



Destination C.Ss.R.

Redemptorist Vocation Newsletter

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To everything... Turn... Turn... Turn...

As we journey together into another autumn season, we see around us different hints of technicolour leaves, cooler temperatures, and school kids busy at work with assignments and projects!

Here at the RYVM Office in Toronto, many projects for Young Adult Ministry and Vocation Ministry are well underway. In this Newsletter, you'll read about SERVE, Liguori Circle, our Online Discussion Pages, Weekend Vocation Retreats, information about Hurricane Katrina and her impact on the Redemptorists in the South, the First Profession of Tony Bidgood C.Ss.R., and the regular features for our Saints, and on discernment.

There are many things happening over the next several months, and you can get involved in them! We will be hosting 9 Weekend Vocation Retreats right across the country. Brochures are available as well as information found on the Redemptorist Website. Several inquiries have come in over the last several months, so we hope that we can offer all the retreats as scheduled! On the Website as well is an update about the Discernment and Formation Process. This is also found on the brochure "So... How long does it take to become one of you guys?"

Living through the season of autumn seems much like living through a season of change. We can never anticipate the vibrancy of the coloured leaves, how cold it may become, or how quickly the rain will turn into snow. But the wonder of the season, is that we are invited to pause and see the beauty that happens around us, without us really knowing what will take



*Jack-o-lantern of St. Alphonsus
by Fr. Jon Hansen C.Ss.R.*

place. Discernment is much like that. God will surprise us if we are open and willing to be surprised. Can we see the colours? Can we welcome the fresh cool breeze? Will we stand outside during that first snow fall and let the flakes land on our smiling face?

A change of season is like learning to change our heart. Open your hearts to autumn, and to God. Be surprised by the wonder of the season. Give thanks for the gift of who you are. Be open to how God may be stirring in you a change of season through your journey of discernment. Become involved in seeing where that discernment will take you this year!

Praying with St. Gerard Majella C.Ss.R - October 16

Gerard's spiritual theology of the Will of God is expressed in a letter to Sr. Marie, the prioress of the Carmelites. Only self-love can prevent us from acquiring such a rich treasure, a true paradise here and beyond - God himself. Only our poor human ignorance could think itself able to find by itself a surer way to heaven than that marked out by the will of God.



Gerard writes: "Oh the will of God, what a great and beautiful thing! Hidden treasure, beyond our comprehension. If I understand you well, you are the same as the very God whom I love! It is the duty of every soul to feed only on this beautiful Will of God.... In order to be transformed into a perfect union, in one and the same thing in the holy Will of God."

"I wish to love God, I wish always to be with God, and to do everything for the love of God. The centre of all love for God consists in giving ourselves entirely to God by being in all things conformable to the divine will, and remaining in this conformity for all eternity."

Picture by: Andrea Lalamita, Cambridge, Ontario



What? Where? How? A Discernment Journey: The Return of a Redemptorist



My discernment journey involves many twists and turns. Though it began with Baptism and the early influences of family, church and school, my discernment deepened through the opportunities offered by the Redemptorists through RYVM. I participated in the SERVE program as both a candidate and later, as a team leader. I was a member of the Redemptorist Youth Mission Team, and entered the Redemptorist formation program. For a while, I moved away from Redemptorist life and ministry and lived on my own, and work as a hospital chaplain. I met beautiful people both professionally and personally, who truly blessed my life during this time. Now I find myself happily back with the Redemptorists, and anticipating ordination within the next two years. What follows are some of my own thoughts on the unique experience called 'discernment'.



During my formation, I spent a significant amount of time praying for guidance from God. I think I was looking for that elusive sign ... the equivalent in my life of the burning bush! I was looking for a moment, an insight, even a feeling that would confirm or deny conclusively the 'rightness' of the path that I walked. And to my great surprise, and disappointment, it never came.

Instead what did come my way was a collection of smaller moments and insights: academic successes, affirmations from those responsible for my formation, discovering gifts in a variety of ministries, the simple sense of 'fitting in' with a community. As I look back, I see that all of these were 'signs' of a good fit. There is a line used by the author Parker Palmer where he says, *'Let your life speak'*. I think this is sage advice. Our life speaks through what interests and attracts us, and what does not. It speaks through our abilities and talents. It speaks through conflict and hardship, when we learn our limitations. It speaks through the things that thrill our hearts

and excite us! As we discern our place, it is these things God uses to speak to us. It is to these 'voices' that we must listen.

That being said, listening is not the sum of discernment. At some point, each of us must act by making a choice. To be honest, I found this to be the most difficult part of discernment. Each of us is blessed with gifts that reveal a number of possibilities for our lives, all of which are good, beautiful, and holy. That is God's gift to us. However, when the moment comes to choose, we can only choose one. My former spiritual director once told me that God's will for me is not one particular path, but that I choose one from the possibilities that God has offered me. Discernment calls us to take an active role, by making a choice. If we wait for God to make the choice for us, we may be waiting a very long time!

In truth, choice between numerous good options is not easy. We must also remember that saying 'yes' to something or someone, means saying no to something or someone else. That can be a difficult lesson to accept when you are discerning, but it is a necessary one to learn. There is great joy in choosing a path; but there can also be poignant sadness in knowing that other paths cannot be taken. In such realizations, we find solace in knowing that God, who understands our heart, walks with us on the path.

When we listen to God's voice speaking in our life and make a sincere choice, we are doing all we can to follow Christ. We also discover that there is freedom in choosing: the freedom to follow our heart and the freedom to deepen our relationship with God and with one another. I wish you every blessing in your discernment journey!



Tony Bidgood C.Ss.R. is currently ministering with the Redemptorist Community in Sudbury

Provincial Fr. Mike Brehl C.Ss.R. with Tony on the day of Tony's First Profession of Vows.

Blessed Francis Seelos C.Ss.R. and Hurricane Katrina

It is not hard to imagine the vast devastation that has taken place across the American South due to Hurricane Katrina this past August. Soon after the first reports of the flooding and destruction of many areas in New Orleans, LA, and Biloxi, MS, we Redemptorists were concerned about hearing word from our Confreres working in those areas. Myself, and Seminarian Tony Bidgood C.Ss.R. traveled to the American South, including New Orleans just a week before the Hurricane began to threaten the area.

When visiting the Redemptorist Community and Parish at St. Mary's, New Orleans, we were struck by the history and impact of the Redemptorists in the area over the decades. Most striking for us was what we learned about Blessed Francis Seelos C.Ss.R., who lived and died in New Orleans in the 1900's.

Francis Xavier Seelos C.Ss.R. was born in 1819 in Bavaria. Upon coming to the United States, he joined the Redemptorists and worked in the eastern United States. He was a contemporary of St. John Neumann C.Ss.R., and worked close together. After working in Detroit, MI, Blessed Seelos moved to New Orleans, LA to be pastor of



the Church of St. Mary of the Assumption. After only a number of months, while he was working with the victims of Yellow Fever, Seelos contracted the illness himself and died October 4, 1876, at the age of 48. He was proclaimed blessed by Pope John Paul II during the Jubilee Year celebrations in 2000.

At the onset of the hurricane, Blessed Seelos' remains were removed from the Church of St. Mary's and taken to a safe place in Baton Rouge, LA. The Church of St. Mary's received heavy damage because of the hurricane. The people of New Orleans have always been drawn to the legacy and life of Blessed Francis Seelos. Let us continue in prayer through his intercession for the people of the American South, especially those who have died in this tragedy, and for those whose lives will be changed forever.

Blessed Francis Seelos, Pray for us.

Fr. Santo

Practically Speaking, how does one begin discernment?

A way to prepare for discernment is to make a time line of your life story from birth to present day:

1. Significant Persons in my life:

- Who have been the people in my life?
- What has my relationship been to them?
- How have they influenced me positively and negatively?
- Who has had the most impact on me?
- Reflect on your experience of family.
- What have I learned?
- What do I value?
- What do I want to let go of?

2. Educational Experiences:

- What schools did I attend?
- What did I like, dislike, favourite memories, activities, friends, significant events, people? What did I learn of life that I want to keep? What gets in the way?

3. Social and Sexual Development:

- What do I enjoy doing with others?
- What do I do just because it's in?
- What do I find relaxing and renewing?
- Who have I dated? Under what circumstances?
- What has been my relationship to men?
- What has been my relationship to women?
- Review your sexual history.....
- From whom did you first learn about sex?
- What have been your experiences as a child, teen, young adult, now....
- What impact have various relationships had on you?

4. Work history.....

- Jobs held, how long, where, colleges, preparation for positions, responsibility, initiative
- What did you learn and what skills did you acquire in each job or preparation process?

5. Faith Experience:

- What's your earliest recollection of God?
- Who taught you about God?
- Who has had the greatest influence in your faith development?
- How was church, faith, God in your family?
- What practices do you do to care for your faith life?
- Where did you learn about these practices?
- Who is God in your life?
- Name your experiences of the Divine in your life?
- How did that feel, what impact did these have?
- How do you see God in the everyday circumstances of your life?
- How do you nurture this relationship?

6. Life choice:

- When did you first think of religious life?
- What has been the pattern in this?
- Why religious life?
- What about marriage? Or single life?

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The *raison d'être* of the Congregation

"In fulfilling their mission of evangelization (to proclaim the Good News to the Poor), we Redemptorists are ourselves evangelized. The reality of confronting the life of the poor leads us again and again to the question of our foundational charism, that which is the reason for our service in the Church. The existence of the poor examines religious life at its very roots, as well as its value as a prophetic sign for the world. It is a frontal challenge to our sense of poverty and our style of life."

Taken from "The Poor Also Evangelize" written by: Francisco Moreno Rejon C.Ss.R. (Vice Province of Peru-Sur) in *To Be A Redemptorist Today*



Am I Called?

Discernment is NOT easy. Now that we got that out of the way, let's move on with our task!

Often when we try to reflect on our call from God, we get all caught up with questions, fears, expectations, and wondering what we'll have to give up to follow God with any vocation we are invited into, be it religious life, priesthood, marriage, or single life. Perhaps we have to think about what we have in us as internal assets that will contribute and lead to our discernment, instead of focusing on the fears of letting go of what we need to give up. The following are a series of questions to help you focus on your journey of discernment. Every couple of months, another set of questions will be listed in this newsletter to assist you in your reflection. These

questions are adapted from the work of another Vocation Director, Sister Gloria Urrabazo, MCDP, and reprinted in Horizon Magazine. Used with permission.

This Issue: "Your Interests", and "Are others important to you?"

Next Issue: "Are you involved?", and "Charity begins at home."

Your Interests.....

Besides your regular occupation, or work that you might do, what other interests do you have: hobbies, sports, parties, etc?

1. Are these interests conflicting with important things in your life? How?

2. Do you feel that these activities are an escape from the pressures of real life? Do these interests bring you in closer contact with others?
3. Do these interests have a bearing on your desire to become a religious? In which way?

Are others important to you?

1. How do you relate to people older/younger than yourself? e.g. Teachers, boss, the elderly, children.
2. What plan do you think you should formulate in order to ensure your growth in friendship with others?
3. Have you any contact with persons in different racial or language groups, and what sort of relationship do you have with them?
4. How do your relationships help you?
5. How does the Gospel guide you in this regard? Prayer?

Constitution Corner

Article 6: A Community of Conversion

40. *It is most important that the members regard the community as something which must aim at continual progress through constant interior renewal.*
41. *a. The members must give all their attention to putting on the new self, created in the image of Christ crucified and risen from the dead, so as to purify their motives in judging and acting. For conversion of heart and continual renewal of mind should characterize their whole daily life. This effort entails continual self-denial, which eliminates egoism, and opens the heart to others generously and fully, in accordance with the demands of the apostolic calling. Spending themselves for others in this way for the sake of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:10ff), they will acquire that interior freedom which brings unity and harmony into their whole life.*

To read more of our Constitutions and Statues, go to our General Government Website at www.cssr.com.

Our Young Adult Ministries

Liguori Circle

If you're looking to connect with young adults to share faith, fellowship and fun, get involved in Liguori Circle! Cities hosting Liguori Circle include: Grande Prairie, Saskatoon, St. John's, and Toronto (January).

See the Website for Details!



S.E.R.V.E.

S.E.R.V.E. is a 5 week opportunity for Young Adults (age 18-30) to live in Redemptorist Community, work in apostolic opportunities, and together grow in faith through prayer, reflection, and Eucharist.

This year, S.E.R.V.E. will be taking place in Saskatoon and Sudbury from **May 13-June 17, 2006**

SEE the WEBSITE for Information and Registration!!

Give your 2 cents worth!

"Dear Alphie....." & **"Room with a View"** are opportunities to ask questions, engage discussion, grow in faith, and learn a bit from sharing, and expert Redemptorist advice.

Go online at www.redemptorists.ca and hit Quick Links: **"Dear Alphie....."** or **"Room with a View"** to have your say!

Weekend Vocation Retreat Opportunities

See our Website for upcoming dates for Weekend Vocation Retreats in 9 locations across Canada!

www.redemptorists.ca

You can even register **ONLINE!**

Upcoming Location and Dates:
Toronto November 11-13, 2006

Check out the Web!!

There are several websites that pertain to the Church, Redemptorists, discernment, and different other "Catholic" things!

Check these ones out!

Canadian Vocation Network
Canadian Catholic Campus Ministry
Contemplative Outreach
Daily Reflection on Scripture
Movie Reviews and Information
Redemptorists in North America
Redemptorists in Edmonton-Toronto Prov
Redemptorists in Rome (General Gvnm't)
Vatican
Vidimus Dominum (Newspaper about Religious Life)

www.vocations.ca
www.cccm.com
www.centeringprayer.com
www.marklink.org
www.moviemission.com
www.redemptorists.com
www.redemptorists.ca
www.cssr.com
www.vatican.va
www.vidimusdominum.org



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