



# Willi's Word

The Newsletter of the Community of St. Willibrord Parish  
351 Willibrord Ave., Verdun, Quebec, H4G 2T7  
www.stwillibrordparish.org - pastor@stwillibrordparish.org  
(514) 769-9678

Winter/Spring 2009

**G**reetings to all Willibrordians far and near! Here is your Lenten issue of Willi's Word. Lent is a time to grow in love of God and neighbour; and to give up something as a pledge of that love as we journey together toward Easter. This issue includes some very good advice from Fr. Cameron about Lent, plus interviews with our organist and choir director at the 10:30 Mass by Paul Moreau who contributes so much to this newsletter. He has also written about the Presentation Brothers and our friend Brother Mark. We also hear from a nonagenarian former parishioner and Sr. Marie Azzarello writes about our remarkable ecumenical service.

We especially recognize this month Fr. Cameron's thirty five years of service to this Parish. He arrived here in February, 1974, and we continue to thank God for Fr. Cameron's presence here, especially for his spirit of compassion that we have all experienced.

## *Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving*

The Gospel on Ash Wednesday calls us to change. Lent is a time for giving up something that we really like or taking up a cause to support. Jesus calls us also to change our disposition or way of regarding circumstances or situations. We would do well to fast from selfishness, to give more time and attention to family and friends and spend more time in quiet prayer and spiritual reflection. Before deciding on a Lenten penance, let us ask God to show us the area of our lives where we need a change of attitude, a different kind of giving, or a new experience of prayer. Let us also remember the Canadian Church's campaign for Development & Peace which does so much good in developing countries. May this Lent be a time of true spiritual growth.

-Fr. Cameron

---

*"The more any way of life sincerely strives for the love of God and the love of our neighbour for God's sake, the more acceptable it is to God, no matter what be its observances or external form. For charity is the reason why anything should be done, or left undone, changed or left unchanged. Whatever is honestly done out of love and in accordance with love can never be blameworthy. May God then deign to grant us this love, for without it we cannot please Him, and without Him we can do absolutely nothing, God, who lives and reigns forever. Amen."*  
- Blessed Isaac of Stella, abbot

---

## *The Apostle Paul: 2,000 Years and Counting*



Church of St Paul Outside the Walls, Rome, where his remains are venerated

A pilgrimage to Greece and Rome "In the Footsteps of St. Paul" is being planned for April 28th to May 9th led by Fr. Cameron and Beverly Fender. What better year to follow in the footsteps of St. Paul, even to his martyrdom in Rome, than in the year the Church celebrates the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of this great missionary? Call St. Willibrord's Parish at 514-769-9678 for more details. If you are interested, we should know definitely by early March.

## *Inside This Issue*

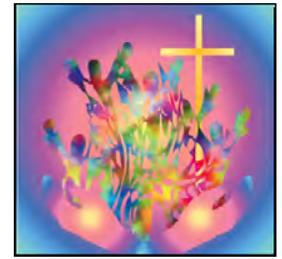
- A reflection on Lent by our pastor, Fr. Cameron
- The invitation to follow "In the footsteps of St. Paul."
- A look at an inspirational evening of prayer for Christian Unity
- The stories of how our 10:30 musicians came to be
- Recollections of a former parishioner
- News of the Presentation Brothers

## *Thinking Ahead*

- Easter is the greatest feast in the Catholic calendar. We invite you to join in our Paschal celebrations. The schedule will be made available soon.

## *St. Willibrord's Hosts Prayer for Christian Unity*

Members of the Christian communities of Notre Dame de la Trinité, Notre Dame de Lourdes, South West United and St. Willibrord's gathered to pray for Christian unity in St. Willibrord's Church, Wednesday evening, January 21st. Participants from the communities led us in prayer, offered reflective reading of scripture and provided inspirational music. Father Jean Pierre Messier's homily wove in this year's theme "May they be one in your hands" (Ezekiel 37:17). He reflected how Jesus' outstretched arms on the cross offer God's love and peace, drawing humankind and all creation into unity. Carrying the joyful refrain "Here I Am Lord" in our hearts, we were invited, on leaving the prayer service, to touch the Cross held before us, offering a silent prayer for Christian unity. The more than 100 present then gathered for fellowship around the refreshment table.



So that they may become  
one in your hand.  
-Ezekiel 37:17

-Marie Azzarello, CND

---

## *Paul Lafontaine and his Musical Family*

Choir director at St. Kevin's for thirteen years, Paul joined our community as a parishioner about ten years ago. No stranger to St. Willibrord's, and living in Verdun, the father of two growing girls, Josine (who was baptized here in 1987) and Miriam, he decided that the proximity of St. Willibrord's afforded him more time on the weekend with his children than taking the long trek to Cote des Neiges and back each weekend.

With music so deeply embedded in his genes Paul soon moved from the pews to our choir and finally accepted Father Cameron's invitation to become our choir director. Anyone who has heard Paul chant the Exultet at the Easter Vigil can't help but believe St. Willibrord's should have at least sent St. Kevin's a high draft choice for inheriting their talented former choir director.

Paul is from a family of ten children, seven boys (of which the best known is probably his brother Raymond, presently pastor at St. Monica's parish in N.D.G.), and three girls. They all grew up in St. Rita's parish in Ahuntsic where Paul graduated from St. Pius X High School before moving on to university and earning a degree in history. He then went on to obtain a Masters degree in counselling psychology at McGill University and currently practices cognitive therapy at the Montreal General Hospital.

Music is at the heart of the Lafontaine family and Paul is no exception. With no formal music training, other than voice lessons as a youngster, Paul has plenty of practical experience in his pedigree. His Father, Jean, is a natural, multitalented musician whose career spanned some forty years as a clarinetist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and his mother, Ursula, was a gifted soprano who sang regularly in churches at weddings, funerals and special celebrations. His sisters are also involved in music ministry in their respective parishes.

While Paul states he truly enjoys each Sunday as our leader of song he laments the paucity of choir members and extends an open invitation to anyone who might wish to come forward and enhance our Sunday liturgies with their musical gifts. "You don't have to be a professional", says Paul, "just someone who likes to sing and who can be there most weeks."

-Paul Moreau

### *A Former Parishioner Writes*

**Margaret Duplantis, a former parishioner who recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday, wrote the following note to Fr. Cameron:**

***"I was among the first group to make my First Communion in the new church in May of 1927. I was married to Ed on December 26th, 1939. At that time he was the choir director at St. Willibrord's. We had a family of two sons and a daughter. All were baptized at St. Willibrord's. I have lots of good memories of the Parish."***

## *Liturgical Music – His First Love*

For Sunday organist Tom Battcock liturgical music has been in his blood as long as he can remember. A natural musical talent with no formal training the sixty-eight year old native of Curling, Newfoundland, played his first tune on a pump organ at the age of six and by fourteen was the organist for his school choir.

Taught by the Christian Brothers, musically influenced by the Sisters of Mercy and encouraged by a musical family, he is the fifth of six children. His studies complete he eventually left the Corner Brook suburb where he grew up to settle in Montreal. His working career included stints as credit manager at the Montreal General Hospital and office manager at St. Patrick's Basilica where he was also a member of the choir for almost twenty years singing lead tenor. Following St. Patrick's he spent the next thirteen years as choir director at Transfiguration parish.

Introduced to our community over twenty years ago by the late Tony Logan whom many may recall as our organist during the 1980's Tom was one of the last to play the original pipe organ here at St. Willibrord's and one of the first to play the present one. Three years ago, Father Cameron invited him to return as our regular Sunday morning organist and he has been with us ever since.

He is certainly in demand at other times as well, playing weddings and funerals, not only at St. Willibrord's, but also at several other parishes in Montreal. In spite of a busy schedule he still finds time for morning Mass each day. Besides Montreal Tom has also lived and worked in Vancouver and Toronto but always evolved to a parish where he could be part of the music ministry. While he enjoys all types of music Tom says, "Liturgical music is, and always has been, my first love."

We hope he continues to bring that spirit to our Sunday liturgy for a long time to come.

-Paul Moreau

---

## *A Letter from the Emerald Isle*

Early last November, close to the feast of St. Willibrord, we received a warm and wonderful letter from Brother Mark Fitzpatrick, one of last of the Presentation Brothers to leave Quebec when the order switched off the lights at its last house here in 2002. Brother Mark returned to his native Ireland, but not before winding up the Order's affairs here in Quebec. During this period of a few months he resided with Fr. Cameron in the rectory and we all delighted in his presence.

A native of Limerick, born to a farming family, Brother Mark will be remembered by many Verdunites for his almost thirty years teaching at Verdun Catholic High School from 1972 through 2001. He first arrived on our shores in 1954 as a novice in the order founded by Blessed Edmund Rice and made his profession in Longueuil in August of the same year. Prior to Verdun Catholic he also taught at Father Cameron's alma mater, Daniel O'Connell, as well as other Montreal-area schools. Brother Mark also did a stint in Prince George, B.C. teaching in a missionary school from 1968 until his appointment to Verdun Catholic.

In his letter Brother Mark spoke glowingly of his final months here in Quebec staying at St. Willibrord's. He was most generous in his compliments to the parish for its hospitality during his short time with us. He stated how much he appreciated our support at the time of the passing of Brother Eric Lucas, the last of the Presentation Order to die here in Quebec and whose wake and funeral were celebrated here in the parish church.

In addition, Brother Mark, in appreciation of his time at St. Willibrord's (by way of stories about St. Willibrord's need for the many fund-raising events necessary to keep the parish afloat) prevailed upon the kindness and generosity of the Provincial of his



## *A Letter from the Emerald Isle (continued)*

order, Brother Walter Hurley (and perhaps sprinkling those stories with just a touch 'o blarney) to make a generous donation to the parish in gratitude.

Enjoying good health and still active in the Legion of Mary he currently lives at the Brothers' residence in Glashule, Dublin. Reflecting on his life in Canada Brother Mark says, "My religious life in Canada was a greatly fulfilling experience. I met wonderful people. Hopeful, cooperative and obliging people, and one of the highlights of that time was my association with the people of St. Willibrord's."

We thank Brother Mark for his generosity, for so kindly remembering St. Willibrord's, and for sharing those memories with us.

-Paul Moreau

---

## *Building Fund Update*

Last autumn Father Cameron wrote our parishioners and friends explaining the ongoing maintenance requirements of our parish church. In addition, Father indicated the parish was seeking donations to help with last year's repair and restoration projects, some of which were outlined in his letter of November, 2008.

The Pastor and the parish wardens were genuinely struck by the immediate and generous response to our appeal for much needed funds.

The Parish Building fund welcomes with gratitude (tax-deductible) all donations which enable us to keep St. Willibrord's in the best possible condition.

---

## *Announcements*

This year we will celebrate **Ash Wednesday**, the beginning of Lent, on **Feb 25 at 7:30pm**. Ashes will be distributed at this special Mass.



Fridays during Lent: **Stations of the Cross** at 7:30pm, Church opens at 7:00pm for quiet prayer.

Saturdays during Lent: **Sacrament of Penance**, 4:30pm before the 5 o'clock Mass.

## *Mass Schedule*

5:00pm Saturday, 10:30am Sunday

<u>Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri</u>	Daily Mass at 8:00am
<u>Wednesday</u>	Church opens at 6:45pm for silent prayer followed: 7:00- Priest available for Confessions 7:10- Rosary 7:30- Mass and Novena devotions
<u>Friday</u>	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 8:30-11:30am