

The Way of the Cross



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

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"The Cross is my Anchor"

Lent 2007

Mother's message!

Dear friends in Christ,

This year the solemn Lenten season has not evolved for me in the degree of stillness and prayerful reflection for which we so long. Community work has kept me exceedingly busy in recent weeks. Thus, this newsletter is coming out later than usual and it becomes a Lenten and Easter edition this year!

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we progress slowly in implementing the vision of the founding of our convent here in Nova Scotia.

We have been negotiating through various options as to the actual building that will become our convent, until such time as our fundraising efforts allow us to purchase our own. Please keep us in your prayers in this work.

The coming months, as they appear to be taking shape at the present time, will be as busy as the last few. As I write this I am already well into planning for Chapter in September.

May God bless you abundantly as we emerge from the depths of the Lenten fast to celebrate the Feast of the Resurrection.

In Christ's Love, *Mother Wendy*

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The Community grows again - four new Postulants!

In our **Advent** newsletter, we reported the events of our Chapter week and the excitement and blessing of receiving our Postulant Angela. Since then, The Servants of the Sacred Cross have received four more Postulants for a total of five at the present time. This is the largest number of Postulants we have had at any one time since our Founding.

Although Mother Wendy had been in discernment with all four for some time prior to Chapter, the discernment and application process was not sufficiently complete to allow the Postulants to be admitted at that time. However, all having been accomplished, they were accepted and ready for admission early in the New Year.



The Rt. Rev. David Chislett with SSC Postulant, Joy Vickerstaff, in Patmos House Chapel

*including **Salve Regina**. I felt a great sense of peace and grace as (the Bishop) placed the Cross around my neck..... It was an incredibly powerful experience to feel so blessed, and so welcomed by our precious Lord, as I said my few words. Great is His faithfulness."*

First to be received, on Sexagesima Sunday, February 11, 2007, was Joy Vickerstaff, of the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC) in Australia. Joy lives near Canberra, but traveled to Brisbane where she was admitted, on behalf of the Superior, by Bishop David Chislett, a bishop within the Anglican Catholic Church of Australia (TAC). The reception took place at Solemn Evensong in the Patmos House Chapel there. Evensong was followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In Joy's own words, *"the environment was rich in prayer and thanksgiving. Bishop David preached the sermon from the First Reading, on faith. Benediction was very beautiful and very special, the incense filling the small chapel. The Bishop had chosen my favourite hymns,*

The next Postulant receptions were scheduled to take place on the weekend of March 3-4, at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, where the Community gathers for the annual Chapter. Mother Wendy was to travel from Nova Scotia, Sister Julia from Atlanta, Georgia, Sister Malinda from Detroit, Michigan and Sister Deborah from Welland, near Niagara Falls. The Aspirants, Carole Barker and Coleen Riley, were coming from British Columbia and Michigan, respectively. Not unusual for certain parts of Canada, a late winter snow and ice storm on the Friday travel day caused flight cancellations in many major centres across the country. Mother Wendy's own flight was cancelled due to the weather in Toronto and one of the Aspirants was stranded in Calgary, Alberta. The weekend at Mount Carmel had to be cancelled. Plan "B" was rapidly implemented before others set out from their own locations. Our Lord, who is ever watching out for us, graciously provided for that alternate plan. Due to her cancelled flight, Carole was delayed in Calgary, where our Professed Sister Lea lives. Coleen, a childhood friend of Professed Sister Malinda, was already in Detroit waiting to travel the remainder of the way to Mount Carmel with her. Please read the rest of the story on the following pages!

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Within a few hours and many, many phone calls and e-mails between Mother Wendy, Sister Lea and Sister Malinda, in addition to phone calls to the others who were to be in attendance, cancellation of reservations at Mount Carmel, flights and shuttles, arrangements had been put in place for the two Aspirants to be received as Postulants that weekend, albeit not exactly as "we" had planned.

Mother Wendy authorized Sister Lea to receive Carole in her Anglican Catholic Church of Canada parish if the Rector would give his permission. Sister had been able to meet up with Carole on the previous day since Carole had been visiting with her daughter in Calgary while en route to Mount Carmel. In fact, they had gone to Mass together at Sister Lea's parish on that Thursday evening, following which Sister and her husband drove her to the airport – and the cancelled flight! In addition, Mother appointed Sister Malinda to receive Coleen on her behalf. Both Sister Lea and Sister Malinda set to work to make arrangements for the Postulant admissions and Mother e-mailed the necessary reception Rites and other documents. Both Sister Lea and Sister Malinda made every effort to make the weekend special, despite the change of plans, and to spend as much time as possible with our new Postulants.

Thus, the next Postulant to be received was Coleen Riley, on March 3, 2007. At Evening Prayer, with Sister Malinda as officiant, Coleen was admitted to the Postulancy at the Manresa Jesuit Retreat Centre, Detroit. Holy Providence allowed for a retreat cottage to be available, at very short notice, once Sister Malinda inquired. She and Coleen enjoyed a special few days together, renewing their childhood friendship. In addition, there was the unique blessing, in such unexpected circumstances, of Sister receiving her as a Postulant. How wondrous are God's works! Sister Malinda wrote how her initial disappointment, over the canceled weekend at Mount Carmel, turned into a moment she would cherish for a lifetime. Coleen is a Roman Catholic whose husband is an ordained Deacon in the Catholic Church. They live in Traverse City, Michigan.

Coleen's description of her reception, in an e-mail to the Community, was titled "My Joyful Day". Some excerpts follow. *"On Friday morning I got a call from Sr. Malinda telling me she had "good news and bad news." She told me that our meeting in Niagara Falls was cancelled, but that Mother Wendy gave her the authority to receive me as a postulant. I was so happy that I would not be returning home without becoming a postulant!On Saturday morning, after our morning prayers, I went into the main chapel and decided to meditate before this very special event. The morning sun streamed through the stained glass windows and I could clearly hear the birds chirping happily. I could sense God's presence and approval and felt a wonderful innate peacefulness....Becoming a postulant of The Servants of the Sacred Cross was a wonderfully uplifting experience for me. Afterward, I felt different as I walked the halls of the retreat center in my new garb. Any self doubts I had seemed to melt away and were replaced with a strengthened sense of purpose regarding doing God's work."*



Sister Malinda receives Coleen Riley as a Postulant at the Manresa Retreat Centre in Detroit



Sister Lea receives Carole Barker at the ACCC Parish of Christ the King in Calgary. Looking on is Father Colin O'Rourke.

As the Reception of a Postulant in Detroit was unfolding, Sister Lea was busy in Calgary organizing Carole's reception. Thankfully, it was made possible for this to take place during Morning Prayer, prior to Mass on Sunday, The Second Sunday in Lent, March 4th. The Community is grateful to Father Colin O'Rourke, rector of the Parish of Christ the King, for his willingness to have this Rite take place in his parish, with very little warning. Sister Lea commented that she never imagined she would be in the position of receiving a Postulant that weekend! She said she gave thanks to God that both Postulants could still be received, despite the sudden change of plans. As Sister wrote to the Community, *"I will always remember this event as evidence of His loving guidance and protection of our Community."* For this we all praise Him in high thanksgiving.

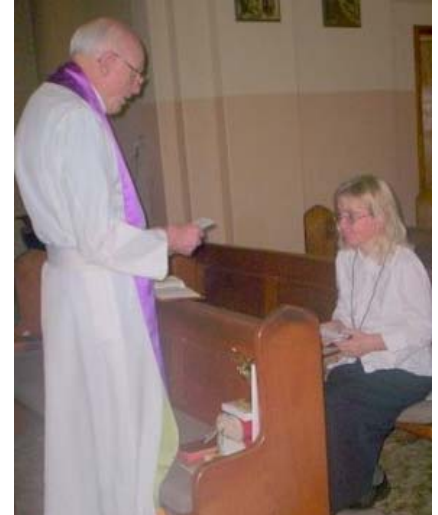
Carole later remarked, *"God truly looked after us all"*. She was joyfully admitted to the Community as a Postulant and the parishioners were able to meet and welcome her following Mass. There was much interest stirred up about SSC among those present. Carole, who is an Anglican, lives on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

Amazingly, as all things are with God, a half a world away and in a time zone fourteen hours ahead of the east coast of Canada, the

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reception of our fourth Postulant was about to take place in Australia, on March 5. Ann-Maree Mitchell, who is a Roman Catholic, was received by Fr. Peter Ryan a Redemptorist priest at St. Clement's Monastery in Galong. The Monastery is about two hours drive from Canberra, where our new Postulant, Joy, lives and works. Ann-Maree assists the priests at the monastery with computer work and a number of special projects. She helped in the production of a very beautiful CD recording of the Scriptural Rosary, prayed by one of the Redemptorist priests.

Ann-Maree's reception as a Postulant of SSC was made even more special in that Joy drove out to St. Clement's Monastery to be present as a more "senior" (by three weeks!) Postulant of the Community. It is almost beyond imagining how Our Lord had called two women, one Anglican Catholic, one Roman Catholic, who live relatively close to each other in a country so far away from the beginnings of this Community. These women, who never knew each other until now, were led to SSC, entered into discernment with Mother, over many months, and then met for the first time in a remote monastery in the Australian bush. And both are now Postulants of The Servants of the Sacred Cross. God is always full of surprises!



Father Ryan receives Ann-Maree



Ann-Maree and Joy

Joy wrote a wonderful account of her attendance at Ann-Maree's reception. I quote from it now: *"The monastery is very beautiful, literally 'in the middle of nowhere' and emanates great peace and stillness. I was warmly received when I arrived about 4:40pm, and Ann-Maree was paged to come down to reception. Father Ryan then came to meet me.....and introduced me to all the community members as they arrived, and we sat in the chapel, which is quite beautiful, until 5pm. Ann-Maree was received by Father during a service called 'Office of Readings' which was very lovely. It was very, very simple, but rich in spirit.it was a precious thing to be there.... Father used a very beautiful blessing when he blessed our precious SSC Cross. I felt privileged and blessed when Father asked me to read one of the lessons...the Crossing of the Red SeaThen Father and Ann-Maree took me on a quick tour of the monastery, and gave me some history of the site, before we returned for Evening Prayers which were said quietly and very simply. One of the Sisters [Josephites] in residence had kindly found all the places for me ... I was very kindly invited to stay for the evening meal, which was a relaxed and jolly affair.... I felt so blessed and joyful to be there. It was a really wonderful time of sharing, and fellowship."*

How blessed the Community is that God has called these four new Postulants to a try their vocation with us. How thankful we are, also, that they have obeyed His Call so readily and lovingly.

Special thanks from Mother Wendy to all who have received these Postulants on her behalf.

Fundraising for our Convent Continues

On Saturday, March 24th, Mother Wendy and SSC Postulant, Angela Kroeger, spent a day of fundraising at a shopping mall in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Setting up a display at the kiosk provided free of charge for non-profit groups, they started before the Mall opened early in the morning. Phyllis, Angela's mother, and our Associate, also helped with the set up.

A very full display was assembled, with signs to draw attention to the focus of the fundraising. A supply of Rosaries, prayer booklets, cards, SSC brochures and other material was available to hand out.



Angela with Mother at the Mall

The day resulted in a very good response insofar as donations received, but the greatest wealth came from the witness value of simply being there. Many people stopped to talk and were deeply moved to learn about the Community and about the establishment of a convent in Nova Scotia. From the young teenaged girl who told Mother that her father was threatening to send her to a "nunnery", to the man who went away with a Rosary saying, with much emotion, that he had not prayed it in many years, all seemed to be happy to meet members of the Community. Mother and Angela were richly blessed themselves by this day of outreach. We pray, seeds were planted - the fruits of which may never be known. Laus Deo!



Angela stands ready to hand out some brochures about SSC

Are you called to be a Sister or Associate??

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Mother Wendy to speak in Australia

Mother Wendy will be one of three keynote speakers at the November biennial Conference of Forward in Faith, Australia, to be held in Melbourne. The theme of the overall Conference is "Renewing the Vision". Mother will speak about the renewal of Religious Life and especially in expressions such as SSC.

In making very preliminary travels plans, God willing, she will go first to Brisbane for Joy's Clothing as a Novice and then on for Ann-Maree's Clothing.

After the Conference, she will travel to Perth for the First Profession of Vows of Novice Sister Vedette. In addition, Mother has been asked to give presentations about the Community at various locations during her trip.

Sister Joan keeps busy in her parish of St. Uriel's



Sister Joan is pictured with her class at a recent Confirmation in the parish. Shown also are Bishop Keith Ackerman and St. Uriel's rector, Fr. Griffin.

The Church of St. Uriel the Archangel (Episcopal) in Sea Girt, New Jersey, is the home parish of SSC's Sister Joan Knipple.

Sister's contributions are many, as she works tirelessly within a number of ministries in the parish.

Sister Joan enjoys visiting the sick and acts as a Lay Eucharistic Minister, administering Communion to those who are housebound or in hospital. She keeps busy in her teaching of Confirmation classes, helping out with rummage sales, providing staff assistance in the parish office, and assisting with a variety of special events.



At Mother's Care benefit dinner



Sr. Joan with Bishop Ackerman, President of Forward in Faith/NA

Lord, I am not worthy (Matthew 8:8)

Each time we come to Mass, we remember that Christ remains ever present to us, through His Sacrifice on the Cross. We come with the words of the Centurion foremost in our minds. For we, too, are unworthy of this precious gift that Jesus gives to us in His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. Our Lord issues to us an invitation to receive Him in this great Sacrament. In our unworthiness, we must be mindful of careful preparation before we receive Him.

The examination of conscience, confession of sin, fasting and prayer all form part of that preparation. We must conduct ourselves in a reverent manner, ensuring that our dress and demeanor are modest and respectful as we humbly enter into the Presence of the King of Kings.

"Lord I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word and my servant will be healed." (Matthew 8:8)

Prayer of Preparation before Mass

Prayer of St. Ambrose

Lord, Jesus Christ, I approach your banquet table in fear and trembling, for I am a sinner, and dare not rely on my own worth but only on your goodness and mercy. I am defiled by many sins in body and soul, and by my unguarded thoughts and words. Gracious God of majesty and awe, I seek your protection, I look for your healing, poor troubled sinner that I am, I appeal to you, the fountain of all mercy. I cannot bear your judgment, but I trust in your salvation. Lord, I show my wounds to you and uncover my shame before you. I know my sins are many and great, and they fill me with fear, but I hope in your mercies, for they cannot be numbered. Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King, God and man, crucified for mankind, look upon

me with mercy and hear my prayer, for I trust in you. Have mercy on me, full of sorrow and sin, for the depth of your compassion never ends. Praise to you, saving sacrifice, offered on the wood of the cross for me and for all mankind. Praise to the noble and precious blood, flowing from the wounds of my crucified Lord Jesus Christ and washing away the sins of the whole world. Remember, Lord, your creature, whom you have redeemed with your blood. I repent my sins, and I long to put right what I have done. Merciful Father, take away all my offenses and sins; purify me in body and soul, and make me worthy to taste the holy of holies. May your body and blood, which I intend to receive, although I am unworthy, be for me the remission of my sins, the washing away of my guilt, the end of my evil thoughts, and the rebirth of my better instincts. May it incite me to do the works pleasing to you and profitable to my health in body and soul, and be a firm defense against the wiles of my enemies. **Amen**

