



Willi's Word

The Newsletter of the Community of St. Willibrord Parish
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Summer Edition 2007

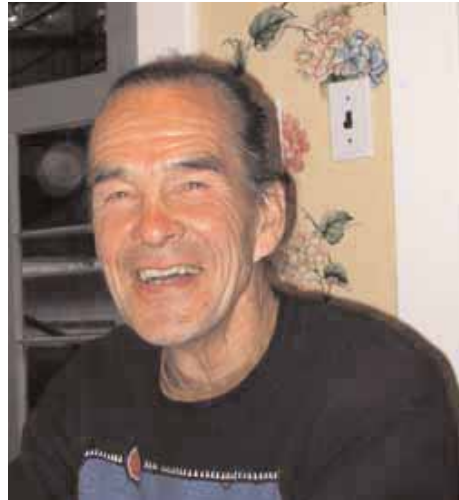
We begin Summer at St. Willibrord's with an abundance of beautiful flowers in front of the rectory, planted by a group of young people brought to us by Sr. Susan Kidd. These good people also cleaned the parking lot for our very special Pentecostal celebration.

In this, your Summer issue of Willi's Word, the parishioners who went on pilgrimage to Turkey with Fr. Cameron share with us some of their wonderful experiences walking "in the footsteps of St. Paul." We also have in this issue a fascinating biography of a parishioner who was a long time peace activist and environmental activist. Our dear friend Sr. Katherine is back animating our Bible Camp this year. We are fortunate that she, Fr. Cameron and some dedicated parishioners make this outreach possible every summer.

Finally, have a great summer, but don't forget that your Parish needs your spiritual and financial support during the summer months also.

Gerry Pascal - A Peacemaker's Story

Gerry Pascal was born in 1933 in Winnipeg, and lost contact with his mother at the age of five. A large part of his growing up was in foster homes and an orphanage. He went to a Jesuit high school and to St. Paul's College, a Jesuit institution. His first choice of a vocation was the priesthood. He entered St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario in 1956, where he met a young seminarian named Joseph Cameron. The seminary, however, did not prove to be Gerry's calling, which was already focused on social justice issues largely because of some of his Jesuit instructors. A powerful, formative experience in his life was a visit to Tony Walsh, founder of the Benedict Labre House in Griffintown. He referred to this as a "burning" event which shaped the rest of his life.



Gerry describes the period from 1958 to 1965 as one of searching and a kind of desert experience, taking him finally to Montreal. He became a volunteer at Benedict Labre House, and enrolled in a course in inhalation therapy at St. Mary's Hospital. Tony Walsh left Labre House in 1966, and Gerry, along with many others, including Ray Salmon (who took over as Director), looked for ways to keep the House going. At the same time, Gerry began teaching English as a second language at the St. Jean military base, but fell ill with tuberculosis in 1967. He spent the next couple of years in the Rosemount sanatorium, where he was greatly influenced by reading the biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

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In 1970 Gerry took over the directorship of Benedict Labre House and took the House through the next decade, a time when many parishioners, including Maureen and Jim Ramsay, were volunteers. He was deeply influenced by the Catholic Worker movement and had several contacts with Dorothy Day, which included attending her funeral in New York City in 1980.

Later he edited the newspaper Unity, which moved his spirit far beyond the limits of Montreal. *Unity* also provided a way to juxtapose the needs of street people with political and social structures that were destroying the lives of the poor, and also a link to the vigorous peace movement. Toward the end of this period, he took a number of trips, including one to Northern Ireland and elsewhere in Europe. He also made contacts with Jean Vanier and the L'Arche movement in France.

Gerry's peace activism began after he left Labre House, when he became involved in a vigorous movement against nuclear weapons. His participation in a huge peace rally involving over a million people in New York City in 1982 was preceded by a march there from Montreal led by a group of Japanese Buddhist monks. The rally was followed by a walk of 500 kilometres from Hiroshima to Nagasaki in 1983. These events have defined Gerry's spirituality, art and activism to this day. Later travels included India in 1985 (to trace Gandhi's footsteps) Haiti and the state of Chiapas in Mexico.

His deep sense of the beauty in small and neglected things, as well as his fondness for displaying art in public places, are also worked into his daily life through his love of repairing cast-off items. Gerry sells these twice a year in front of the home of Brian and Hortense McDonough to raise money for Le Centre de Ressources sur la Non-Violence located in Pointe St. Charles, where he has worked for a number of years.

We are happy to make known the details of the life of this remarkable man to our parishioners who may not know him.

Jim Ramsay

If we want to grow in the spiritual life, we must try against all odds to be peacemakers. We need to look for that harbour of peace hidden by grace in our own souls. We need to share peace with those who are dear to us and with those we don't like. We need to forgive our enemies. We need to speak up on behalf of the victims of injustice and neglect. We need to stand with the immense number of ordinary people in the world who desperately want peace. We need to pray for peace and support those who work for peace by non-violent means.

Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R.

Pentecost – A Mass of Many Meanings

On Sunday, May 27th, Saint Willibrord's Parish celebrated three important events – the feast of Pentecost, the sacrament of Confirmation and the 80th anniversary of our church building. Our celebration began in the parking lot next to the rectory, where the first church once stood, and the congregation then processed into the current building, just as the faithful of St. Willibrord's did some 80 years ago. During the Mass, Bishop Lionel Gendron confirmed the candidates who were prepared by Patricia Kehler, and in the spirit of the great feast of Pentecost, a group of parishioners proclaimed the prayer of the faithful in their native tongues.

We would like to thank Bishop Gendron and Father Jean Isabel for being with us on this meaningful day, as well as all those who helped to prepare the liturgy and the lunch that followed. The Holy Spirit was truly present!

Emily Moreau

The Path of St. Paul

We are happy to have the following beautiful accounts of the experiences of some of our parishioners who went on pilgrimage with Fr. Cameron to Turkey.

Something special happens when you travel to cities and places that the Apostle Paul actually visited, sights that tell us much about the world in which he lived.

I join with my fellow pilgrims in thanking God for the lovely moments we had together. The Mass at St. Paul's Grotto will remain for me a treasured memory.

Fr. Joseph Cameron

One of the memorable spiritual experiences on our pilgrimage was the visit to the House of Mary in Meryemana just a few kilometers from the centre of Ephesus. Tradition holds that Mary spent the last years of her life there.

Both Christians and Muslims visit the shrine. The feast of the Assumption on August 15 attracts an exceptional number of pilgrims to the site.

We arrived at the site early in the morning before the hustle and bustle of the crowds. It was a beautiful sunny day. Birds were flying and chirping around us and the scent of flowers was in the air.

Our group was fortunate to attend an outdoor Mass in an area just steps away from the shrine. After the Mass, we visited Mary's modest stone home.

Our guide Ali, a Muslim, always referred to the Virgin Mary as Mother Mary. That day I felt Mother Mary's peace.

Jeanne Caron

It is hard to believe that so much time has passed since we arrived home from our trip to Turkey. The experience of 'walking in the footsteps of St. Paul' was unique and, I believe, deeply spiritual for all of us pilgrims. I am still absorbing the sights, the sounds, the smells, the encounters.

What touches me most deeply as I relive the experience is the overwhelming power of that grace of Pentecost for the first disciples and the power of St. Paul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. Their love of Jesus and their desire – their need – to share this good news with others was so much more powerful than their fear of the very real dangers of attack, of imprisonment, and of death which were with them every day. We saw the rocky



caves in the mountains where they met together and the escape routes, the underground catacombs, the Roman roads fraught with danger from bandits. The book of the Acts of the Apostles has taken on a whole new meaning for me. I am left with questions about how and how bravely I share the good news of Jesus with others.

Sr. Clare O'Neill, C.N.D.

Our pilgrimage revealed to me the difficult geographic and physical circumstances which St. Paul endured to spread the Word of Jesus Christ. Our trip also explained the manner in which Christianity expanded initially, before a negative reaction set in later.

As we traced westward from St. Paul's base in Antioch, we were able to comprehend the difficulties in travel, and also the persecution to which Christians were exposed. We were told that Cappadocia had 52 towns (population of up to 20,000 people) built underground or into the sides of hills in order to avoid attack and thereby survive! On the other hand, in Ephesus, we saw the restored ruins of a thriving community where both Saints Paul and John preached for many years.

I feel so blessed to have had this opportunity to more fully comprehend the profound and meaningful history of the Church.

Jim Tremaine

Building Fund

Having recently so beautifully celebrated our church building's 80 years, we take a moment to share our deepest gratitude with all of the St. Willibrord's parishioners, alumni and friends who have supported the Building Fund projects in the past years.

The next step in assuring that our Parish can continue to function in a secure, comfortable and efficient manner is the restoration of the church hall windows. Forty architectural windows line the walls of the basement hall which hosts events such as our flea markets, fall fairs, Christmas basket preparation and fundraising dinner-dances. These windows are damaged, weathered and in need of restoration. After having consulted with architects and building specialists, the wardens and committee have deemed this \$65,000 project a necessary investment in the sustainability of our Parish. Please continue to consider the Fund in your giving. Your assistance is deeply appreciated.

Chuck Ormsby

Beyond Sunday

Our Parish continues to have the Novena Devotions to our Mother of Perpetual Help each Wednesday evening at 7:30pm. During the Mass we remember the many sick who request our prayers. Let us know if a friend or member of your family is sick and they will be included in our prayers. Why not plan your schedule so that you can come occasionally to our Wednesday evening Prayer time.

We are now in the last year of preparation for the 49th International Eucharistic Congress to be held in Quebec City in the summer of 2008. The theme of the congress is "The Eucharist, Gift of God for the Life of the World."

Bible Vacation Camp

June 25 - July 6

Please call the rectory to register your child.

St. Willibrord Parish Mass Schedule
Saturday5pm
Sunday9am, 11am
Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri8am
Wed7pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Friday.....8:30- 11:30am