

The Way of the Cross



The Newsletter of *The Servants of the Sacred Cross*
Anglican ■ Roman Catholic ■ Orthodox

Volume 1, Issue 2

"The Cross is my Anchor"

Advent 2005

Mother's message!

Dear friends in Christ,

Our Community continues on a wondrous journey under the mighty and loving Hand of God. There is much news as we present this second issue of our newsletter.

You will notice that I am now addressed as "Mother" Wendy. This comes after the prayerful prompting and request of our Sisters who have been asking for this change for some time. Unworthy as I am for such an honour, at our Chapter in September, I gave permission to be addressed as such. In chapel, as I gazed out at my spiritual daughters, I was filled, as always, with intense love for these dear Sisters and the Holy Spirit revealed to me that it was indeed fitting. How very thankful I am for our little SSC family.

As I write this, I am in correspondence with a number of women, married and single, Anglican and Roman Catholic, who have been led to explore a vocation with us. Thus, many blessings, and much work, abound. Deo gratias!

In the Cross of Christ,

Mother Wendy, Superior

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SSC Chapter 2005



The Community with Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Harvey

The annual Chapter of The Servants of the Sacred Cross took place this year from September 18-23. The Community gathered at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The Sisters were joined by their Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Donald Harvey, for three days. On the Feast of St. Matthew, he led a most edifying Quiet Day with the inspiring theme of "**The Saints of September**". Meditations centered on the lives of Saint Matthew, Saint Cyprian and Saint Michael, with particular attention to their example of Obedience as the Sisters strive to live out their own Vows in obedience. The Community kept complete silence for the Quiet Day, including during meals when readings from *The Imitation of Christ* provided welcome, and much-needed, food for the soul.

On the Eve of Saint Matthew, Bishop Harvey celebrated the Anglican Mass, in the Upper Room Chapel, at which time Mother Wendy and Sister Joan Professed Life Vows and were anointed with Holy Oil by the Bishop. Sister Malinda Professed First Vows and Sister Lea renewed Vows. Hearing Jesus' beautiful invitation to Matthew, "*Follow me*", read in the Gospel seemed especially poignant as these Sisters made their Profession.

The following evening, the Roman Catholic Mass was celebrated in the monastery's historic shrine chapel. On a side altar rest the relics of St. Therese of Lisieux. The celebrant, Father James Mueller, O. Carm., is one of the priests in residence at Mount Carmel. This Mass marked a historic milestone for SSC. The Lord has lovingly shown us the way in which we may fully respect and safeguard Sacramental

integrity while, at the same time, incorporating both Roman Catholic and Anglican Sisters. In this beautiful chapel, with all Sisters seated in the ancient choir stalls, the first Roman Catholics, Sister Teresa and Sister Vedette, were Clothed as Novices and Sister Julia, now as a Roman Catholic, Professed First Vows. Sister Deborah, having also been recently received into the Roman Catholic Church, renewed Vows.

Another highlight of Chapter week was the admission of a new Postulant, Julie Walker, from Montesano, Washington. A Roman Catholic, she is a parishioner of St. Mary's in Aberdeen, WA. The Community is richly blessed by Julie's call to SSC.

During the week the annual Chapter meeting was convened. Here the business and administrative aspects of the Community are taken up. This year, the matter of reviewing many amendments to the Rule and Constitution, in order to bring all in line with SSC's admission of Roman Catholics, formed much of the discussion.

The time spent together as a Community, although short, strengthens the bonds of Sisterhood and helps the Sisters to grow in a spirit of love for God and each other. For this may Our Lord be praised!!

First Roman Catholic Novices Clothed



Sr. Vedette, Mother Wendy and Sr. Teresa

On September 21, 2005, the Feast of Saint Matthew, the first two Roman Catholic Novices, Sister Teresa and Sister Vedette, received the habit of The Servants of the Sacred Cross at a Mass celebrated by Father James Mueller, O.Carm. The Mass was celebrated in the monastic chapel of the Canadian National Shrine of St. Therese of Lisieux. The Saint's relics rest on a side altar and the chapel is a place of pilgrimage for countless numbers of people throughout the year.

At the Mass, it was virtually impossible to escape the sacred and historic significance of the moment, as Mother Wendy and Sister Joan led the two Postulants into the sacristy to don their habits. The habits, having been placed on the altar and blessed by Fr. Mueller were presented to the Postulants as they knelt at the chancel steps. Keeping a prayerful silence, the remainder of the Community, Bishop Harvey and Fr. Mueller waited in the chapel. As Mother and Sister Joan processed back into the chapel, followed by the new Novices, there was an awareness of the countless Carmelites who, over many decades, had trod these same steps. The Community praises God in thanksgiving and deep humility for the works He has wrought since our Founding just five years ago.

Sister Vedette and Sister Teresa, having traveled over forty hours all the way from Australia, have been "journeying" with SSC for more than two years. It is truly awesome to realize that God has brought these women to us from so far away as the Community continues to grow and expand, not only geographically, but also in being a model of Christian unity. Once they arrived back home, our Australian Novices received a loving and warm welcome. The Archbishop, The Most Rev. Barry Hickey of Perth has celebrated a special Mass of thanksgiving for their vocations. Deo gratias!

Changing habits!!

Those who are familiar with the Community will have recognized, in the pictures, that we have a new look!! Last year, at Chapter, the Sisters spent considerable time in discussion about the possibility of adopting a full length habit. All were in agreement in their desire for the more traditional style. The Community continues with its trademark navy blue colour, now worn year round, eliminating the light blue summer habit. A wide collar and longer veil, in proportion to the length of habit have also been added.

The Superior spent many months in search of a habit-maker and working on the "fine-tuning" of design and fabric. We are grateful to have found Bubba White, in Fort Worth, Texas to make our habits. Mrs. White sews habits for a large Franciscan Order, among others. She has been most gracious in working with SSC and is able to fill all requirements, "long distance", via measurement chart and order form.

The Community's beautiful six-decade Briggittine habit Rosary, with large inlaid Crucifix, is custom-made, for SSC, by an Order of Carmelite nuns in the United States. The wearing of the Rosary is optional.



Sister Joan shows Postulant Vedette how to pin her veil

Meeting here and there!



Sr. Julia with Fr. Nichols during lunch in Arlington, TX

The Servants of the Sacred Cross generally expect to meet together only once each year at their Chapter and Retreat. However, these past few months a number of other events have been attended by some of our Sisters. We never know, of course, when God will provide for such opportunities. But they come as great blessings and we are deeply thankful to have been able to share in additional days together whenever they occur and are enriched by the various learning experiences and spiritual benefits that they offer.

In February, Mother Wendy and Sister Julia traveled to Arlington, Texas. There they participated in an interesting conference in the Anglican Use Catholic Parish of Saint Mary the Virgin. Meetings focused on talks between representative bishops, clergy and laity of the Traditional Anglican Communion and the Anglican Use under the Pastoral

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Meeting... *(Continued from page 2)*

Provision within the Catholic Church. Speakers included the well-known Roman Catholic theologian, Father Aidan Nichols, O.P. It was a distinct pleasure to meet Father and to hear his presentation. The Traditional Anglican Communion is seeking full communion with the Holy See and important meetings are on-going.

Soon after the Texas trip Mother, Sister Malinda and Sister Deborah made their way to Mount Carmel in Niagara Falls for a few days prior to Sister Deborah's Profession of Vows. Sister Deborah was unable, due to the sudden illness of her husband, to remain at Chapter the previous September. However, on April 17th, at her Anglican parish of St. Paul's in Dunnville, Ontario, she Professed First Vows. Fr. Haynes Hubbard, rector of St. Paul's received the Vows. The Sisters spent a beautiful few days at the monastery. Sister Deborah has recently been received into the Roman Catholic Church. Since she lives near Niagara Falls Sister is able to attend many of the excellent Retreats and Quiet Days offered at Mount Carmel.

On May 1st, Mother received a message from Sister Malinda who was very excited to have discovered that Bishop Harvey would be in her parish of St. John's, Detroit, the next day. The parish was hosting a conference of Anglican Bishops. Sister was able to go to the Mass, providing a pleasant and unexpected meeting for both and a big surprise for our Bishop!

Some of our Sisters were back at Mount Carmel in July. Mother Wendy, along with Sister Julia and Sister Deborah, attended a week-long silent retreat, for Religious Sisters. About forty-five Sisters from various Communities attended. The days were passed in prayer and peaceful silence interspersed with the daily meditations, quiet time to spend before the Blessed Sacrament in one of the four chapels and prayerful walks about the grounds. On one evening silence was broken for the purpose of conducting an open forum in which most of the retreatants participated. The theme was "*Religious Sisters - an endangered species?*" Mother and our Sisters enjoyed the lively discussion and were able to present information about SSC and answer questions. The Community was well-received and many of the other Sisters were most interested and offered loving encouragement and support. We pray that, God willing, we will have further opportunities to see one another before next year's Chapter.



Sister Deborah after her Profession Mass with two of her daughters and brand new grandson.

In the Byzantine Chapel at Mount Carmel



Mother Wendy receives Julie into the Postulancy



In Chapel after praying the Divine Office

Formation Director Appointed

Mother Wendy has announced the appointment of Sister Julia Ray, SSC, as Formation Director for The Servants of the Sacred Cross. Sister Julia lives in Atlanta, Georgia where she is involved in a number of ministries including volunteer work in prison ministry and with the Missionaries of Charity in their hospice for women with AIDS. Sister holds an undergraduate degree in English Education and has recently completed a Master of Theological Studies degree from a Catholic University.

Previously an Anglican, Sister was received into the Roman Catholic Church in August. Thus, she brings a unique and important perspective in administering the studies of all those in Formation.

Formation study is a mainstay of Religious Life. In SSC, study of the respective Catechism (Anglican or Roman Catholic) takes place during the Postulancy. Holy Scripture is studied throughout the two-year Novitiate. The study is conducted via "distance education" with lessons being sent to the Formation Director who annotates the work and returns it. Frequent communication with the Formation Director ensures vital mentoring. Ongoing study, after Profession, is very much encouraged by the Community. A basic knowledge of Holy Scripture, theology, Church history, liturgy, Christian ethics and the history of Religious Life is important in a Sister's life of prayer, service and ministry.

Are you called to be a Sister?

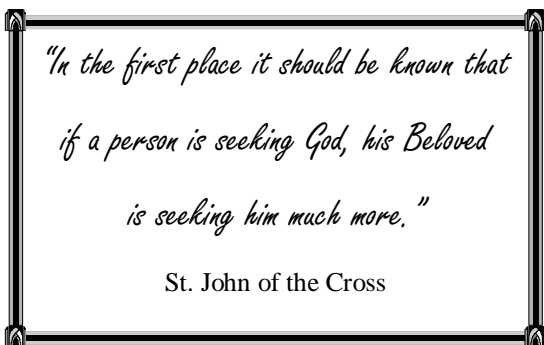
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Can you help us???

The Sisters need financial support in order to carry out the work to which they are called, in a life of prayer and service.

There is presently urgent need of funding for formation study materials, habits, office supplies, postage, photocopying and web hosting. The web site is the vehicle through which God leads many inquirers to us. Thus, we feel it is imperative to keep it available and up-dated. There are ongoing administrative expenses, and costs for the yearly Chapter week etc.

We would ask you to pray about helping us to fulfill our vision of establishing a convent as a work of the Community. This project calls for huge financial support and committed benefactors. We pray, God willing, for the donation of a house.

PLEASE help us if you can! All donations are received with prayerful gratitude.

***SSC is a Registered Charity in Canada
and an Incorporated Non-Profit Society***

Remember that you can also support us by sharing in the life of the Sisters as an **Associate** of the Community. Write for details!

Most importantly, we ask for your prayers.

Speaking of Habits!



SSC Novices kneel in prayer at an outdoor shrine.

The Sisters of the Servants of the Sacred Cross hold to the tradition of wearing a visible sign of witness and commitment. The habit is worn as a sign of membership in a religious sisterhood, in keeping with a tradition that is centuries old. The habit is a mark of belonging and serves to remind the one who wears it that she represents her Community and, by extension, the Church. The Sisters are both married and single women. They are not, by definition, nuns. They live and work in their own homes, communities and parishes. God willing, we pray we might also have Sisters living in a convent one day.

While the Sister's primary witness is through what she is, in living the Gospel, there is also an immediate and sustained witness value in the wearing of a habit. It becomes a sign of parochial availability and also an important reminder to the Sister herself of the commitment she has made in her vocation. The habit, worn in humility and with dignity, is never to become a source of pride for the Sister.

Following several months of Postulancy, the first stage of formation, the Clothing ceremony marks the beginning of the Novitiate. In this way the

Sister, through both the promises she has made and the reception of the habit, has "put on Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3:27). During the Novitiate the Sister continues formation, study and discernment.

The Novice, who is now addressed as "Sister", wears the white veil and a wooden Cross for the next two years. The Novice has not taken any Vows, but has promised to live "in the spirit" of the Vows of the Community. At the end of the Novitiate the Sister Professes Vows of Simplicity, Purity and Obedience. The white veil is replaced with navy blue and the Profession Cross is presented.

"Isn't it an immense grace to be clothed in the religious Habit? So great that we cannot estimate its value. . . Only in Heaven we shall understand all its greatness" Blessed Teresita Quevedo, Carmelite of Charity (1930-1950)