



WILLI'S WORD

The Newsletter of the Community of St. Willibrord Parish
351 Willibrord Ave., Verdun, Québec H4G 2T7
(514) 769-9678

Summer Edition - 2005

"Habemus Papam"

For the first time in many years, we heard those hope-filled words in St. Peter Square on April 19th of this year. In that one month, we lost a beloved Pope and gained a new Pope, Benedict XVI. We pray that our new Holy Father will be filled with faith, hope and love and that God will grant him much courage to follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads him. Because of these momentous events in the life of the Catholic Church, we have inserted two extras in this issue of Willi's Word... a lovely, short life of John Paul II from the Christopher News Notes and a holy picture of our new Pope, with a special prayer for him on the back. We hope you will enjoy these and make good use of them.

After a very cold May here in Montreal, we are now experiencing an extremely warm June as we begin to switch into summer mode. The beginning of Summer at St. Willibrord's always means Bible Camp, a very wonderful event for our neighborhood children. We are thankful that Sr. Katherine will be leading the camp again this year and we include some of her thoughts about Bible Camp in this issue. We also have a fascinating article on our unique church fresco and a remembrance of two special ladies of the Parish who now live elsewhere.

We hope that when it comes to Sunday Mass attendance our parishioners will not be as changeable as the weather has been but be faithful to their church community by attending Sunday Mass. After all, God's love never takes a holiday.

Where Are They Now?

Two wonderful women who were both important prayerful presences in this Parish for many years are no longer seen in St. Willibrord's, though they are still very much with us in spirit. Their names are Faustina Ferreira and Sheila Carrega. Both of these wonderful ladies came to Canada from Guyana many years ago. They found housing with the Sisters of Service, a wonderful religious community dedicated to welcoming immigrants and finding them housing.

After leaving the residence of the Sisters of Service, Faustina and Sheila decided to share an apartment on Gordon Street where they lived for many years. A few years ago, serious health problems forced them to move. Sheila now lives in the Montreal Extended Care Residence and Faustina lives with her niece Jackie Cere and her family in N.D.G. They both miss their Parish home, St Willibrord's, very much and long for contact with their friends at the Parish. (...continued on page 2)



(...continued from page 1)

Sheila was active for many years at St. Willibrord's with a ministry to the elderly and the homebound. She spent hours on the phone reaching out to these people and was always willing to help them in any way she could. She also worked many years at the Flea Market and the Bazaar where she helped manage the plant booth. Wherever Sheila helped out in the Parish, she was always a gentle, loving presence there.

Faustina was our parish contemplative, coming for Wednesday Adoration for many years, often staying for three or four hours in prayer before the Eucharistic Jesus whom she loves so much. Faustina was also very faithful to her service at the Flea Market and the Bazaar where she managed the religion booth for many years. She also helped out at the Hospitality Centre, preparing and serving meals for the poor and was a volunteer for l'Abri en Ville.

Faustina and Sheila led simple, humble, hidden lives, but lives filled with love for God and their neighbour. Perhaps, in God's eyes, these are the greatest lives of all. Now that they are disabled, it is our turn to reach out to them. Though I have the privilege of visiting Faustina once a week and Susan Young and Daisy Levangie visit Sheila at least once a week, both Sheila and Faustina would really be happy to see more of their fellow Willibrordians. Please call the Parish for more information on how you could bring some extra joy to these two lovely ladies.

Dorothy Ormsby



"The Meeting paid a well merited compliment to...Guido Nincheri for his artistic conception and realization of the magnificent (fresco) painting in the dome of the sanctuary."

(Extract from the minutes of St. Willibrord wardens meeting held May 23, 1940.)

As time passes, more and more ecclesiastical art, so much an inherent part of Quebec Roman Catholic culture, is lost through the conversion of redundant church buildings to demolition, or, worse, to secular uses. Much of the art can be moved and preserved to grace other surroundings. However, in the case of frescoes, such as Nincheri's depiction of Christ the King which adorns the vault of our sanctuary and which

was formally dedicated by Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau on Nov. 17, 1940, moving is not an option. A fresco ("fresh" in Italian) is a painting technique wherein pigment is integrated into plaster while the plaster is still wet. As a result, there is no room whatsoever for error. Removing a fresco is impossible inasmuch as it bonds to form a part of the architecture of the church. Our Christ the King, as art, is a principal reason our church has been given heritage consideration.

While Guido Nincheri, an Italian immigrant from the Tuscany region, receives only the briefest of mentions in our parish archives, his reputation was one of distinction even at that time. He introduced to North America a painting technique handed down from Michelangelo. Today he is considered to be one of the most gifted fresco painters of the twentieth century.

Nincheri had a narrator's talent. One never ceases to enjoy contemplating Christ the King, taking in its message, subtly stated by the earthly king laying down his scepter, or the cup being higher than the crown. The humility of the family, the workers, even that earthly king; all are turned in unity toward serving the Lord, through the strength of the Gospels.

Nincheri, besides being Canada's foremost "*fresquiste*" is equally honored as a creator of stained-glass windows. His work can be found in many of Montreal's churches such as St. Patrick's, St-Leon de Westmount, St-Viateur in Outremont, and many others. He died in Providence, Rhode Island in 1973 at the age of 87.



The colors in our fresco may appear from the pews to be somewhat faded but this is an illusion. Sixty-five years of candle smoke and dust have coated it somewhat with grime. Should it be cleaned the colors would return again to be as rich as they were in 1940.

Paul Moreau

For more information on the life and works of Guido Nincheri see the following website <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/nincheri/>



Pope Benedict XVI

Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? And once again the Pope said: No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great.

-Excerpt from Inaugural Sermon

Thoughts About Bible Camp

Sr. Katherine has kindly sent us these scriptural meditations on the joys of Bible Camp.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Ps 119

At Bible Camp it is inspiring to see children and teenagers reading the Bible and acting out stories.

"Whatever you ask in prayer, believe and you shall receive it." Mt 21:22

The children pray earnestly with great trust in God.

"Make a joyful noise to God." Ps 66

The children certainly do that when they enthusiastically sing the Bible Camp songs during choir time.

"And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim Him." Romans 10

The younger children are helped by the older children.

The leaders serve as models by their visible interest in proclaiming God's word.

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God." Mt 5

The campers enjoy dodge-ball and other sports each day.

They attempt to be good sports, share together, and build friendships.

"These all look to you to give them their food in due season." Ps 104

Many volunteers prepare snacks and lunches for the children, lovingly and carefully.

So when I think of Bible Camp, I say,

"I will thank the Lord with all my heart." Ps 111

Sr. Katherine Coltart, C.N.D.

Roof Update

We are pleased to see, thanks to our parishioners, alumni and friends, our church building gleaming white in the early summer sun, safe in the knowledge that the exterior roof, masonry and windows are not only repaired, but restored to new. In early autumn we will be issuing a full report on the income and expenses of this undertaking in the six-plus years from its inception in April of 1999 to the present.

