



Willi's Word

The Newsletter of the Community of St. Willibrord Parish
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Winter Edition - 2007

If it's February and Lent is approaching and it's so cold out that the wind burns your face and takes your breath away, then you know it's time for another Willi's Word! So turn up the heat a bit; get a cup of tea and enjoy the latest news from your Parish.

This issue includes an article by a former parishioner who is now a Benedictine nun in the U.S., some practical advice for living Lent some notes from our Parish historian and, of course, upcoming events.

As Lent approaches, let us prepares our hearts to begin again; because God's mercy is new every morning. As we journey toward Easter, remember that holiness consists in starting again everyday, trying to be a little more loving than the day before.

-Dorothy Ormsby

From Verdun To Minnesota

Twelve years ago I set out on a life-changing adventure after spending all of my adult life in Montreal. I was 50 years old when I packed my bags, gave away Squeeks, the cat, and sublet my flat at Maureen and Jim Ramsay's on Galt Avenue where I had lived from 1991 to 1995. During those years I attended St. Willibrord and served on the Liturgy committee and was a reader.

Since leaving Verdun I have made my home at Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota. This year, 2007, we are celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the founding of our monastery. I like to tease the Sisters here that my high school, Villa Maria, is older than my community.



What is life like in this Benedictine monastery? I say "this" because while each Benedictine monastery lives the spirit of the Rule of Saint Benedict, the manner in which it is lived can vary from community to community. The Benedictine charism stands on three legs, like a tripod: prayer, community and work. Here at the monastery we gather to chant the Divine Office three times a day; St. Benedict in his rule considers the Divine Office as the *Work of God* and states that nothing is to be preferred to the *Work of God*. We also are blessed with daily Eucharist and we take time each day for personal prayer.

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Community is the second leg of the tripod. There are 297 Sisters in the community and two postulants (the first stage of religious formation). We don't all live at the monastery proper but all of us are grouped in "living groups" of various numbers. For example I live with three other Sisters in a house across the street from the monastery. We have chosen to eat breakfast and dinner and to pray morning and evening in our house during the week. On the weekend we pray and eat at the monastery so that we can join the larger community.

All of us who can do some type of work whether it is at the monastery or out in the community. My ministry is to direct our Oblate program. Oblates are women and men who associate with our monastery because they wish to live the spirituality of the Rule of Saint Benedict in their daily lives and they adopt Saint Benedict's Monastery as their spiritual home. Most of us also do community service; for example I take my turn with dishes in the monastery, reading at Eucharist, being an usher at Sunday Eucharist and occasionally giving a homily at a weekday mass - all this in addition to helping to keep house where the four of us live. Ah, yes, and I am a beekeeper since last summer.

Dear friends, I am grateful to Dorothy Ormsby for asking me to write this article. I do get back to Verdun every year or so and I make it a point to visit and attend Eucharist at St. Willibrord. For the past 12 years I have received the parish bulletin, the diocesan paper and Willi's Word every month so you are remembered in my heart and prayers.

You are welcome to visit our web site to find out more about this wonderful community: www.sbm.osb.org and if you wish to write to me my e-mail address is hmercier@csbsju.edu

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****Editor's Note:** Sr. Hélène has deep roots in the province of Quebec. Her great-grandfather, Honoré Mercier, was premier of Quebec from 1887-1891; and her grandfather, also Honoré Mercier, was Minister of Lands and Forests for the Liberal party of Quebec. He commissioned the building of the Mercier Bridge which he named after his father.

The Building Fund

The Building Fund continues to welcome with gratitude donations to reduce the deficit from the recent work renovating the exterior confessionals. It is your generous support that enables us to continue to tackle projects which keep our church in up-to-date condition. Some upcoming undertakings are the renovation of the church hall windows as well as those long-awaited repairs to the ceiling. Please keep St. Willibrord's Building Fund in mind in your giving.

80th Anniversary of the First Mass

This coming April 24th will mark the 80th anniversary of the first Mass celebrated in our present church. No descriptive account has been found of the events of the day; but it is known that it was Father McDonald's wish that the last Mass in the original church be on Easter Sunday, April 17th. It seems that there was little fanfare on that Low Sunday, (the first Sunday after Easter) except perhaps for the Pastor's homily. Parish life continued on seamlessly in surroundings much better suited to the burgeoning St. Willibrord population of 1927.

Today in 2007, we, though few in numbers, are successors to the stewardship of our beautiful building; and as such can be proud to pronounce that our heritage church building at eighty years old is in prime condition. And it is in prime condition because of the loving generosity of our present and many former parishioners to whom this place of prayer is of immeasurable significance.

-Paul Moreau

Called Home to the Father

It is inevitable, but saddening all the same, to learn of the deaths of former priests who have served here at St. Willibrord's. In December we learned of the passing of Father Henry Hall, who served here for one year in 1951. Born in Montreal and ordained in 1950, Father Hall passed away in Toronto this past December 18th. Articulate, knowledgeable and a great listener, he was a frequent contributor to "The Catholic Hour" on radio CJAD in the fifties. He also taught theology, both at Marianapolis College in Montreal and at St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto.

The second passing was that of Father Dominic McCormack. 'Father Nick,' a native of Verdun, was ordained at St. Willibrord's in 1949 and served here as a curate until 1953.

A graduate of Loyola College of Montreal and Loyola University of Chicago, Father Nick was deeply interested in religious education and held many posts in that field. Blessed with a marvelous sense of humour he could regale a group for hours with his hilarious yarns. He took great pride in his frugality and delighted in exaggerating it, once telling his visiting American nephew who was sixteen, that in Canada he was

fourteen, thus enabling him to get the boy into Expo 67 on a reduced ticket. Father Nick was called home to God on November 23 at the age of eighty-three.



Fr. Cameron welcomes Fr. McCormack and Paul Moreau at the rectory.

-Paul Moreau

What shall I do for Lent?

Here are some suggestions for making the Holy Season of Lent a time for you to grow in God's grace as you journey toward the Resurrection.

- 1 Read one of the four Gospels from beginning to end. Try St. Mark's Gospel. It has only sixteen chapters and you can easily read half a chapter in fifteen minutes.
- 2 Keep some loonies and toonies in your coat pocket; so when you see someone in need you can easily share a little something with him or her.
- 3 Do some spiritual reading every day. Check out some of the books in the back of the church for this purpose. It's amazing how spiritual reading can influence your daily life.
- 4 Did you know that there is a special Liturgy of the Word for *every day* of Lent, not just Sunday Mass? Try daily Mass, you'll be surprised at the richness of the daily Lenten liturgies and receiving the body of Christ more often will help you to grow in grace.
- 5 Giving up sweets is always good; but along with that, try fasting from bad language or unkind word about others.
- 6 Volunteer some time with the poor, the sick and the homeless.

Above all remember four simple words as a motto for Lent: Pray more, Serve more.

-Dorothy Ormsby

Adult Confirmation

We are looking for adults who are baptised Catholics but who, for some reason, have never received the Sacrament of Confirmation. This Sacrament will strengthen you in your Faith with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If you are interested in preparing for Confirmation on May 27, please contact the rectory at 514-769-9678.

Lenten Parish Mission

A Lenten Parish Mission will be preached by Deacon François Lehman. He will preach at the weekend Masses Feb. 24 & 25. We shall then continue to meet with him from Monday to Wednesday Feb 26, 27 & 28 at 7pm in the church.



ST. WILLIBRORD PARISH MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday5pm
Sunday9am, 11am
Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri 8am
Wed.....7pm

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Friday.....8:30- 11am

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!

- Fri. Feb 16 Super Sale 2pm-7pm
Sat. Feb 17 Super Sale 9am-2pm
Tue. Feb 20 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper for the Youth and their families 7pm
Wed. Feb 21 Ash Wednesday Mass 7:30pm
Fri. Mar 2 World Day of Prayer at St. Aidan's Anglican Church - all are invited.
Sat. Mar 17 Presentation on Global Warming 10am-3pm