



Willi's Word

The Newsletter of the Community of St. Willibrord Parish
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Fall Edition - 2006

The wonderful brightness of Autumn is with us again and thus it's also time for your Fall issue of Willi's Word. We are happy to have a letter from Sr. Anne McNally in this issue. We recall with gratitude the ten years she worked in our parish and shared her life with us. We also have news of a family, now living in England, who were very active in the parish at one time and our Church historian has done it again with a great article about our first pastor. Please also check out all the dates for our upcoming events.

October is not only the time we thank God for all the fruits of the earth and the month of the Fall Fair but it is also the month of the Holy Rosary. The late, great Pope John Paul II wrote, "Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace."

We would also like to thank the group from the Diocesan Healing Ministry who came to St. Willibrord's the evening of September 15th for a beautiful healing Mass. When they come again, we hope to have a much larger parish attendance.

Last but not least, we are so glad to see parishioners of yesteryear who drop in at the rectory during the summer months to say "hi" and rekindle old memories.

Remembering our Founding Pastor

October 9th marks the 75th anniversary of the death of the founding Pastor of St. Willibrord's, Father Patrick McDonald. While there are only a handful of parishioners still with us who can remember him in person, his influence is all around us in the form of our beautiful church. Father McDonald collaborated on each detail of the church's construction with the architects, planners and builders.

Father McDonald was a dynamo of energy when it came to serving the Church. Born in St- Hyacinthe to a farming family in 1871 he was ordained in the Montreal diocese in 1896. Prior to his arrival in Verdun he was the popular pastor of St. Mary's Parish in east-end Montreal.* Mandated by Archbishop Bruchesi to establish a Parish to serve the English-speaking Catholics who were flooding into Verdun after 1910, he was compelled to build not one, but two, churches within a space of thirteen years, as the number of parishioners doubled.

Taking up his mandate in 1913 he immediately set out to build the rectory and the first church. He also successfully lobbied for the first English-speaking Catholic school in Verdun which the school commission named "Jeanne d'Arc," but which he soon had changed to St. Willibrord's.



Though a very serious priest, the husky farm-boy (whose grandparents had come from Ireland in the “fever ships,”) was nonetheless very gregarious and was a familiar sight on Verdun’s streets as he chatted with anyone and everyone during his walkabouts, accompanied by his friendly Irish Setter, “Paddy.” He was respected by Verdunites of all faiths and known as a contributor to charitable institutions, non-Catholic as well as Catholic.

The same year the school opened he invited the CND sisters to oversee it. The following year the Sacred Heart Brothers took over the boys’ section. That Willibrord connection to the CNDs has continued unbroken to this day in some form or another, eighty-seven years later.

Shepherding an ever-growing flock of the faithful, building churches and schools, and meeting the numerous other challenges that faced a Pastor at that time, (and still do today) took a toll on Father McDonald’s health. On October 4th of 1931 he suffered a stroke while celebrating Sunday Mass. Gravely ill for only five days, he departed from this life into eternity on October 9, at the age of fifty-nine.

His funeral, celebrated at St. Willibrord’s on Monday October 12, reflected the impact Father McDonald’s life had on the Verdun community during his eighteen years in the Parish. The church was filled to capacity and hundreds more stood outside on the steps and sidewalk as Bishop A.E. Deschamps celebrated the funeral Mass. In attendance, along with every civic dignitary one could think of, were no less than thirty-six priests of the diocese. Interestingly, in this group were the next four of Father McDonald’s six successors: Fathers Reid, Elliott, Stanford and Byrd. The fifth pastor, St. Willibrord High School graduate, Father George Thoms, was already in the seminary and the seventh, our own Father Cameron, would not be born until seven months later.

A Verdun *Guardian* editorial eulogized Father McDonald saying, “His death is a cause of bereavement to all citizens of Verdun. The church and schools bear eloquent testimony to the zeal with which Father McDonald worked.”

** St. Mary’s church stood on the site of what is now the CBC/Radio Canada building near the Jacques Cartier Bridge. A commemorative clock given in appreciation to Father McDonald by the St. Mary’s parishioners in 1909 sits to this day on a mantle in our parish rectory. A cross which stood on the steeple of St. Mary’s was rescued during the church’s demolition by Verdunite and former St. Willibrord curate, Father Nick McCormack who had it refurbished. It now stands outside St. John Brebeuf church in LaSalle.*

-Paul Moreau

Our Friends in England

I had the great pleasure and privilege of visiting with the Côté family in Britain this summer. I’m sure most Willibrordians will remember this lovely family – Michel, Lucy, and their children: Francois, Daniel, Marie and Claire. During their stay in Verdun they were very active in the parish, especially Children’s Liturgy. Though they moved to England (Lucy’s birthplace) about nine years ago, our Parish children still begin their liturgy with a prayer written by Michel when he lived in our Parish. (See next page.)

I shared family life with the Cotes for eight days and was made to feel like a member of the family. They live in Surrey, South-West of London, and with much help from Lucy and Michel, I was able to take the train into London often to see the sights and visit both my sons who were there for the summer.

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Michel and Lucy remember St. Willibrord's with great affection, Lucy especially; because she was received into the Catholic Church and confirmed at St. Willibrord's. Over her kitchen counter is a framed photograph of the church and an icon of St. Willibrord.

Michel is working as a prison chaplain and Lucy is very happy to be a stay-at-home Mom. Please keep this wonderful family in your prayers.

-Dorothy Ormsby

***Dear God, We thank You for loving us and we pray that through this Liturgy we may come to know You a little more. Amen
-Children's Liturgy Prayer by Michel Côté***

Greetings from Sister Anne

Dear Willibrordians,

Since I was able to meet only a few of you in July I am taking this opportunity via Willi's Word to thank you for your care and concern during the past year, especially during those seven months of chemotherapy. Many of you know what that experience is like.

I cannot possibly convey in words my heartfelt gratitude to all who prayed, sent cards, relayed messages of encouragement, etc. The fact that I feel well today I attribute as much to your prayers (and to those of friends, family, and Community) as to the excellent care I received at Kelowna Cancer Clinic.

Now I am back in Kelowna, BC, gradually becoming involved again in ministry here. Recently we welcomed Sister Denise Bérubé to the west; she is in Cranbrook, only an eight-to-ten hour drive from us.

In British Columbia we are thirteen CND Sisters working in ones and twos across the province from Cranbrook in the southeast to Dease Lake in the north.

Marguerite Bourgeoys continues to inspire people throughout our land (and beyond), and in BC alone we have about sixty-five CND Associates who share with us the spirit of our foundress.

I continue to count on your prayers and I assure you of mine. Blessings of good health and deep joy to each of you...and a lucrative Fall Fair!

Anne McNally, CND

***"Happy are those who consider the poor and the weak. The Lord will save them in the day of evil, will guard them, give them life, make them happy in the land. [...] The Lord will help them on their bed of pain and bring them back from sickness to health."
-Psalm 41: 1-2***

Children's Liturgy

Our catechetical program is going strong under the capable leadership of Helene Dilallo with the assistance of Patricia Pine, Dan Ormsby, Chuck Ormsby, A.J. and Marie LaFleche. This year the children will be divided into four groups: the four or five year olds, the first to third graders, the fourth to six graders and the post-Confirmation class. The Parish is also starting a children's library of spiritual books. They would greatly appreciate donations of children's books on saints, Bible stories or stories to help children grow in goodness. Let us lift them all up in prayer as they, "hold and teach the Catholic Faith that comes to us from the Apostles."

Building Fund

A recent letter from Father Cameron updated us not only on the loving generosity and financial support of St. Willibrord's parishioners, alumni and friends, but also on the conditions of both the church exterior and the Building Fund, which has supported this project which began with roof restoration in 1998..

As outlined by Father, the condition of the former is excellent but the latter requires a transfusion to erase the \$134,000 deficit presently facing the fund. The wardens and committee are hopeful that they can soon turn their attention to the church ceiling but this deficit must be addressed beforehand. Please continue to consider the Fund in your giving. Your assistance is deeply appreciated.

-Paul Moreau

News Items

On a musical note, we welcome our new church organist, Tom Battock. He may be heard playing at the eleven o'clock Mass. Also, we would like to congratulate Johanne Patry, our cantor at the 5pm Mass on Saturday. Johanne was recently appointed music director at Concordia's Loyola Chapel; but we will continue to hear her lovely voice at the five o'clock Mass here at St. Willibrord.

We would like to thank Julia Gonzales and her team from the Filipino community for their hard work preparing the wonderful Parish barbecue on the sunny Sunday of September 10th. We also thank Chris Ramdhani for coordinating this event. It was a great success!



FALL FAIR!!!

OCT 20th 1-9pm
&
OCT 21st 11-9pm

St. Willibrord Parish Mass Schedule

Saturday5pm
Sunday9am, 11am
Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri8am
Wed7pm

See the list below for upcoming Parish events....

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday8- 11am

October		November		December	
20-21st	Annual Fall Fair Friday 1-9pm & Saturday 11-7pm	1st	All Saints – All Souls Day Mass for all parishioners who have died during the past year	1st	Twilight Retreat at Parish in preparation of Advent [6pm-9pm]
22nd	World Mission Sunday	5th	Celebration of Feast of Saint Willibrord * 11am Mass only. No 9am. *	3rd	First Sunday of Advent
				9th	Dance for benefit of Christmas Baskets
				17th	Penance Service at 11am Mass with Confession