



# The Vine...

Young Adults and Redemptorists Connecting Through Christ

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## *My Incredible, Unexpected Summer Experience! S.E.R.V.E. 2006—Sudbury*

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By Miranda Walley of Winnipeg Manitoba

If you would have asked me a few months ago how I would have envisioned spending my first summer break after a year of university I would have said, “Traveling to a far-away place and exploring a new culture for the purpose of doing works of social justice”. I have to admit: that’s the dreamer in me. The reality for this 19 year old is that I did exactly what my works would’ve spoken, but the truth is: I’m only realizing it now.



Maybe I’ll back up the bus and give you a chance to see how my summer experience with the Redemptorists all started. Sometime in February I came across a pamphlet just outside the chapel of the Catholic college I call home at my university. Trying to be open to any new possibilities I brought the pamphlet home, looked through it and without having any particular practical goals for the upcoming summer, decided to give the experience described a try. The thing I was about to apply

for is called SERVE – Summer Endeavor in a Redemptorist Volunteer Experience and let me tell you I was very surprised when I got in. I started to think, “Well, this is for real now: does God really want me to give this a go?” To make a long story short, I did go, had the incredible experience I now understand I had hoped for, and now I want to share that experience with you.

After a 24 hour bus ride (of which I finally realized during the last hour I was sitting beside a fellow Servite!) my new friend and I got off in a brand new place for me, my “far-away place” if you will: Sudbury, Ontario. Sudbury itself is a place I’ll never forget: people there know how to use the God-given rock and lakes they are surrounded by! From the very first moment I felt completely accepted by Tony (the then Redemptorist seminarian who helped run the program) and by Fr. Tom and Anne (also SERVE coordinators); not to mention the dear brother and two other priests (all members of the Redemptorist community) who let us youngsters invade their home for 5 weeks!

The first few days of the experience were spent investigating all the corners of our new home, including the attached parish, the woods behind it, being orientated into the program and getting to know our new friends: the other Servites and members of our beautiful new parish. I started learning very quickly that this place, although not foreign, does have its own unique and very beautiful culture. And from the get-go the new culture seemed to embrace us as its own in everything from letting us join in choir at Sunday Mass to teaching us the French Sudbury “slang”! (cont’d pg 4)



## Dialogue 2006: "Plug Into Christ!"

Ancaster, Ontario...August 2006... a peaceful and stunningly beautiful retreat center...90 enthusiastic young adults and Redemptorists from across North America...a gentle invitation from God...the ingredients for the North American Dialogue 2006!

Only a few weeks ago I arrived a Mount Mary Immaculate Retreat Centre in Ancaster (Hamilton) on a sunny afternoon, not completely sure of what I was to experience over the following week. But I knew that when you combine young adults, Redemptorists, and some "dialogue" between them, things were bound to happen that would have trumped my expectations.



North American Redemptorist Dialogues are opportunities for young adults and Redemptorist Priests and Brothers to come together to celebrate, share, reflect, and pray about different themes in our world and Church. It is an opportunity as well to vision about how the Redemptorist Charism, "to preach good news to the poor", is a call and charism that young people in the Church today can make their own, in collaboration with Redemptorists through their ministries of preaching, parishes, youth and young adult ministry, and inner-city ministries.

The theme for Dialogue 2006 was, "Plug into Christ". The atmosphere throughout Dialogue was incredibly welcoming and accepting. Through small group discussions, activities that brought much laughter, and loud conversations at mealtimes, a strong sense of community was built, and new friendships quickly formed. We had the opportunity of hearing inspiring words from several of the Redemptorists, who shared not only their knowledge and love of God with us, but also their very selves and the personal experiences that have brought them closer to God, and deeper into mission and service. Fr. Serafino Fiore C.Ss.R., the Vicar General of the Redemptorist



Congregation world wide was present for the gathering and represented Superior General Joseph Tobin C.Ss.R. in Rome. Fr. Serafino shared these words with the assembly as we neared the end of our week together, *"The whole message of Alphonsus revolves around this crazy love of God for the world, this love that induced God to become a child, to die for us on the Cross and to become bread for us. The Incarnation, passion and the Eucharist are the three pillars of Redemptorist spirituality and the conditions for our way of looking at life. For example, for St. Alphonsus it is not important to ask oneself 'what must I do' What are my obligations to be a good Christian?' The decisive question is rather: 'If God has loved me so much how can I respond to so much love?' For Alphonsus the key to happiness is to know Jesus Christ and make our relation with him the motive of our love. If the heart allows itself to be touched by this love the person will learn how to direct his or her conscience and freedom in a more profound way."*

In addition to several talks and presentations by Redemptorists and Young Adults, we gathered together in prayer. Prayer and Eucharist were planned by different Redemptorist Provinces, each sharing with us their culture, songs, and ways of worshipping God, including French, Spanish, English, and Ukrainian (Byzantine-Catholic tradition). We celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the peace of a quiet evening, the sun setting and casting long shadows until darkness surrounded us, yet Christ's light burning deep within our purified hearts.

A day was spent downtown Toronto, bringing that light to the poor and abandoned by meeting and interacting with the poor of the streets and providing them with lunch bags and some friendly conversation. And of course, we celebrated! From bonfires, to dancing, to a Hawaiian Luau, to dynamic liturgies, we rejoiced in Jesus, our power-source and Redeemer.

For many of the participants, this was the first opportunity they have had to encounter other men and women who share their experience of faith, and desire to be servants of the Gospel. As the young adult participants and the Redemptorists returned home, they went with this challenge: To integrate, nurture, and call forth the gifts they have received in this experience, and to allow those gifts and grace to bear fruit in their particular parish and community through the ministry and charism of the Redemptorists as it is lived out in its outreach to youth and young adults across North America.

By: Sarah Villager, a parishioner at St. Mary's Parish in Beaverlodge, AB and Santo Arrigo, C.Ss.R., Coordinator of Redemptorist Vocation Ministry based in Toronto, ON, and who also served as the Chair of the Dialogue 2006 Planning Team.



## *Then there was S.E.R.V.E. ...Saskatoon!*

Interview by: Kiply Lukan Yaworski:  
Communications Coordinator—Diocese of Saskatoon

Five young adults from across Canada recently shared an experience of service and community, spending time living, praying and working with the Redemptorist Community in Saskatoon.

The Saskatoon experience was part of an annual SERVE—or “Summer Endeavour in a Redemptorist Volunteer Experience”—program offered to young adults between 18 and 30 years of age from May 13– June 17. A second S.E.R.V.E. program also ran at Holy Redeemer Parish in Sudbury, ON. this year.

Patrick Brown of Toronto, Chantale Durette of Sudbury, Sarah Gleeson of Milton, Ont., Kendra Howlett of Clifton Royal, N.B., and Alphonsus To of Vancouver, B.C. participated in SERVE Saskatoon. Team leaders included Pat Csinos, (Coordinator of Redemptorist Young Adult Ministry with the Edmonton-Toronto Province), Fr. Leo English, C.Ss.R., and Myron Rogal of Saskatoon.

SERVE provided these five young adults with a five-week opportunity to pray and to live in Christian community with the Redemptorists based at St. Mary’s parish, while providing hands-on volunteer service in the community.

That service included preparing and serving food at Friendship Inn soup kitchen on 20th Street, as well as volunteering at the CWL clothing depot, at a local senior citizen home and at a Catholic elementary school.

Participants found the experience both challenging and enriching. “I’d worked before in a retirement home, but this was a little bit different, because it was long term care,” said Durette, who served at Porteous Lodge with Gleeson and Brown. “People needed feeding and sometimes things are really hard to deal with on a day to day basis.”

Gleeson described how she enjoyed being with the elderly residents. “At first you think ‘how am I going to relate to people who are three or four times my age?’ but you do. You find so much in common!”



“You grow to really love the residents”, agreed Durette. “You enter into their home, into their community.”

“To just help a child to read a sentence that they wrote, there is such a sense of accomplishment.”

“The opportunity to volunteer for an extended period of time brought a new depth to one’s service”, said To.

“Back home, at most we probably would volunteer once a week or maybe once a month. There would not be enough regular contact to form a good relationship with people,” To said. “However, here, where we see people almost on a daily basis, you are able to have enough contact to get to know each other a little bit more.”



Howlett described another unique aspect of the service provided through SERVE—it happens in the context of faith reflection and shared prayer. “We are going out in apostolate work and then coming back here and living in community, where we have sessions on different parts of our faith. We’re trying to connect faith with what we’re doing during the day.”

Durette said she really appreciated the chance to reflect on her service in light of her faith, “and relate it to the gospel.”

As part of the program, participants learned more about the Saskatoon context, said Csinos, describing how the group spent time taking walks, visiting local facilities, and hearing presentations by speakers involved in different agencies and ministries. The group also met Bishop Albert LeGatt, spent time with parishioners at St. Mary’s, and participated in a sweat lodge.

“I think it’s an invaluable experience,” said Durette. “Very few people are offered a chance of going to a strange city and immersing yourself in the community and in a different culture, in a different way of life, a different situation.” Gleeson agreed. “You step outside of your box, that’s for sure.”

The program provides a chance to make some of the changes in the world that a person dreams about, said To. “We can try doing some of the things we always wanted to try.”

Participants said they appreciated the family atmosphere and support provided within the group and by the Redemptorists. “I don’t think that we would be together so successfully if it weren’t for the spirituality of the Redemptorist community,” said Brown.

(cont’d pg.4)

### Kiply's S.E.R.V.E Saskatoon Continued...

Support for the program comes from many people, noted English, pointing to a nearby bulletin board filled with prayer messages from past SERVE participants, from religious orders, from community groups and from Redemptorist communities across the country. In addition, the Vicar Provincial of the Redemptorist order, Gerry Pettipas, C.Ss.R., came to Saskatoon to meet the SERVE group. The program has implications for the local community as well, said English. "There were a lot of people involved just to make this happen; a lot of behind the scenes work."



The agencies and institutions where the SERVE participants have volunteered are also



eager to see this happen again next year, added Csinos. "That's really encouraging. As we live this, we are reassured that yes, this is an important program that we need to continue to offer young people across Canada. These young people want to connect their faith with ministry, and want to meet people who share their faith all within a Redemptorist spirituality." The program is a great sign of hope for the future of the Church, added Rogal, noting how these young people are willing to sacrifice part of their summer for this experience of service and prayer. As some compensation for time taken from potential summer employment, participants receive a \$1,500.00 educational bursary upon completion of the program.

### Miranda's S.E.R.V.E. Sudbury Continued...

When I learned of the place that was to be my "apostolate" for 5 weeks (the place that I and a fellow Servite were being "apostles" to during the program) I was very excited but nervous. I was invited to work in the activity department of a long-term care facility called Extencicare Falconbridge where approximately 250 elderly live and are cared for. Being with the residents there helped solidify my decision to go into Nursing at school this fall. This part of my experience also affected me the most because here I got to get down on my knees for the first time in a long time and serve those who couldn't do things on their own. And this is where the "social justice" I had dreamed of comes in. One of our themes for the experience was a beautiful picture of Christ kneeling down to wash an initially hesitant Peter's feet. Just like Peter I think we all had hesitant feelings but for each of us these feelings gave way to a new kind of understanding. What you see in this picture after a while is that Jesus' face is reflected in the dirty water, just as after a while we were able to see Christ in the people we got down on our knees to help every day in Sudbury.



Nothing could replace the sense of community and prayer life we all felt living with the Redemptorists. What to me felt much more like an honour than the right of SERVE participants was the kindness with which the Redemptorists treated us. We had fun times together at supper and on occasional outings. They brought us into the community life and encouraged us to use the best of our talents to help out where we could and these things all added extremely to my cultural experience. One of my favourite encounters on SERVE, however was the chance to meet face to face with Jesus in the tabernacle every day. The little chapel upstairs and the church downstairs made it so easy for me to take time for the one who sent me on this mission, everyday! And nothing could replace our Tuesday Celebrations of the Eucharist – especially that first one with Fr. Mike, the enthusiastic Redemptorist leader who taught us so much through his actions. That first Mass was incredible – all 6 of us new-bees, surrounded by such genuinely joyful Redemptorists, were together able to feel as if we were in the Upper Room where the very first Eucharist was celebrated and we were given much-needed strength for the exciting and challenging times to come!

And the day after we dispersed 2 by 2, in the traditional Redemptorist manner, to seek the new challenges and greet the new faces our unknowing apostolates would bring!

At the end of the day, the very awesome and busy day, I knew each night going to bed, that we were doing His work. And to me – that's the most important thing. Almost nothing can replace a dream, especially an exciting summer dream-experience, but I think experiencing SERVE is better than any other summer plans to far-away places a person can make! If you give it a try and find a way to get involved, I don't think you'd ever regret the chance to do so much more than what you could dream of. You get to be Jesus' hands and feet, meet incredible people and take home with you a whole new set of guidelines for life – what more can you ask for – even if you're a dreamer like me?



## Thanksgiving: An Attitude of Gratitude

Somewhere recently I read a statistic that 80% of Canadians live in towns and cities. Rural life is quickly disappearing and most of us have lost touch with our rural roots. Yet, historically our nation was built on a strong agricultural foundation and it was in the harvest festivals of rural Canada that our present-day thanksgiving celebrations were born.

Having lived around agriculture most of my life, I can say that farming is perhaps the most optimistic of all occupations. The spring seeding is done in the hopes that the seed will sprout, that it will grow, and bear fruit. Success depends so much on things outside the farmer's control – rainfall, sunshine, pests or blight. And so, it's no surprise that people close to the land would be most aware of God's providence and would want to give him thanks for the many blessings received. We could certainly learn something from these tillers of the soil.

As Christians, we also have an important way of giving God thanks for all that he has given us – and it's called *Eucharist*. The word *Eucharist*, comes from the Greek word for *thanksgiving*.

Each and every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we are giving thanks for everything that God has done for us, especially for the awesome gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.

To have this attitude of gratitude is very important for us as Christians. To acknowledge God's goodness and to give thanks is fitting and proper. Therefore, I encourage all of you to try this little exercise. Take a few minutes sometime, even today, and reflect on what you are thankful for, and write them down on a piece of paper. And then hang onto it for a while – put it on your desk, or your dresser, or your bedside table, and look at it every day, and say a little prayer of thanks to God for the many gifts and blessings God has given you. Set that as a life goal. Each and every day, take the opportunity to thank God for all that we have been given.

Ed Eherer, C.Ss.R.

(Fr. Ed is an Associate Pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Toronto)



*The Angelus—Millet*  
The sound of the bell travels far on the still air of evening, from the church spire on the horizon

### Welcome Aboard

Things have been quite busy in the RYVM (Redemptorist Youth and Vocation Ministry) Office over the past several months. SERVE, Dialogue 2006, preparing for a new year with Vocation Promotion, Vocation Come and See Retreats, High School Retreat Team, Liguori Circle..... The list goes on and on!

Pat and I are happy to welcome into the craziness, Kathy Perry who is currently studying Theology at Regis College in Toronto. Kathy will be working with RYVM as her Practicum in Pastoral Ministry. She will be working with Pat in the preparation and running of the High School Retreat Ministry Team, as well as being involved with the Toronto Liguori Circle with Fr. Jon Hansen C.Ss.R. at St. Patrick's Church. Kathy will also be contributing to the RYVM Newsletter, and other elements of our ministry at the Office. You may one day be hearing from her as well! Welcome Kathy to the Office!

We look forward to working with you over the next year!

(Santo Arrigo, C.Ss.R., Vocation Coordinator)



### What Does Redemption Mean to YOU?

We invite you to answer this question and the following questions in our **ONLINE SURVEY!**

**What do you believe about the saving work of God?**

**How is Jesus YOUR Redeemer?**

**In what ways do you think the world is in need of hearing about "Redemption"?**

**How does the Good News of Plentiful Redemption need to be heard among the youth of the world today?**

**How does the Good News of Plentiful Redemption need to be heard among the youth where you live?**

**How might you see the work of the Redemptorists responding to the needs of young people?**

**How might you be able to participate in bringing the Good News of Plentiful Redemption to our broken world?**

[www.redemptorists.ca](http://www.redemptorists.ca)

## Check Out Our Programs for Young Adults!

### 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: Grand Prairie, Saskatoon, St. John's, Toronto, and Sudbury.*

*See the Website for Details!*

### S.E.R.V.E. 2006

**Summer Endeavour in a Redemptorist Volunteer Experience**

*Come Discover Christ in Yourself and in Others!*

**Join us for six weeks of reflection, friendship, and service.**

**May 12—June 23, 2007**

Twelve young men and women, 18-30 years of age are invited to live in community with Redemptorist Priests and Brothers and to grow together in prayer, Eucharist, and service.

Two locations: Holy Redeemer Parish, Sudbury, ON and St. Mary's Parish, Saskatoon, SK  
Applications available ONLINE soon!

Deadline for application: March 10, 2007

### Online Advent Retreat For the Busy Young Adult

Consider spending three minutes each day during the Advent Season in personal preparation for the coming of Christ.



Send your email address to [ryvm@redemptorists.ca](mailto:ryvm@redemptorists.ca) by Nov. 24 with the subject "I'm in for Advent Retreat" to receive the daily Advent reflection directly in your mail box.

Or

Visit our On-line Advent Retreat for the Busy Young Adult at:

*"Dear Alphie"* is an opportunity to ask questions, engage discussion, grow in faith, and learn a bit from sharing, and expert Redemptorist advice.

Go online at [www.redemptorists.ca](http://www.redemptorists.ca) and hit Quick Link to "Dear Alphie..."

### Come and See Retreat Weekends!

Check out the website for information about the Come and See Retreat Weekends.

You can even register ONLINE!

[www.redemptorists.ca](http://www.redemptorists.ca)

*Toronto: October 26-29, 2006*

*Edmonton: November 3-6, 2006*

*Retreat dates are advertised on the website as well for Winnipeg, Vancouver, St. John's, Sudbury, Toronto, Saskatoon and Quebec City.*

*Redemptorist Youth/Vocation Ministry*

*Contacts:*

**Pat Csinos**

Coordinator of Redemptorist Young Adult Ministry

Fr. Santo Arrigo C.Ss.R.

Coordinator of Redemptorist Vocation Ministry

Phone: 416-789-3217 Fax: 416-789-9266

Email: [ryvm@redemptorists.ca](mailto:ryvm@redemptorists.ca)

E-mail: [vocations@redemptorists.ca](mailto:vocations@redemptorists.ca)

[www.redemptorists.ca](http://www.redemptorists.ca)