



WILLI'S WORD

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

Fall Edition - 2004

We come to you with our Autumn - Thanksgiving issue of Willi's Word as we all rejoice in the bright beauty of nature all around us. The humblest, poorest city street is illuminated by the splendour of autumn colours. Here at St. Willibrord's we have a wonderful tree in front of the rectory that puts on a magnificent autumn show, for all to see, every year at this time. It is one of the many things we have to give thanks for on Thanksgiving, when we especially try to obey these words of Scripture that come to us through St. Paul: "Dedicate yourselves to thankfulness." We are especially thankful for the restoration of the church's facade as well as all of the work done on the roof. You can read more about that in this issue, as well as an interview with our friend and Sunday helper, Fr. Isabel. We also have an update on L'Abri en Ville, some words on the upcoming youth retreat and an announcement of a new book by a C.N.D. sister whom we know well in our parish.

Please continue to pray for peace in our world, that God's love may overcome hatred and violence.

The followers of Jesus have been called to peace [...] his kingdom is one of peace, and the mutual greeting of his flock is a greeting of peace. His disciples keep the peace by choosing to endure suffering themselves rather than inflict it on others. They maintain fellowship where others would break it off. In so doing, they overcome evil with good, and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship

Our Good Friend – Fr. Jean Isabel

Father Jean Isabel has been a cherished presence in our community for these past couple of years; so I was happy to meet with him after Mass, over the kitchen table in the rectory, (where else?) and get to know a little about his life.

Father Jean was born in 1939 at Trois Rivières and raised with one brother. His early days as a Boy Scout gave him his sense of service to the marginalized. It was the example of another scout that led Fr. Jean to the vocation of a missionary. That scout is now the Superior General of the order. Father entered the Société des Missions Etrangères in 1960, and, after four years of study in the seminary in Laval, was ordained in 1965, in the "first batch after Vatican II." Those were exciting years and a time of great hope because two bishops represented his order at the Vatican II Council and provided the Société with inside information.

Father's first appointment was to a region in the south of the Philippines. After four months learning the local language, Visayan, with the help of a missionary father, he was told to "Let the people teach you!" He was then put to work among the fifty or so chapels in the region of the city of Davao. He remembers his eight years spent there with great fondness, especially because of the warmth of the people. Returning to Canada in 1974 to

(continued on next page)

get a visa for Indonesia, Father Jean was then posted to Banda Aceh in the north of that country, moving from a completely Christian culture to total immersion in Islam. But he was received warmly on the campus of the local university, and eventually called to be a resource for students studying comparative religion. His next posting was to Hong Kong in 1983, with the objective of helping its Catholic communities to prepare for the takeover by mainland China. The Société now has active missions in other locations in the People's Republic. Father Jean was asked to return to the headquarters in Laval, where he was first in charge of the formation of new priests, and then assumed his current duties as Bursar for the Société.

How did Father Jean first make contact with Father Joe and St. Willibrord's? There was a need for a place in which some Spanish-speaking lay missionaries could improve their English within the context of parish work. Sister Clare O'Neill suggested that he turn to us. The rest, thankfully, is history. Thank you, Father Jean, for so much that you have given us!

✿ Jim Ramsay

New Book on Mary, Mother of Jesus



We are happy to announce the publication of a new book by a C.N.D. sister who lives near us and often worships at St. Willibrord's. The book is entitled *Mary, the First Disciple* by Sr. Marie Azzarello. When I spoke with Sister about the book, she told me that she wrote it because she wanted to discuss the discipleship of Mary as portrayed in her gospel appearances. She also wanted to write about our Blessed Mother in a way that was in harmony with the teachings of Vatican II about Mary.

This book will be officially launched at a gathering on October 14th, from 5pm to 7pm at 2330 Sherbrooke St. West (corner of Atwater and Sherbrooke.) Also, as announced in the October issue of the *Catholic Times*, Sr. Kay Duffin, C.N.D. will be giving a course on this book. Its publication by Novalis is announced in the October issue of *Living With Christ*. We look forward to reading this

book about Mary's discipleship with eager anticipation.

✿ Dorothy Ormsby

November Retreat at Oka

Come and spend some time with Fr. Isabel and fellow parishioners for a weekend of peaceful prayer and relaxation at the beautiful Trappist monastery in Oka. Fr. Jean Isabel will be guiding us in our prayer. We still have a few places left; so call the rectory soon if you are interested. (The food is great and you can have all the Oka cheese at meals that you want!)

Update on L'Abri en Ville

With gratitude and friendship we greet our St. Willibrord supporters with an update of our project of supported housing for people with a mental illness.

L'Abri continues to serve ten apartments, one being our Verdun apartment. We have decided to stay with ten apartments in order to maintain the sense of a small, intimate community, so important to our residents. The friendly relationships thus made possible, break the isolation and loneliness often felt by those with a mental illness.

Instead of opening another apartment, we have put our efforts into helping other groups begin their own projects of supported housing. During the summer two new groups we have worked with, have opened their first apartments on the South Shore. It has been wonderful to see this caring and sharing work spread throughout the larger community as the benefits enrich everyone.

We are presently in need of a volunteer who would be willing to be the treasurer for our Verdun apartment. It involves collecting the rent and paying the bills -- Hydro, Bell, cable and the rent -- as well as visiting the men. Our sincere thanks go out to Guy Bougie, who has been our very dedicated treasurer, and who has done a great job over the past seven years. If anyone feels they could take on this role, please call us at L'Abri En Ville. Telephone: (514) 932-2199.

 Maureen Ramsay

A weekend for the Youth

We will be having another Youth Retreat this Winter for children aged eleven to sixteen years old. It will be held at beautiful Villa Marguerite in Pierrefonds on December 3rd to 4th. Our previous retreats have been great successes due to the wonderful leadership of our young adult staff and the incredible participation of the youth. It is with great enthusiasm that our leaders approach topics such as putting one's faith into action, living one's daily life as a servant of God, and strengthening one's relationship with God through prayer. Youth Retreats enable children to step away from all of the worldly distractions that they might encounter in school or among friends and focus on exploring their own, personal, ever-growing faith through the words of the Gospel and through different methods of prayer such as Taizé, centering prayer and the Rosary. Naturally, these weekends are also fun-filled! We often find ourselves in the midst of a giant snowball fight, or absorbed in a great film or even sweating it out in an intense round of "pass the salt" (this is a fan-favourite - I encourage you to ask one of our former young retreatants about this game!)

We are thankful for all of the prayers that are offered up for us during the weekends from parishioners and family members. I believe that these youth retreats offer the participants a nice balance of spirituality and fun. They are a great semi-annual tradition, but you don't have to take my word for it; in the words of a young retreatant when asked about the overnight retreat he had just experienced: "I thought it was fun and we should do it again during summer vacation for one whole week!"

 Chuck Ormsby

Façade and Roof Restoration Project

We are pleased to report that the final exterior phase - "Phase III" - of our roof and building repair is almost complete. The good weather of August and September has been a help in moving the project along, especially since extra work was required on the church stairs and parvis (outside landing area) which was only discovered once the steps had been removed.

While this work drove the cost up considerably, we are truly gratified at the response of parishioners and friends to our campaign for the funds to finish this project. To date, we have raised \$135 000 towards the total cost of \$295 000. The \$20 000 increase in the cost is for the rebuilding and the replacement of the steps and parvis. The most recent "late summer campaign" has raised nearly \$36 000.

Our campaign continues to move forward toward the final goal. The Pastor and Committee extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to date. We encourage anyone who has not yet made a donation to consider doing so soon, as we finally reach the end of this five-year journey to preserve and protect our heritage church building.

 Paul Moreau

Children's Liturgy becomes Sunday School

We have made some changes to our Sunday religious education program for the children. With the help of Sr. Katherine Coltart, the religion teacher at St. Patrick's Basilica, we have begun a new program of catechesis and are calling it Sunday School instead of Children's Liturgy. Many children have already enrolled. We are very grateful to our catechists in this new program, Dan Ormsby, Helen Dilallo, Patricia Pine and Marie LaFlèche.

Annual Fall Fair

Our Annual Fall Fair will be held on **October 22nd & 23rd**. Enjoy great bargains, great prizes, freshly baked goods & refreshments. It's fun for the whole family. Please come and bring a friend or two!

All Saints & All Soul's Day

The special Mass to remember all those from our parish who died in the past year will be held on All Soul's Day, **November 2nd**, this year instead of on All Saint's Day (Nov. 1st) because the English Catholic Rally will be held on that night.

Feast of St. Willibrord

There will only be one Mass on **November 7th**, at 11am. There will be no 9am Mass. Come to help us celebrate our patron saint with our traditional dancing procession in his honour. A reception will be held in the hall after Mass.

Oka Retreat with Fr. Jean Isabel

This will take place on **November 12th - 14th**. There are still a few places available so call now and sign up for this wonderful experience.

Youth Retreat

The theme for the retreat held on **December 3rd-4th** will be "Navigating the Waters of Faith" Registration is limited so call early.

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily Mass

8am - Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri
7:30pm - Wed



Sunday Mass

Sat -- 5pm
Sun -- 9am, 11am