



Willi's Word

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

Fall Edition 2007

Autumn is always a very busy time at St. Willibrord's because of our Fall Fair. There is much bustling activity: collecting donations, setting up booths, decorating the hall and baking up a storm - the delicious aroma of which often fills the church at the 5pm Mass on Saturday. The Fall Fair is of great financial importance to the survival of our Parish as well as a time for renewing old friendships and just having fun.

We recently said 'goodbye' to two wonderful, longstanding parishioners, Maureen and Jim Ramsay, who have moved to Ottawa to be closer to family. We will miss their extraordinary kindness and generosity, especially to those in need. We will also miss Yang Qing and Jiang Zeng Yuan, parents of Harry, a young boy baptized recently at St. Willibrord's. They are also moving to Ottawa.

October 31st is the 25th anniversary of the canonization of Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys. We will commemorate this at a special Mass on Sunday, October 28th at 11am.

Dorothy Ormsby

Eddie Rodgers - A True Verdunite

As I chatted with Eddie and Maureen in their home in preparation for this article I was struck by the humble, simple way Eddie attempted to tell me the story of his life in his lilting Scottish accent. Unlike most people, he didn't seem to relish talking about himself very much.

He told me he was born in Bellshill, Scotland, a suburb of Glasgow, in 1924. His mother died when he was only eleven and the family moved to Fife. His father worked as a coal-miner and he had one sister. He explained that since there was much discrimination against the Catholic minority in Scotland, good jobs were not available to them. Therefore, at the age of 17, he began to work as a coal-miner, too. I, having done nothing but schoolwork and babysitting at the age of seventeen, was awed by someone entering a coal mine at that age. Ed played it down, explaining that though he worked deep underground, he was not with the men who had to crawl on their hands and knees as they worked. Eddie continued to work in the mines until he was twenty-three. At that time he met and married his first wife Jean, well known to all our parishioners for her generous work in our Parish, especially with the elderly.

Together, Eddie and Jean raised a family of three girls, Anne, Gail, and Norine. Like so many other Scots they had come to Canada seeking a better life. They arrived here in 1947 and Eddie has been a Verdunite ever since. Jean passed away suddenly in 1992, a great loss to the Parish.



Though he has become a snowbird in recent years, I have never known anyone more devoted to Verdun than Eddie. His present wife Maureen (pictured beside Eddie in the photo above) is a lifelong Verdunite. It seems truly providential that they ended up together; since Maureen lost her first husband, Maurice Hay, to a heart attack the same year that Eddie lost Jean so suddenly. Eddie and

Maureen were married by Fr. Cameron on Canada Day, 1996. Like her sister, Beverly Fender, she has served the Parish in many ways including coordinating the Hospitality Centre.

When Eddie arrived here in 1947, he got a job at Canadian Industries Ltd. where he worked transporting goods until he took early retirement in 1982. His retirement was quite a gift to the Parish where he did much heavy work for years driving all over the city picking up furniture and other items to be sold at the Flea Market, of which he was one of the founders. Anyone who knows Eddie will also be aware of his undying devotion to the NDP and to CBC talk-radio.

Ed remembers well the tenure of many of our good priests such as Frs. Elliott, Byrd and Thoms, with whom he served as a Parish warden. He also recalls Fr. Cameron's arrival here in 1974. Eddie has fond memories of all the dedicated C.N.D. sisters who have served the Parish over the years.

Eddie and Maureen continue to serve their Parish, even taking on new ministries like serving at funerals. Our Parish has been very fortunate to have such faithful friends for so many years.

Dorothy Ormsby

“My son, observe the commandments of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. When you walk about they will guide you; when you sleep they will watch over you and when you awake they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light.”

Proverbs 6:20-23

Reminiscences of a Former Parishioner

I am honoured to have been asked to contribute a few words to *Willi's Word*.

I was born in 1937 and lived on Third Avenue until 1964; and I ran through the lanes to St. Willibrord's for most of those 27 years. I use the term “ran” deliberately, because many of my early recollections are of my running --- running to our Elementary School, running to and from Willibrord Park, and, especially running to Church.

On dark February Lenten mornings, I “ran like the wind” in order to be on time to serve the 7:00 a.m. Mass. I remember the excitement and awe I felt when serving Mass for Fathers McCormack and Schultz as they began their priestly Ministry. I recall, as well, serving Mass for Msgr. Elliott, whose hearing was failing (an asset for us youngsters in his Confessional; but a liability when serving Mass for him). Msgr. Elliott offered us chocolate bars if, and only if, we bellowed out our answers. I suspect we could be heard on Wellington Street.

Another happy memory is of Father Jim Danaher whose sermons (now ‘homilies’) were simply exquisite. I, and many others, marveled at his profound oratorical skills. Father Danaher introduced me to the world of Opera. I listened with him to many opera recordings, including “Lucia di Lammermoor” with Maria Callas as Lucia.

I could go on at some length as I have so many joyous memories of growing up in St. Willibrord's. The memories remain vital; and are enhanced by my frequent visits to the Parish. (I now live in Ottawa). I appreciate the vitality and significant contributions of St. Willibrord's, under the guidance of Father Cameron. And I continue to be deeply grateful for growing up in the St. Willibrord's Community of caring people.

Thank you for keeping the blessed tradition alive.

Bill Lawlor

Building Fund Update

Almost ten years have passed since the ice storm of January 1998 accelerated the need for replacement of the main church roof. Emergency repairs were done at the time and the roof was completely replaced in 1999. Since that time major maintenance has been done to the church incrementally each year.

Subsequent to the roof, and under the prudent guidance of our heritage architects, Duschenes & Fish, extensive pointing of the masonry was done, front upper-level windows were restored, and the front doors of the church were repaired and renewed to their original condition. Another large project was the replacement of the front parvis and stairs. In 2006 we refurbished the roofs and masonry of the exteriors of the six confessionals. This year we have recently completed the restoration of the frames and sills, and the installation of new outer windows of the twenty windows of the church hall.

This is a partial list of the work that has been accomplished in order to keep St. Willibrord's Church building in an up-to-date condition.

None of this could have been achieved however, without the benevolence of our own people. These include our parishioners, our alumni and all our many friends who have supported St. Willibrord's in an astonishing manner through these last ten years.

As we look toward the 95th anniversary of our Parish in 2008, we encourage you if you have not already done so, to consider a donation to St. Willibrord's Building Fund to assist us in eliminating our present deficit of \$45,000.

We ponder the future knowing that our community, though comparatively small, is a strong faith unitsustained, in turn, by a sizable extended fellowship of Willibrordians.

We are ever grateful to all who have supported, and continue to support these endeavours.

*Paul Moreau**

*Editorial Note: Paul is now a part-time columnist for the *Catholic Times*, check it out!



The Art Camp Experience

August 13 – 16, 2007 marked the fourth anniversary of the St. Willibrord's Art Camp. As the facilitator, it is always a pleasure for me to share the joy of creating art with the fifteen to twenty young people who attend each year. This year we worked with natural materials and recycled items to create one-of-kind hand made books. We decorated and painted wooden boxes to hold treasures or give as gifts. The children engaged in drawing and painting exercises from their imaginations while listening to music. One of the high points was a visit to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts to see the work of Canadian Painter, Emily Carr. Her work inspired us to take a field trip to Angrignon Park where we sketched the surrounding forest, then enjoyed a fabulous picnic in the park. The adults who volunteered their time (Katherine Guenther, Dan Ormsby, A-J and Marie Laflèche) seemed to enjoy the art activities as much as the children. During this special week they gave themselves permission to create, explore, experiment, share and have fun! I believe that, as important as it is to tap into our creative selves as regularly as possible, the community that is created when people who share their

passion for art get together is an unforgettable bonding experience. We get to know ourselves and one another a little bit better. I find that art making together is a wonderful way to communicate with our inner spirit, one another, and of course our Creator.

Patricia Kehler

Book Review

The autobiography of Jane Poulson, The Doctor Will Not See You Now, is truly the story of a wounded healer. Blinded by diabetes at the age of twenty-seven, Jane was about to graduate from medical school at McGill. Despite the incredible odds, with the help of many friends, she became Canada's first practicing blind physician.

She was a woman of great faith in God, her Shepherd. Even when afflicted with heart disease and blindness, she lived a joyous life filled with fun as well as pain. She loved travel, cross country skiing, even water skiing. She played the piano and threw big parties for her many friends. She became an expert in palliative care, wrote many scientific articles and taught medical students. Montrealers will recognize the names of many of her friends and colleagues such as Fr. Paul Geraghty who was a very dear friend.

Jane Poulson died of cancer at the age of forty-nine and knew she was dying when she wrote her autobiography, which makes it all the more poignant and powerful. Jane trusted in God and her friends, no matter how bad things got. She states, in the chapter entitled *The Dark Night of the Soul*: "as I wrestled with the concept of God [...] I found that I needed a constant image. I could not have a relationship with one kind of God when things were going well and with another kind of God when things were falling down around me. [...] I do not expect to understand how my life and my suffering are part of God's tapestry; but believe that I, in all my frailty am part of a greater picture."

Check out this book, it is published by Novalis but there are some copies available at the rectory. Read it and you'll never feel sorry for yourself again!

Dorothy Ormsby

St. Willibrord Abroad

Our Parish friend, Fr. Jean Isabel is presently visiting China for the month of October. Meanwhile, Sr. Susan Kidd, C.N.D., is working in Cameroon, Africa. She is training new African sisters in the C.N.D. vocation. We hope to hear from her soon to learn about her experiences. Let us keep both of them in our prayers.

St. Willibrord Parish Mass Schedule

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

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Friday8:30- 11am

October 19-20th

ST. WILLIBRORD'S ANNUAL FALL FAIR

Come enjoy what our Fall Fair has to offer!

Open Friday 1-9pm & Saturday 11-7pm



October 28th Special Celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Canonization of **Ste. Marguerite Bourgeoys** to be held at 11am Mass, Sunday

October 31st Eve of **All Saints and All Souls** - A Memorial Mass for all parishioners who have passed away in the last year will be celebrated on Wednesday at 7:00pm

November 4th Celebration of the **Feast of St. Willibrord** - Gather with us at Mass (featuring our traditional Hopping Procession) and be welcomed at the reception to follow.

November 30th **Advent Twilight Retreat** to be held on Friday from 6-9pm. Please call the rectory for registration and further details.

Willi's Word Editor: Dorothy Ormsby

Production Manager: Chuck Ormsby
