

Sans Frontières



For the beauty of your creation, Glory to you Lord!

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'Creating Clearly Visible Love'

We will remember June and July 2009 as wet and dreary. It was as if summer finally woke up on August 12th with the heat waves and all that sunny weather. Climate change is only one consequence of the wrongs we have committed against Mother Nature. Rain and flash floods over here; severe droughts and raging fires over there. How can we blame our sulking sun when it is human beings who are responsible for the state of affairs between the earth and the environment?

All of these weeks were a gift from God. We do have to admit that there was more silence, more sighs, and more pauses than usual. Between one year's activities ending and another's starting, it is a good time to reflect, to evaluate, and to elaborate new projects. Everything invites us to create. It is also a time to rest, to rebuild our strengths, and to ponder. Why not also take time for relationships, visits, and interactions. A respectful, attentive, open attitude toward our differences is the strength of our interactions. To enrich each other is to mutually grow in understanding.

In August we had the joy of welcoming Sr Mary Donlon, our General Councillor. She spent the month simply living with us and getting to know the sisters wherever their mission called them. Each had questions that she answered simply. Such a delightful visit that warmed our hearts!

The First Monday in September, as we celebrated labor as a visible sign of creating love, set before us the weight of another year's beginnings. Some are starting new missions and leaving ones where they had built, to find new strengths elsewhere. Others are continuing to work courageously anew each morning. The missions vary: working for our missions, welcoming the poor, the marginalized, the homeless. Work or apostolate? Why not a humble service so dear to St Francis' heart?

This October 4th for the feast of St Francis, let's delve into our Franciscan heritage. St Francis will surely know how to teach us to find the needed stones to build Gospel communities in peace and harmony.

Patricia fmm

A Visit ... Welcoming ... Sharing ... Goodbye !

Sister Mary Donlon's visit to the country of the maple trees was short if we consider the size of the country to be visited, but it was filled with joy, sisterly sharing, shared suffering, hope regarding the future and above all mutual listening.

August 5th, having arrived at Pierre Elliot Trudeau Airport well ahead of time, we watch the hundreds of passengers as they go by, coming from all the corners of the world! It seems as if all the planes have arranged to land at the same time. Patience! Mary will finally appear in the midst of this crowd. After more than an hour of waiting, we see her, smiling, as she looks for the FMMs ... Claire and myself have already spotted her and we run to meet her. What joy we share!



As soon as we arrive at the community in Montreal, the doors open as our sisters watch with impatience for our arrival. Applause bursts forth spontaneously and, through our sisters present that evening, it is in union with each one of you that we welcome Mary and begin to share what makes up our life in Canada. The next two days: visits to Sacré-Coeur and Sainte-Claire communities; sharing with our sisters in the provincial infirmary; meetings with the different groups in the house ... Time flies by so quickly.

August 8th, we leave to visit the communities in Quebec. It is impossible not to stop at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. We confide Mary's visit in our province to the Virgin Mary. Without the shadow of a doubt, we know that she is present at the center of our lives and of our meetings. A meal with our sisters at Dieppe, a quick visit to Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré with our sisters of Limoilou followed by a shared meal and departure for Dijon fraternity for an evening of sharing and meeting. August 10th, at daybreak we take the road again for Montreal. The young professed sisters and the novice have a week of formation, which makes it possible for Mary to meet them for a time of sisterly sharing. Already on the 11th, there is another departure, this time for Ottawa on the way to meet the fraternity in Toronto and for Western Canada where our sisters of Winnipeg and Calgary also await us with joy. On the 17th, we return to Ottawa to the provincial fraternity and have meetings with our sisters of the Noviciate and of Presland.

Everywhere our sisters appreciate the joy, the simplicity of Mary; the ease with which she relates with others, her ability to be simply 'a sister among her sisters'.

We spend the last days before Mary's departure at Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci with the Provincial Council. Mother Nature welcomes us with a festive air and spreads out her splendour. The Cantic of Brother Sun rises spontaneously on our lips. Surrounded with so much beauty, in this fascinating site, together we share Sue Phillips's letter which has just arrived; we reread the weeks of meetings with

Mary; together we look towards the future while listening to Mary who rereads for us a part of the report made by Sue and Françoise Massy during their last visit to Canada in 2004. We know that we can go forward with faith, courage and trust. God goes before us on our way and together we walk step by step listening as carefully as possible to the Spirit.



Thank you, Mary, for your sisterly visit in our midst. Bring back to Sue and to our sisters of the General Council, our esteem, attachment and sisterly affection.

Simone Bastien fmm

Calgary's Diocesan Mission Council

Editor's Note: Cecily Graves is an Australian who has been living in Canada for nearly fifteen years. She is in charge of the Mission Centre in the Diocese of Calgary. She is really involved in this missionary endeavour that reminds her of her mission in Papua New Guinea.

Calgary's Diocesan Mission Council had a simple beginning in 1969 when Bishop Paul O'Byrne brought to fruition the dream of Fr Louis Malo by sending him to assist the Alberta mission in Lima, Peru. A group formed to support Fr Malo, a group which evolved under the guidance of Fr Joseph Toole into the Diocesan Mission Council.

Nowadays the role of Mission Council in the diocese is two faceted. First there is the overall responsibility for the churches on the four native reserves in the diocese. We pay the salaries of the priests who work there and if/when necessary, we give limited parish assistance. Three of these churches have their own parish priests and administration: parish council, various ministries. One church is a mission of a city parish and is dependent on it for the Eucharist and other sacramental services. These native churches are becoming more self-reliant and less isolated, forming bonds with one another and nearby parishes.

Mission Council's second responsibility is to respond to the many appeals that come into the diocese from churches throughout the world. Before a positive response to any of these is considered they have to be deemed to fit into the category of evangelization – direct or indirect or pre. Research is done to assure the validity of a request, and to make sure that it has the approval of the local bishop. Then there is the question of availability of funds and the situation of the church within the country. We seek to share the greatest treasure we have – knowledge of and relationship with Jesus, and where possible, to show tangible support for brother and sister churches enduring persecution. This of course cannot be abstract and often involves material aid. E-mail really helps communication and brings a closeness. We have projects in Pakistan and Eritrea, both persecuted churches. The Philippines, the Caribbean, Vietnam, Africa, Hungary, are home to some of our projects this year.

Sometimes we transfer funds to another organization that has the personnel to oversee a project e.g. a Calgary based Ugandan group organized to arrange education of orphans and skills training for war

widows and other victims of war. We transfer funds to Jesuits International to help their work in India and we support Servants Anonymous in their rescue of boys and girls from the sex trade on the borders of Nepal. Funds for the Pontifical Collections on Mission Sunday and Holy Childhood are channelled through our office.

Mission Council has a Board to make decisions and we have volunteers who come to the office to work on our stamp collecting and card recycling projects, as well as general support from the CWL groups in the parishes.

This is a sampling but not an exhaustive list of what Mission Council is about.

Sr Cecily Graves fmm
Executive Director of Mission Council,
Diocese of Calgary

...within our walls

Holidays : A Time of Rest and Reflection

What luck! Thanks to Sr Claire's enthusiasm, I wrote my name on the list to go to our summer house.



On August 8th after having spent lovely holidays with my family, Sr Monique Tanguay drove Sr Agnès (from Holy Trinity) and me to Notre-Dame de la Merci. What a treat! Summer was just starting that day. After several weeks of cold rain, the sun had finally come out. It smiled with the luscious, green trees, the multicoloured flowers, and the blue waters of Lac Ouaro to welcome us! We did not have a drop of rain all week. We ate all of our meals outside on the deck. What a delight! Sitting there on the deck facing the lake, I marvelled at the exquisite beauty. It fully revealed the Creator. I basked in this peace that fills you and places you in the presence of God. It was a retreat

before my annual retreat. We shared so many laughs around the table while enjoying meals mostly prepared by Srs Maria Tu and Denise Delysle. It was a fantastic week!

We returned to Montreal on August 14th. This was another blessing, since it permitted us to celebrate the feast of the Assumption with our sisters in Laurier. We shared in the lovely Mass and the festive meal in the courtyard that followed.

Then it was time to slowly get into the spirit of the retreat that started in the evening of August 16th. It was preached by Father R. Poudrier, ofm. Thanks to a few key sentences repeated throughout the retreat, we can summarize it in our hearts: REJOICE AND BE HAPPY FOR YOUR NAME IS WRITTEN IN HEAVEN; AND WHERE YOUR NAME IS, THERE ALSO YOU WILL BE ONE DAY. WE ARE FORGIVEN SINNERS. LET YOURSELF BE IMMERSSED IN GOD'S INFINITE

COMPASSION. This was our entire retreat. These words, repeated over and over again, were embedded in our hearts. Let us hope in them!

On August 22nd, we left hurriedly for Presland, because Sr Mary Donlon had arrived from Rome to see us. Sr Mary, who spent the day with us in Presland, had already met with the Sisters and was waiting to meet the four Sisters returning from the retreat. After supper, we had a lovely community meeting to talk together about... can you guess? We talked about our dear Institute and the various works of our Sisters around the world. That evening, Srs Mary and Simone left to continue the visit of the Province with a stop at the Novitiate in Gatineau.

And life goes on... we try to make it beautiful for others and for ourselves!

Jeanne d'Arc Poulin fmm

A Wonderful Celebration

If every moment offers an opportunity to encounter God, there are certain moments more especially marked by His Presence, through Liturgical Prayer, one's personal offering and the communion among the members of the congregation. This was true of the celebration of the temporary profession of religious vows by Sister Arlene van Zyl.



September 13, 2009- This day that our novice, Arlene, had waited for so long, has dawned at last and we met her, radiant in her white Habit, near the chapel, accompanied by her father, her mother and Roger, her brother, as well as Sr. Simone Bastien, the Provincial, and S. Marianna Jung, Mistress of Novices. Soon she was joined by Father Louis Cinq-Mars, OFM cap. the celebrant, (who is a real brother for us), Father Maxime Lacroix, our Chaplain, co-celebrant, and M. Reigner,

the acolyte.

The solemn entry procession was accompanied by the hymn: '*Jesus Christ, you are my life*' (*Marco Frisina*). Arlene and her parents sang with evident joy as they moved down the aisle. We noticed that 6 Latin American novices with their director from the Marie-Clarac community were present in the congregation, as well as a young man from the Emmanuel Community, not to mention FMM from six houses, plus our big Laurier Community and the Ladies from the Pavillion. (There were over 100 present!)

The Novitiate Team was in charge of animating the ceremony, so it was Sr. Marianna who greeted the congregation. For the **Liturgy of the Word**: Roger, Arlene's only brother, proclaimed the first reading, S. Françoise Bourdages, the second reading in French, while Sr. Agnès Diouf gave a powerful rendition of the Psalm in song.

Homily : “ A moving day for Arlene and for each one of us, as we too, renew our consecration.” **Final exhortation** : “Arlene, may the Lord bring to completion the work He has begun in you!”
(A very beautiful homily on Religious Life. The complete text is to be published on the **Web Page**).

The questioning : Arlene, do you wish to...etc. **Yes, I do.** Then the **Profession : Sister Simone invites Arlene to pronounce her vows. Arlene makes her commitment in a strong, assured tone of voice.** Sister Simone receives her vows in the name of the Church and expresses the joy of the Institute and of all of us. Finally, the moment has come for **Arlene to receive the insignia of the Institute.**

Offertory Procession: From the pulpit, Isabelle and Sun-Ah explain each symbol : **Statue of a Circle of friends:** *represents the Church and human fraternity.* **Constitutions : Golden Rule** for the *Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.* **Large container of rice:** *Represents the poor, the marginalized.* **Cross from Latin America:** it is there that *Arlene heard the call of the Lord.* **A feather:** *a reminder of the native peoples whom Arlene found amazing.* **A calabash :** *it represents women who give, bear and protect life.* **The Plant Arlene received at the beginning of her Novitiate :** *it has grown and blossomed...*

The Eucharist continues in an atmosphere of recollection, until the sending at the end when Sr. Simone, Provincial, announced her mission sending : an obédience for Quebec (Dijon).
Final Blessing: Arlene’s parents give her a solemn blessing; *then, raising one hand towards the newly professed, the congregation sings :* **Que le Seigneur te donne la paix!...(May the Lord grant you peace!)** **Recessional:** *Handel’s Messiah.* Taking of photos..

In the Mary of the Passion Hall, the celebration assumed an original and joyful tone. An appetizing brunch awaited us, during which there was **a speech by the parents of Arlene,** thanking the Novice Mistress for the spiritual growth of their daughter; a Thank You also to all the Sisters for having accepted her into the Franciscan Family; [they said] “We too belong to your family. You received us three times: in Calgary, Gatineau and today in Montreal. And always so warmly!”



The **6 Latin American novices** (from the Marie-Clarac community) and their Novice Mistress, friends of Arlene, sang 4 songs for the occasion, in Spanish, English and French :« *Reçois mon être aujourd’hui, comme une hostie...* ». « *Je ne veux ni possessions, ni richesse* ». (*Receive my whole being today, offered up like the Host...I want neither wealth nor possessions.*)

Kendal, dressed all in white, performed a graceful dance: “*You raise me up.*”

Our Korean trio : Marianna, Rita et Sun-Ah warmed our hearts as they sang “of love and hope”. After Arlene cut the cake, we had dessert, and Mr. Van Zyl told **some short stories about Arlene’s childhood.** *Then the family showed us a lively, uplifting Power Point presentation prepared by Roger on the life and the journey of his sister.* It covered every stage in Arlene’s life, from her birth to this day; it was surely Sr. Marianna who provided the last pictures, those of her Novitiate. The final

note: « *Que tu laisses la lumière briller pour que tout le monde la voie!*» (Let your light shine for all to see!)

You would really have enjoyed the evening in community, with the chosen one of the day and her family. The gifts were opened... as well as many cards congratulating her, several of which came from cousins in Holland. Everyone was really happy!

Then Mr. **Van Zyl traced a little of the spiritual and religious history** of the Van Zyl family. “Arlene’s great grandfather studied for a few years in the Minor Seminary, since he wanted to be a priest, but he was not able to make it. He remained all the same a person of strong, deep faith. He had a white beard and people used to call him St. Joseph, from the name of our village. He had 9 children. One of her great-uncles studied in the Seminary, hoping to become a religious brother, but he did not continue his studies. However, Arlene had four great-aunts who all became contemplatives religious in a Franciscan Congregation in Holland, and they persevered their entire life. (At that moment Mr. van Zyl circulated a doll wearing the black habit the aunts had worn.)

And to complete this story of our family’s affiliation with the Franciscan Order, I myself spent six years in the Franciscan Seminary studying to be a priest. I wanted to be a missionary just like Arlene, except that I wanted to go to the Dutch area of New Guinea (to Irian Barat). I was obliged to abandon my dream. However, I met Magda and now, **Arlene is continuing the family tradition.** *I am proud of you, Arlene, because, by becoming a religious, you are accomplishing what I was not able to do by becoming a priest.*

Now you can understand something of Arlene’s personality. From her early childhood, she liked to pray, to help the poor...She is full of life, highly motivated and very concerned about poverty and also the ecology...”

After this presentation **Arlene et Roger’s mother passed around some delicious chocolates from their beloved Holland. As a final gesture, Roger offered his sister a beautiful and very practical case for her guitar!**

It was Sr.Simone’s turn to thank the family for coming to share our joy. Let us give thanks to God with full voice! Blessed be God! **Closing hymn** : Ave Maria of the Institute.

Monique LeBrun, fmm

...*Voice of youth*

Sharing our charism with the younger generation

Editor’s Note: Maria Tu from Vietnam has been studying theology for 3 years in Canada. She is preparing to be on the Formation Team in her country.

I sang softly the prayer of St. Francis “Lord make me an instrument of your peace,” as I wondered how we could prepare to be an instrument of peace in today’s world. I brought my idea to Sr. Patricia St. Cyr and we discussed the issue of formation.



My first question was, “*What are your concerns about forming young FMM vocations in the global context?*”

Sr. Patricia : I think we should first ground them on human values such as respect, love, maturity and a sense of responsibility, then anchor them on the Word of God. Remember Mary of the Passion who wrote “Wherever we go, we should have peace, union and the pardon of injuries.” (MD 234) “I recommend to my daughters a very special love of the New Testament (CT/1,46)... We should appreciate the

treasure of divine teachings, love to meditate upon them, and above all, to put them into practice” (MD316)

Maria Tu: Would you mind explaining a little bit more what maturity in religious life means?

Sr. Patricia: When you are mature, you think about the decision you have to make and then act with courageous responsibility. Maturity sets you free from fear which often leads you to run away from reality or to defend yourself or to attack others. A mature religious acknowledges both her gifts and her limits with gratitude. We all are human and therefore imperfect; we fall and learn day after day. However, believing in God gives us hope.

Maria Tu: It is scary if we make a wrong decision.

Sr. Patricia: We do what we understand to be the best at the moment and since God does not demand what we do not know, the decision made should be fine. The important point is that a mistake can be our professor: what we learn from our mistake is more important than the feeling of regret over it. I remember when I was in the missions, one of the Superiors shared with me that one of her community members came to her and expressed her bitter regret over her fault. This Superior just empathetically asked, “So what did you learn from it?” and continued “Christ fell three times!” Along this line, I think we need to have an open mind, to observe, to learn and to reflect; your open mind allows you to welcome diversity with joy.

Maria Tu: How can we “reconcile one’s open mind and one’s own values?”

Sr. Patricia: (came to her desk and took St. Francis’s writings, then read the letter that St. Francis wrote to Br. Leo and to a Minister) and added “It is all about loving unconditionally. If you have a passionate love for God, you will know what to do.” See Mary of the Passion, a woman with a passionate love that allowed her to be universal, recognizing all cultural diversities and at the same time keeping the essence of her charism firmly. I long for a formation that inspires young people to search for God; a formation that encourages them to learn about themselves with both talents and shortcomings, so that

they might feel at home with themselves at first, and then become approachable for others and vice versa. When you know who you are, you feel secure enough to welcome others' values. This requires a lot of patient reflection. Unfortunately, the technological society does not support this kind of mental and spiritual effort.

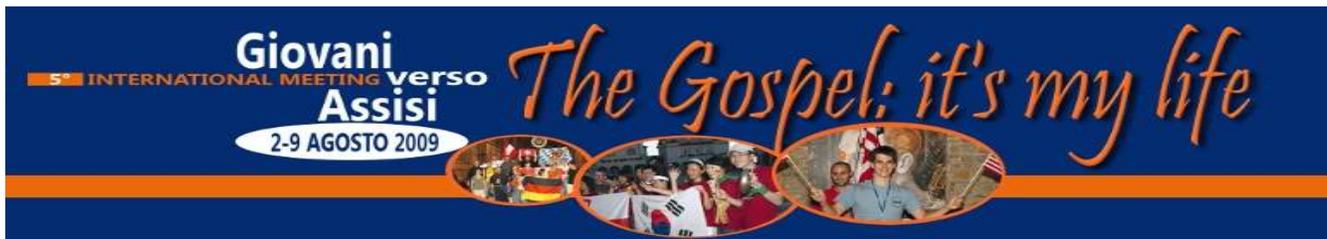
Maria Tu: So how can we sharpen our vision of missionary life?

Sr.Patricia: You know, no human growth occurs overnight. As I said before, we need to have an open mind to observe, to pray and then to respond. Vision has to be sharpened by profound contemplation and a passion to put vision into action. Above all, if we are aware of what we are going to do, then we will adopt the appropriate values, actions and attitudes, etc., Do not be afraid! God is always there for us and we all have room in his genuinely loving heart.

Thank you, Sr.Patricia, for your vision with regard to the issue of formation. Please allow me to share this with my Sisters who are in formation in Vietnam.

Maria Tu. Fmm.

Giovani verso Assisi
5th International Meeting in Assisi : 2-9 August, 2009



I had a beautiful opportunity to participate to the international youth meeting in Assisi this summer. This meeting is held every three years and is organised by OFM Capuchins. The theme of this year was «The Gospel is my life». There were 700 young people from 20 different countries and in spite of language differences, we were able to communicate with each other by body language and laughter. The hot and humid weather with long walks every day could not dampen the spiritual joy in our hearts. Times of prayer, sharing, pilgrimage, and singing, dancing and laughing brought us together as one body and soul in Jesus Christ.

The international gathering aims to offer youth the opportunity to explore the source of true joy and the meaning of life they are seeking. This gathering in Assisi offered all the youth of the world the possibility of meeting and deepening the human and spiritual experiences of St. Francis and St. Clare. We visited the places, activities and symbols that inspired the saints of Assisi and tried to learn how to become authentic listeners and imitators of Christ.

The meeting comes with a set of values:

- of Fraternity, of conversion, of a joyful encounter between young people of different countries and cultures

- of Prayer, as a light from the Holy Gospel, through a consideration of the human and spiritual experiences of St. Francis and St. Claire of Assisi
- of encounter with the Most High and Omnipotent Good Lord, origin of all Good
- of Mission, to be for the world proclaimers of the Gospel, witness of faithfulness to God and to our own Christian vocation

During this meeting I witnessed the love for Jesus Christ in youth and their seriousness in searching for meaning and values in their life. I also saw HOPE in them. The young people who participated in the meeting went back to their own countries with an experience of the love of God and full of joy in their hearts.

The prayer, energy, love, joy, hope that we have shared during the meeting will remain in our hearts for a long time.

Rita Kim, fmm

Farewell Gala for Sr. Rita Kim



On Saturday August 29th, more than a hundred and fifty people gathered together at St. Andrew Kim Church for a Gala Dinner to pay tribute and bid farewell to their dear Sr. Rita, who for the past twelve years has been involved in the various ministries in the parish, particularly in the youth ministry. The evening was filled with an extraordinary outpouring of love and gratitude as one after another the young people sang and played on their instruments to voice their appreciation and gratefulness for someone who has been for

them a true companion on their journey, a mentor, a friend and a sister, among them through all these years. A poem written by one of them touchingly expressed their deepest sentiments, fittingly describing what Sr. Rita truly means to them.

Sr. Ana Castaneda

The House that Sister Rita Built

By Michael Kim

There is a house I know, in the middle of a dark city,
 built by one of the most incredible women I have ever met in my life.
 Every time I'm in this house, I feel her arms hugging me through the walls,
 protecting me from the cold.

I hear her whispering into my ear whenever I shut a door,

or turn on a tap, and even when the wind blows from outside.
I feel the warmth of her heart, from the fireplace within,
letting me know her love will always be with me, as long as I'm in...

The House that Sister Rita Built.

12 years ago, a woman named Sister Rita came into town,
and discovered a community in need of salvation.
She found teenagers in need of direction,
And their parents in despair.
She noticed young people searching for shelter,
And elders in need of solace.
And no one in town knew each other.
We were lost.
And so, Sister Rita rolled up her sleeves, and began her work here,

In The House That Sister Rita Built.

At first, no one in town would trust a woman, who only had love to give.
But this didn't discourage her.
Brick by brick, Sister Rita began building a foundation.
Her hands hardened with callouses, as she lay each stone in place.

But the light from her heart burned so hot and so bright.

Then the townspeople took notice.
The teenagers came first, and rushed in to build the walls,
taller and higher than any of their growing bodies could reach.
Their parents showed up shortly afterwards,
and worked on the floors that would support the weight of all who entered.
The young people built the roof, shielding them all from the cold.
And the elders planted beautiful flowers all around, welcoming all to join.
And Sister Rita stood tall, in the middle, supporting all those around her,

In the House That Sister Rita Built.

For 12 Years, this house invited the young and old to come in
and enjoy the comforts of Sister Rita's love.

For 12 Years, this house shined a light so bright it gave a guiding light
to those who were lost.

For 12 Years, Sister Rita held the weight of her house
with her own two arms, as a pillar,

In The House That Sister Rita Built.

But now.

Sister Rita has been called to leave the townspeople,
Other towns have noticed what she has accomplished,
And beg for her to come and share her light.

Her Love.

And so she leaves us,

But we remain strong

In The House That Sister Rita Built!

A Day of Retreat



On June 6th, 2009, four young women and six Sisters met at the FMM Novitiate for a day of fun and prayer. This day gave us the time and space we needed to reflect on how God is working in our lives. We spent the morning getting to know each with inventive “ice breakers.” At first I thought there would be the usual questions: Where are you from? Where do you work? But the questions the Sisters had thought of went much deeper. These questions were meant to gently challenge us, to reveal different aspects of our spiritual lives. From the games we learned more about each

other. The Sisters shared their vocation stories, and what moves them to respond to God’s call on a daily basis. A theme emerged in the Sisters’ stories. Though the Sisters have different backgrounds and are all from different countries, such as India, Madagascar, Vietnam, Korea, Poland, and Canada, they share a love of God and a willingness to spread that love.

In the afternoon we had a BBQ lunch, and then Sister Cynthia spoke with us about how God has worked in her life, and how He works in all of lives. From there we participated in Taize songs and prayer, and adoration. We wrapped up by discussing the day, and what we hoped for in the next meeting. There was general agreement that we would like a theme, especially something that relates to us as young women. A friend of mine, Sasha, has already expressed her desire to join us in the next meeting. It is wonderful to know other young women who are striving towards a personal relationship with God, and I am looking forward to the next meeting!

Theresa LeBane

Knock, and the door shall be opened.....

We are not a soup kitchen, we are not a drop-in center, yet our fraternity on Provencher may be one of the only places our street brothers/ sisters can receive a hot meal any day of the week in St. Boniface. We welcome the natives and homeless with open hearts to our small verandah, which has a few chairs and tables. This is a community mission and we all lend a helping hand in feeding our homeless



friends. While one Sister takes time to talk to them, another warms up the soup and yet another steps in to prepare a sandwich and serve them something to drink.

Many Natives walk the streets of Manitoba, homeless, lost and confused. They live under bridges, hungry, cold, addicted to alcohol and suffer from mental health problems. They come to our house almost daily asking for food. The other day we were returning home from a community outing when we saw a woman lying on our front steps. We came in, opened the door and invited her

to come in as she was drunk and hungry. We talked to her, gave her something to eat and off she went on her way. The majority who come knocking at our door are often drunk, but we continue to open the door and invite them in. Occasionally by the time we serve the food they are asleep. It is a safe haven for them. After a couple of hours they wake up and we give them something to eat. One day a man asked a Sister who had woken him up, “Sister which way should I go?” He was confused and disoriented. Once a man walked into our house, soaking wet from the rain. The Sister who opened the door asked him “Why do you do this to yourself?” He said “I don’t know why I do this, I’m an alcoholic, I know I should not, but I still do it.” We made sure he had dry clothes and a hot meal before he left the house. In gratitude he asked for the twoSisters who had served him and gave them each a hug. Our goal as a community is to accept and welcome all who come to our house as people of worth and dignity. We serve approximately 100 people a month.

This Spring, our society was taught an important lesson by a Native named Faran Hall. His name and picture appeared on the front page of our daily newspaper entitled ‘Homeless man saves teen’s life’. We knew him personally as he came often to ask for food and take naps on our front verandah. In our community he is now known as ‘Our Hero’. Faran Hall, a homeless native sitting on the bridge by the Red River noticed a teenager mistakenly fall into the frigid waters; he



immediately jumped in and saved the boy. He had to tell the boy who was frantically fighting for his life to stop and grab on to him or they will both drown. That afternoon Faran walked into our house, asking for a cup of coffee, he was cold and he told the sisters the story of how he had saved a boy. Faran continued to puzzle society as he told reporters that he did not want recognition, he was happy and enjoyed living in nature. The reporter asked him what he needed, and as he looked at his shoes his answer was “Maybe a new pair of shoes.” He did not ask for money, a house, or warm clothes, just a pair of shoes. What simple people!! Yet a community which continues to be displaced and misunderstood.

Karen Corera, fmm

*...with the
Associates*

In Loving Memory of My Sister, Madone

In the November cold, the verdict fell. You had asked me to accompany you that day. You already practically knew and you were afraid. Pain had been your companion for so long, becoming more intense and persistent. There was no relief; not during the day nor at night. You walked painfully. This sly illness had crept into your bones and powerless, you looked at me without really understanding.

I can see all those months that you spent bedridden without feeling sorry for yourself; living with a body blasted by so many medications and always cold. You spoke to me about your childhood, about your life, about your sufferings; your head so full of memories. We would then partake in the Eucharist which united and healed us. Sometimes, anxiety appeared in your eyes. If I was late in coming to you, I would find you in tears. The fear of being abandoned had overwhelmed you. I would then so gently take you in my arms. Others also came: your brothers and sisters that you had not seen for so long. They were all there to ease your days, your nights, and your suffering.

What a memory! We watched you in these final moments becoming dumb, immobile, and feverish. With a determined glaze, you slipped into a word that only you could see. Your face flushed with sweat, your heart beating so fast, and that shortness of breath. It was the last battle! In the dead of night, death came. Gently and silently, you crossed into eternity. It was the moment when God chose to say to you: «*Come!*» And you answered: «*Lord, here I am!*». Your wisdom became our wisdom.

Thank you, my beloved sister! By your life and by your death, we became better people.

Bibiane Cregheur, afmm

Associate in Madagascar

Why Madagascar? I am convinced that it was the place I was destined for after grasping the signs which Jesus gave me in preparation for my trip of the century. The thought of being on another continent than America and of seeing an ocean other than the Pacific or the Atlantic thrilled me greatly. Yes, Madagascar is perfect, no need to learn another language.



It was necessary me to completely live differently. It was necessary for me to leave the heavy grind of my job. I had to leave for a better return one day. I hoped for a complete turnaround of all my life perspectives.

I was leaving for two and a half months. During that time, I planned to volunteer for about two weeks and then travel to the four corners of the island. I wanted to live with the people, not merely as a tourist.

It is through Sr. Isabelle, a Malagasy, living in Gatineau, that the last details of my trip got organised. I knew the Sisters, since I am an Associate. I prayed intensely for this trip. I asked God to go before me and prepare the way. I left with no definite plan and with only the backpacker's guide in hand. I kept repeating to myself the word of St Francis: **LET GOD BE GOD**. A friend told me: You leave alone with the One and Only. I entrusted myself to Him. He would watch and protect me through any circumstances.

Do not be afraid. Let go and let me act. Come and follow me.

I was sure that I would come back transformed with sparkling eyes and renewed to undertake the next fifty years of my life. This trip was made in a spirit of death and of resurrection. It was time to dispel the old and to come back to life with new habits, a better attitude to confront life's challenges.

The island of Madagascar is located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of Africa on the other side of the Mozambican channel. I went during the rainy season, their summer, from January 13th until March 23rd, 2009.

I am exhausted on my arrival after 11 hours of flight from Paris where I had stayed three days. It is 11:30 pm when I cleared the customs and I quickly understand that I must adjust to their rhythm. I am greeted by Sr Marie-Joseph, Sr Josephine and the driver. We get into the Jeep with the windows almost closed: they are cold and I am dying of heat..... It is raining.

My first impressions of this 40 minute ride to the motherhouse really do not thrill me. There are no street lights, no traffic lights; only wandering dogs, some poor persons and many fences. These fences are made of wood, of bricks and of metal. I start to feel bad. My departure enthusiasm fades as we keep driving. I have the feeling that everything here is barricaded. I am overcome with emotions which are getting harder to conceal.

Upon arrival, the gate is opened by the security guard. St Francis Clinic is to our right and further down is the motherhouse. O my! Surprises lie behind these fences. I finally see something nice. My heart quietens down a little. I am impatient to take leave of the Sisters who accompany me as I have broken down in tears. I weep bitterly. I finally lie down with the light on, clutching my rosary after



having carefully wrapped the mosquito net all around my bed; no way for the local bugs to get to me Ha! Ha!!!

WHAT AM I DOING HERE, JESUS?

I often asked this question during the first week. I lived a complete change of scenery with no familiar landmark: a complete shock. This change of scenery hit me harder than I had expected and I faced it all alone. Jesus became my beacon and I was in the perfect place with the Franciscan Sisters. I would never have envisioned myself in a hotel; not at all. I had always considered myself rather

adventurous. It was one thing in North America; but when nothing is familiar, it is a completely different ball game. I thus started to become aware of what immigrants have to go through. The courage they require to leave everything behind and to start anew in new customs and traditions... hats off to them!

I kept asking St Francis for his humble, giving, and contemplative spirit. I understood that I had to let go of my North American ways to grasp all the beauty to be found in this place. It was the only way to see and to live this Malagasy life. This was how I would fully live what Jesus daily challenged me to live.

Line Desharnais, afmm

To be continued in the next edition

Autumn



We have much in common with autumn. In fall, we learn humility through difficult moments and painful separations. Autumn grabs human being at the very core of their ownership, as it strips trees bare and ravages our gardens. One day, I have and the next, I no longer hold. You have no right of ownership autumn reminds us.

Benoît Lacroix, o.p.

... *here and there*

JOB or MINISTRY

Some people have a JOB in the church others involve themselves in a MINISTRY. What's the difference?

If you are doing it just because no one else will, it's a JOB. If you are doing it to serve the Lord it's a MINISTRY.

If you quit because somebody criticized you, it was a JOB. If you keep it serving it's a MINISTRY.

If you'll do it only as long as it does not interfere with your other activities, it is a JOB. If you are committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it's a MINISTRY.

If you quit because no one praised you or thanked you, it was a JOB. If you stay with it even though nobody recognises your efforts, it is a MINISTRY.

It's hard to get excited about a JOB. It's almost impossible not to be excited about a MINISTRY.

If our concern is success, it's a JOB. If our concern is faithfulness, it's a MINISTRY.

An average church is filled with people doing JOBS. A great and growing church is filled with people involved in MINISTRY.

Where do we fit in? What about us?

If God calls you to a MINISTRY, don't treat it like a JOB.

If you have a JOB, give it up and find a MINISTRY.

God does not want us feeling stuck with a JOB, but excited and faithful to HIM in a MINISTRY.

We don't change God's message... His message changes us.

Witnessing is so important. The thing is that we tend to focus on all sorts of rules and regulations and a whole lot of other things which revolve around appearances and such like, and neglect the simple basics of Christ's message, the «new» commandment that He gave us. Indeed, the ONLY commandment: LOVE.

unknown author

Happy Feast of Saint Francis

*Your team,
Agnès, Sun-Ah and Patricia*