

The Way of the Cross



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

Volume 4, Issue 1

"The Cross is my Anchor"

Lent 2008

Mother's message!

Dear friends in Christ,

Our last newsletter was that of Lent 2007! What happened to the Advent 2007 newsletter? Perhaps, as you read through this edition, you will gain a sense of the reason why we missed one! Our Lord has been keeping us very busy over the past months. How full of goodness and surprises He is!

In the past year, we have established our first convent, I have been away for a month in Australia, we have received a new Postulant and Associate and, as I write, I am in correspondence with the largest number of inquirers that we have ever had at one time. Our web site has received about one quarter of a million hits from around the world over the course of 2007. Praise be to God, we are now becoming known and respected internationally. Our work goes on under His Mighty Hand.

May you all have a holy and prayerful Lent as we anticipate the joy of the Resurrection at Easter.

In Christ's Love, *Mother Wendy*

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NEWS!!!!

OUR FIRST CONVENT IS NOW ESTABLISHED!!

See news of Sacred Cross Convent inside this issue!!

Chapter 2007

The Sisters of The Servants of the Sacred Cross (SSC) assembled at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, once again for Chapter, September 9-16, 2007. It is always a time of great excitement and joy as Sisters begin to arrive at Mount Carmel. One by one, two by two, we gather. There is much love and laughter as we watch for arrivals, greet each other and catch up on news.

In our last newsletter, we featured a lengthy account of the reception, under somewhat unique circumstances, of four new Postulants, Carole Barker, Coleen Riley, Ann-Maree Mitchell and Joy Vickerstaff.

Having diligently finished their Postulant formation studies and various other requirements, they were deemed ready to be Clothed in the SSC habit by the time the Community gathered for the annual General Chapter and Retreat. They had all completed, on average, just the minimum six months of Postulancy.

Thus, at our Chapter, two of our new Postulants became Novices. The other two would wait until a few weeks later when Mother Wendy made her way to Australia. A new Postulant, Patricia Regal, was also received early in Chapter week.



Sr. Coleen and Sr. Malinda, following Sister Coleen's Clothing Mass.



Sister Carole admires some gifts from the Community after her Clothing Mass.

As always, the Sisters welcomed the Community's Visitor, Bishop Donald Harvey, who arrived on the Tuesday and stayed until Thursday morning. On Wednesday, September 12th, the Sisters and Postulants were treated to another edifying Quiet Day conducted by our Bishop. This year's reflections centered on the theme, "*Teach us to care and not to care / Teach us to sit still*" inspired by T.S. Eliot's great poem, "*Ash Wednesday*". What a marvelous and appropriate theme it was, as we have, both individually and as a Community, faced many changes and uncertainties in the past year. The Bishop's meditations helped us to see a godly and prayerful approach to the perplexities we encounter, emphasizing the moments when we must act and when we must simply wait patiently. We were reminded of the wily strategies of Satan, who rejoices in launching spiritual warfare with us in the "changes and chances" of this life.

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The first of our Clothing Masses took place on the morning of our Quiet day when Bishop Harvey celebrated the Anglican Mass. At that time Mother presented Carole to the Bishop and the Clothing Rite began with the examination and the profound question from the Bishop, "My Sister, what do you desire?" Carole's answer followed, "I desire the grace and mercy of God and admission as a Novice in *The Servants of the Sacred Cross*." A most historic and moving dialogue leading to the blessing and presentation of the Novice habit. It is one that fills us with awe and thankfulness each time we witness it as we think of God's gift of vocation to those He chooses to serve Him in this way.

Our second new Novice was Clothed at the Community's Roman Catholic Mass the next day, Thursday, September 13th. In Mount Carmel's stunning and historic monastic chapel, Coleen stood before Father Roger Bonneau, O. Carm., one of the monastery's resident priests. On one side was her presenter, Mother Wendy. On the other side stood Sister Malinda, one of SSC's Professed Sisters. Sister Malinda is a childhood friend of Sister Coleen and it was due to a Providential reconnection between the two, after many years, that Sister Coleen learned of the Community and eventually discerned a call to seek entrance into the Postulancy. Both friends, and now Sisters in the same Religious Community, were radiant as they, along with Mother Wendy, processed back into the chapel after Sister Coleen donned her habit and knelt for the final blessing.



Mother Wendy receives Patricia as a Postulant of SSC during Mattins on the Tuesday of Chapter week.

Chapter week was also an occasion of further rejoicing as we received a new Postulant, Patricia Regal. Patricia is a Roman Catholic who lives in Minnesota. It was a great joy to welcome another new member of the SSC family. Patricia's journey began with seeking for a closer relationship with Jesus. She felt that God might be calling her into membership in something like a Third Order. Praying that God would show her the way, she discovered the web site of *The Servants of the Sacred Cross*. "It seemed so right for me", she wrote to Mother Wendy in some early correspondence. We look forward, with happy anticipation, to our Chapter this year when, God willing, Patricia will become our next Novice Sister!

Ongoing formation and study is an important part of each yearly Chapter. Sister Lea, who prepares SSC's monthly Divine Office Calendar, presented an informative and helpful instructional workshop on the use of our new Office Book, the liturgy used in praying Mattins and Evensong each day. The Community has adopted the use of ***The English Office Book***, originally published in the 1950's, and recently re-printed, as its liturgy for the daily praying of the Divine Office. The book provides a rich variety of Propers for Seasonal and Sanctoral cycles. The Ancient Office Hymns, Antiphons on the Psalms and Canticles, as well as the inclusion of various devotions, litanies and prayers of preparation before Mass and the Itinerary, make this a most suitable choice for a monastic Office which is, in essence, a "mini-Breviary". SSC has, since its beginnings, sought a suitable Office Book that would offer a full monastic style Office that could be used by all Sisters. One of the important ways in which both Anglican and Roman Catholic Sisters of the Community retain a sense of sisterhood and unity is through common prayer. ***The English Office Book***, very Catholic in content, and retaining the traditional language and elements familiar to Anglicans, has already proven to be an excellent choice for all Sisters.



Foundress and co-foundress, Mother Wendy and Sister Joan, cut the SSC Anniversary cake

Chapter 2007 saw no shortage of happy events. On Friday, September 14th, the Community celebrated the seventh anniversary of its Founding, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The occasion was marked by a special dinner organized and prepared by the efficient staff of Mount Carmel's hospitality team. The Sisters enjoyed a wonderful meal and an evening of relaxation and fellowship to mark the celebration. At the end of the meal a delicious "Anniversary" cake, appropriately decorated with a large cross, was cut and served by Mother Wendy and Sister Joan, as the two Founding Sisters. While we enjoyed the festivities, we very much missed Bishop Harvey, our Australian Sisters and Sister Julie, who was in the final stages of preparing for her trip to Nova Scotia. We pray for the day when the entire world-wide SSC family, including Associates, might be gathered.

On September 15th we returned to a more somber mood as we prayed the Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady marking that Feast of our Patron, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our prayer centered on contemplating the "swords" that would pierce her heart as prophesized by Simeon.

All Sisters were in agreement that Chapter 2007 was a most blessed week. We prayed, we worked, we studied, we discussed, we laughed, we kept silence and we rejoiced, as we continue to grow in spiritual friendship and unity. How very good God is!

Sacred Cross Convent welcomes the first two Sisters

On the evening of August 8, 2007, Sister Julia Ray, from Atlanta, Georgia, walked through the door of Sacred Cross Convent in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, for the first time. It was the Eve of Feast Day of St. John Vianney, one of SSC's patrons. Much research and preparation had preceded the actual arrival of the first Sister. Indeed it has been at least two years since God planted the seed of establishing SSC Sisters in community. It was a joyous moment and one of deep gratitude when Sister finally emerged from Canada Immigration at the airport, to be met by Mother Wendy.

With meager financial resources, and the various administrative matters involved in the Sisters' actual move to Canada, the possibility of actually establishing this foundation, with the many obstacles that arose, appeared almost unattainable at times. However, as women of Faith, all concerned approached the vision with prayerful perseverance and upheld by God's Grace. All things are possible with Him! The Community has been fortunate to be able to rent a small house on the outskirts of the city. For now, since it is a rented space and the Community knows it is not to be the permanent home of the convent, it is being called, simply, "Sacred Cross Convent".

In the following weeks, Sister Julia settled into her new environment and began to work on the daily ebb and flow of activity at the house. She started to draft a *Horarium*, or daily schedule, insofar as the living out of semi-contemplative Religious Life as the Community envisions it for the convent. Sister very quickly learned her way around the city, studying bus schedules and becoming familiar with the most convenient shops and services.

On October 1, 2007, the second Sister arrived at the convent when our Novice Sister Julie Walker ended the long journey from Washington State on the west coast of the USA. She and her sister, Karen, had driven straight across the United States in a trip that took several days. The journey was a painful one for Sister Julie who had tripped and fallen while loading the vehicle just before their departure. With a fractured collar bone she set out and completed the trip despite the considerable discomfort. The picture (below) shows the moment of her arrival with her right arm in a sling. The quiet joy of the occasion was evident. With the landlord's permission, Sister also brought along her Standard Poodle, Tatiana, who has now become a part of the convent household.



A poignant moment in the history of SSC as Sister Julia welcomes Sister Julie at the Convent

Sister Julia expressed her feelings as *"deep gratitude to God for bringing me to this place, as I arrived in Halifax. To participate in the founding of the first convent of SSC is a most precious blessing. We hope the convent will be a place to which all of our Sisters and others can come for prayer and rest. We pray it may it also be a model of unity."*

Sisters living within the convent, "in community" will be single or widowed women, professing the traditional Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience in keeping with the Evangelical Counsels. Eventually, they will wear a somewhat different headpiece and veil to distinguish them from our Sisters (married and single) who live "in the world" under Vows of Simplicity, Purity and Obedience.

Pray for our Sisters at the convent as they begin this new work of SSC!!

A Day at the Convent

5:30 AM - Rise (Silence)

6:15 AM - **Mattins**

7:00 AM - Breakfast

9:00 AM - Mass

9:30 - 10:30 AM - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

10:30 AM - **Terce** said privately after Adoration

Errands outside of convent, if needed, following Terce

12:00 PM - **Sext and Rosary**

12:30 PM - Lunch

1:00 - 3:00 PM - Work

3:00 PM - **None**

3:00 - 5:00 PM - Personal prayer, spiritual reading, study (Silence)

5:00 PM - **Evensong**

5:30 PM - Supper

6:00 P.M. - Recreation and free time

7:30PM - Meditation in chapel

8:00 PM - **Compline**

The **Great Silence** is kept until after Breakfast

**N.B. The above is subject to change as life "in community" evolves. Presently, the Sisters must go out for Mass each day but it is hoped that daily Mass in the Convent chapel will eventually be possible. Since, as in the overall Community, Sisters in the Convent may be Anglicans, Catholics or Eastern Orthodox, Masses, and other Sacraments, will be provided for each group. We continue to strive for unity in all things possible while respecting the sad divisions that prevent full *communio in sacris* at this time.

Our Visitor Visits

On the Eve of St. Luke, Oct. 17, 2007, Bishop Donald Harvey, SSC's Episcopal Visitor, celebrated the first Mass in the convent chapel. At that time he also received Jeffrey Roy as an Associate of the Community. Jeffrey has since been ordained to the Diaconate in the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (ACCC) of the Traditional Anglican Communion (TAC) and is a parishioner at St. Aidan's ACCC Pro-Cathedral in Halifax. Mother Wendy and Associate Phyllis Kroeger are also part of St. Aidan's congregation.



Bishop Visitor with Associates, Jeff and Phyllis, in the Convent Chapel

It was a great blessing to welcome Jeff to our spiritual family and to have our Bishop with us for a visit - the first overnight guest at the convent. Mother Wendy was in attendance for supper and Mass as well as seeing to airport transportation for the Bishop. Phyllis also joined us for Mass and an informal reception following.

Bishop Harvey, as Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada, keeps to an extremely busy travel schedule. He visits countries around the world on an ongoing basis and was in Halifax on a stopover before proceeding on to other destinations immediately after his visit at the convent. Our Bishop is constantly upheld in our prayers, not only for travelling mercies but also that God will bless him abundantly in his valiant efforts within the Network and other bodies in the Anglican Communion presently standing firm in *"the Faith once delivered to the saints."*

A beautiful hour of fellowship and refreshments, joined by our Associates, followed after Mass. As always, our Visitor regaled us with his wonderful anecdotes and stories and the time passed all by all too quickly.

However, the Community has been treated to another visit by Bishop Harvey who stayed at the convent again on Jan. 20-21, 2008. The visit fell within the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, a most important week for SSC. On January 20, Septuagesima, the Bishop attended Mass at St. Aidan's with Mother Wendy, following which they returned to the convent for lunch. Special guest was The Rt. Rev. Craig Botterill, ACCC Suffragan Bishop and rector of St. Aidan's. We were honoured and blessed to have the two Bishops seated at our table.



Bishop Harvey relaxes in the Convent sitting-room.

We look forward to welcoming Bishop Harvey to our SSC home, whenever he is able to visit.



SSC Associate is Ordained Deacon



"Take thou authority to execute the office of a Deacon in the Church of God...."



Sr. Julie, Sr. Julia, Father Deacon Jeff Roy and Mother Wendy after the Ordination Mass

Mother Wendy and the "Halifax Sisters" were in attendance at the Pro-Cathedral of St. Aidan in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the Feast of Christ the King, November 25, 2007, to witness the ordination to the Diaconate of our Associate, Jeffrey Roy. He was ordained by The Rt. Rev. Craig Botterill, Suffragan Bishop of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada.

Father Deacon will assist at St. Aidan's and at the mission at Ecum Secum, Nova Scotia. We pray for God's most abundant blessing as he begins his ordained ministry and give thanks for his association with The Servants of the Sacred Cross.

The Sisters need your help!!

The Community is looking for a more permanent home for its convent. Although we have been blessed to be able to test our call for this extension of the original charism of SSC in our little rented house, we do realize that it will not be the ideal long term property. Mother is already receiving a number of inquiries from women who are interested in joining us "in community". Thus, it seems we may soon outgrow our present accommodation.

With exceedingly limited financial resources, we pray for a benefactor, who might own a more secluded rural house, with acreage, willing to donate it to the Community. If you, or someone you know, owns property that can be made available to us, please be in touch with the Superior, Mother Wendy. As a Registered Charity, the Community is in a position to offer significant tax incentives within Canada for such a donation. Please help, if you are able, so that we can carry on the work that God has called us to do. In addition, cash donations toward purchase of a property are most useful and appreciated!! We are not only seeking more space for our Sisters, but also for the over three hundred nun dolls, dressed in authentic, historic habits, that have been donated to the Community. There is also a large collection of photos and artifacts that will form the core of a SSC Museum of Religious Life and where handcrafts made by the Sisters will be offered for donations.



Mother Wendy at work in Australia *(in her own words)*

Last autumn, I travelled extensively around the beautiful country of Australia. Having been invited to speak at the Forward in Faith (FiF), Australia, biennial National conference in Melbourne, my trip included a number of other events. I set out from Canada on October 23. After landing in Sydney, I transferred on to Brisbane where I was lovingly greeted by our Postulant, Joy Vickerstaff who accompanied me during my travel within Australia. We stayed at Mercy Place, a large house of the Sisters of Mercy, who welcomed us warmly. The next day I gave a brief address about the Community to the FiF, Queensland branch. Bishop David Chislett, Anglican Catholic Church of Australia (TAC), and all members of this energetic group made me feel most welcome.

On October 28th, Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude, Joy's Clothing as a Novice took place at Mass at Patmos House in Brisbane. The celebrant was Bishop Chislett. I had the honour of giving the homily. The love and celebratory joy with which the people of the Patmos House congregation surrounded Sister Joy were profoundly evident.

In the next few days there was time to meet with an SSC inquirer and with the Sisters of Mercy Congregational Leadership Team. The Sisters were most interested and gracious as they asked many questions about our Community. Sr. Joy and I enjoyed a day of sightseeing along the Gold Coast, chauffeured by "tour guide", Bishop Chislett. A highlight was a fascinating visit to St. Stephen's College, the first school of the Anglican Catholic Church of Australia (ACCA).

After a brief stopover in Sydney to see the famous harbour and Opera House, Sr. Joy and I spent two days of rest in Canberra at her apartment. She kindly took me to see many interesting sights in that city. The panoramic view from atop the Telstra Tower was breathtaking. Afternoon tea and a leisurely walk through the Botanical Gardens was a special treat for me, as a keen gardener.

Next, we drove off to "the bush" where we arrived, on All Soul's Day, at St. Clement's Roman Catholic Monastery in Galong, a beautiful and peaceful place. Waiting for us was our Postulant, Ann-Maree Mitchell. She is a frequent visitor there as she assists the Redemptorist priests with many projects and meets with her Spiritual Director, Fr. Peter Ryan, C.Ss.R. On Nov.4th, Fr. Ryan celebrated Mass during which Ann-Maree was Clothed in the habit of a SSC Novice. After Mass we joined the priests and Religious Brothers of the house for a small reception and refreshments to mark the occasion. We spent several precious days at St. Clement's, strolling the grounds and exploring the museum and handsome religious works of art to be found throughout the buildings. We all enjoyed a lovely afternoon outing at the Japanese Gardens at Cowra, a short drive from the Monastery.

Saying good-bye to Sr. Ann-Maree, we made our way back to Canberra for our flight on to Melbourne and the FiF conference, Nov.8-10th. The theme of the conference was "Renewing the Vision". I was asked to give two papers focusing on "renewing the vision" of Religious Life. I spoke of the history of monasticism beginning with the call to solitude of the Desert Fathers to the evolving of the great Religious Orders. I emphasized how the continued call to Religious Life, that God issues to men and women today, can be fulfilled in expressions such as SSC. Our Community's model is, in fact, quite ancient - dating back at least 1000 years! Thus, we are not to be seen as something "new" but, instead, a "renewal". I talked about our vision for the future, as we believe God has revealed it to us, and how we have evolved as a limited ecumenical Community. It was a distinct honour to be asked to participate in this event alongside the other keynote speakers, Bishop John Broadhurst, from England, chair of FiF International, and Professor Tracy Rowland, Dean of the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne. It was such a pleasure to spend those days together with others attending the conference including Archbishop John Hepworth, TAC Primate, as well as many other TAC and FiF bishops, clergy and laity.

On November 11th, we travelled to Perth, where we were met by Sr. Vedette Lendich. We spent a week there, in a house provided by the Sisters of Mercy. We were within a two minute walk of the Indian Ocean - magnificent. Enjoying these days with Sr. Vedette, we visited the Benedictine Monastic Town of New Norcia, where we toured the Abbey and grounds. We were invited guests for lunch and the praying of the Noon Office. Day trips to a number of other beautiful locations around Perth were very much enjoyed.

We were guests for tea at the Convent of the Presentation Sisters in Perth where we met with the Archdiocesan Vocations Director. I was blessed to have a private meeting with Roman Catholic Archbishop Barry Hickey who has been a strong supporter of SSC for several years. On Saturday, Nov.17th, at the Vigil Mass in Good Shepherd parish, His Grace received Sr. Vedette's First Vows of Profession. As I presented her, Fr. Michael Rowe, FSSP, her Spiritual Director, stood beside her. In the true spirit of Unity, for which SSC seeks and prays, Archbishop Hickey invited TAC Bishop Harry Entwistle, of Perth, to vest and be seated in the sanctuary. He is Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Australia and rector of the ACCA parish of St. Ninian and St. Chad where Sr. Vedette is a frequent visitor for Evensong and the ecumenical Taize services. This was an important and historic occasion which was covered by the editor of *The Catholic Record* in Perth.

I arrived back in Canada on Nov.19th after four weeks of travel, not all of which was "work" as can be seen. I thank God for the rich blessing of this opportunity and praise Him in high thanksgiving for a trip which bore much good fruit for SSC.



Joy kneels before Bishop Chislett to receive the Novice habit



Sr. Ann-Maree with Fr. Ryan at St. Clement's



Mother presents Sr. Vedette to Archbishop Hickey for Profession of Vows

Ciborium dedicated in memory of Father Karl Tufts



Fr. Karl Tufts

The Rev. Canon Karl Tufts was an Anglican priest who was instrumental in the spiritual mentoring of Mother Wendy during the months leading up to the Founding of SSC on The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 14, 2000. He remained a staunch friend and supporter of Mother and the Community until his death in 2002. He and Mother had a rather long standing relationship, dating from the day when he Baptized her as an infant in 1947!

His encouragement was most important and appreciated during the time of the establishment of SSC. Many an hour did he and Mother sit together to discuss one or another fine point of the Rule or Constitution. Mother loved him dearly and took to heart the wise counsel that he gave. It seemed quite natural that Father Tufts was eventually called to be the first Associate of the Community. He told Mother, "It is the right thing to do!" Such was his direct way of getting to the point without frills - only one of his many endearing qualities. Therefore, in loving memory of our dear friend, the Community has donated a large silver Ciborium, suitably inscribed, to St. Aidan's Pro-Cathedral (ACCC) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Father Tuft's widow, Mrs. Edith Tufts, was present when the Ciborium was dedicated and blessed on July 1, 2007. It now holds the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle at St. Aidan's.

Requiescat In Pace

More pictures from Australia



Archbishop Hickey signs Sr. Vedette's Profession certificate on the Altar as Mother Wendy looks on.



Bishop Harry Entwistle with Sr. Vedette after her Profession



Sr. Joy and Sr. Ann-Maree share dessert at the Japanese gardens in Cowra, AU



Sr. Vedette, Sr. Joy and Mother, in Perth, on the last day of the trip.



Mother Wendy makes friends with a Koala.....



.....and a Kangaroo!!

Quiet Day at Convent

March 15, 2008

10 AM to 5 PM

Conducted by Fr. Earl Smith, S.J.

For Sisters and Associates

Theme: "Forgiveness and Healing"

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