

Evangelizing Through Christian Friendship

By Constance T Hull, M.A. Theology

As Christians, our lives and our relationships are meant to be different from the prevailing culture. We are witnesses to Christ crucified and risen from the dead, who is the cause for our joy. As the Mystical Body, the communion we share with one another is one of the ways that we are able to draw others into the love of the Most Holy Trinity and to the eucharistic banquet. When people see the love we have for one another, they should immediately see the love of God dwelling within us.

As witnesses, we are not meant to draw attention to ourselves, but rather, to the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwells within each one of us. There should be a dynamic at work in our friendships and relationships that leads people to wonder in amazement at the love we have for one another, and it should awaken within them the desire to enter into that love. Our bonds of love in friendship—or any other loving relationship—are a reflection of God’s love for mankind. Our friendships are meant to be infectious and life-giving. And while there will always be varying levels of intimacy and affection in each one of our relationships with individuals, the joy in the love of Christ that we share in those relationships should always be inviting to others so that love and communion can deepen and flourish within the Mystical Body.

When our relationships are grounded in the love of Christ, they take on a new quality. There is a closeness that becomes evident to others. I’ve been thinking about this in my own relationships. I’ve noticed that the more my relationships are focused on the love of Christ, the more other people, even within my own parish, ask me about them. I am frequently asked if one of my closest friends is actually my biological sister. I tend to reply with: “Yes, she is my sister in Christ, but we aren’t biologically related.” Our friendship is centered on our mutual desire to grow in holiness through the paths we have each been given. The closeness we share with one another in Christ is evident, so people are convinced that we are sisters.

The same goes for my relationships with my priests. I’m regularly asked how I am able to communicate so effortlessly with them after daily Mass, Sunday Mass, or at an event. First, I’ve made a concerted effort to foster closer relationships with them. Sometimes members of the laity can set priests too far apart—the same can be said of priests who do this to the laity—and this creates an unnecessary barrier to communion with them. They are supposed to be “men of communion” after all. They are called to be “other Christs” to us and the world. By virtue of their ordination, they are meant to draw us into deeper communion with the Most Holy Trinity and with one another. Priests should radiate the love of God to the world, and as members of the laity, we are called to mirror the love of Christ back to them. As Kathleen Beckman points out in her book *Praying for Priests: An Urgent Call for the Salvation of Souls*: “If we desire to be inspired by holy priests, we also should mirror holiness to them.” We cannot share in the mutual love of Christ with them if we close ourselves off from priests. Christ working through the holiness of our priests and their desire to grow in holiness strengthens us on the path to holiness as well. Relationships are meant to be reciprocal, so our desire for holiness should also help them on the path to holiness and convict them in their priestly ministry.

What sets all of these relationships apart is that they are all grounded in a mutual love of Christ and a desire to grow in holiness. The more deeply we love Christ, the more we will come to love one another. As we are purified in charity, our relationships become freer and take on a radiance that images the love of the Most Holy Trinity. We first learn this love within our own families, seeking to love our spouses and our children with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This love is not meant to stay within our families, however. Love should always be a movement outward from ourselves towards others. In a time of increasing loneliness and isolation, it is essential that we come to a greater understanding of our call to communion with one another. Our culture desperately needs our witness of charity towards one another found in relationships focused on Christ. Not only because of the great blessing these relationships are for us, but because it is an opportunity to teach others what authentic love looks like. Our love for one another can draw others into the love of God.

Anyone who has experienced the great joy of friendships grounded in the love of God knows that charity is extremely demanding. It is not good feelings and sentimentality. It is self-emptying, forgiving, and constantly in need of purification. There are times when we have to offer fraternal correction or voice concern and may hurt one another. Disagreements—sometimes serious ones—may arise. There will be times when we will have to forgive deep pain we’ve caused one another. Our willingness to choose to forgive in order to love the other person is another testament to the great love we have in Christ and an image of the forgiveness and love we’ve been shown by God. Christian friendship also means walking with others in their suffering and enduring pain alongside of them. True friendships—just like the love within families—require an acceptance of both joy and sorrow. This is why learning to love one another in this way has a dramatic impact on all of those around us. Friendships grounded in the love of Christ can weather the storms of this life.

In an age of division, when calls to communion are becoming even more essential, let us seek to foster friendships with one another that radiate the love of Christ to others. Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” - John 13:34-35

www.catholicexchange.com

PARISH DIRECTORY

Parish Council

Donna Trasolini
trasolini@telus.net

Finance Council

Lauri Ann Fenlon
lauri.ann.fenlon@gmail.com

Parish Education Committee

Maili Wong
pec@olphbc.ca

Parish Fundraising Committee

Sandie Weitz
sweitz20@gmail.com

COORDINATORS

Altar Guild

Bridget Bird 604-228-9180

Altar Servers

Kate Carr 604-730-5640

Catholic Women’s League

Meg Knowling
MKnowling@Outlook.com

Children’s Liturgy

Kathy Mok
communications.olph@rcav.org

Craft Group

Elizabeth Hii e1kmhii@gmail.com

Development & Peace

Deirdre Webster 604-736-0714

Eucharistic Ministry

Pamela Brammall 604-228-9206

Food Bank

Robyn Simul
robysimul@shaw.ca

Hospitality Ministry

Gerry Macken 604-222-1369

Knights of Columbus

Peter Dodge 604-649-1111

Liturgy of the Hours

Bridget Clark 604-228-8773

Madonna Group

Monica Cheung 604-739-8837

Ministry of the Word

Roger Poirier 604-224-0426

Music Ministry

Catherine Walsh
catherine.organist@gmail.com

Pastoral Care

Mary Thompson 604-263-6008

PREP

Elizabeth Towers 604-440-8809

Project Advance

Bertilla Watanabe 604-224-4344

RCIA

Bertilla Watanabe
bwatanabe@rcav.org

Social Justice/St. Vincent de Paul

Mark Thompson 778-891-6275

Volunteers Coordinator

Lara Garcia Carton
olphchurchvolunteers@gmail.com

Weddings

Fr. Babu Mathew 604-224-4344



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

June 30, 2019

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Make a mini-pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Dear Parishioners,

We had an amazing turnout last Sunday for our Feast Day celebrations. It was a day of joyful sharing in the Eucharist, music, good food and fellowship with our parish community and visitors. Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR, was also very grateful for the time he had here and the new friends he met. Thank you to the volunteers who made the evening a joyous occasion for all.

Youth Ministry leaders also had a chance to meet with Bishop Jon to discuss plans for Yellowknife. They will be leaving for this 5-day trip on Wednesday. I urge you to keep us all in your prayers. Let us also pray for all our parish and school families going away on vacation.

With the weather being so pleasant, I urge you to take a few minutes out of your summer schedule and pray the *4-step Pilgrimage in the Spirit of Alphonsus*. This mini-pilgrimage begins inside our church, in front of the icon of Our Lady, then leads you to the Grotto, then the bronze shrine of Our Lady near the Parish office and back into the church to the Tabernacle. As you may know, St Alphonsus had great trust in the intercession of Mary and a deep devotion to the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. The 4-step prayer leaflets are on the ambry, the cabinet where the holy oils are displayed, near the piano.

May our Lady of Perpetual Help aid us in touching the hearts of the folks in Yellowknife with the message of hope our youth will be sharing with them.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R



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You are my chosen portion, O Lord. - Psalm 16

NEWS & NOTICES

Weekly Collection: June 15/16 - Sunday Mass Offering: \$5,360.05. Catholic Missions: \$25. Pope's Pastoral Works: \$15. Pro-Life Sunday: \$1,492.90. Offering for the Needy: \$135. Work of Vocations: \$15.
June 22/23 - Sunday Mass Offering: \$4,569.90. Offering for the Needy: \$70. Pro-Life Sunday: \$20.
Thank you for your faith-filled generosity.

Mass Times: As Monday July 1 is a public holiday, Mass is at 9am. From July 5 till Aug 30, Friday Masses will be at 8am.

PREP: The Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) is for elementary school aged children who are not attending Catholic school. Please contact Elizabeth Towers at 604-440-8809 or email prep.olph@rcav.org for information.

Choir Members for 9am & 11am Masses: The OLPH choir is seeking new members: we especially need singers who can commit to the Sunday 9am and 11am Masses. Rehearsals are on Monday evening 7-8pm. Please contact Music Director Catherine Walsh for more information: catherine.organist@gmail.com.

Friday Night Faith Series: The Importance of being Friends: Lessons from the Courage Apostolate
We need to reclaim and deepen the value of friendship in our world, in the Church, and for ourselves to foster a culture of welcome and of love. Friendship is a fundamental goal of the Courage apostolate. Men and women who experience same-sex attraction—members of Courage—can teach us much about friendship as they wait for us to embrace them as friends. It takes place on Friday, June 28 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the John Paul II Pastoral Centre in Vancouver. Register for FREE online at secure.rcav.org/into-the-deep

Permanent Diaconate Still Accepting Applications: Do you feel called to be a Permanent Deacon? Men between the ages of 35 and 60 interested in ordained ministry are invited to apply for our fourth cohort! Application deadline has been extended to July 15. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity; next intake is in two years! Please contact the Permanent Diaconate Office at (604) 683-0281 ext. 50431, or email deacons@rcav.org, for more information.

Who Am I?: Join us for a two-weekend workshop to help you discover the gifts you bring to parish work; improve your relationships in leadership; increase your productivity in parish ministry; and develop your unique strengths as a parish leader, coordinator, or catechist. July 6, 7, 13, 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the John Paul II Pastoral Centre, Vancouver. Register here: <https://rcav.org/event/who-am-i-14>

Catholic Gap Year - \$500 Bursary: Looking to strengthen your faith before going to university? Need adventure or time off from school? Trying to figure out how to live your life with purpose? Taking a Catholic Gap Year to go on mission or formation may just be what you're looking for! It's your chance to serve the world, experience the global Church, and explore God's purpose for your life. We understand that this is a big decision, but you're not alone! Visit catholicgapyear.ca to explore your options and apply for a \$500 bursary before August 2.

An Evening with Archbishop Miller: Save the Date! The eighth annual Archbishop's Dinner will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2019, at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver. This year, in partnership with Providence Health Care and with St. Mark's College, Archbishop Miller has designated the proceeds to help foster Catholic health-care ethics in the education of health-care providers and in the support of their day-to-day practice. There will be a reception at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. For more information or to reserve your table(s) please contact development@rcav.org.

PEC Thank You Note

On behalf of the OLPH PEC, I would like to sincerely thank the fantastic teachers, staff and administration at OLPH for their outstanding service over the past school year. We appreciate the daily passion you bring to educating and taking great care of our children, and wish you a peaceful, blessed and enjoyable Summer.

Best wishes,
Maili Wong, Chair of OLPH Parish Education Committee (PEC)

Stewardship Reflection

"For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather serve one another through love." (Galatians 5:13)

We like to celebrate the fact that we are free to "live the good life." But Jesus calls us to a different kind of freedom. St. Paul reminds us that Jesus sets us free so that we can serve one another, share our gifts and promote God's work here on earth to glorify His name and not honor ourselves.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

CALENDAR

JULY

Youth on Yellowknife Trip



The Youth Ministry's Icon of Hope Tour is happening this week! Youth and some of the young at heart will be heading out to Yellowknife this Wednesday July 3 and will return on July 8.

Our vibrant adaptation of the image of the icon calls attention to Mary's role in the church. The liturgical colours of green, purple, red and gold are used to draw attention and express a youthful spirit.

We've been working with Bishop Jon Hansen and Fr Babu to finalize the details of the trip. Among the events we've got planned are a healing meditational visit to a mission and a prison as well as cultural exchanges with indigenous people. We ask for your prayers that our journey be a safe and fruitful one.

OLPH Parish Refugee Walk

D&P is asking Catholics and all people of goodwill to support refugees by cumulatively walking a minimum total of 40,075 kms – the circumference of the Earth. Please join us in a parish community Walk on Saturday July 20 starting at 9:45am from OLPH Parish Office carpark. Your kind symbolic support is earnestly requested. A sign-up sheet will be available July 6. Please note, you can also log your own daily walks or runs in support of the 40,075 kilometres goal at www.devp.org/walk until Aug 15, 2019.

Mission Climaxes in Feast Day Mass & Reception

By Bertilla Watanabe

Lessons on awe and wonder and the loving hand of Mary as we navigate our way in life, were just a few of the highlights of last week's Triduum talks given by visiting Redemptorist, Bishop Jon Hansen of MacKenzie-Fort Smith. It kept parishioners, and visitors from other parishes, coming back for more. In his quiet and down-to-earth manner of delivery, Hansen shared his experiences as priest and Bishop. Etched in our memories is the story of the elderly mother from the Cree community who waited, and waited, by the coffin of her spouse until the estranged son of the family finally came to say his last goodbye to his father. There was also the story of the stray dogs who howled in response at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer when everyone said, "Amen". The moving vignettes about indigenous communities and how they celebrate life and death were slices of the faith life of the Northern communities Bishop Hansen serves.

The final days of the Novena prayer and contemplation on the graces of Mary climaxed with our Feast Day Mass and reception on Sunday evening. Prayer did not hold off the grey clouds that had loomed all day. The summer shower finally fell just as Mass began, forcing volunteers to drag tables and chairs off the lawn and down to the hall to set up again. But as they say, "It's all good!" The lively chatter of families crammed into the hall was proof that spirits were not in the least dampened. Perhaps the delightful array of desserts that parishioners so generously brought had something to do with it... or the tasty suckling pig roast! The sun was out again by the end of the evening. Children took the opportunity to run and play around the grotto while others stopped to pray. All told, it was a beautiful feast day celebration. A big thank you to all our volunteers for your help that day and thank you also to all our parishioners and friends who brought those delicious desserts!



PARISH COMMUNITY

