardin was born to promote the ‘seamless garment’ and how John Paul II could become such a great proponent of using communication to get the message of the Church across to so many people in so many diverse nations to name just two symphonies written in the style of this document.

I also see the open door for the discordant debates that still rage in the church about marriage, birth control, politics – the liberal left and the conservative right – and in the United States the separation of church and state; where yet the constant misguided attempts by church leaders both clerical and lay try to sway general elections to the side of the religious right. And yet I see within the document the consistent warning that with the freedoms that come from the dignity of being human also come the responsibilities to ensure balanced opportunities that ALL of humanity receive all that is guaranteed to each one because of being created in the image and likeness of God. I was grateful to see the Church striving to be what it was calling itself to be in reading the ‘signs of the times’, to be true ‘Servant-Healers’ of ALL of humanity.

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