

SCARBORO MISSIONS

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*"Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you."*

John 14:27

Dear friend of Scarboro Missions...

Thank you for your faithful prayers and generosity to us. We will continue to be good stewards of all your gifts as we put ourselves at the service of others. Please note our Easter envelope inside this issue for your convenience.

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COVER: Students of St. John XXIII school in Kingston, Ontario, form a human peace sign to celebrate the International Day of Peace, September 21, 2013. Credit: Mark Bergin.



By Kathy Gillis

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Peace be with you!

As Easter approaches, our hearts long to recognize the Risen Christ and to hear his words of greeting, "Peace be with you!" With these words he not only gives us peace; he also calls us to be peacemakers.

Our entire being longs for a deep abiding peace. But what does it mean to be at peace, to be peaceful, to be peace-filled, to be people of peace? How do we understand this peace, how do we teach it to our children and grandchildren, how do we live this peace in our home and community, in our nation and world?

This issue is filled with articles that will help you to live a life of peace. We open with Karen Van Loon's story about a growing citizen-based movement in Canada called PeaceQuest that has come together at a time when Canada is set to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War I. PeaceQuest defines peace as "an active way of living, seeking to resolve conflicts cooperatively, respecting the wellbeing of the Earth and all peoples." This is not a passive peace, they say, but one that requires everyone's commitment and action to make it real, long lasting, steadfast, and worldwide. We are encouraged to join this movement.

The issue also features the incredible story of Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Palestinian doctor who lost three daughters and a niece to shelling from Israeli tanks in Gaza. Out of this experience, Dr. Abuelaish has emerged with a powerful message of peace and compassion.

In his exhortation, Evangelii

Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis maps out in detail his vision for the entire Church to be people of peace and joyful messengers of the Gospel. I am grateful to Fr. Jack Lynch for providing us with a summary of this in-depth message.

Prayer and meditation are essential if we are to make this journey of peace. To till the soil of our hearts as we await the coming of Christ and his greeting of peace, Fr. Ron MacDonell has prepared a Way of the Cross that will help us to reflect on the crucified Christ in our world today.

In her article on Centering Prayer, Kathy Murtha calls us to make space in our day for silence and meditation so as to grow in communion with Christ. Kathy shares the story of our Christian heritage of contemplative prayer and the testimonies of members of the Centering Prayer group at Scarboro

Missions. We read that Mother Teresa revealed the secret of her life and work when she said: "God does great things in silence. His language is silence... Meditation is the fuel which powers a life of service to others. We must set aside this time each morning and evening to find a new energy within—God's energy, the energy of love."

And finally we offer the experiences of high school students in Hamilton who make peace by travelling to San José de Ocoa, the parish in the Dominican Republic where Scarboro missionary Fr. Lou Quinn lived and worked for 42 years and where he is buried. When these students walk the streets and hillsides of Ocoa, side by side with the people, they too recognize the Risen Christ and hear his message, "Peace be with you!"[∞]

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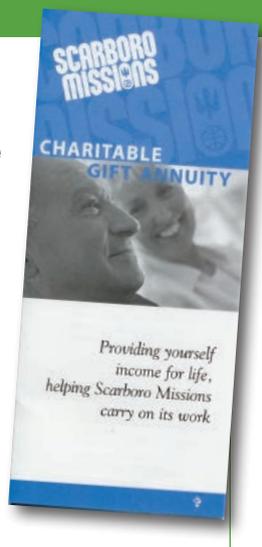
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By Karen Van Loon

PeaceQuest

Believing in peace, educating and planning for peace, celebrating peace

In the Gospel of John we read that after the death of Jesus the disciples gathered in fear behind locked doors. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” What a joyful surprise for those consumed with doubt and grief.

As people of faith we believe that resurrection is possible, that peace is possible. Jesus fulfilled a vision of peace that includes good news for the poor, freedom for the oppressed, healing, wholeness, and abundant life for all. In our personal lives and relationships, in our communities and wider economic and ecological relationships, we are called to be faithful witnesses to this life-giving peace. This is not an easy path to follow.

Difficult paths are made easier in community, with support and solidarity, and so, too, peacemaking draws us to seek out others on a similar quest. This year is the beginning of the 100th Anniversary of World War I, “The War to End All Wars” (2014-18) and in 2017 we will mark Canada’s 150th year as a nation. Recognizing that such anniversaries are occasions for reflection and remembrance, the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul in Kingston, Ontario, launched an initiative last year called PeaceQuest.

In 2012, the federal government spent approximately \$30 million commemorating the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 as a defining chapter in the history of our nation and “an unprecedented opportunity for all Canadians to take pride in our traditions.” This summer our government

plans to launch World War commemorations to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by Canadians and will rededicate the National War Memorial. These official commemorations also aim to promote national pride and build awareness on how Canada’s participation in the First World War shaped our country and identity.

War is part of our Canadian story and world story. How we remember and tell the stories influences how we understand ourselves and the world around us. Will we focus on war in building our pride and identity, or will our stories, as PeaceQuest proposes, help us in grieving the tragedy of war and in remaining committed to the promise of peace? World War I ended with a staggering level of devastation and loss of human life—estimates vary, but around 9.5 million soldiers died as well as millions of civilians. This “War to End All Wars” did not result in a lasting peace but began the path towards World War II. For PeaceQuest, searching and working for peace are meaningful ways of honouring veterans and those who lost their lives during the war.

One of the goals of PeaceQuest is to reaffirm a commitment to peace as

One of the goals of PeaceQuest is to reaffirm a commitment to peace as a core Canadian value.

a core Canadian value. The initiative hopes to stimulate conversations across Canada about peace and Canada’s role in peacemaking, reconciliation, and social justice. Questions offered for discussion include: Should we lament or commemorate war? Can war create peace? What do Canadians want our military to achieve? How do we make peace so that we can keep peace?

The volunteer organizers of PeaceQuest initially struggled to define peace and saw the need for conversation and dialogue on its meaning. A working description of peace has evolved: ***Peace is an active way of living, seeking to resolve conflicts cooperatively, respecting the wellbeing of the Earth and all peoples.***

A growing network

PeaceQuest brings together people and groups from different faiths and areas of the community. Anyone interested in questing for peace is invited to participate. A program of activities is being launched that will focus on learning about war and peace and on ways that peace can be promoted. It is hoped that this program could serve as a model for people across Canada who would like to undertake PeaceQuest initiatives in their own communities during these anniversary years.

Four streams of activity are developing: faith, education, policy and culture. Sister Pauline Lally of the Sisters of Providence explained how these streams flow together in the work towards lasting peace when she spoke at the 14th Annual Kingston Interfaith



Sister Pauline Lally of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul unveils a message carved in stone beneath a 100-year-old oak tree at the official launch of PeaceQuest last year at the City Park in Kingston, Ontario, on September 21, the United Nations International Day of Peace. The inscription in each of Canada’s official languages reads, “Grieving the tragedy of war, committed to the promise of peace.” Last July, the mayor and city council of Kingston passed a proclamation declaring September 21 to be Peace Day in Kingston and this too was read at the launch. The proclamation states that “the citizens of Kingston are all too familiar with the cost of war and cherish the value of living in peace,” and encourages “all citizens to do something positive to promote peaceful living in our community and our world.” Visit peacequest.ca to learn more. All photos for this article credited to Lars Hagberg/PeaceQuest.

Service on New Year’s Day 2014: “We need to believe that global peace is possible and pray for it. We need to educate others and ourselves in nonviolence and peace-keeping. We need to plan, support and work toward policies of justice, for justice always precedes peace. If we want peace, we work for justice. And we need to celebrate and enjoy peace at all levels culturally.”

The faith stream draws people together in the conviction that each faith tradition holds and cherishes peace as a value, inviting a journey of peace-making. People in Kingston are planning events such as Peace Pilgrimages, journeying from one sanctuary to another, holding vigils at cenotaphs connected with a signifi-

cant event of WWI, and taking part in Circles of Contemplative Peace involving a peace-themed reading, contemplative silence, and optional sharing.

On December 5, 2014, PeaceQuest will hold a public commemoration in the Memorial Room at Kingston City Hall on the centennial of the famous Christmas truce when unofficial ceasefires took place along the Western Front.

Under the education stream, PeaceQuest has provided peace education resources on its website (see box on page 7) and is collaborating with local school boards in Kingston to bring peace education into the classrooms. PeaceQuest also encourages, promotes, and partners in peace-

themed events such as the Women Do Peace conference held in Kingston and the May 2014 conference at Saint Paul University in Ottawa on Nonviolence: A Weapon of the Strong (Mahatma Gandhi)—Advancing Nonviolence, Spirituality, and Social Transformation.

PeaceQuest is also working with cultural groups on activities that will animate community engagement and discussion. Artists, choirs, local theatres, book clubs, and other community organizations are encouraged to create or program peace-themed elements or works during the years 2014 to 2018. Activities include the Kingston Chamber Choir concert, Seeking Peace, and co-sponsoring of plays with local theatre groups. PeaceQuest also hopes



At the PeaceQuest launch last September, young Thomas McLaren, with some assistance from emcee Bill Penner, offers a few symbolic drops of water to a young oak tree planted beside the PeaceQuest marker. Despite the rain, more than 100 people gathered. Kingston, Ontario.



to develop a template for a film series or festival that others could use.

Under the policy stream, PeaceQuest is connecting with the efforts of other organizations such as Project Ploughshares, which is working to promote a global Arms Trade Treaty. This treaty was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2013 and more than 100 countries have signed it, including the United States. Canada, once a leader in arms control, has yet to sign.

In 2013 people began gathering in Ottawa to discuss the possibility of a local chapter and the Ottawa Chapter of PeaceQuest was formed. Cities, towns, and organizations across Canada are also invited to create a chapter. PeaceQuest is also working with peace networks in other cities and led an information session in Toronto earlier this year.

With a launch in Kingston, a military city, PeaceQuest welcomes the participation of the military community and expresses gratitude for the past and present service of the Canadian Forces and their families. Recognizing that there are shared values and differences, the intent is to be fully inclusive, inviting all to dialogue and discussion and building on common ground. Encounter, dialogue, and reflection are good ways to begin this effort to cultivate peace as a deeply rooted value, one

White flags designed by PeaceQuest's Diane Fittsell festooned the park at the launch. Each sign completes the sentence proposed by PeaceQuest: "In our quest for peace in the world, we need to..."



The PeaceQuest symbol is an inch-square piece of white cloth—the colour of hundreds of thousands of grave markers in wartime cemeteries. The blank white square, easy to make and wear, is part of the PeaceQuest effort to start conversations about peace by inviting people to complete the sentence: "In our quest for peace in the world we need to..."

that is reflected in our actions, in the education of our children, in our celebrations and stories, in our policies and commitments, and in our relationships near and far.

Unless we cultivate peace we risk drifting away from it, and with far greater consequences. Our ability to destroy each other and life around us has vastly increased since the days of World War I. Even the absence of war is not enough for a lasting peace.

Cultivating peace is like gardening. We have to care for the soil that nourishes the roots for a plant to grow. What feeds the roots of a lasting peace? A healthy environment, enough food and clean water, protection of the vulnerable, love and care, and many other elements that may be discovered by

Cultivating peace is like gardening.
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for a plant to grow.

PeaceQuest education resources

Anyone interested in educating for peace can find many excellent resources on the PeaceQuest website. The senior administrators of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and the Limestone District School Board, both serving Eastern Ontario, have endorsed PeaceQuest and many of these schools are taking part in PeaceQuest activities. As well, a number of teachers are working with PeaceQuest in selecting and getting permissions for the best peace education resources so as to present them in a teacher-friendly format on the PeaceQuest website and on school board websites. If you are a teacher and would like to join this creative effort, please contact Judi Wyatt at wyatt.judi@gmail.com.

Currently available resources include:

PeaceQuest Education Stream: www.peacequest.ca/category/education/Resources and lesson plans for different grade levels, with a focus on participating in the International Day of Peace, September 21.

Peace Education Curriculum Resources: www.peacequest.ca/peace-education-curriculum-resources/

Outlines a variety of Internet sites with extensive resources including *Peaceful Schools International*, *Peace One Day*, and the *Coleman McCarthy Centre for Teaching Peace*.

Scarboro's Golden Rule resources are also listed. The Golden Rule, "treat others as you would like to be treated," has its roots in a wide range of the world's cultures, religions, and philosophies and is a global standard for all peoples and nations in resolving conflicts and working for peace: www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/

asking, "In our quest for peace in the world we need to..."

Peace is fundamental to our faith. The reign of God is the reign of peace. After repeating "Peace be with you" Jesus adds, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:19-21). We are called to continue the work for reconciliation, justice, and peace that Jesus began. Along the way we can collaborate with others who value and quest for peace. The way to peace does not lie in remaining in fear behind locked doors.∞

Karen Van Loon is the coordinator of Scarboro's Justice and Peace Office.





By Fr. Ron MacDonell, S.F.M.

I shall not hate

Several years ago, Scarborough Missions created an endowment fund at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo to sponsor a speaker in the "Lectures in Catholic Experience" series. Each year we invite someone to share about interfaith dialogue and about mission. The speaker delivers the Scarborough Lecture at St. Jerome's University in Waterloo and then repeats the talk at our Mission Centre in Scarborough.

This year Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Palestinian medical doctor who was born and raised in the Jabaliah Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip, gave an impassioned plea for all to work for peace and to be people of compassion and hope. On January 16, 2009, Dr. Abuelaish lost three daughters, Bessan, Mayar, and Aya; and a niece, Nur, to shelling from Israeli tanks in Gaza. "Just last Thursday was the fifth anniversary of the killing of my daughters," he said. "Their heart-wrenching cries of pain and hope never leave me." He speaks of them like a prophet of old: "You were my companions and comrades in my loneliness, my friends in my calamity, and my daughters in loving me...Your names do not leave my side...We will not despair of God's mercy, nor will despair find us. And we shall meet one day."

He told us that at the moment of their death, "I directed my face to the One who is awake at a time when others are sleeping, to the One who listens when others are deaf. I directed my face to God." And he prayed so as not to be filled with anger and hate. During this time, he was interviewed



Above and facing page: Palestinian doctor Izzeldin Abuelaish, who five years ago lost three daughters and a niece to shelling from Israeli tanks in Gaza, delivers a message of hope and healing. He spoke as part of the annual Scarborough Missions/St. Jerome's University (Waterloo, Ontario) co-sponsored Lectures in Catholic Experience. Scarborough Missions. January 19, 2014.

by Israeli TV and broadcast live, which he believes helped to open the eyes of the international community about what was happening. Two days later a unilateral ceasefire was announced.

Instead of responding in hatred, Dr. Abuelaish chose to forgive. "I Shall Not Hate" became his mantra and the title of his book recounting those traumatic events. Drawing on his medical experience, he describes violence and hatred as contagious diseases that must be eliminated from our lives. As diseases, they can be transmitted; they can cross

borders. Our world is small. Events that happen far away can and will impact us here in Canada.

When we see terrible news on TV and read about situations in the media, Dr. Abuelaish said, we need to feel angry, but in a way that energizes us to do what we can to prevent the injustice from happening again. "How long are we going to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the suffering in our world?" he asked. It is time for us to act.

Dr. Abuelaish believes that the disease of hatred is the result of expos-



"Our enemies in this world are our ignorance, our arrogance, our fears, our greed... God created us and we became nations so as to know each other—to know by showing compassion, respect, understanding." Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish

ure to harm. In diagnosing disease, he said, a doctor must first look at the patient's history and try to find out why the patient is not healthy. So, too, we must begin to ask and try to understand why a person hates, why a person practices violence.

"We cannot meet violence with violence, hatred with hatred, and judge in a superficial way," he said. To overcome hatred we must learn to connect with each other, not to blame people for their hatred and violence, but to understand, to dig deeper, to ask questions. We need to have the courage to change our way of being and of understanding others.

"We need to look at and change the environment and the context in which people are suffering," he said. If we want children to be healthy we need to change the environment in which they live: the housing, the water, the food, the schools, the surroundings. This is the sustainable and most effective way to create a healthy community, where health equals peace. When a person is healthy, he or she has peace and the community has peace, because each individual represents the community and the community represents the individual. As long as others are not free, no one is free. By saving one life, we save the world, by killing one life, we kill the world.

"Our enemies in this world are our ignorance, our arrogance, our fears, our greed...God created us and we became nations so as to know each other—to know by showing compassion, respect, understanding. The more we connect with each other and open our hearts to one another, the better the world will be for all." We all wear the same robe—the robe of humanity. God values humanity and the human being. All religions value humanity.

Dr. Abuelaish warns that on judgment day, God will ask each of us what we did with three things. First, our knowledge and education: did we share it with others? Second, our time: did we spend it helping others? Third, our money: where did we get it, and what did we do with it? It is in sharing and helping others that we will receive happiness. Happiness is a reflection of our actions. Happiness is our reward for our service and kindness to others.

The intensity and passion of Dr. Abuelaish's plea for all to overcome hatred by forgiveness and to embrace hope left many in the audience in quiet tears. "I lost my daughters," he said, "but I will never lose hope because hope is life...I believe that my daughters are alive and I talk to them: 'The promise that I have taken upon myself, since day one, is to keep your names and spirit alive, not to forget you, so

long as there is life on this earth."

In fulfilling this promise, Dr. Abuelaish established the "Daughters for Life Foundation" (www.daughters-for-life.com), a charitable organization providing aid for the education of girls and women from the Middle East, especially those who do not have support or who suffer hardship. "If you ask about development in another country," he said, "don't ask about the income or the GDP...ask about the level of women's education, women's role, and women's opportunity."

Dr. Abuelaish spoke of his debt to his mother, his wife, and his daughters. He believes that women are the strongest people in the community, its main pillars: "Women are the hope of the world to rise and reach the greatness that all humans are capable of achieving, not just imagining." Dr. Abuelaish, believes that we must all come together to make the 21st century "...the century of humanity...where we can all live in harmony, free, connected with each other, so as to inherit and pass on a human legacy to our children, to whom we are accountable."∞

A missionary and compassionate Church

A summary of Pope Francis' exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*



L'Osservatore Romano

“I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.”

That statement of Pope Francis is a good summary of his exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), which was released last November on the Feast of Christ the King. In his own words he writes: “I have chosen to present some guidelines which can encourage and guide the whole Church in a new phase of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality.” (EG17) He writes as a pastor with 22 years of experience as a bishop in Buenos Aires, seven years as an auxiliary bishop and 15 years as archbishop.

His personal testimony

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them.” The frequent use of the word “I” is indicative of his personal testimony and expectation. As a result of a constant encounter with Jesus, members of the Church are to be bold and creative. He proposes to promote an evangelization that is not about imposing new obligations but rather about sharing one’s own joy in the

Gospel.

He exhorts us, **“Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow.”** (EG10) One of the profound changes is in communicating through every word and gesture an understanding of our mission and how to live it without fear: “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!” (EG10)

Writing as a pastor

He writes as a pastor who is a passionate believer in Vatican II. “In virtue of their Baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples...Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization.” (EG120) Notice that his language is inclusive. He is speaking not only to Catholics but to all who believe in Jesus Christ. He goes on to remind us that, **“the Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized.”** (EG174)

Vatican II promoted consultation and collegiality. Francis writes, **“Since I am called to put into practice what I ask of others, I too must think about a conversion of the papacy...”** Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church’s life and her missionary outreach (EG32)...It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. I am conscious of the need to

promote a sound ‘decentralization.’” (EG16)

His collegial spirit is evidenced in *Evangelii Gaudium* by his citing of 10 documents from a diversity of bishops’ conferences from Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, Oceania, and North America. He writes that a bishop must “encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law, and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear.” We need to be creative in developing structures that allow for greater lay participation ensuring co-responsibility.

A compassionate leader

We have come to know Pope Francis as a leader and a pastoral man. As you read his Exhortation, the compassionate man who is very clear about his missionary identity and that of the Church invites us to encounter what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and the essence of the mission is evident on every page. **He invites all of us to be like, “the Good Shepherd, who seeks not to judge but to love.”** (EG125)

He tells us that the missionary style “has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary.” (EG35) His style speaks volumes about him and his mission. Managers are concerned with process and maintenance; leaders are concerned with mission and vision, which give the institution a sense of



By Fr. Jack Lynch, S.F.M.

purpose and direction. Pope Francis is a leader who inspires. Through the pages of *Evangelii Gaudium*, he challenges and empowers us to be faithful and joyful disciples of Jesus.

A witness

To those who continue to say that he hasn’t changed anything, I recall the words of Pope Paul VI who said that people listen more willingly “to witnesses than to teachers.” Francis does both very well; he exudes compassion—the principal characteristic of the ministry and teaching of Jesus—in his attitudes but above all in his actions: **“I believe that the secret lies in the way Jesus looked at people, seeing beyond their weaknesses and failings.”** (EG141)

Evangelii Gaudium is not an attempt to overturn traditional teaching but rather a call to be open to the Spirit and fearlessly change the way we do things. Pope Francis doesn’t mince words about attitudes and mindsets that impede that realization. Since the day of his election, he has spoken loud and clear to clergy about excessive clericalism, careerism as a leprosy, personal ambition, and complacency. He warns against Catholics who act like “sourpusses” (EG85) and “Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter.” (EG6)

A preferential option for the poor

You will recall that shortly after his election he said he longed for “a Church which is poor and for the poor!” In his writing he makes clear



For his 77th birthday on December 17, Pope Francis welcomed homeless men to the Vatican.

L'Osservatore Romano

“ I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting, and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security...”

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium

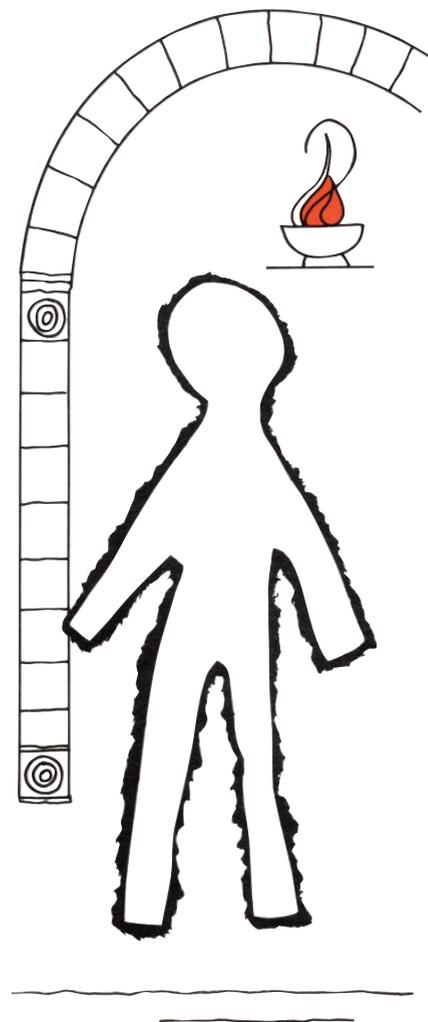
his preferential option for the poor. He wants a Church that is more missionary and compassionate; one that reaches out to those most in need. His is a theology of the poor: **“Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society (EG187)...As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved by rejecting the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation and by attacking the structural causes of inequality, no solution will be found for the world’s problems...Inequality is the root of social ills.” (EG202)**

His vision of the Church

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis has expressed his vision of the Church. Repeating what he often said to the priests and laity while he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he writes (EG49): **“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on**

the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security...More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: ‘Give them something to eat’ (Mark 6:37).”∞

This article attempts to give a summary of Pope Francis’s exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium. To benefit from its full message, Fr. Lynch invites everyone to read the document for its excellent teachings on homilies and their preparation, its statements on women in the Church and on interreligious dialogue, and much more.



By Fr. David Warren, S.F.M.

A time for waiting

I did not realize it at the time,
but while we waited for my father to come home,
I was fasting. Fasting is waiting.

When I was a kid growing up in the last century, the school day ended at four o’clock. By that time of the afternoon I was hungry. When I arrived home, I would go to the refrigerator, but my mother would always say, “Don’t eat now. Wait for supper!” My father got off work at five o’clock. So we would wait for him to come home and then have supper together.

I did not realize it at the time, but while we waited for my father to come home, I was fasting. Fasting is waiting.

World hunger represents a global failure to wait. While a third of humanity suffers from too much to eat, two-thirds of humanity suffers from not enough to eat. Obesity is a major health problem in North America. Health Canada states that 52.5 percent of adult Canadians are overweight or obese. This is certainly a first world problem.

World hunger represents a failure of the one-third to wait for the two-thirds.

Waiting for the two-thirds means eating less. But it is not just a matter of reducing how much we eat—waiting for the two-thirds is also a matter of changing what we eat. It has been estimated that it takes about 2,500 gallons of water and 16 pounds of corn to produce one pound of beef. There are more efficient ways to meet our protein requirements. Our diet also includes food that is imported from the Global South. This means that large tracts of agricultural land that could produce food for local populations is instead used to produce crops for export.

But it’s not just about food. It’s also about changing our means of transport and how we run our cars. Ethanol is now being added to gasoline and a major source of ethanol is corn. Agricultural land that could produce food is instead being used to produce fuel for our cars.

World hunger represents a global failure to wait. So does poverty.

Following the communist revolution in 1949, the government of China had a policy that no one could have a motorcycle until everyone who wanted a bicycle had a bicycle. That meant waiting.

China has since abandoned the principle of waiting and has embraced capitalism, which does not encourage waiting. Instead of self-restraint, capitalism demands self-indulgence. Modern capitalism promotes the immediate gratification of our desires. And the advertising industry helps this along by creating our desires and then convincing us that our desires are our needs. There is no place in modern capitalism for waiting for others to enjoy the basic necessities before we indulge in luxuries.

If poverty represents a failure for the “haves” to wait, the Christian life, on the other hand, is an exercise in

waiting. Fasting is an expression of waiting for others who do not have as much as we do. We wait and so we fast.

In the Gospel of Mark (2:19), Jesus asks, “The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they?” The Gospel of Matthew (9:15) reads, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?” We fast because we mourn. How can our happiness be complete as long as the mass of humanity lacks the basic necessities of life?

The Christian life is an exercise in waiting. The Mass itself is an exercise in waiting; we fast for an hour before receiving Communion. Not only that, but the Mass is a simple meal: unleavened bread and a little wine. This is certainly not enough to fill our stomachs. But the Eucharist is not meant to fill our stomachs. The Eucharist points us to the banquet where everyone will have more than enough to eat. The Eucharist points us towards the Reign of God where there will be no more waiting.∞

The Way of the Cross

This Way of the Cross was prepared by Scarboro missionary Fr. Ron MacDonell. It follows the Stations of the Cross introduced by Pope John Paul II in 1991, in which some of the traditional stations have been omitted and others added so that all 14 stations are based on Scripture. After meditating on each station, we invite you to pray the Jesus prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39)

At certain times in our lives, we are faced with a dilemma. We spend the night awake, tossing and turning. We worry. In times like these, we pray to discern God’s will and we receive courage from the example of Jesus who endured the agony in the garden. Among the poor of Brazil, many mothers and fathers spend sleepless nights watching over a sick child, praying that God’s healing Spirit will permit the child to live. Let us work as Church to create a more just society where basic needs are met to ensure better health and a life of dignity.

2. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested

Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. (Mark 14:45-46)

Have you ever felt betrayed by someone, a person you considered a friend? A biting word or action can bring your world down around you. In areas of conflict around the world, the spirit of Judas still lives and betrayals can lead to arrest and death. Let us pray for people in countries like Syria and the Ukraine, that they will have truth and peace. Let us pray that the dignity of each human being will be respected.

3. Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin

They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.” (Luke 22:70-71)

Innocent people are condemned to death in many regimes throughout the world at the whim of their political leaders. The verdict is known before the trial begins. The International Criminal Court in The Hague is a just court of appeal to prosecute individuals engaged in genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Let us pray that judges and tribunals be fair and just in their deliberations. Let us pray for an end to human rights abuses and violations of international laws.

4. Jesus is denied by Peter

Those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.” Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” (Matthew 26:73-74)

Have you ever denied knowing Jesus? We do not like to think of ourselves as Peter who gave in to his fear of being recognized and arrested. Yet when we deny someone’s dignity, when we pass by the street person, when we don’t speak out in defence of the marginalized or the persecuted, we deny Christ. Let us pray to be more courageous in standing in solidarity with others.

5. Jesus is judged by Pilate

So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate. “You have said so,” Jesus replied...Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. (Mark 15:1-2, 15)

Pilate was a Roman governor representing the oppressors in Judea, an out of the way province. He handed Jesus over in order to satisfy the local leaders. As Canadians living in one of the richest and most developed countries on the planet, what is our attitude towards other nations? Do our international policies take into account the poor and the marginalized? Do our investment policies consider that Jesus is alive in each person in the Sudan, in Guatemala, in the Philippines? Do we consider their welfare or do we wash our hands of these matters? Let us commit ourselves to working for justice and peace in our world.

6. Jesus is scourged and crowned with thorns

The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face. (John 19:2-3)

Right at this very moment, in some dark hole in some corner of the world, someone is undergoing torture: beatings, electric shock, water boarding, sleep deprivation.... We pray that God’s

Holy Spirit will give them the strength to endure the pain. We pray that the torturers will stop, that they will recognize their common humanity. We are all sisters and brothers. We thank God for people who work against torture and help victims heal after they have been released. Let us support organizations such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee Against Torture.

7. Jesus takes up his cross

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull, Golgotha. (John 19:16-17)

Jesus knew the physical suffering that he would undergo on the Cross. Painful too was the rejection by his own people as they shouted for his crucifixion. He was totally misunderstood: his Kingship is not of this world. He is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the meek and gentle Anointed One of God whose message of love and compassion was too simple for a world caught up in an intricate web of greed, profit, power, and control. God is love. Jesus is love. Let us open our hearts to him.

8. Jesus is helped by Simon to carry his cross

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. (Mark 15:21)

Jesus, overwhelmed, weakened by the scourging, now carries the heavy wooden cross in the hot sun. He gratefully feels the burden lifted a little as Simon helps him. We can all remember times when a friend has sat with us and listened to our pain. We, too, have been present to others as they struggled with some darkness in their lives. We are not alone. Let us humbly accept help when it is offered to us. Let us be generous in helping others to carry their cross. Let us live our lives in solidarity.

9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wept for him. Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.” (Luke 23:27-28)

The women cry for Jesus, deeply moved by his suffering and recalling his life of healing and kindness. Jesus’ mother Mary now understands Simeon’s prophecy at the Presentation, “And a sword will pierce your soul too.” How many women have stood aghast at the suffering and violence in our world, while bearing much of that suffering? In Argentina, starting in 1977, the “Mothers of May Square” stood in silent protest at the disappearance of their sons and daughters. Over 30,000 people were abducted, tortured, executed, and dumped into mass graves at the hands of the military during the dictatorship. The women’s

tears of lament drew attention to the criminal attack on the innocent. Let us stand in solidarity with those who suffer the loss of human rights.

10. Jesus is crucified

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:33-34)

Crucifixion was the standard execution method of the Romans, used to maximize pain and induce fear. The victim suffered for hours and even days under the hot sun of the Holy Land. The nails hammered into wrists and feet tore nerves in arms and legs. Any movement was agonizing as the victim had to raise up in order to breathe. Eventually weakened, death came by suffocation. As Jesus suffers this atrocious torture unto death, his heart of love forgives those committing these acts. God is love. The Son of God loved even unto death.

11. Jesus promises his kingdom to the repentant thief

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:42-43)

Two thieves were crucified with Jesus. One of the thieves keeps a hardened heart, mocking Jesus. Pride and self-sufficiency are at the root of his sin. The other thief, however, embraces humility and recognizes Jesus' innocence. He repents and converts—he

literally "turns toward" Jesus—and receives pardon, walking with Jesus into Paradise. Let us pray for the grace of humility and repentance.

12. Jesus entrusts Mary and John to each other

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." (John 19:26-27)

In his pain, Jesus consoles his mother by entrusting her to his beloved disciple. John is the first disciple to call Mary, the mother of Jesus, his own mother too. Jesus calls us to be one family. When told by his disciples that his family sought him, Jesus proclaimed, "Who are my mother and my brothers? Anyone who does the will of God is my brother and my sister and my mother." Jesus also entrusts us to one another. We are all family. Let us care for one another.

13. Jesus dies on the cross

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46)

As Jesus breathes his last breath, he calls upon God the Father and entrusts his spirit to him. "Spirit" means breath in Latin, and it calls to mind God's breath, *ruah*, hovering over the water

at the beginning of creation, and the breath of life that God breathed into Adam and Eve. Jesus is the Son of the Living God, the living breath of life. On the cross, he gives his final breath, his spirit, to the Creator. Later, as the Resurrected Christ, he breathes on the apostles, gifting them with the Holy Spirit. He will send this Holy Spirit to them again at Pentecost. It is the Holy Spirit, the holy breath of God, that lives and moves in us. Let us breathe and move in the Spirit.

14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. (Matthew 27:59-60)

Jesus is placed in the tomb, his still body enveloped by darkness. "He descended into hell," we proclaim in the Apostle's Creed. Yet there is light in the darkness. God raises Jesus to new life: "On the third day he rose again from the dead." We have all experienced the death of loved ones. Are they gone forever? We believe they are alive because Jesus conquered death and offers us new life. The Resurrected Jesus was transformed, the same yet different, embodying new and eternal life. This is our hope, this is our faith: the love of Jesus will give us eternal life and peace. "Glory be to God whose power in us can do infinitely more that we can ask or imagine." (*Ephesians 3:20*)∞

Open

**I am one of three,
Mary, another and
I stand here
stone**

**in viscous sorrow like mud;
can't lift my feet.**

**I could rub this balm
into my grief
that splits**

the noon glare of this place

**but some pull some pull some desire
to see the opening
yet the stone rolled away!**

**My lungs fill slow
What is this?**

**The jar slips from my palms,
I don't care
that precious oil has spilt,
I can feel lightness
the vapour that glistens
above the mirage.**

I enter the cave

**swirls and streaks
burned white onto stone:
luminous powder, like moth-wing dust.**

**At my feet
a shroud discarded,
light still
quickenning from this
burst-open chrysalis.**

Reprinted with permission from String of Mysteries by Kate Marshall Flaherty, HiddenBrook Press, 2008. Kate is a member of Scarborough's Mission Centre program facilitation team.



By Kate Marshall Flaherty



Kathy Murtha

Centering Prayer

Moving beyond conversation with Christ to communion with him

In the early 1970s a group of Trappist monks at St. Joseph's Abbey in Massachusetts couldn't help but notice the steady stream of young people passing by their monastery. They were heading to the Buddhist Center for Insight Meditation half an hour down the road. Frequently, some of the spiritual seekers would ring the bell of the monastery to ask for directions to the renowned Buddhist retreat centre.

Many of the passersby, it was discovered, were born Catholics who had no idea that Christianity had its own rich contemplative heritage. The monks felt deeply challenged by the spiritual hunger they witnessed outside their windows. They heard, too, Pope Paul VI's call to revive the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in the lives of both monastic and lay people.

Thus began a fruitful interfaith dialogue with Eastern spiritual teachers that led not only to a greater understanding of other traditions but to a deeper understanding and appreciation of our own Christian faith. This dialogue and the pursuit of Christian contemplative sources began a rediscovery

and revitalization of the Christian contemplative tradition.

The challenge was to develop a method of prayer that would express our contemplative heritage and address the spiritual hungers of our time. It was the accessibility of specific practices that gave such appeal to the Eastern spiritual traditions. In developing the method that came to be known as Centering Prayer, the monks of St. Joseph drew on ancient sources of contemplative life beginning with the fundamental Christian expression of kenosis (self-emptying) found in Philippians 2, which says that Jesus did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume our humanity. They also drew on the words of Jesus: "when you pray, go into your inner room, close the door and pray to your Father in secret." (*Matthew 6:6*)

Centering Prayer is further inspired and shaped by other influences: the Desert Fathers and Mothers—the first Christian hermits who abandoned the cities in the second century; the fourth step of *Lectio Divina* (praying the Scriptures); the 14th century classic spiritual work, *The Cloud of*

Unknowing; mystics and Doctors of the Church, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross; and Cistercian monk (Trappist) Thomas Merton.

Father Thomas Keating, one of the major founders and spiritual guides of this contemplative revival, describes Centering Prayer as "a very simple method in which one opens oneself to God and consents to His presence in us and to his action within us." He goes on to say that this form of prayer moves us beyond words, emotions, and thoughts, like "two friends sitting in silence, just being in each other's presence." My favourite description of this method of prayer is that it invites us to move beyond conversation with Christ to communion with him.

Four simple steps

Here are the four simple steps designed to lead us into a deeper more intimate relationship with God, the Ultimate Mystery:

1. Choose a sacred word as a symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently intro-

duce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.

3. When engaged with your thoughts return ever so gently to the sacred word.

4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes.

Mother Teresa

Paul Harris, a long-time friend of Scarboro Missions and a gifted teacher of Christian Meditation, vividly recalls his visit with Mother Teresa in which she expressed the bases of her spirituality and work. Her words highlight the necessity and rich benefits of the practice of Christian meditation: "God does great things in silence... His language is silence... meditation is the fuel which powers a life of service to others... we must set aside this time each morning and evening to find a new energy within—God's energy, the energy of love."

At Scarboro Missions we have been enriched by this revival of Christian contemplation. For almost eight years a community has gathered weekly to

“ God does great things in silence...
His language is silence...
Meditation is the fuel which powers
a life of service to others.”

Mother Teresa

practice Centering Prayer and immerse ourselves in inspiring spiritual resources. In March of this year, we will join the larger Centering Prayer community of the Greater Toronto Area to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Contemplative Outreach, an ecumenical, international organization established in 1984. Contemplative Outreach supports individuals and small faith groups who are committed to the practice and promotion of Centering Prayer. We celebrate this growing international Christian movement and the Trappists at St. Joseph's Abbey who responded to the challenge of reintroducing the spiritual heritage and the treasures of Christian contemplative prayer.∞

Kathy Murtha is the coordinator and program facilitator for Scarboro's Mission Centre at the central house in Scarborough, Ontario.

Comments from participants:

Terry: "Centering Prayer has significantly improved my awareness, concentration, memory, and emotional well being. After meditation, our facilitator, Kathy Murtha, presents a video or audio CD with teachings from prominent spiritual speakers, helping to sustain us in our growth of mind and understanding, as well as softening our hearts, soul, and body, promoting healing and transformation. I wouldn't miss Centering Prayer at Scarboro Missions for all the world. I am 82 years of age and I am loving my life."

Margaret: "After attending a series of talks at Scarboro Missions I decided to join the Centering Prayer group. I now do at least 20 minutes of Centering Prayer each day on my own and have found that I am more patient and more open to other people's opinions and beliefs. We have been blest by our group, which has become a community of loving, caring people. May God continue to bless us as we meet Him in our silence."

Joyce: "I had been floundering in my faith. Centering Prayer allowed me a quiet time to open myself to God's will and return to a stronger and more meaningful faith."

Olivia: "I feel very thankful to the Centering Prayer group at Scarboro Missions for helping me to develop my spiritual life. I am learning ways to get closer to God. I am also learning to better understand myself and others and to improve my relationship with others. I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful people who are on the same path, searching for a higher spiritual life."

Comments continued on page 20.

“ From contemplative prayer, from a strong friendship with the Lord, is born in us the capacity to live and carry forth the love of God, His mercy, and His tenderness toward others.

Pope Francis



The Centering Prayer group

In 2008 I was invited to be part of the weekly Centering Prayer group at Scarboro Missions. Since then, I might say that the windows of my heart, mind, and soul have been blown open by the Spirit. The experience begins when I arrive at the door of Scarboro Missions and receive a warm welcome. I then make my way to the Mission Centre where refreshments are available and I can greet other members and get caught up in what has happened in their lives since the week before.

A small bell sounds to call us to gather and we move into a comfy room with carpeting that hushes the sound of our footsteps. A circle of chairs surrounds a cloth-covered table with a candle that is then lit. As we settle into our chairs the bell sounds again and one of our group reads a prayer by Father Thomas Keating, one of the foremost teachers of contemplative prayer:

“Lord, we adore You present in our inmost being and among us. Draw us inwardly by the greatness of Your love so that we might taste that peace that surpasses all understanding, and that little by little we might understand what it means to be ‘lived in’ by God.

Heal the wounds of a lifetime—body, soul, and spirit—as we wait lovingly upon Your presence and healing action within us.”

The prayer is followed by a short piece of meditative music whereupon we sink down into silence for 20-25 minutes. During that time of silence I experience both a sense of letting go and a grounding that allows me to open to the work of the Spirit. At the end of this time the meditative music returns. We slowly allow ourselves to rise out of the silence and quietly leave the room. Returning to the kitchen, we enjoy refreshments and conversations that build community.

After the break, we are introduced to a speaker or topic. Each week there is always some new and different teaching that enriches our spiritual journeys and opens our hearts and minds.

This is more than a prayer group, it is a community built through friendship and shared learning. It is a group you never want to miss—you never know what treasures will appear. I feel blessed to be part of the Scarboro Missions educational programs, interfaith events, prayer and Scripture series, and community events and celebrations. Thank you Scarboro for the many gifts and blessings you so generously share with others.

Gini



Members of the Scarboro Missions Centering Prayer group at prayer. Above (L-R): Shelia, Lydia, Gini, and Olivia. Top (L-R): Grace, Catherine, Terry, and Margaret.

Connecting with God through silence

Four years ago I watched an online interview with Fr. Thomas Keating who explained Centering Prayer in a way that resonated in my heart. I immediately searched for a place in Toronto where I could practice. Much to my surprise, that place was in a building that had always caught my eye when I passed it on Brimley Road where I had lived for 36 years.

My first time joining the group, I felt welcomed by their warmth and acceptance. I felt at ease. On the third week I decided that it would be appropriate to tell our group facilitator, Kathy Murtha, that I was not a Catholic. I remember her laughter as she asked, “And what are you?”

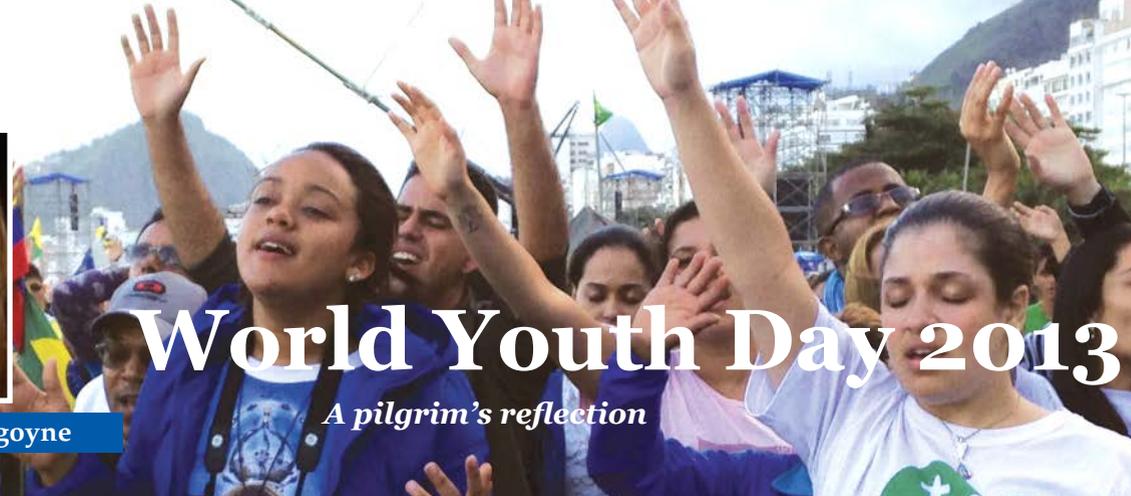
Being in the group is important to me. I always look forward to Thursdays. Prayer has a different quality when I am there; it feels deeper and easier when I pray with others. I am very fortunate to sit beside Scarboro Father Ken MacAulay since I love his peaceful energy. When I started Centering Prayer, my mind felt like a railway station, always busy. After four years, however, things have changed. While in contemplative prayer, a loving stillness surrounds and penetrates me. I even sometimes fall asleep, a sweet sleep. Feeling guilty about dozing off, I mentioned this to Fr. Ken who dismissed my concern, saying, “God does not care.” His answer still makes me laugh. Whether I fall asleep or not, the loving serenity of the prayer lingers long after it is over.

I believe that through Centering Prayer I have become a better human being. I feel gratitude and joy in being with people that make an effort to connect with God through silence.

Catherine



By Shelley Burgoyne



World Youth Day 2013

A pilgrim's reflection

Attending World Youth Day has become almost a rite of passage for many young Catholics. Last July was my third such experience. However, it was the first time attending not with my parish group, but as the youth representative of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

World Youth Days are known to be chaotic. Last year, 3.7 million youth from around the world descended on the chosen city, Rio de Janeiro. For years the city had been preparing for this event, in addition to its preparations for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics.

My previous experiences at World Youth Days in Rome (2000) and Cologne (2005) were filled with mad dashes for trains, frantic food searches, and so many logistics that it was more of an Amazing Race type of adventure than a reflective pilgrimage. Perhaps because I was a bit older this time or because I was travelling alone I found more opportunities for contemplation, and for observation.

I witnessed groups of pilgrims on the subway pulling small musical instruments out of their brightly coloured World Youth Day backpacks to serenade commuters; weary tourists getting help from local shop workers, even if they didn't speak the same language; strangers hugging; pilgrims eager to trade small trinkets from their home countries, often accompanied with a prayer and always with a big smile; friends holding hands in prayer; young football fans cheering wildly

after Pope Francis called out: “Jesus offers us something bigger than the World Cup!”

When I asked the young people about their thoughts of our new Pope, the response was overwhelmingly positive. They rejoiced in his warm approach and unassuming behaviour. Pope Francis seems like “the most huggable Pope ever,” they said.

Despite the week of unending rain, the pilgrims were undeterred. Drenched and soggy, they continued to stand along the papal route each day waiting for the Pope to drive by. They continued to trek from location to location for catechesis sessions and other events like those hosted at the English Language Welcome Centre set up by Toronto's *Salt+Light Media* where I was based for the week.

The rain didn't seem to bother anyone until it threatened to undo the biggest event of the entire week: the papal vigil and closing mass. At every World Youth Day event, a large field is chosen as the final vigil location, complete with a long pilgrimage route to get there. The location, named *Campus Fidei* (Field of Faith), was to be in Guaratiba just to the west of the city of Rio, but it had been flooded by heavy rains and would be unsuitable as a gathering space for the millions of young people.

Quickly, the location was changed to Copacabana Beach. Overnight, crews tirelessly assembled scaffolding for big screens and staging, and street barriers and blockades to direct and control foot traffic.

With the sudden change of venue,

everyone had to choose their own pilgrimage route to get there so as to preserve that part of the experience. I chose to walk a seven kilometre route along the beach-lined coast from Flamengo Park in the northeast. For me the journey was a time of reflection, an opportunity to accept what I could not control and to make the best of things.

On the evening of the vigil nearly four million people lined the four kilometre-long sandy beach, spilling into the ocean on one side and out onto the famous tiled sidewalk and street on the other. Even the Pope in his address to the prayerful crowd remarked on the change of location by saying, “I think that we can learn something from what has taken place...Is the Lord not telling us, perhaps, that we ourselves are the true field of faith, the true *Campus Fidei*, and not some geographical location?”

I had many challenges during the week, including getting stuck in traffic for hours, missing meetings, missing meals, getting soaked in an unexpected downpour, and coming down with a dreadful cold. In the end, however, World Youth Day was exactly what it ought to have been: a joyful and faith-filled space where young people of like vision got together to realize that they are not alone. As I watched the flags of different nations waving through the misty air along the beach, I saw that they were not about politics or boundaries but more about saying, “We are present and we believe.”∞

D.R.E.A.M.S. 2014

An experience of learning, service, friendship, and fun



Chaperones Andre, Kate, Eckhard, Christina, Gale, Marti, and Don at the convent in Ocoa.

The bond that unites us

By Don Hall

For years our 2014 St. Mary Catholic Secondary School D.R.E.A.M.S. participants and chaperones had waited patiently to journey to the Dominican Republic. Throughout that time, they heard stories and read about the unconditional love that Scarborough missionary Fr. Lou Quinn had for the families in the parish of San José de Ocoa. Finally, they were about to share the experience firsthand.

D.R.E.A.M.S. works through ADESJO, the community development organization that Fr. Lou supported and accompanied in his many years in Ocoa. Their staff met us at the airport, waiting hours after our expected arrival, and brought us to the convent where we had a meal and our first sleep in almost two days. Throughout the week, the daily rain never slowed us down or dampened our spirits as we worked on three new homes from the ground up, often using nothing but our hands due to a shortage of tools. The image of blood trickling down our muddied hands was a symbol of the bond that unites us together as Dominicans and Canadians. It is our hope and prayer that Fr. Lou's profound love for the people as expressed by ADESJO has also been transmitted by our D.R.E.A.M.S. students and chaperones to the families we met.∞



Christina enjoys time with the children in the village of La Cienaga.

Self-discovery

By Christina Mezes

Every night while in the Dominican Republic, the students and chaperones gathered to do a reflection. We crammed into the small entry of our home and our cook, Oristella, sat quietly on her bunk observing our conversations. On the first day, Don Hall, the chaplaincy leader at St. Mary's, asked me to look through the reflections and pick one that I wanted to conduct with the students. The fourth night's reflection, about sharing a self-discovery, caught my attention. What was it that we would be discovering about ourselves on this trip?

Among the numerous self-discoveries I made, one was particularly important, and that was finding a new sense of purpose in my endeavor to become a physician. My journey to medical school has been a winding one, and as each year passes I learn something new about the type of physician I want to be. This trip showed me that I greatly value the human connection found in the most vulnerable of relationships. Before this trip I did not have a true understanding of what it meant to help those in need, and upon my return to the United States I feel a great pull to acquire the medical training necessary to go back to the Dominican Republic and countries in similar situations to help others.

The Dominican people I met had hardly any physical possessions and therefore devoted their time and energy to loving those around them. I never would have imagined making the connection between the words, "love thy neighbour as thyself" (*Mark 12:31*), and the doctor-patient relationship. When we're stripped of the comforts of home, the constant hum of our daily routines, and the people we know, all that remains is the truest form of self. It is this person who is capable of the vast love God intended us to share with those around us, and it is this love I would like to continue to fortify throughout my life and future as a physician.∞

A roller coaster ride

By Eckhard Lutz

When I took on the role of chaperone, I knew it would be a great experience because I had witnessed the effect that D.R.E.A.M.S. had on my daughter two years ago. Yet, nothing could have prepared me for the emotional roller-coaster that we were about to experience as a group of 16 students and four chaperones.

It started with Mass at St. Mary Catholic Secondary School and a reminder from Fr. Joe Selvanayagam that nothing happens unless it is God's will. Then came the roller coaster: the excitement of meeting our group; the family goodbyes; a sleepy bus ride to Buffalo; the anticipation of the first leg of our flight; the long snow delay in Atlanta; a late but exciting arrival in Santo Domingo; another sleepy bus ride to Ocoa; a delicious dinner at the convent; a heavenly sleep in a cot after nearly two days of travel; the news that our transportation to the *campo* (village) would be delayed until "manana" (tomorrow); the beauty of the countryside; the excitement of the campo; the reality of twice a day running water; the poverty of the people; the spirit of the community; the exploration of basketball and dance; the children; the cautions of safety and security; the tranquility of the hillside worksite; the beat of Latin music until 2:00 am; the satisfaction of building a house with just hand tools; nurturing blisters and sore muscles at night; the simplicity of our accommodations; the savours of Jauna's meals.

We reflected together as a group at night before bed, but reflection also took place during meals, at the work site, on walks, and in the evenings as we turned to each other to help sort out all of our emotions.

At the work site, we met the foremen, Warkeo and Grafiel (Cacao), and homeowner Edvard. They had but a handful of tools as we began digging the foundations for a house for Edvard's family. All afternoon more tools and people arrived by moped and by foot until the site was a beehive of activity with the D.R.E.A.M.S. team working together with local men, women, and children. Culture and language were no longer a barrier as we collaborated to overcome obstacles like roots and boulders.

The scene brought to mind Fr. Lou Quinn's answer as to how he started. "Take a shovel," he said, "and start digging your way up the mountain to get to the people and the people will come to you with their shovels and help you dig." As I looked around, I realized we were continuing Fr. Lou's work and it felt as though he was there among us. It all became clear... this was God's will just as Fr. Joe had told us.

Thanks to all the D.R.E.A.M.S. participants for making this such a great experience.∞



Above and left: D.R.E.A.M.S. (Dominican Republic Education and Medical Supplies) participants from St. Mary Catholic Secondary School in Hamilton helping to build houses in San José de Ocoa, Dominican Republic. Each year, four groups of St. Mary's students journey to Ocoa.

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