

The Way of the Cross



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

Volume 5, Issue 1

"The Cross is my Anchor"

Lent 2009

Mother's message!

Dear friends in Christ,

Lent is a most profound season for SSC in its dedication to the Cross. In imitation of Jesus, we strive to enter into His journey to that Cross. We fast, meditate, deepen our prayer life, and make reparation for our sins. This we do in a joyful offering to serve Him as Servants of the Sacred Cross. We pray to willingly accept our crosses and suffering, that we may be more fully united to Him. How often we fail! But as we do, by God's Grace, we rise again, striving for the perfection which is so very illusive.

There have been many joys and much growth over the past year. God continues to bless our humble efforts. We have many new vocations and a large number of inquiries. I am deeply grateful to all members, friends and benefactors of the Community who so selflessly assist in the work.

God bless you in abundance as we journey the way of the Cross together.

In Christ's Love, *Mother Wendy*

Inside this Issue

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| SSC Chapter 2008 | 1-2 |
| SSC Snapshots | 3 |
| Further growth of the SSC family | 4 |
| Fr. Jeff Ordained to Priesthood | 4 |
| The Nun Doll Story | 5 |
| More scenes from Chapter | 6 |
| Reflections from the Convent | 6 |

SSC Chapter 2008

Last September the Sisters of The Servants of the Sacred Cross (SSC) met together at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario for their annual General Chapter. From September 7-14th, Sunday to Sunday, the Sisters held their official annual Chapter meeting, shared in worship and fellowship and celebrated various Community Rites.



SSC at Chapter 2008 with their Bishop Visitor.

In total, thirteen Sisters and Postulants were in attendance, including Novice, Sister Joy, who travelled from Canberra, Australia. It is always a special blessing when any of the Australian Sisters are present for the Annual Chapter. Bishop Harvey, SSC Episcopal Visitor, joined the assembled Community from Wednesday, the 10th, through Friday, the 12th.

Unfortunately, four members were not able to attend and were given the necessary dispensation from the Mother Superior.

After the initial excitement of arrivals, happy reuniting since last Chapter and the meeting of new Aspirants, everyone began to settle in for the week. Leisure time for fellowship on the first evening was much enjoyed.

First thing on Monday morning, The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it was down to business. After Divine Office, Mass and breakfast, Professed Sisters met with Mother for interviews. Sister Julia, Formation Director, interviewed those in Formation. The meetings were continued in the afternoon.

At Evensong, the Community rejoiced in the reception of four new Postulants, admitted by Mother Wendy during the Office. Beginning their journey with SSC as Postulants are Shirley (former SSC Associate), Catherine, Kasandra and Georgette. They are seen in that order (L-R) in the front row of the picture above. Shirley is from North Carolina and is member of the Anglican Catholic Church. Catherine is a member of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (TAC), living in Alberta. Kasandra, a Roman Catholic, lives in British Columbia, while Georgette, also a Roman Catholic, is from Kentucky. The Community is greatly blessed by the vocational call of these faithful women and welcomes them with prayerful love as sisters in Christ.

The following day, Mother Wendy and Sister Lea gave instruction on the use of *The English Office Book*, the liturgy used by SSC for their daily Divine Office. Opportunity for a question and answer period was also provided. This instruction was especially helpful to those new to the Community and an excellent review for others.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

It was with much anticipation that all awaited the arrival of Bishop Harvey on Wednesday morning. He was just returning from Buenos Aires and, after greeting everyone, took time for a rest in his suite after an extremely long flight. As always, the Community was very glad to see their Visitor who not only provides much appreciated spiritual direction and nourishment but also regales the Sisters with highly entertaining story-telling. This Chapter was especially rich with the Bishop's recounting of his experiences during the past year of travel around the world in his work as Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada.

A rehearsal for the evening's Roman Catholic Mass and Community Rites took up most of the afternoon. One of the highlights of Chapter 2008, and within the relatively short history of the Community itself, was the Profession of Vows of the first two Sisters called to live in Sacred Cross Convent. Also at the Mass, Sister Patricia was Clothed as a Novice and Sister Deborah renewed her annual Vows.

There were few dry eyes in choir as, in the monastic chapel of Mount Carmel, the two Conventual (i.e. living in community at the Convent) Sisters professed the traditional Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Fr. Roger Bonneau, O.Carm., one of the resident priests at Mount Carmel, was celebrant and received the Vows.

Kneeling before Mother, their hands placed between her hands, in a symbol of submission and obedience, the Sisters heard, for the first time, their new names in Religion - "Sister Julia Agnes of the Sacred Heart" and "Sister Rosaire Martine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help". They were invested with the distinct coif and veil designed by the Community for the Conventual Sisters. In every other respect, the



(L-R) Sr. Julia Agnes, Mother Wendy, Sr. Rosaire Martine, Sr. Deborah, Sr. Patricia.

Conventual Sisters wear the same Profession Cross and habit as all SSC Sisters. Those Sisters not living "in community", and professing Vows of Simplicity, Purity and Obedience, are now referred to as Extern Sisters. This was a deeply emotional, joyful and poignant moment which marked yet another historic milestone in the evolution of The Servants of the Sacred Cross, just eight years since the Founding.



Sr. Patricia, radiant after her Clothing Mass.

Bishop Harvey conducted a beautiful Quiet Day for the Community on Thursday, September 11th, with the theme, "*In his Master's steps he trod*". Meditations were based upon his recent travels in the Holy Land which he connected to the vocational call as Religious. The day was one of silence and reflection with the Bishop celebrating the Anglican Mass in the morning, during which Sister Lea renewed her annual Vows. Silence was broken just before supper so that all could engage in "speaking fellowship" during the meal!!

The Professed Sisters met on Friday afternoon, September 12th, for their formal Chapter meeting. In the morning, the Superior convened a meeting for the entire Community in order to reflect and discern together. To facilitate discussion, Mother Wendy opened the session by playing an excerpt from a recording of Catherine Doherty's great book, *Sobernost* - the Russian word for unity. Reflecting on the powerful words of this text was most helpful. The Community heard about the relation of the unity and reality of the Trinity, as "*the best context in which to approach the true meaning of sobernost.*" Catherine Doherty, Foundress of the Madonna House Apostolate, says "*There is no sobernost without crucifixion*". Thus suffering can be expected. But the author writes that even to desire unity is already a gift. SSC has adopted a focused mandate of prayer for the Unity of the Church Universal. The search for unity begins within the Community itself. Chapter was enriched by this time of listening and seeking together, praying

for the leading of the Holy Spirit in the way forward for the Community. The input of all members is valued by the Professed Sisters as they attend to the administration of the Community as its governing body.

As the week came to a close several of the Sisters enjoyed an outing to the magnificent Falls in, well, Niagara Falls! It is always a special and amazing experience for those who have never before seen this mighty wonder of God's Creation.



Sr. Joy views Niagara Falls.



Outing to "the Falls".

On September 14th, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the eighth anniversary of its Founding, members of the Community boarded the shuttle buses taking them to the airport.

Chapter 2009 is scheduled for September 13-20th.

SSC snapshots!



February 24, 2008

The Convent Sisters, with Mother Wendy, attended a Dog Expo in Halifax, NS. They were accompanied by "Sister Tatiana", the Convent's Standard Poodle, and Mother's little black and white Shih Tzu, "Miffy". A good time was had by all!



March 15, 2008

SSC Associate, Phyllis Kroeger, engages in spiritual reading in a time of silence during a Lenten Quiet Day at the Convent. The mini-retreat was lead by Fr. Earl Smith, S.J.



May 24, 2008

SSC Novice, Sister Carole, from British Columbia, visited at the Convent in May and enjoyed an outing with the Sisters in Nova Scotia's beautiful Annapolis Valley. The view from high atop a "look-off" point can be seen in the background.



June 11-13, 2008

Sister Malinda, from Detroit, represented The Servants of the Sacred Cross during the Forward in Faith Annual Assembly held at Our Lady of the Snows Conference Centre in Belleville, Illinois.

SSC's web site received 311,671 hits from around the world in the past year!!

More Postulants.....



(L-R) Pamela, Sr. Julia Agnes, Mother Wendy, Sister Rosaire Martine, Katherine.

It was not long after Chapter when the Community received yet more Postulants. Since the Postulancy is required to be a minimum of six months long, applicants have the possibility of being received outside of the time of Annual Chapter and still be Clothed as Novices during the next one.

On November 8, 2008, Mother Wendy received Pamela and Katherine as Postulants in the Convent Chapel at Evensong. Both are Roman Catholics, Pamela from Florida and Katherine from Illinois.

It was a blessing to be joined by Associates, Father Jeff Roy and Phyllis Kroeger, as well as friends of the Community, Cory Lunn and soon-to-be Associate Meaghan Hickey. After Evensong, a delicious supper was enjoyed followed by a happy evening of fellowship which included a spontaneous hymn-sing with Sister Rosaire on piano. Everyone had a chance to request their favourites. Mother and the Conventual Sisters enjoyed Pamela and Katherine's short visit and look forward to seeing them again at Chapter when, God willing, they will be Clothed as SSC Novices along with the Postulants received earlier in 2008.

Meanwhile, in Brisbane, Australia, another Aspirant, Elaine, was preparing for her reception as an SSC Postulant. Elaine is a member of The Anglican Catholic Church of Australia (ACCA), the Australian Province of the Traditional Anglican Communion. On December 14, 2008, *Gaudete* Sunday, Elaine was received, on behalf of the Community, by The Rt. Rev. David Chislett, Bishop of the ACCA. Sister Joy, SSC Novice in Canberra, was able to travel to Brisbane to attend the Mass and the reception which followed.

The Servants of the Sacred Cross rejoice in the growing family of women called to join the Community. We praise God for His abundant blessings upon us.

The Servants of the Sacred Cross rejoice in the growing family of women called to join the Community. We praise God for His abundant blessings upon us.



Bishop David Chislett receives Elaine as a Postulant of SSC with Fr. Tony Iball assisting.



SSC Postulant Elaine in Brisbane, AU.

.....and Associates!!



Sr. Vedette, Bishop Entwistle and Margaret.



Mother & Sisters with Bishop Botterill & Associates Fr. Jeff, Phyllis and Meaghan.

On Palm Sunday, March 16, 2008, Margaret Corlett was received as an Associate by The Rt. Rev. Harry Entwistle, Anglican Catholic Church of Australia, in Perth. Sister Vedette presented her on behalf of Mother Wendy.

On December 14, 2008, Meaghan Hickey was admitted in Halifax, Nova Scotia, by The Rt. Rev. Craig Botterill, at St. Aidan's Anglican Catholic Church of Canada, Pro-Cathedral.

Welcome to the SSC family, Margaret and Meaghan!!

Associate, Father Jeff, is ordained

On August 2, 2008, Mother Wendy, Sister Julia and Sister Rosaire had the great joy and privilege of being present for the Ordination to the priesthood of Associate, Father Jeff Roy.

The Ordination Mass was celebrated by The Rt. Rev. Craig Botterill at the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada parish of St. George's-by-the-Sea in Moser River, on the eastern shore of Nova Scotia. The little white painted church is spectacularly situated right beside the ocean in a stunning location.

The Community, in its mandate of prayer for all priests, asks for God's abundant blessing upon Father Jeff in his service to Christ and His Church.



The Ordination of Father Jeffrey Roy

St. John Vianney, Patron of Priests, pray for us and for all priests!

THE NUN DOLLS' STORY

Anita Campbell

Eight years ago Sister Wendy James founded the Servants of the Sacred Cross, a religious sisterhood committed to upholding the historic Catholic Faith. Important to this commitment is the wearing of the habit. Sister Wendy understands the significance of clothing, of how the habit makes the nun easily identified, a sign of parochial availability.

She believes that this was lost with the reforms of Vatican II, and is part of a movement to re-establish the wearing of the habit and the awareness of nuns in our everyday life.

One of the community members, Sister Rosaire moved from Seattle to join this special community, and with her she brought a collection of 300 dolls dressed as nuns. Look up nun dolls on e-bay and you will get an idea of the variety available to a collector, from the cheap and mass produced, to porcelain figurines correct to the last detail. Sister Rosaire has examples of both. She has dolls made by the best known fabricators, such as the Cholewa Brothers, as well as a Sally Fields Flying Nun doll. But perhaps the most valued are the convent made dolls, those dressed by nuns themselves in the habit of their community. These dolls were given to young girls to foster a vocation with the community, or by a novice to her family when she left



Sister Rosaire holds a "Sister Luke", Audrey Hepburn doll, from *The Nun's Story*.



Convent dressed doll in the habit of the Sisters of Saint Casimir.



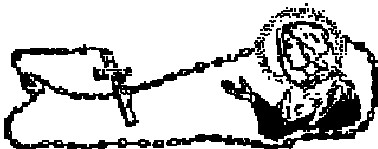
Doll dressed in the habit of the Holy Family of the Nazareth.

the family home to enter the convent. A charming example is the doll dressed by the Sisters of Saint Casimir, a community organized in the early 19th century to serve Lithuanian immigrants in America.

Every doll in the collection has a story. A doll dressed in the habit of the Sisters of Holy Family of the Nazareth prompts Sister Rosaire to relate how members of this community were persecuted in Nazi Poland, slaughtered for their religious beliefs including the wearing of their habit.

Eventually the Sisters of the Sacred Cross would like to have a convent with space to exhibit the dolls to the public. The dolls and their clothing are fascinating in themselves, but the real story is the history of the women who chose to wear the habit, women who were, and still are, the backbone of the Catholic and Anglican faiths. For now though, the community would be grateful to find a temporary home for the collection; they are looking for a secure location, accessible to the public, where the dolls can be viewed and their stories told.

(Originally published in the Winter 2008 issue of *The Clothes Press*, the newsletter of The Costume Society of Nova Scotia. Reprinted here with permission of the author. Anita Campbell is Curator, Cultural Resource Management, Parks Canada.)



Rosaries made by SSC Sisters

Watch the SSC web site for a link to a new page of photos displaying a sampling of beautiful and unique hand-made Rosaries and Chaplets which will be offered for a suggested donation. Standard and custom orders!

All proceeds will go to the Community's Convent building fund. Tax receipts can be issued for Canadian donations.

Contact: rosaries@thesacredcross.org

More scenes from Chapter 2008



Reflections from the Convent

Sister Julia Agnes of the Sacred Heart, SSC

In the spring and early summer of 2008, Mother Wendy met weekly at the Convent with Sister Rosaire and me as she conducted classes based on the Evangelical Counsels and their relationship to the Profession of our upcoming Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.* In preparation for the Vows, we examined, in detail, materials such as a document of Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis* ("Perfect Charity"), Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life; *Chastity, Poverty and Obedience*, by Mother Mary Francis P.C.C., a highly respected Poor Clare abbess; and a three-volume set of books, *Cloud by Day, Fire by Night*, by Father David Knight.

Christ revealed in the Gospels the source of perfect charity through the Evangelical Counsels or "Counsels of Perfection". The discussions and reading materials provided us with guidelines for, understanding of, and insight into the Vows, which are a radical expression of living the Counsels. The Vows, which have exterior aspects also, issue from within, from Grace received at Baptism. Unchangeable truth and changeable aspects are a part of the living of Religious Life. These were examined and discussed at length.

Although the journey to be formed into community through the Vows has had moments of joy, as well as inevitable trials, the joy has certainly abounded in all. Among the joys have been the availability of the Sacraments, retreats and spiritual direction from the beginning.

Prior to Profession, Sister Rosaire and I spent a week of silent retreat at *Notre-Dame de l'Assomption* Trappistine Abbey in New Brunswick. This was a very moving experience. It brought back memories of a trip with my parents, when I was twelve, from home in North Carolina to the Shrine of *Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre*, a place where seeds of the path I would follow were planted within me. The Profession of the Vows within the Monastic Chapel at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre was, for me, profound, most precious and very humbling.

We pray for a convent with the Blessed Sacrament and prayer at the center. We pray for the day when there will be Sacramental unity in the Chapel. To be a part of this prayer through the Vows is a gracious gift of God's superabundant love. To be able to pursue living a Religious vocation of prayer embodies for me more than I could hope for on my own. For it is the vocation of all to be realized at the last day when the Church, Christ's Bride, is to be united with Him forever.



Sr. Julia Agnes SSC

**Extern Sisters Profess Vows of Simplicity, Purity and Obedience in emulation of the Evangelical Counsels.*

A Visit with the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus



Mother Wendy prays before a Relic of Blessed Mother Mary Teresa of St. Joseph, Foundress of the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus. Mother and Sr. Joy spent a few days with the Sisters in St. Catherine's, Ontario, following Chapter week. Mother is very devoted to Bl. Mother Mary Teresa who she upholds as an inspiring model.

Are you called to be a Sister or Associate??

(Note new address and phone number)

For information:

The Rev. Mother Wendy James, SSC
The Servants of the Sacred Cross
1137 McKay Rd.
RR # 3, Newport
Nova Scotia B0N 2A0
Canada

Phone: (902) 757-2165

Email: info@thesacredcross.org

Web Site: www.TheSacredCross.org

*Legally Incorporated Non-profit Society
& Registered Charity*