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**Changing Forms of Parish Renewal:  
Toward a Restructuring of the Parochial Model  
1950-1999**

**Margaret Mary Million**

**A Thesis in The Department of Religion**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
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# Changing Forms of Parish Renewal: Toward a Restructuring of the Parochial Model 1950-1999

## ABSTRACT

Margaret Million

This thesis will study the phenomenon of Catholic parish renewal movements before and after the Second Vatican Council. It will focus on four renewal movements: the Redemptorist Mission, Cursillo, Charismatic Renewal and RENEW. Although these renewal movements were operative in both Europe and the Americas, this study will be limited to the Island of Montreal and the effect that the movements had on the life of those parishes which experienced them. A history of each of the movements studied will, however, be outlined in order to situate the milieu of its origin.

Renewal movements stimulate the latent piety of the individual and there is evidence of a resurgence of popular devotional practices. This thesis will examine both collective and individual forms of worship by describing communal devotion and personal piety. It will do so by looking at some of the more popular devotional practices such as the veneration of saints and the cult of Mary. It will also examine the efficacy of parish renewal movements and the impact that clerical leadership had on success or failure.

An introductory chapter will posit the theory held by acknowledged sociological experts that religion is a social and individual phenomenon. It will outline movements which formed communities and examine those which were grass roots movements and those which were organised by church authorities. It will also describe some of the forms that devotional practices took and try to analyse their persistent hold on the piety of devotees. The second chapter will begin the examination by describing the Redemptorist Mission Movement, pre-

Vatican II and the present efforts to re-vivify the movement according to post-Vatican II norms. Subsequent chapters will investigate the Cursillo movement, the Charismatic Movement and RENEW.

The epilogue will show how renewal movements, and the subsequent devotional life of the membership, nourish the community and prepare participants for leadership roles in the parish setting. It will illustrate the role the importance of Pastoral Care in the restructuring of parishes into Small Church Communities (SCC).

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There have been many milestones on my academic journey and at each of them there were persons who urged me on to the next mile. From the many to whom I owe a debt of gratitude some stand out.

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## Review of the Literature

The primary focus of this literature review is to ascertain the value of certain publications which have helped form the basis and subsequent development of this dissertation.

### SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Several sociological studies have verified the authenticity of the human search for what is recognised as reaching for the transcendent through the phenomenon of religion. Emile Durkheim's classic work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*<sup>1</sup> as well as his *Selected Writings*<sup>2</sup> offers a definition of the function that religion plays as a fact of the social context. *The Sociology of Religion* by Max Weber, especially his typology of asceticism, mysticism and salvation religion, clarifies the use of symbols and how beliefs are often modified to the perspective of the strata which will be attracted to that ethic of salvation which corresponds to their place in society.<sup>3</sup> This was of particular value in helping to understand the practice of praying to intercessory saints. Several other sociological works helped to build a firm foundation for the study of the religious imperative. *The Sacred Canopy*<sup>4</sup>, *The Religious Factor*<sup>5</sup>, and *Religious Institutions*,<sup>6</sup> confirmed that religion is a matter of great importance for society – particularly in the ways in which it impacts on the areas of family values, and political and economic life. Reginald Bibby's *Fragmented*

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<sup>1</sup> Emile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: MacMillan, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Emile Durkheim. *Selected Writings*. A. Gibbons (ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1972.

<sup>3</sup> Max Weber. *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963. [Original publication: *Religionssoziologie*. *Wirtschaft & Gesellschaft*, 1922].

<sup>4</sup> P. L. Berger. *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Doubleday, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard Lenski. *The Religious Factor*. New York: Doubleday, 1963.

*Gods*<sup>7</sup> and *The Bibby Report: Social Trends Canadian Style*<sup>8</sup> clarify and confirm through statistical analysis, much of what these writers have to say about the place of religion in modern society.

*The Varieties of Religious Experience*<sup>9</sup> is a complementary companion to *The Idea of The Holy*<sup>10</sup>, which links religious emotion with the ethical imperative. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* confirms much of Rudolph Otto's thesis in *The Idea of the Holy* that there needs to be a marriage of the "irrational" with the moral and ethical expression of religious worship. The practice of ritual best expresses worship. It may be described as "good theatre" or "drama". In his work *Ritual and Ethnic Identity* Frederick Bird describes ritual as "a unique medium of communication".<sup>11</sup> As an "invocative" form of communication it enhances the efficacy of *liturgical* expression. He also confirms that ritual action does not play a purely liturgically decorative role but is indispensable to the communication of sacred meaning.<sup>12</sup> An example would be the anointing of a child with holy oils on the forehead by the prescribing of a cross. As soon as this has been done, (accompanied by the appropriate prayers), the oil is immediately wiped off! Within the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) the first step for the candidate is to ask for inclusion into the church community. The ritual for this process is to have him/her knock on the doors of the church from the outside and request entrance into the building. This is certainly more

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<sup>6</sup> Joan Brothers. *Religious Institutions*. London: Longman, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> Reginald Bibby. *Fragmented Gods*. Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Reginald Bibby. *The Bibby Report: Social Trends Canadian Style*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: The Modern Library, 1929.

<sup>10</sup> Rudolph Otto. *The Idea of The Holy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

<sup>11</sup> Frederick Bird. *Ritual and Ethnic Identity*. (unpublished), 28.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

effective than any homiletic reflection; the action clearly focuses the attention of the congregation as no teaching or homily could. The importance of such ritualistic action is confirmed by Bird who says "ritual scripts must be acted out and not just spoken."<sup>13</sup>

Some books such as *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*,<sup>14</sup> *The Myth of the Eternal Return*<sup>15</sup> and *Natural Symbols*<sup>16</sup> while not explicit to this research, reinforce a belief in the fascination and necessity for spiritual expression through religious worship expressed in ritual and symbol.

#### MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH AND THE ROLE OF THE LAITY

After Vatican Council II was convened in 1962 the deliberations which flowed gave birth to contemporary Church renewal. The purpose of the Council was to examine the Roman Catholic Church's evolving self-understanding, and usher in a new age of renewal and reform. An extensive body of literature addressed the implementation of this new vision. Crucial to its understanding was the authoritative translation of the conciliar documents together with post-conciliar papers and commentaries. These publications are explicit to this research.

The sixteen Council documents and addenda which make up the Vatican II data, are readable to any person of any background and it is doubtful whether any analysis of renewal movements in the latter half of the twentieth century could be made without the *Documents*

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<sup>13</sup> Frederick Bird. "The nature and Function of Ritual Forms" in *Studies in Religion* (Fall 1980), 389.

<sup>14</sup> F. Schleiermachers. *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.

<sup>15</sup> Mircea Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Douglas. *Natural Symbols*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970.

of Vatican II.<sup>17</sup> The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* was invaluable to this thesis because it analyses the thinking behind the decree itself. The global re-examination of the laity's role in the Church and the urgency to intensify lay activity was acutely realised by the bishops of Vatican II. At that time they affirmed that the role of the laity was "...a global issue that required massive re-examination" and pointed out the "...urgent need of intensifying lay activity."<sup>18</sup> This new intense awareness became the subject of an extensive body of literature proposing reforms and it is because of this focus that the above document and decree are considered primary to the thesis.

In *Lay People in the Church* it is stated that when the Church "...boldly throws herself open to lay activity, she will experience such a springtime as we cannot imagine."<sup>19</sup> For the author there is a natural function and place for laity in the Church, and his understanding of the inauguration of Catholic Action situated the process of Cursillo. Catholic Action was defined and instituted by Pope Pius XI but the main lines of the Catholic Action mandate were stated by Pius X in 1903. The role of the layperson involved in Catholic Action was the seedbed for the Cursillo Movement which is one of the renewal movements cited in this thesis.

Specific documents referring to the laity and emanating from the Vatican II Council brought the teachings of this Council into the normative experience of the ordinary layperson. The "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" advocated the increased participation of the laity in Church life. As a result of the pastoral reflections and examination of the layperson's role, a Canadian theological conference was called in 1967 requesting that papers

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<sup>17</sup> Austin P. Flannery, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> John B. Sheerin. *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*. New Jersey: Paulus Fathers, 1996; 10, 14.

be submitted on renewal, charisms, worship, and the sociology of the proposed new vision of Church. Several lectures from the conference support the thesis of this paper that the creation of Small Church Communities would best serve the on-going life of the Church.<sup>20</sup> Synthesised, these lectures confirm pastoral animators' experience in Montreal community colleges where students experiencing a "...*desire* to serve, a *desire* to show their love and concern, a *desire* to worship ... [who] seek in the local church a place of acceptance, are disappointed. They find our liturgies meaningless. The Church becomes an obstacle to an experience of religious life and faith."<sup>21</sup>

Several books were integral to the argument for the formation of groups of people meeting in house churches. *The Remaking of the Church* calls for sweeping changes in the belief that they are needed in order to sustain the hopes of a membership that is experiencing the Church as an irrelevant institution.<sup>22</sup> In the twenty five years since its publication many of the author's more radical suggestions (a married clergy, women's ordination etc.), became recommendations for action proposed by the more than 700 delegates representing 25,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese of Montreal in November 1998.<sup>23</sup> The author hoped that his agenda for reform would produce a more communal and human church.

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<sup>19</sup> Yves Congar, OP. *Lay People in the Church*. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1965; xviii.

<sup>20</sup> L. K. Shook, ed. *Theology of Renewal Vol. II*. Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968; Chaps. 1, 2, 4, 13, 16, 18, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret McNally. "Removing Obstacles to Faith" in *Practice of Ministry in Canada* (Vol. 6:4, 1989), 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> Richard P. McBrien. *The Remaking of the Church*. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

<sup>23</sup> Cardinal Archbishop Jean-Claude Turcotte. *Pastoral Orientations Diocesan Synod of Montreal*. Montreal: Montreal Archdiocese, 1999.

In the book *Who is a Catholic*, it is stated that the Church must "...incorporate the whole People of God into the decision-making process of Church life."<sup>24</sup> This is in accord with the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (no:33), where it is stated that the "...lay apostolate is a participant in the mission of the Church itself ...where only through them can she become the salt of the earth."<sup>25</sup> This supports the notion that the formation of Small Church Groups would come under the jurisdiction of the lay apostolate.

*The Church and the Laity* draws upon the logic and theology of Newman but also promotes the place of the laity in the Church. The author argues that a change in consciousness regarding the place the layperson has always assumed was his/hers, would not occur in a single generation "...indeed the mission to *re-convert* is more difficult than the mission to *convert* [and] a much greater effort must be made to offer religion to men's intelligence."<sup>26</sup>

To the question "Where and how is community formed?", this thesis maintains that it is in Small Church settings such as are found in the structure of the RCIA. This is confirmed by the book *Catholic Evangelization Today*, where it is stated that "...Leaders need to facilitate a harnessing of ministers and ministries toward a common mission of evangelizing"<sup>27</sup> and that this is best accomplished, through "...the richness of the RCIA [which] needs to be applied to many areas of ministry and parish life."<sup>28</sup> *A Parish Guide to Adult Initiation* asserts at the outset that the RCIA provides the opportunity for people to

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<sup>24</sup> Richard P. McBrien. *Who is a Catholic*. New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1971; 233.

<sup>25</sup> Walter J. Abbott, SJ, *The Documents of Vatican II*. Piscataway, New Jersey: New Century Publishers. 1966; 59.

<sup>26</sup> Jean Guilton. *The Church and the Laity*. Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1965; 160 – 161.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Boyack, CSP, ed. *Catholic Evangelization Today*. New York.: Paulist Press, 1987; 200.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



“...meet, build relationships and celebrate together”.<sup>29</sup> The book not only presents the RCIA as a vehicle for Christian initiation that will revitalise a parish, but also provides suggestions for its implementation . It is a readable manual which complements the seminal volume *Rite of Christian Initiation* which details the methodology involved in the reception of those seeking inclusion.<sup>30</sup>

To understand the thrust of the post-Vatican II Church’s vision vis-à-vis Christian initiation, it is important to know how the early Church received converts to Christianity and what the initiation rites were in the early centuries. *St. Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*<sup>31</sup> is the primary study of the practice of initiation rites of the primitive church. In addition, *The Early Liturgy*<sup>32</sup> is a natural corollary to the investigation of early Church practices and patterns of worship. Since the early Church’s response was to expose the catechumens (would-be converts) to three years of teaching (catechumenate), it was obvious that the methodology had to be re-adjusted to the practical necessities of time and space in today’s world.

The shortened, one year journey period of catechises is found in the RCIA manual published by the Canadian Bishops. The Magisterium of the Church urges the implementation of the program as *the* way of receiving and teaching those asking for inclusion in the Roman Catholic Church, and each country has published its own unique manual. Although the “Congregation for Divine Worship” was prepared for the new rite, based on the decrees of Vatican II, it is by no means widely used. The process is only

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<sup>29</sup> Kenneth Boyack, CSP, ed. *A Parish Guide to Adult Initiation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979; 5.

<sup>30</sup> National Liturgical Office. *Rite of Christian Initiation*. Ottawa: C.C.C.B. , 1987.

<sup>31</sup> F. L. Cross, ed. *St. Cyril of Jerusalem’s Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*. London.: S.P.C.K. , 1951.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Jungman. *The Early Liturgy*. London: Dorton, Longman & Todd, 1959.

successful when clergy, parish staff and dedicated lay people adapt the rite to meet the unique character of each parish. Several books are helpful to this end. *Sacraments of Initiation*<sup>33</sup> is indispensable when seeking a fresh look at the theology of the Sacraments. *New Wine, New Wineskins* sets forth in lay terms the *raison d'être* of the RCIA.<sup>34</sup> The latter parallels the opinion that the Church must take the risk of changing itself if it is to find the "...fullness of its adult presence in the world" which is expressed in *The People are the Church*.<sup>35</sup> This last book also outlines the way in which this can be accomplished and expressed through the specific personality of the North American Church. While not dealing with the evangelising tool of the RCIA, nor adding to what *Sacraments of Initiation* had already explained, *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology* elucidates the sacramentality of the post-Vatican II Church.<sup>36</sup> An article contained in the *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, and entitled "Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion", gave not only a simple historical overview but outlined how the RCIA could be a blue-print for parish renewal and *not* only a means of bringing new members into the Church.<sup>37</sup> It particularly stressed the importance of continuing pastoral care as a deciding component for the success or failure of any excursion into renewing the parish structure.

*Faith Alive: A New Presentation of Catholic Belief and Practice* aimed specifically at up-dating the adult Catholic's understanding of the Church.<sup>38</sup> It is a comprehensive and

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Davis. *Sacraments of Initiation*. New York.: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

<sup>34</sup> J. B. Dunning. *New Wine, New Wineskins*. Chicago: William H. Sadler, 1981.

<sup>35</sup> Eugene Kennedy. *The People are the Church*. New York. Doubleday & Co Inc., 1971; 139.

<sup>36</sup> A. Ganoczy. *An Introduction to Catholic Sacramental Theology*. New York.: Paulist Press, 1979.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick Byrne. "Christian Initiation: Into full Communion" in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (Vol.11:64, 1978).

<sup>38</sup> John Redford, and Rowanne Pasco, eds. *Faith Alive: A New Presentation of Catholic Belief and Practice*. Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

easy-to-read exposition of the present day Church for those engaged in ecumenical dialogue. Yet, as a catechetical tool it can be more effectively used in various groups such as the RCIA. In it the framework for ministry no longer rests on individual priestly vocation, rather it becomes something which is upheld by a people called to a mutual shared ministry. One of the best books on co-responsible ministry is entitled *Collaborative Ministry*.<sup>39</sup> As a manual, it is one of the more effective texts which can be used to further the expansion of the concept of ministry jointly practised by clerics and laity. Since its publication in 1987 the *idea* of collaborative ministry has percolated into the thinking on how parishes should be run. Although the concept has provoked fear in some circles of clericalism there has been enthusiasm in others, particularly in those areas where pastoral care has been a feature of parish life. Where there has been good formation of lay leaders through teaching of scripture augmented by the Vatican II documents, the vision of a revitalised Church has taken root and the vision been realised. In these instances the diocese has become more service-oriented and, as Philip Murnion notes: “[I]t represents something like a Copernican revolution to see the diocese in orbit around its parishes rather than the parishes in orbit around their diocese.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Loughlan Sofield, ST and Carroll Juliano, SHCJ. *Collaborative Ministry*. Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1987.

<sup>40</sup> Philip J. Murnion. “Parish Renewal: State(ments) of the Question” in *America* (April 24, 1982), 316.

## LATIN AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

Small Church Communities emerged in Latin America as a result of "...popular movements which sought profound changes in the socio-economic structures."<sup>41</sup> As a result of committed work by such agencies as The Movement for Basic Education, the peasantry began to become literate. They met in homes and their new-found literacy wedded to their deep faith moved them to a greater understanding of the Bible and its basic themes of liberation. The first base ecclesial communities had begun in the 1960's and were encouraged by the theological atmosphere engendered by Vatican II. Whilst theologians, both Catholic and Protestant, were meeting to reflect on the relationship between faith and poverty, the gospel and social justice, (meetings which foreshadowed Liberation Theology), the peasants were meeting in shanty-town houses for bible studies led by home-grown but trained leaders. The living situation and the aspirations of the poor found voice with the theologians and pastors. The two streams were joined in a great hope, and the power of a united peasantry through their small group communities was quickly recognised.

Before the movement could take root in other cultures much reflection on the nature of Church had to be entered into. *The Community Called Church* clarifies the dynamics of what should be manifest in the Church. It is a book which was written following a series of seminars in which lay and clerics debated the question of faith in our age. The author, Juan Segundo, recognises that people believe that faith should be an energetic element in their lives and laments "...in fact it is not... all too often it has been transformed into a hide-out for people who dare not or cannot live the adventure of *being a human being today*."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. New York: Orbis Books, 1987; 67.

<sup>42</sup> Juan Segundo. *The Community Called Church*. New York: Orbis Books, 1973; Vol.1: vii.

Segundo situates the small base communities, such as those of Latin America, within a more realistic picture. He shows that in order to create Small Churches within the North American milieu there has to be a deeper appreciation of the vision of 'Church' according to the local conditions as well as the precepts of Vatican II. The book illustrates that theology and sociology should work together for a better understanding of 'Church'. This book and a slim volume entitled *What Must Remain in the Church*<sup>43</sup> were the beginning of a trickle of books on the subject which became a steady stream. For example, *The Shape of the Church to Come*<sup>44</sup> was confirmed in *Puebla and Beyond*. The latter showcased the possibilities of lay and ecclesial commitment which resulted from highlighting the priorities of education in order "...to raise the level of community awareness and promotion of ...Christian grassroots communities"<sup>45</sup> – thereby stressing that education should be an engagement of the post Vatican II Church.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A premise of this thesis is that there is a pressing need for the type of education which would empower those promoting Christian grassroots communities to become an integral part in the development of the parishes; and in particular, that this education could come about by the creation of small church groups. In order to support this premise it was necessary to understand how the earliest Christian communities functioned. It was relatively simple to access good historical documentation pertaining to the functioning of early

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<sup>43</sup> Hans Kung. *What Must Remain in the Church*. Glasgow: Fontana Books, 1977.

<sup>44</sup> Karl Rahners,. *The Shape of the Church to Come*. New York: Seabury Press ,1974.

<sup>45</sup> John Eagleson, and Philip Scharper. *Puebla and Beyond*. New York: Orbis Books, 1976; 11.

Church membership and congregational activity. Two of the best sources were *The Early Christian Church*<sup>46</sup> which dealt in depth with the first two centuries of the Church and *Christendom*<sup>47</sup> an historical exposé of Christianity from its earliest formation until the Reformation. Similarly, *A History of Christianity*<sup>48</sup> showed how the Jesus movement became widespread as an organised expression of faith. All of these texts were valuable in tracing the origins and practices of the early Church. Even more valuable, for their illumination of the conduct of the early Church, were the Letters of St. Paul written to the various church communities founded by him, which for this thesis were taken from the *Jerusalem Bible*.<sup>49</sup> (This translation was subsequently used for all the biblical research.) *Early Christian Writings*<sup>50</sup> further illuminated the activities and disputes present in the earliest communities. What became evident was that the early Church was engaged in continual teaching both catechetically at the local congregational level and through copious written documents at the hierarchical level.<sup>51</sup> This investigation proved that the educating of the laity was of primary importance in the early Church – an importance which must be retrieved in order to re-invigorate the Church of the twenty-first century.

*Models of the Church* was helpful in the research on the contemporary Church for its ecumenical dialogue and its assertion that “...the Church must take cognisance of...social movements [because] it must prove capable of responding *creatively* to the demands of new

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<sup>46</sup> Philip Carrington . *The Early Christian Church*. New York: Cambridge University Press , 1957.

<sup>47</sup> Roland Bainton,. *Christendom*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966: Volume 1.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Johnson . *A History of Christianity*. Middlesex, England: Pelican Books, 1982.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander Jones, ed. *Jerusalem Bible*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co, 1968.

<sup>50</sup> Maxwell Stanforth , and Andrew Louth, trans. *Early Christian Writings*. London, England: Penguin Books, 1968.

<sup>51</sup> John R. Willis. *The Teachings of the Church Fathers*. Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1966.

situations and to the needs of generations yet to come.”<sup>52</sup> It once again confirmed a need for change in the parochial structures. The book *Introducing Contemporary Catholicism*<sup>53</sup> states that “...today it is being stressed that pastoral work is no longer a matter for the clergy alone...and the clergy is powerless without the active and spontaneous cooperation of the laity.” This maintains the philosophy that small church communities will only grow in a healthy atmosphere of pastoral nurturing with teaching as a primary undertaking.

Searching for a model that would build on a rich heritage and courageously experiment with the present parochial structures, *Creating Small Faith Communities A Plan for Restructuring the Parish and Renewing Catholic Life* clearly showed how a parish could become a community of communities and be a new model of Church.<sup>54</sup> The concepts presented in *Creating Small Faith Communities* were furthered in the video entitled “Called to be Church”<sup>55</sup> which illustrated the realisation of these concepts in the restructuring of a parish. It showed the process of restructuring by presenting the experiment which was undertaken at St. Elizabeth Seton parish in Troy, Michigan and asserted that St. Elizabeth could be the model for the future profile of a parish. The book *Building Christian Communities*<sup>56</sup> reinforced the vision that there must be a pastoral strategy for this proposed model of Church. One of the best handbooks on this subject is *From a Crowd to the People of God*. It is a private edition acquired from a priest in Montreal and was translated from the original by Andrew Wade. It presents a clear vision of what is called “...a new historical

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<sup>52</sup> Avery Dulles. *Models of the Church*. New York: Image Books, 1978; 208.

<sup>53</sup> Theo Westow. *Introducing Contemporary Catholicism*. London, England: SCM Press, 1967; 63-64.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur R. Baranowski. *Creating Small Faith Communities*. Cincinnati: St Anthony Messenger Press, 1988.

<sup>55</sup> “Called to be Church”. Distributor: St. Anthony Messenger, Cincinnati.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Clark. *Building Christian Communities*. Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1972.

image for the Church.” This image conceives of the Church as comprising “...little groups of human proportions and basic ecclesial communities.” These will incorporate “...a process of catechumenate for the growth in faith of the people ...through structures of participation and communication and an extension of ministries.”<sup>57</sup> Another helpful and practical publication was *The Leaders Training Manual*,<sup>58</sup> which illustrated how a parish in Florida had also engaged in a successful restructuring along the guidelines set forth in both *Creating Small faith Communities* and *From a Crowd to the People of God*. The original conception of this thesis was prompted by these related experiences of Small Church Communities.

Statistics from an Angus Reid poll in November 1996 show that 68% of Canadians count themselves Christian<sup>59</sup> and a Southern News poll conducted in December 1998 said that three quarters of all Canadians claim religion to be important to their lives.<sup>60</sup> Yet as sociologist Andrew Greeley points out, “Catholics are...much more sceptical about the relevance of Church teaching to their lives.”<sup>61</sup> Whereas the large parish structure does not seem to attract, small groups continue to grow and draw membership. Because of this phenomena the concept of restructuring at the parish level is seen to be a viable approach.

Through the texts researched, it became apparent that well trained facilitators would be crucial to pastoral success, and that this would be the primary feature necessary for each of the Small Church Communities. Thirty-eight years of experience in parishes, prayer

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<sup>57</sup> Juan Cappellaro. *From a Crowd to the People of God*. Italy, Rome: MBW International Centre, 1982; 47.

<sup>58</sup> *The Leaders Training Manual*. Pembroke Pines, Florida: St. Boniface Parish, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> *The Montreal Gazette*. (Nov. 1996), J5.

<sup>60</sup> *Montreal Catholic Times*. (Feb. 1999), P4.

<sup>61</sup> Murnion (1982), 314.



groups, renewal groups and catechises both at the pedagogical and androgical levels in the Archdiocese of Montreal have taught this writer how to recognise effective leadership. During this time, it was observed that the best persons to support the movement toward lay based activities and Church communion are the same persons who have themselves experienced a spiritual formation<sup>62</sup> often provided by renewal movements.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, it has been recognised that these movements have been vehicles for a *metanoia*, or conversion of the heart, which results in a desire to serve. This can also be affirmed by a summary assessment of the 1998 directory of the Office for English Language Affairs for the Archdiocese of Montreal. It lists services to the English speaking Catholic community often provided by participants in renewal movements.<sup>64</sup>

The attempt toward a *re-vivifying* of Catholic faith and morality during the pre-Vatican II era came through the Redemptorist Mission Movement. However, the need for a renewal of Church came from the precepts of Vatican II. The primary purpose of this thesis is to undertake an examination of the strategies used by the Redemptorist Mission Movement and the modern renewal movements and by comparing them, ascertain why the latter lent themselves more easily to the formation of Small Church Communities. With this in mind, I have focussed the research on the four following movements: the Redemptorist Mission Movement; the Charismatic Renewal; the Cursillo Movement; and, RENEW.

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<sup>62</sup> Pope John Paul II. *This is the Laity*. Middlesex, England: Grail Publication, 1989

<sup>63</sup> Murnion (1982), 315.

<sup>64</sup> These conclusions are drawn from conversations with a majority of the deacons and women in the Order of Service over the past twenty years.

## REDEMPTORIST MISSION MOVEMENT

Research into the historical background of the Redemptorist Movement determined the milieu which gave rise to Alphonsus Liguori's creation of 'The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer'. The priests of this order are known as 'Redemptorists'. The most helpful biography of the founder was *St. Alphonsus Liguori*.<sup>65</sup> This work avoids being a pious hagiography as are so many stories of the lives of saints. It is an academically stimulating volume which gives a pertinent detailed religious background of the late seventeenth-early eighteenth centuries in Italy. The spiritual ignorance and malaise of the Church of Naples together with the success of missionary movements which were aimed at the conversion of indigent people in foreign lands, convinced Alphonsus Liguori of the need to catechise the population of rural Italy. The book details the life and work both of Alphonsus and his community and traces the success of the movement from its home in Italy to the shores of North America.

It is not easy to find material dealing specifically with the movement because the Redemptorists stopped giving 'Missions' when the climate provoked by the Vatican Council rendered the methodology "out of sync" with the religious sentiments of the times. A meeting with the last Redemptorist priest to pastor a parish in Montreal gave this writer access to the Superior of the Toronto Province. Under the Superior's direction the archives were being closed for ten years in order to review and catalogue the publications. The Superior kindly gave permission for the archives to be made accessible for this research. Further permission was given to copy necessary material. Much of the collection is of great

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<sup>65</sup> Theodule Rey-Mermet. *St. Alphonsus Liguori*. New York: New City Press , 1989.

historical value. *The Catalogue of the Members of the Toronto Province*,<sup>66</sup> *The Provincial Story*<sup>67</sup> and *Historical Overview of Redemptorist Parish Missions in the Edmonton Province since World War II*<sup>68</sup> all deal with activities of the Redemptorists in areas of Canada outside the scope of this thesis. They do, however, provide a template for what had been recurring in Canada and the United States on an annual basis for almost two hundred years.

The most important “find” was a manifest work by J. Wissel, CSSR: *The Redemptorist on the American Missions* (2 volumes).<sup>69</sup> This work is a manual of the Mission strategies, the methodology of how to conduct a Mission week and a glimpse into the past. The format of the Mission, was identical to the methodology which had been used universally for many years. This manual was expanded in two subsequent works, *Redemptorist Parish Missions 1945-76*<sup>70</sup> and *The Obligation of Holding Sacred Missions in Parishes*.<sup>71</sup> Both gave rare and special insight into how the Redemptorists prepared themselves prior to giving a Mission. *Mission Preparation*<sup>72</sup> assembled by the Redemptorist Mission Team and the *Constitution on Sacred Missions*<sup>73</sup> are of particular value as they

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<sup>66</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *The Catalogue of the Members of the Toronto Province*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers, 1987.

<sup>67</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *The Provincial Story*. New York: Redemptorist Fathers (Baltimore Province), 1963.

<sup>68</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *Historical Overview of Redemptorist Parish Missions in the Edmonton Province since World War II*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material).

<sup>69</sup> J. Wissel, CSSR. *The Redemptorist on the American Missions* (2 volumes). Norwood, Massachusetts: Plimpton Press, 1920.

<sup>70</sup> John Rueff. *Redemptorist Parish Missions 1945-76*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material), 1980.

<sup>71</sup> Lavelle, CSSR. *The Obligation of Holding Sacred Missions in Parishes*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1949.

<sup>72</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *Mission Preparation*. Toronto: Redemptorist Press, ca. 1992.

<sup>73</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *Constitution on Sacred Missions*. Redemptorist Press (private printing for internal use only).

outline how the team of priests prepared themselves spiritually by prayer and fasting prior to setting out for the parish that would host them. Closer to home, *Les Mission Paroissiales dans La Province de Saint Anne Quebec*<sup>74</sup> and in particular *The Centenary of St. Ann's Church 1854-1954*<sup>75</sup> are uniquely valuable as a comment on the social and religious scene in Montreal. St Ann's church was the second English-language church in Montreal and was under the care of the Redemptorists from 1884 until it was demolished in 1970. Archaeological work began in 1998 to expose the foundations on the site. The space once occupied by the church will be protected by a park which will feature the exposed church foundations. St Ann's served the predominantly Irish parishioners in the area known as 'Griffintown' in Montreal and had been the home of the Redemptorist Juvenile. Because it is no longer an active parish, this documentation belongs (as does so much of the Redemptorist Mission Movement) to the religious history of Quebec.

*Toronto Province Statutes*<sup>76</sup> and *The Rule and Constitution of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*<sup>77</sup> which were revised after Vatican II, are integral to the understanding of how the Redemptorists kept their focus and vitality. *Catholic Revivalism*<sup>78</sup> maintains that the parish mission of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century was one of the most important factors in the up-building of the Catholic faith of parishioners all over the world. This can be confirmed by the excellent *Redemption and Renewal. The*

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<sup>74</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *Les Mission Paroissiales dans La Province de Saint Anne Quebec*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material).

<sup>75</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *The Centenary of St. Ann's Church 1854-1954*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material), 1955.

<sup>76</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *Toronto Province Statutes*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material), 1936.

<sup>77</sup> Redemptorist Fathers. *The Rule and Constitution of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*. Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers (archival material).

<sup>78</sup> Jay Dolan. *Catholic Revivalism*. Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1978.

*Redemptorists of English Canada 1834-1994*.<sup>79</sup> The author's in-depth history of the vocation, mission and effect of the Redemptorist *raison d'être* should be studied by anyone investigating both the historic and contemporary Redemptorists.

After Vatican II the traditional posture of the Redemptorist parish mission went into a dramatic decline. Following a hiatus of several years the Order set out to revise their strategies for preached missions.<sup>80</sup> They were encouraged by Pope Paul II's "Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis no.47" when he said that the traditional parish missions "...remain irreplaceable for the periodic and vigorous renewal of the Christian life."<sup>81</sup> The Mission was the only means of parish renewal for many decades and the printed materials which have been used in this thesis reveal the environment surrounding both parishioners and parishes. Furthermore these materials have a scholarly and historical importance as they reflect the Catholic milieu before Vatican II and are windows into a Catholic world that is past. Interviews with several elderly people showed they remembered the Mission events with eloquent clarity. Personal memories and reflections also serve as a social history of the era.

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<sup>79</sup> Paul Laverdure. *Redemption and Renewal. The Redemptorists of English Canada 1834-1994*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996.

<sup>80</sup> I am indebted to Father David Furlonger, CSSR, for sharing with me copies of the newest "Mission Preparation", strategies for preached missions which were printed internally for the Mission Teams in Toronto; (426 St. Germaine Street, Toronto). I received them in 1992.

<sup>81</sup> Pope Paul II. "Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis (#47)." Ottawa: CCCB.

## THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Because I argue that the Charismatic Renewal is a Catholic form of Pentecostalism the first task was to research the Pentecostal phenomena. It was discovered through *Pentecostalism*<sup>82</sup> that the phenomena known as ‘speaking in tongues’ had been reappearing sporadically since the Reformation. The author claims however, that what is called the ‘Baptism of the Holy Spirit’ was visited upon a group called the ‘Irvingites’ some seventy years before the commonly accepted origins of classical Pentecostalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. A well documented history of the origins and growth of Pentecostalism was found in several works; among the best were *Fire from Heaven*<sup>83</sup> and *New Charismatics*.<sup>84</sup> In the latter, the author gives an insightful analysis of the movement. He describes the Charismatic Renewal as a “transnational” movement and seeks to place it securely within the Church’s spiritual tradition. *The Pentecostals*<sup>85</sup> investigated the Catholic phenomena and laid to rest concerns of those within Classical Pentecostalism as to whether the Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit were authentically manifested in the Catholic Church. Several publications explaining the characteristics of the spiritual gifts were helpful. *Tongue Speaking*<sup>86</sup> researches the known history of *glossalalia*. *They Speak With Other Tongues*<sup>87</sup> is one of the books which stimulated the curiosity of Ralph Keifer and Patrick Bourgeois (lay instructors at Duquesne University’s department of theology) to seek

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<sup>82</sup> Thomas Nichols. *Pentecostalism*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

<sup>83</sup> Harvey Cox. *Fire from Heaven*. New York: Addison Wesley, 1994.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Quebedaux. *New Charismatics*. New York: Doubleday and Co, 1976; 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger. *The Pentecostals*. London, England: SCM Press Ltd., 1972.

<sup>86</sup> Morton Kelsey. *Tongue Speaking*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973.

<sup>87</sup> John Sherrill. *They Speak With Other Tongues*. New Jersey: Spire Books, 1964.

for themselves the “outpouring” of the Holy Spirit which led to the Charismatic Movement. It is an interesting first hand account of the phenomena of the charismata.

*Healing and Christianity*<sup>88</sup> and *How to Heal the Sick*<sup>89</sup> were only the beginning of an avalanche of books on the healing gifts which explained the dynamics of praying for healing. There was a development in the understanding of healing prayer which became known as the ‘Healing of Memories’. The book *Restoring the Christian Soul through Healing Prayer*<sup>90</sup> is helpful in the search for understanding, but the best in-depth works are by Francis MacNutt, OP. His first book was (appropriately) *Healing*<sup>91</sup> in which he tells how he overcame his priestly reluctance to believe in healing prayer through his association with evangelical “healers” such as Agnes Sanford and consequently developed a ministry in this area. A follow-up book came three years later. *The Power to Heal*<sup>92</sup> tells of how his own experience informed his belief in the healing ministry. About the same time as MacNutt was embarking on his search, the Linn family were also praying with others for healing. Mary Jane Linn, CSJ, joined her two Jesuit cousins, Matthew and Dennis Linn in the healing ministry. *Healing the Dying*<sup>93</sup> was published after Mary Jane Linn’s accidental death and contains case studies and a seminar section after each chapter. This is designed to teach and train others in the healing ministry. *Healing the Greatest Hurt*<sup>94</sup> deals with prayers for the grieving. It approaches such seemingly esoteric topics as ‘Healing the Family Tree’ in the

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<sup>88</sup> Morton Kelsey. *Healing and Christianity*. London: Harper & Row, 1974.

<sup>89</sup> Charles and Francis Hunter. *How to Heal the Sick*. Texas: Hunter Books, 1981.

<sup>90</sup> Leanne Payne. *Restoring the Christian Soul through Healing Prayer*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991.

<sup>91</sup> Francis MacNutt, OP. *Healing*. Florida: Creation House, 1974.

<sup>92</sup> Francis MacNutt, OP. *The Power to Heal*. Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1977.

<sup>93</sup> Matthew and Dennis Linn . *Healing the Dying*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

<sup>94</sup> Sheila Fabricant. *Healing the Greatest Hurt*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

belief that generational negative behaviour patterns can be erased (healed) through spiritual counselling and prayer. As faith in the ministry of healing grew such books as *The Healing Team*<sup>95</sup> which is a practical guide for effective ministry began to appear. This is one of the better publications on the practical application of healing prayer. These books written by Catholic priests, sisters and lay-people led to an investigation of how sources outside the Catholic Church viewed healing. *Healing the Shame that Binds You*<sup>96</sup> shared the belief that generational negative behaviour springs from a lack of spiritual counselling. The author argues that certain learned techniques such as visualisation, meditation and learning how to listen to the “inner voice” can be effective in the healing of core problems. There was a familiar tone in his writing and research revealed that Bradshaw is a married man with a family but that he had studied for the Catholic priesthood. It appeared that a belief in healing, whether by prayer or other practices, had filtered through the Catholic milieu.

A leader’s guide and journal which outlined seminars on Catholic teaching for prayer groups was simple and thorough. *You Will Receive Power*<sup>97</sup> is a Catholic response to an earlier seminar guide, *The Life in the Spirit Seminars*,<sup>98</sup> which had in turn replaced the original Pentecostal manual in order to incorporate Catholic sacramentality into the teachings. *The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience*<sup>99</sup> provides an interesting window on the effects of the Charismatic Renewal in both the north and south of Ireland.

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<sup>95</sup> Leo Thomas, OP. *The Healing Team*. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

<sup>96</sup> John Bradshaw. *Healing the Shame that Binds You*. Florida: Health Communications Inc, 1988.

<sup>97</sup> Philip Marie Burle and Sharon Ann Plankenhorn. *You Will Receive Power*. New Mexico: Dove Publications, 1977.

<sup>98</sup> A Community in Ann Arbor, Michigan. *The Life in the Spirit Seminars*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1973.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Flynn. *The Charismatic Renewal and the Irish Experience*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974; 55-56.



Although the intention was to write a book assuring Irish Catholics of the orthodoxy of the renewal it includes accounts of prayer meetings attended by both Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland – worshipping together to the sound of gunfire and explosions, and in one case, the shattering of the windows in the room where they prayed.

Both scholarly volumes of *Rites of Initiation in Representative Pentecostal Churches in the U.S.A.*<sup>100</sup> seek to examine Pentecostalism from a “liturgiological” point of view, examining (among other forms of worship) how the spiritual gifts and the sacraments particular to Pentecostalism are manifested. Another excellent source of information is found in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*.<sup>101</sup> It devotes a significant portion of its text not only to the history of the Charismatic Renewal but also to its organisation and its relationship with the Church authorities. It is the opinion of ‘charismatics’ that the recognition by the Vatican Council of the charismatics’ gifts, cleared the way for an acceptance of the Charismatic Renewal. In this regard, the “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”<sup>102</sup> was indispensable to my research. It is in this “Constitution on the Church” that the Church Fathers declare: “The Charismatic gifts...are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation...for they are suitable and useful for the needs of the Church.”<sup>103</sup> When this statement was made in 1964 it could not have been envisioned that these “gifts” would be manifested in the Catholic Church in 1967. This statement together

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<sup>100</sup> Kevin Ranaghan. *Rites of Initiation in Representative Pentecostal Churches in the U.S.A.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1980; iii.

<sup>101</sup> P. Alexander, G. McGee, and S. Burgess, eds. *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1988.

<sup>102</sup> Abbott (1966).

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

with the new emphasis on the role the laity was called to play in the life of the church provided, for the Charismatic Renewal, an imprimatur from the highest source.

In addition to the above, *Ever Increasing Faith*<sup>104</sup> offers special insight into the belief in the efficacy of healing prayer. The author, Smith Wigglesworth, was born in Bradford, England, and was an uneducated plumber who became one of the evangelical church's world-wide preachers. The book, first published in 1924, is a collection of preached sermons. It is rewarding for the insight it provides on the exercise of the spiritual gifts which fuel both Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Renewal. In addition to the phenomena of glossalalia (tongues) and healing, the book has chapters on the gifts of knowledge and faith, prophecy, and the discernment of spirits. It clarifies the assertion that the Charismatic Renewal was, although late upon the scene, a child of Pentecostalism.

The characteristics of the Charismatic Renewal which are described in this thesis have not only been deduced as a result of an examination of textual sources, the experiences and memories of persons involved have also been elicited and analysed. These findings correspond to the experience of the writer who participated in the movement from 1973-1985, (initially at St. Augustines church, N.D.G., and eventually in the parish of St. Thomas à Becket, Pierrefonds. Much of the data was gathered by participation on the Diocesan Pastoral Team as a parish representative and as a teacher within the organisation. This familiarity with the extent and methodology of the teaching base of the movement, affords an 'insider' perspective on the efficacy of the programme of on-going spiritual formation.

Leadership training was an important component of the Charismatic Renewal and many of those trained became and in many cases still are, active in the prayer/worship life

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<sup>104</sup> Smith Wigglesworth. *Ever Increasing Faith*. Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1973.

of their parishes. Many of these leaders went on to support and facilitate Bible study groups which met in churches and homes. When RENEW became part of the Archdiocese's effort toward parish renewal some years later, these leaders frequently formed part of the core teams. Some are still to be found facilitating groups in a new movement called Alpha. The Alpha renewal movement began twenty years ago in London, England in the Anglican parish of Holy Trinity, Brompton. It has made inroads into seventy communities in Montreal. Although primarily a Protestant denomination phenomenon, it has in the last few years, through the initiative of both priests and lay people who have experienced the Charismatic Renewal, surfaced in a couple of Catholic parishes. Having only lately come into the orbit of the Alpha renewal means that the Catholic parishes are heir to a substantial body of teaching aids. Most important of these are *The Alpha Course Leader's Guide*<sup>105</sup> and subsequent publications such as *Questions of Life*<sup>106</sup> and *Searching Issues*<sup>107</sup> which are all study guides for small groups that meet in homes. Some of the leaders experienced the Charismatic Renewal more than twenty years ago and are training a new group of leaders to become facilitators.<sup>108</sup> It is their dedication to the revitalising of the church which has been the inspiration for the writer's belief that the Charismatic Renewal was one of the seed-beds that provided the leadership necessary for the restructuring of the parish into small home churches.

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<sup>105</sup> N. Gumbel. *The Alpha Course Leader's Guide*. Colorado Springs: Cook Ministry Resources, 1996.

<sup>106</sup> N. Gumbel. *Questions of Life*. Colorado Springs: Cook Ministry Resources, 1993.

<sup>107</sup> N. Gumbel. *Searching Issues*. Colorado Springs: Cook Ministry Resources, 1994

<sup>108</sup> In the parish of St Thomas à Becket, eight out of twelve group leaders had participated in the Charismatic Renewal twenty years earlier .

## THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

The Cursillo movement preceded the Second Vatican Council. It was one of the first fruits of a pastoral and spiritual renewal which began with Catholic Action and the liturgical movement in Spain in the 1930's and 40's. In order to situate the movement in its milieu it was necessary to research the religious climate engendered by Catholic Action in Spain. *Franco's Spain*<sup>109</sup> gave me the political background and Yves Congar's *Lay People in the Church*<sup>110</sup> gave me the best insights into the background of Catholic Action. Congar maintains that, although the main thesis for Catholic Action was not articulated by Pius X until 1903, the themes of the movement were expressed as early as 1871 by Francis Veillot.

Eduardo Bonnín is the founder of Cursillo, (which means 'a short course'), and his *Cursillos in Christianity: The How and the Why*<sup>111</sup> is the primary source on the subject. In it he sets out the history and the founding vision of the movement. and reading it one can see how during its evolution the movement began to become distorted. Bonnín says "that nowhere has Cursillo really been tried as the founders envisioned."<sup>112</sup> According to Bonnín the "faraway" are those who have no help from the church because they do not practice their faith but who never-the-less have a "...need for meaning and hope in life."<sup>113</sup> *Origins and*

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<sup>109</sup> Stanley Payne. *Franco's Spain*. New York.: Cromwell & Co., 1967.

<sup>110</sup> Yves M. J. Congar. *Lay People in the Church*. Maryland: Newman Press, 1965; 360.

<sup>111</sup> Eduardo Bonnín. *Cursillos in Christianity: The How and the Why*. Dallas, Texas: National Ultreya Publications, 1981.

<sup>112</sup> Eduardo Bonnín. "The 'Faraway': A Preferential But Not Exclusive Option." Annual Delegates Conference; Victoria, B.C., 1997.

<sup>113</sup> Gaston Roux and Winston Sheelagh. from the proceedings of the Delegates Conference, 1997; 5.

*Development of Cursillo*<sup>114</sup> also outlines the origins of Cursillo and one can determine within its pages how the initial vision of the movement changed under clerical direction.

*Basic Concepts of the Cursillo Movement in the Light of Vatican II*<sup>115</sup> presents Cursillo as an "...instrument for Christian renewal rather than an apostolic movement" and sets out the basic criteria legitimising adaptation of the courses. The author prefers to see the changes as a development rather than an evolution. The leaders manual *Cursillos in Christianity*<sup>116</sup> is indispensable to knowledge of the strategy of a Cursillo weekend retreat and also of the imperative for on-going teaching and spiritual formation of the leadership. This latter is spelled out in *The Cursillo Movement: The Essential Principles*.<sup>117</sup>

Close proximity to the Movement has provided the writer with on-going insight to the development of the vision of Cursillo. There is a serious effort being made by the National Secretariat for Canada toward retrieving the original vision of Eduardo Bonnín. Not all the national secretariats are in favour of this thrust but the Canadian Secretariat has been influential in promoting the value of a return to the original source through national conferences and the publication of papers on the subject. The Secretariat recently (1999) met with the leadership in Mallorca, Spain, to discuss the foundational charism of Cursillo. A reflection group in Argentina has joined in retrieving the vision and disseminating the findings throughout the world. Cursillistas believe that a new book by Alberto Montegudo

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<sup>114</sup> Ivan Rohloff. *Origins and Development of Cursillo*. Texas: Secretariat of Cursillo 1976

<sup>115</sup> Juan Capo. *Basic Concepts of the Cursillo Movement in the Light of Vatican II*. Texas: National Ultreya Publication, 1968; 1.

<sup>116</sup> *Cursillos in Christianity*. Texas: National Secretariat, 1988.

<sup>117</sup> G. P. Hughes. *The Cursillo Movement: The Essential Principles*. Texas: National Secretariat. 1977.

*Back to the Source*<sup>118</sup> will aid in their endeavour and there is hope that other national groups will also join in the quest.

#### THE RENEW MOVEMENT

RENEW was the most recent effort towards the renewal of the Church in North America. Preparatory efforts began in New Jersey in 1976, the aim being to bring the lay-people of the Newark diocese to a better understanding of their role within the Church as co-operators with the clergy in the work of the Church. The programme emerged in 1978. It called for participation in liturgical worship, small-group faith sharing sessions, take-home materials and periodic large-group activities. The emphasis was on participation in small group encounters with Scripture *and with each other*. It was considered to be an overwhelming success and other parishes in the U.S. adopted the format. RENEW was introduced into the Archdiocese of Montreal in 1987. Forty seven parishes participated in a three year programme of scripture and faith sharing.

The programme was evangelistic in nature and the goal was simple. The desired effect was that, from studying, in small home-based groups, how the scriptures related to daily life, the parish would develop among its congregation, bible-oriented people who would serve the wider parish community. It was hoped that eventually the whole parish would be engaged in RENEW. The organisers envisioned all participating parishes experiencing a ripple effect such that each parish would become a “community of communities”. This was expressed through in introductory greeting from the Archbishop of Hartford who wrote that he hoped for the day when his parishes “ ...would be so rich with

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<sup>118</sup> Alberto Monteagudo. *Back to the Source*. Buenos Aires: Editorial De Colores, 1997.

small Christian communities that on Sundays it would be an assembly of the community of communities.”<sup>119</sup> He recognised that the diocese had not yet progressed that far.

Sister Marie Azzarello, CND, was appointed the executive director of RENEW in the Montreal diocese. A committee of people entrusted with diocesan funds, (Pillars Trust), set aside reserves for the programme. Although there are books which deal with the origins of Small Base Communities in Latin America and others which document and describe the process in North American parishes (such as Baranowski’s *Creating Small Communities*), very little has been publicly published on the subject of Montreal’s RENEW movement. Most information came through packages of booklets, manuals and other printed materials furnished by the diocese to the participating parishes. The printed materials explained the vision and the practical application of the programme over five six week sessions covering a period of two and a half years. They were printed by the Archdiocese and made available to group leaders and parish facilitators on a retreat which served as a training session and prayerful exercise prior to the beginning of RENEW. The package included the weekly guide for each season, guidelines for the pastoral facilitators and a reiteration of the vision of RENEW – this last being the primary purpose of conducting the retreat/training weekend. At the end of the three year programme an evaluation report was issued which outlined the “dominant threads which appeared in response to the questionnaire.”<sup>120</sup> Basing their forecast on the success of the U.S. parishes, RENEW was seen as a successful tool for the re-igniting of the parish community and the evaluation was predominantly optimistic.

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<sup>119</sup> John F. Whealon, Archbishop of Hartford. “God’s Way? Our Way?” Bloomfield Connecticut: Pastoral Department for SCC, 1990.

<sup>120</sup> *Evaluation of RENEW: Final Report on the RENEW Process*. January 1990, 1.

That the optimism was premature forms part of this thesis. A vision such as Renew which is not fully embraced by the clergy (due to inadequate pastoral care) inevitably leads to a draining of the available energies of the lay people. The key requirement that there be a moratorium placed on all other parish activities, thus releasing parishioners to participate in the creation of small home communities, is crucial to the vision of RENEW. When this is not comprehended, the result is apathy due to 'burn-out'. This opinion is shared by the pastoral facilitators and includes the opinion of the executive director, Marie Azzarello. The seed had been sown however, and participants enjoyed first-hand experience of what "Church" could be: not a community of anonymous participants but active parishioners who believe they are "the church and that the responsibility [for its life and vitality] rests with them."<sup>121</sup>

#### POPULAR DEVOTIONS

Whilst the post Vatican II milieu had the effect of de-emphasising the traditional devotional life of the catholic, renewal movements often developed in the participant a desire for further spiritual formation. The Ignatian Centre for Spirituality, which initiated the aspirant to the *Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*,<sup>122</sup> the Benedictine Meditation Centre and the Diocesan Ecumenical Centre filled the need. Because of a more developed prayer life it was not uncommon for the average lay-person to have a spiritual director – a feature of religious life mainly appropriated by the ordained or professed – and a significant number became associate members of religious orders. As an associate, a person is

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<sup>121</sup> Arthur R. Baranowski. in *U.S. Catholic* (January 1992).

<sup>122</sup> *Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951.



inducted into what is called the 'Third Order' and participates as a lay-person in the prayer life and the apostolate of the order. Some of the more popular associations are with the Franciscans or the Carmelites.<sup>123</sup> Old loyalties die hard and a gradual return to traditional devotional life resurfaced.

Weber linked the praying to intercessory saints with a strata of society that was considered marginalised. This can be attested by the devotees of St. Jude in the poorer areas of Chicago<sup>124</sup> and the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico and Latin America.<sup>125</sup> However people whose parents may have been marginalised as immigrants several generations earlier have often moved out of that strata and today enjoy a more affluent life-style. Some have taken with them the pious practices of their childhood and show an affinity for devotion to the intercessory saints.

Michael Carroll's *Catholic Cults & Devotions. A Psychological Inquiry*<sup>126</sup> is a study of why Catholics (unlike Protestants) have developed a body of devotional practices worthy of the attention of psychoanalysts. Never-the-less there is the active reality of a heritage of pious practice. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*<sup>127</sup> and *Egeria's Travels*<sup>128</sup> confirm the ancient

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<sup>123</sup> Aloysius Sieracki, O.Carm. *Carmel's Call*. Darien, Illinois: The Carmelite Press, 1991; also Thomas J. Zeitvogel, T.O.C. *Lay Carmelite Formation Guide*. Darien, Illinois: The Carmelite Press, 1996.

<sup>124</sup> R. Orsi. *Thank you St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*. London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

<sup>125</sup> J. Rodriguez. *Our lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican American Women Texas*. University of Texas Press, 1994.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Carroll. *Catholic Cults & Devotions. A Psychological Inquiry*. Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989.

<sup>127</sup> G. Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales*. New York: Bantam, 1976.

<sup>128</sup> John Wilkinson. *Egeria's Travels*. London: SPCK, 1971.

practice of making pilgrimage to centres of faith whilst *The Road to Canterbury*<sup>129</sup> shows that the practice is still a modern day activity.

Several works are devoted to the lives of the saints whose characteristics inspired generations of devotees and the books illuminated the reasons for their veneration. *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*,<sup>130</sup> and *St Therese: The Little Flower*<sup>131</sup> were helpful. and Robert Orsi's *Thank you St Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* revealed that praying to intercessory saints is primarily a female occupation. Devotions to Mary the Mother of Jesus are often rooted in the cultural expression of a people and the "Decree on Missionary Activity"<sup>132</sup> along with the encyclical *Marialis cultus*<sup>133</sup> warn of excessive Mariology. However, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican American Women*<sup>134</sup> demonstrates how popular piety, often rooted in marginality and oppression, avoids the tendency to excess while being an empowering force for women.

*Psychology of Religion*<sup>135</sup> and Francis Lebrun's essay "The Two Reformations: Communal Devotion and Personal Piety"<sup>136</sup> are complementary. The first advocates that psychoanalytical views of religious practice must be undertaken with students of the history of religion; in the latter, LeBrun states that the "dialectical tension between personal and

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<sup>129</sup> Shirley Du Boulay. *The Road to Canterbury*. Harrisburg PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1994.

<sup>130</sup> D. Attwater. *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1970.

<sup>131</sup> J. Beevers. *St. Therese: The Little Flower*. Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books Doubleday & Co, 1967.

<sup>132</sup> Flannery (1975).

<sup>133</sup> *Marialis Cultus* ( Ottawa. CCCB, 1974)

<sup>134</sup> Rodriguez. J. Op. Cit..

<sup>135</sup> Faber, Heije. *Psychology of Religion*. London: SCM Press. 1976.(P.29)

<sup>136</sup> Lebrun, F. "The Two Reformations: Communal Devotion and Personal Piety," in P. Aries, and G. Duby, (eds.), A. Goldhammer (trans.), *A History of Private Life: Passions of the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989; vol. III: 69-109.

communal religion has shaped the entire history of Christianity”<sup>137</sup> In this statement he includes both Catholic and Protestant piety which, though different in expression and conviction, have never-the-less been an ancient feature of Christian practice.

*Christian Feasts and Customs*<sup>138</sup> offers an historic overview which clarifies popular devotions such as the ‘Rosary’. The author also describes various other pious undertakings such as ‘*Quarant Ore*’ (Forty Hours Vigil), ‘*Corpus Christi*’ and other devotions to the ‘Sacred Heart of Jesus’.

Descriptions of the practice of praying to saints, the formation of societies and sodalities in honour of Mary and the constitutions of those groupings, owe much to my personal experience. Prayer books and manuals for the pious which describe the prescribed manner of prayer are often privately printed and often undated. *The Manual of the Children of Mary*<sup>139</sup> is an example of such undated printed material. This small book contains the vision of the Sodality, its aims and a section on Marian prayers to be recited. A *Daily Missal* printed in London in 1924 contains not only the ‘Proper of the Saints’ with their various feast days but also an explanation of the ‘Sanctoral Cycle’ pointing out that Pius X in his bull “*Divina afflatu*” set out an order to be specifically observed when the feast days of saints coincide with the celebration of events in Christ’s life. Another missal dated 1897, published in Dijon France (Roux-Marchet & Cie), lists a table of prayers including “Litanies to the Holy Name of Jesus”, “The Holy Virgin”, anthems, hymns and poems, and several popular psalms. It also reveals the importance of certain feast days which were considered ‘Solemn Feasts’ such as The Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph, Patron of the

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>138</sup> Francis X. Weiser. *Christian Feasts and Customs*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958 .

Universal Church, The Solemnity of the Rosary, and the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul. A particularly well-used prayer book was obtained. Since it is without a backing, the title is unknown but it has an introduction by a man called Michael Hollings writing from Southall, England. It contains traditional Catholic prayers to be said at various times of the day and evening. These include Grace before and after meals, prayers to Our Guardian Angel, to the Holy Spirit, prayers of dedication for peace, and prayers for unity. It also has a Muslim prayer of self-giving and a Hindu 'prayer when distracted'. In addition, it contains other traditional Catholic prayers such as "Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament", "Stations of the Cross" and the Rosary.

The new form of the *Stations of the Cross*,<sup>140</sup> *Catholic Prayers & Devotions*<sup>141</sup> and a recent edition of *Praying the Rosary*<sup>142</sup> were helpful in confirming that devotional practices found in old prayer books were once again finding favour with a generation of Catholics which had not experienced the rigidity of the pre-Vatican II Church. It has been noted by clerics<sup>143</sup> and lay people alike that there is a tendency in young people who return to the practice of their religion, to experience a form of *deja vu*. They express a desire for a return to old customs and traditional devotions such as the 'Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament' and May processions complete with a 'Coronation of Our Lady' with garlands of flowers – devotional practices that had been popular for centuries and then lapsed after

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<sup>139</sup> *Manual of the Children of Mary*. Montreal: Sadlier & Co.

<sup>140</sup> found in *Manual of the Children of Mary*. See note 139.

<sup>141</sup> *Catholic Prayers & Devotions*. New York: Regina Press, 1981.

<sup>142</sup> Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. *Praying the Rosary*. Belleville, Illinois: 1993.

<sup>143</sup> Bishop Anthony Mancini noted this at a meeting of synodal delegates, February 1999.

the Council. A visit to the bookshelves at the back of local churches confirmed a revival of such prayer manuals.<sup>144</sup>

In the psycho-spiritual realm there is perhaps a move from a 'transformative' to an 'integrative' type of religion. The author of the essay "Integrative and Transformative Religions" describes transformative religion as one which stresses fluidity and individual awareness and integrative religion as having a tendency "toward hierarchical organization or strong charismatic leadership."<sup>145</sup> While the ecclesial mood after the Council might not be described as wholly transformative there *was* a new sense of movement and dynamism that had not been experienced for centuries. Some of that dynamism remains. But as may be expected, it could not be sustained at the same pitch of exuberance which greeted the reforms and so has quieted. Perhaps the desire to return to a more traditional (integrative) posture is a new form of the 'checks and balances' which have been a tendency in the Christian Church.

#### IN SUMMARY

The writer's interest, in fact fascination, with the subject of all things pertaining to Church, its ecclesiology, liturgical worship, history and its position on women's contribution to church life have required a staple diet of reading on those subjects for many

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<sup>144</sup> Christopher Farrell, CSSR, ed. *Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1983.

Robert J. Fox. *A Catholic Prayer Book*. Huntingdon, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 1973.

Anselm J. Viano, SSP. *Mary our sweet Mother*. Derby, New York: St. Paul Publications, 1950.

Robert C. Broderick, KHS. "EXAMEN: Prepare to Receive the Sacrament of Penance." St. Paul, Minnesota: The Leaflet Missal Co, 1984.

<sup>145</sup> Barabara Hargrove, "Integrative and Transformative Religions" in *Understanding the New Religions*. J. Needleman and G. Baker, (eds.). New York: Seabury Press, 1978; 263.

years. The water-shed years (particularly from the 1940s to 1990s) had their effect both socially and religiously. Consequently, pertinent books formed both religious consciousness and conscience. The publications that are listed as having an impact on this dissertation are by no means the sum of all reading on the subject of the Church. Much of what has been read is implicit to this work and has provided a background to the expressed opinions. They live in the writer. Some of the writing is anecdotal in nature and therefore falls into the category of social history. The discipline of historical inquiry has traditionally placed great emphasis on the examination of political, economic, religious and demographical trends in order to come to conclusions about our historical past. However in the last three decades the discipline has shifted its focus toward an examination of the social implication of events in order to ascertain the effects on the common person. Rather than relying on documentation and empiricism social historians have begun to see the value in examining such “unofficial” documents as personal diaries, memoirs and personal correspondence in order to discover what the ordinary person felt about certain events and thus place *those* attitudes to *those* events under scrutiny. In other words there is a growing emphasis on the need to put a “human face” on history.

Not everything is documented in any area of living past or present. This dissertation deals with the yearnings of the human heart for contact with the Divine and a community of like-minded others. It deals with ordinary human beings. Consequently some of this thesis will not find its fullest expression in documentation and data but in the experience of those engaged in the extraordinary adventure of searching.

## Towards a Definition of Pastoral Care

The history of the Roman Catholic Church has often been defined through the praxis of various renewal movements which periodically form and which subsequently colour the popular piety of the people. Because of this, no document seeking to understand the contemporary scene of the Catholic Church can ignore the impact of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). In the early days of the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, usually referred to as Vatican II, the incumbent Pope John XXIII referred to his hope for an *aggiornamento* of the Church. Since the end of the Council in 1965, the term '*aggiornamento*' (renewal) has become linked with several distinct movements in the Church. Except in the case of revitalised movements (such as Cursillo) which originated before Vatican II, all these movements had their genesis as a result of an impetus generated by this Ecumenical Council. The Council loosened the stranglehold of rigidity and allowed for a flexing of the spiritual sinews of the laity. Several of the renewal movements which followed as a result will be explored in this dissertation.

Renewal movements are found to be most effective when, supported by pastoral ministry, they incorporate scripture, good liturgy, prayer and fellowship. They can also be understood as responses to weaknesses within these areas. For instance, within the Roman Catholic Church, the immutability of liturgical rite has produced a static ritualism removed from the experience of the people. Thus the average Catholic, while demanding baptism for an infant, is frequently ignorant of why the Church baptises; she or he 'attends' the celebration of the Eucharist with little or no knowledge of its sacrality or historical

significance; and, because catechesis is almost nonexistent at the parochial level, for her or him the proclamation of the “Word that can transform”, has become “sufficient for Sunday and the reading thereof”. The fraternity and fellowship of the parish community are expressed, at best, through a sense of neighbourliness and through the organising of parish events. Neighbourliness is certainly a desirable component of pleasant association, but it is rarely practised at a depth which provokes the heart of observers to ask “What motivates these people?” or to think “I want what they have”.

Catechesis presumes the existence of a community, and so a diligent effort should be made to use ‘simple’ language which recognizably reflects the life of the person.’ Too frequently the professional religious person, to whom theological/spiritual terminology is transparent, presupposes the same fluency in the listener. Similarly the lay person having heard these expressions for a lifetime thinks, at best, that she or he understands, or, at worst, unconsciously accepts that she or he is not meant to comprehend. For example, how many average lay persons understand what is meant when they hear: “We are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ”? They have heard it all their Christian lives but how many ask “What does that mean?” and in particular “What does that mean for me in my life?” For many, as Emile Durkheim says, such phrases have “... come into common usage to such an extent that we are unconscious of them.”<sup>2</sup> For many, this has become “just priest talk” and few request that the terminology be translated into meaningful and accessible language applicable to their own lives and experiences.

Richard McBrien states that “...there is a widespread sense of frustration on the part of the rank and file membership and even on the part of many bishops”<sup>3</sup> which agitates for

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<sup>1</sup> Austin P. Flannery, *Documents of Vatican II* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), 905.

<sup>2</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religion* (NY: The Free Press 1965), 427.

<sup>3</sup> Richard P. McBrien, *The Remaking of the Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 14.



the creation of new structures to allow for authentic renewal. Structures are the means by which church life is organised and are necessary for the expression of human consciousness. If they are inadequate, they produce frustration and dysfunction; if they are rigid and inflexible, they stultify and repress. Church structure should be such that it encourages participation of all the membership to live out more fully their Christian call in an authentic milieu. Because structures are for the benefit of people, they must facilitate and not hinder the process of pilgrimage and enable and equip the pilgrims to live an authentic Christian vocation. However, a desirable structure can not be defined by faith alone but must incorporate the behavioural sciences through "... study not only in theology but also in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and methodology and other available resources."<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, structures are only effective when they allow for the efficiency and adaptability of a viable infrastructure. In the Church the infrastructure is the laity and the laity are frustrated. Many do not see the relevance of the institutional church to their lives. There is an emphasis on the need to link faith with social reality.<sup>5</sup> I would like to suggest that the infrastructure necessary to this end is the formation of a community which serves, worships, learns and struggles to live out its participation in a Christian context. I contend that this can be found in the restructuring of the parish into "Small Church Communities" (SCC's).

Church leadership (particularly pastors) must realize that good pastoral care is pivotal to the success of the movement that seeks to renew. The Committee on the Parish ( National

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<sup>4</sup> Walter M. S. J. Abbott, ed., "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" in *The Documents of Vatican II* (Piscataway, NJ: New Century 1966), 520.

<sup>5</sup> In 1992, The Assembly of Quebec Bishops initiated a research-action program involving thirty-six parishes. Their recommendations included the creation of small communities within the local parish which would foster a sense of belonging and mutual support. (Assembly of Quebec Bishops, Antoinette Kinlough, trans., *New Directions for the Future* (Quebec: Archdiocesan Publication, 1992), 29.

(U.S.) Conference of Catholic Bishops) sought to identify key issues which could enhance parish life. Its staff director, Phillip J. Murnion, states “almost unfailingly ...where a parish enjoys vitality, the leadership of the pastor has been central to this vitality”. Conversely, he maintains that “where there are problems, the pastor’s part in these problems is significant.”<sup>6</sup>

Murnion maintains that good pastoral care means that the pastor must be aware of his abilities and weaknesses. He must have a sense of what a parish *can* be, show respect for the experience and gifts of others, be able to delegate and share decision-making powers and be ready to be a listener. The opposite is just as true. Where the pastor is weak, there is divisiveness and pettiness which can lead to the disintegration of the parish infrastructure. The significance of the pastoral care should lead to the promotion of diocesan programmes for pastors to help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This is necessary for the development of leadership skills and for the healthy fostering of relationships within the parish.

Good pastoral care is particularly necessary when the parish experiences a renewal movement. By its nature the latter is a new phenomenon, one that is likely to demand a fresh approach to entrenched practices and mentalities. To some pastors renewal can be a threat to the ‘order’ they have sought to maintain since it requires new thinking and behaviour that disturbs the *status quo*. Good pastoral care requires the expenditure of a great deal of energy, loving vigilance and guidance. Where these are not present the renewal movement will falter and in some cases fail to mature; but where there is co-responsibility between pastor and laity the renewal flourishes and edifies the parish.

Modern renewal movements have been characterised by intense lay activity and participation. This has not always been so in the Catholic experience, although renewal

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<sup>6</sup> Philip J. Murnion, “Parish Renewal: State(ments) of the Question,” in *America* (April 1982): 314.

movements have been a recurring facet of the Christian Church's experience and have been evident in both the Protestant and Catholic branches of the Church. In the nineteenth century the Catholic tradition was experiencing its own particular form of renewal in the form of the 'Parish Mission' according to the methodology of Alphonse Liguori, founder of the Redemptorists. This form of renewal will be used in this thesis to contrast the shift in Church thinking after the Vatican Council which heralded a "new understanding of the relationship between divine and human freedom...faith and its works...Scripture and Tradition"<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McBrien (1973), 4.

# Chapter I

## Introduction

In his objective assessment of religion in Canada, *Fragmented Gods*, Reginald Bibby, in a study conducted in 1987, discovered that although religion is not primary in our lives, there is a widespread yearning for God.<sup>8</sup> In the light of massive defection from organised religion can we say that religion itself is in trouble? In the face of secularisation, pluralism, and the advent of the 'age of technology', religion has indeed experienced a sharp decline from the 1950's, through the turbulent religious unrest of the 60's until today, and yet it appears that the longing still remains. In the past, religious dissatisfaction brought about pietism, the social gospel, existentialism, neo-pentecostalism, the reforms of Vatican II and a greater thrust toward ecumenism which have each had an impact for social change.

Bibby further believes that the current impoverishment of religion could actually open the possibility for a rediscovery of the potential of religion. One of the responses to this impoverishment is a greater tendency to privatization (or individualization) for the satisfaction of religious yearning. However, Joan Brothers, in her book *Religious Institutions*, points out that religion is not only a personal matter but also a collective quest.<sup>9</sup> Emile Durkheim also believes that there is an individual *and* a social orientation in religion.<sup>10</sup> Max Weber states that when people bond together because of a shared religious belief, social structures are changed.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> J. Brothers, *Religious Institutions* (London: Longman Publishing, 1971).

<sup>10</sup> Durkheim (1965).

<sup>11</sup> Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* Ephraim Fischhoff, trans., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

Communal worship and personal piety have had a long history. They have had a symbiotic relationship – relying upon each other for a balanced expression of faith – but the fact remains that there are many who will assent to a belief in God but not as manifested within institutionalised religion. Bibby’s survey would suggest that part of the reason may be because “an institution is of its nature conservative; it expresses and maintains the *status quo*.”<sup>12</sup> In French Canada, the *status quo* of the Roman Catholic Church is not held in affection, yet even the privatized religious belief of a Roman Catholic will still have links with the devotional life of the Church. There are still those who claim to pray the rosary and who will attend May Devotions and Corpus Christi processions.<sup>13</sup> What is the attraction of devotional practice? Why is it that devotional practices can still exert a pull toward old loyalties? Alternately, can private devotions alone fill the longing for God? An examination of the phenomenon of popular religion should provide some answers.

Personal history and cultural ties still exert an emotional impact and often produce a desire for a link to the religion of childhood. The rites of passage of religious affiliation are still sought by more than 68% of Roman Catholics.<sup>14</sup> They may not assent to the demands of orthodoxy, and they may disclaim much of the Church teaching, but when it comes to baptism, marriage and funeral rites, the Church is still approached to fulfill the need. Ron Graham agrees that “people who never go near church still want the last rites, and whenever

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<sup>12</sup> Leonard Johnston, *A History of Israel* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), 114.

<sup>13</sup> On a recent Corpus Christi procession, the participants of a West Island (Montreal) church, processed an outdoor route as was commonly done in the past. They carried candles and other traditional signs of the feast day. They were joined along the way by people who saw the procession pass their window. These were not parishioners and the parish priest saw no increase in church attendance thereafter. It can be surmised that the “yearning for God” may be intrinsically bound up with a nostalgia for a religious past and with a time that was simpler. It also showed how devotional life survived in some fragmentary form even though formal church membership was dropped.

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1969), 23, Table II.

you touch something that concerns the whole group, people get out of their lethargy.”<sup>15</sup> Some still claim the personal piety aspect as a component of their search for God whilst absolving themselves from the communal aspect on the grounds that it “no longer has meaning”. While Gregory Baum says that “the pietist concentration on God-and-the-soul tends to legitimate contemporary individualism,”<sup>16</sup> Bibby affirms that “beyond God and the individual, religion is a social phenomenon. People share faith.”<sup>17</sup>

What has been the response to the impoverishment of the Church? One response has been the emergence of renewal movements. These movements have themselves reflected the position of the Church's self-understanding. The renewal movement begun by Alphonsus Liguori in the mid-18th century, which became known as the Redemptorist Mission, was prompted by the widespread ignorance of Catholic Italy as to the fundamentals of the faith. It became the norm for Catholicism across Europe and North America for almost two hundred years. After Vatican II the strategies of the Redemptorist Mission no longer met the contemporary need and, although there is now a tentative resurgence of a revised format, gave way to other renewal movements. Cursillo which began in Spain has a strong foothold in North America. The Charismatic Renewal, seen as a response to John XXIII's prayer for “a new Pentecost”,<sup>18</sup> has spread worldwide. Understood as a Catholic form of the Pentecostalism which began at the turning of the century, and drawing its adherents from already established mainline churches, it is considered to be the fastest growing Protestant form of worship.

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<sup>15</sup> Ron Graham, *God's Dominion: A Sceptic's Quest* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 126.

<sup>16</sup> Gregory Baum, *Theology and Society* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 125.

<sup>17</sup> Bibby (1987), 266.

<sup>18</sup> This prayer is reproduced in *Prayers for the Jubilee Year 2000* (Ottawa: C.C.C.B., 1997), 12-13.

Cultural renewals also take place. Liberation theology which began in Latin America as a response to persecution and social injustices found support in Small Base Communities which were already in existence. These have been adopted by some parishes in North America. They nourish the need for a greater sense of intimacy in parishes, some of which have more than a thousand families. The yearning for God is also a yearning for the companionship of like-minded others. It is this yearning that creates a Small Church Community.

The Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Montreal recognises the dilemma of its own impoverishment. At the lay level, the Cursillo and Charismatic Renewal movements have been augmented by a programme called RENEW. The Archdiocese undertook six and a half years of preparation and enquiry for a recent synod.<sup>19</sup> It sought the opinions not only of the membership but also of those who had moved out of the Church community and even of those of other faiths. The findings were presented on April 28<sup>th</sup> 1999: The lay delegates, numbering seven hundred and representing twenty-five thousand Catholics of the Archdiocese, made strong recommendations as to the direction of the future life of the Church in Montreal. In seeking the lay recommendations to the synod the bishops were following the advice of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops which said "unless the [background work] is constantly nurtured by the actions and reflections of *popular movements* [my emphasis] and grassroots communities, it will prove inadequate."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This was the first synod to be held in the Archdiocese of Montreal in forty-eight years. In 1950 the synod comprised only clerics. This recent synod included a majority of laity. The members of the Synod Commission released the following statistics: There were over seven hundred and fifty delegates, representing twenty-five thousand parishioners. Their (5,591) recommendations were codified into three-hundred and eighteen categories and then regrouped into four major blocks. The preparation for the synod took three and a half years, and ended after three years of deliberation in 1998. The results were sent to the parishes in April 1999 and an "Action Plan on Pastoral Orientation" will be available in the Fall of 1999.

<sup>20</sup> C.C.C.B., *Twenty Years Later* (Ottawa, Ont., 1985), 28.

We are accustomed to the fact that there is a division between church and state but people *live* in the world and are affected by it. Religion, too, must feel the consequences of a world that is moving toward the twenty-first century at an unprecedented pace. The “yearning for God” which Bibby discovered in his surveys lies in the heart of the man whose job is threatened by the very technology that will form his future; in the single-parent mother of several children trying to make ends meet; in the divorcee who has remarried and desires acceptance by the church community; and, in the homosexual who claims inclusion. These are the Catholics whose needs will shape the church of the twenty first century. But first there must be dialogue. The synod provided this opportunity. And, for the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, the direction had already been given by the decisions of Vatican II: The document *Guardium et spes* points out that “...the Church has always had the duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel. Thus in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings and its often dramatic characteristics.”<sup>21</sup>

More than thirty years later the need to interpret the ‘signs of the times’ is even more pressing and integral to the dialogue which, as Juan Luis Segundo says in his book, *The Community Called Church*, must be that of “sincere searching... the world has much to teach about God.”<sup>22</sup> Yet it is not at all certain that the Vatican will heed the call to dialogue. Thomas Fox, journalist, author and editor of the newspaper the *National Catholic Reporter* speaking to a predominantly Catholic audience at St. Jerome's College, Waterloo, is

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<sup>21</sup> Flannery (1975), GS4: 905.

<sup>22</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, *The Community Called Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1973), vol. I: 125.



pessimistic about the possibility. He says “the struggle in the Church today is about vision, mission, authority and structure”. He sees the leadership “bogged down in a rigid male hierarchy that continues to invest enormous resources into resisting change.”<sup>23</sup> It would appear that even thirty-five years after the changes called for by the Vatican Council, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church can not agree with Robert Bellah's five stages of religious evolution, particularly with the belief that we are now in the fifth stage – a stage where absolutism is replaced with relativism and religion is revisable.<sup>24</sup>

How will the “yearning for God” be addressed? The struggle lies with the changing *populo fidei* and the rigid tendency to resist change. Renewal movements which have sprung from the grassroots are not always effective in bringing about appreciable change. Is it because these movements form sub-communities which only re-enforce the church structure? The Redemptorist Mission form of renewal (which did not have grassroots origins) never formed sub-communities *per se* but did strengthen hierarchically approved associations. It can be seen by its longevity that it was successful *apropos* the times. The Cursillo movement, which emerged from the lay population, has maintained its life and has frequent injections of enthusiasm from those who feel a yearning for God. It is a movement that maintains lay leadership with minimal input from the ordained clergy. As a sub-community it is a network which fosters the need for interpersonal relationships with others of like mind whilst still being acceptable to the hierarchy. Is this latter the answer to its ‘success’ as a renewal movement?

The Charismatic Renewal, on the other hand, has moved from its initial enthusiasm. Like its parent, Pentecostalism, it crossed boundaries which had long been entrenched. But,

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Fox, *The Record*. (Sept. 1995); (Kitchener, Ontario).

<sup>24</sup> Reginald Johnstone, *Religion and Society in Interaction* (NJ: Prentice-Hall 1975), 298.

perhaps because it had the endorsement of the Church as a phenomenon attributed to the action of the Holy Spirit and had adherents such as Cardinal Suenens, there are those who believe it has become a sub-community which reinforces Church structures. On the other hand, it is possible that the movement began to present a challenge to the Roman Catholic Church by its tendencies to liturgical innovation and intercommunion. Or, perhaps it is merely following a pattern described by Monsignor Knox: "Always the first fervours evaporate; prophecy dies out, and the charismatic is merged with the institutional."<sup>25</sup> In any case, the Charismatic Renewal exists today as prayer groups which, although they fulfill a deep desire for prayer and the expression of Catholic devotion, are different from the original manifestations of ecstatic worship. Some believe that the initial spirit of Pentecost has been lost and there have been attempts to resuscitate the initial enthusiasm.<sup>26</sup>

Another movement, RENEW, was a three-year programme designed by a group of Catholics in Newark, New Jersey. The format called for groups of people to meet in small enclaves to study scripture and share their life experiences in the light of the gospel. The project was inspired by the Small Base Communities in Latin America. The groups met over a period of three years in small 'living room communities'. The aim was to allow people of the same parish a greater sense of 'belonging' by fostering intimate groupings whilst strengthening familiarity with the scriptures and therefore the gospel message. It cannot be said to be an entirely grassroots movement since it emerged from the American Church and the programme itself was administered by the Office of English Language Affairs of the Montreal diocese. Since it was also open to those who had left the 'bosom of the Church',

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<sup>25</sup> Ronald A. Knox, Mgr., *Enthusiasm* (New York: Oxford University Press 1961), 1.

<sup>26</sup> The Catholic Charismatic Services of Montreal list twelve prayer groups as of October 1997. A combined prayer meeting at the parent church of St. Augustines in 1998 was an attempt to reclaim the initial enthusiasm. (see appendix).

RENEW not only strengthened the local parish community but added to it people who were willing to “give the Church another chance” in their lives. Was RENEW successful because it was endorsed by the Church?

Can there really be an authentic grassroots renewal? It will be interesting to see the outcome of the newest effort for renewal which the Synod of Montreal is spearheading. Certainly, by focussing much of its efforts on grassroots opinion, it seems to have started the right way. In all of the interviews I have undertaken, there is a mixture of hope and doubt; hope for real change and a new openness, and doubt expressed by the question "Do you think it will ever come to anything?" In other words "Do I count?"

The examination of the renewal movements featured in this thesis will take the form of a grid divided into the ten areas to be scrutinised. This grid will be included at the end of each chapter as a summary of the results of the examination. The areas under consideration are:

Origins and history of the movement.

Purposes of the movement.

How the movement was organised and led.

Characteristics of the movement and the focus for meetings.

A parish and an individual focus.

Participation levels.

Gender factors.

Characteristic ritual activity.

Clergy involvement.

Training for lay leadership.

Before entering into the body of the research I would like to situate the reader by a) clarifying the two terms ‘revival’ and ‘mission’; b) offering an abbreviated history of the origin of popular (parish) missions; and, c) summarising the place of devotional life within the Church according to the Ecumenical Council (1963-65).

#### ‘REVIVAL’ / ‘MISSION’

##### i) Revival as Mission:

In Protestant religious terms the word *revival* is applied to the effort to re-vivify the religious beliefs and sentiments of a particular group of people. Today in Catholic circles the term to describe a similar activity is *renewal* but in the memory of older Catholics a *Mission*, which was preached by the Redemptorists, identified the same goal. Since the Catholic Church uses the word ‘mission’ in several different contexts it might be as well to take a look at the different ways it is applied.

##### ii) Mission:

The dictionary definition of a ‘mission’ is “a task or duty assigned to a person or a group of people.”<sup>27</sup> The Catholic Church attaches the term ‘mission’ to much of its evangelical effort. It is the word used to describe the work of spreading the gospel in foreign fields. The term ‘foreign missions’ is self-evident to the Catholic population as evangelisation taking place in lands primarily non-Christian.

A ‘Mission’ is also the name given to a “quasi-parish which is a community of Christ's faithful, entrusted to a priest as its proper pastor but because of special circumstances cannot be called a parish.”<sup>28</sup> In the Province of Quebec for example, a community of

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<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press 1991).

<sup>28</sup> Canon Law Society, *Code of Canon Law* (London: Collins Liturgical Press 1983), Chapter 6: Canon 516.

worshipping Catholics cannot be called a parish until the legal obligation of a duly elected 'fabrique' (warden) is in place.

'Canonical Mission' means that a priest has received permission to preach from the local bishop in whose diocese the preaching is to take place.

'Sacred Missions' became obligatory at least every ten years, in all parishes, in 1918.<sup>29</sup> These were meant to renew and revitalise the spirituality of the Catholic people by means of a week-long series of special liturgical events. These Church services focussed heavily on preaching and the practice of popular devotions. They were designated 'Popular Missions' or 'Parish Missions' and the Redemptorist Mission became a spiritual staple of Catholic life.

#### AN ABBREVIATED ORIGIN OF POPULAR (PARISH) MISSIONS:

Evangelism, mission and subsequent conversion have been the aim and bedrock of the Church's activity since its apostolic origins. The primary task of bishops such as Augustine, Ambrose, John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa was to "proclaim the Word" to the people of their dioceses. This activity was evangelistic in character and was directed to Christians already organised in rudimentary parishes. Preaching and teaching were a preoccupation of the early Christian Church which had the responsibility of interpreting the scriptures catechetically each time the community assembled. It also had the obligation of teaching to refute the contagion of heresies likely to draw the Christian adherents into error. As the Church grew in maturity it became difficult to "draw a hard distinction between internal and external missionizing"<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Pope Pius X, *Code of Canon Law* (Rome: Typis Poliglottis Vaticanis 1918), Canon 1349.

<sup>30</sup> John McManners, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press 1992) 92.

From 700-1050 “the great constructive developments...were missionary.”<sup>31</sup> Although the idea of popular missions became increasingly evident from the thirteenth century, missions intended for the parish congregation did not exist in any organised form before the seventeenth century. It is to the preaching of the mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans of the thirteenth century that we attribute the earlier form of parish missions. These assumed greater significance in the Counter-Reformation activity of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century and were primarily associated with the Jesuits and Capuchins. St. Vincent de Paul began his missionary work in 1627 and developed a parish mission different from that of the Jesuits and Capuchins. It was the Vincentians who greatly influenced Alphonsus Liguori whose missionary style became normative up to the Second Vatican Council. The efficacy of the parish mission formalised by Alphonsus and his Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, popularly known as Redemptorists, was quickly realised. It was his opinion that no pastor could, in good faith, refuse to provide the benefits of a parish mission to his people – but that did not mean that all pastors were disposed to hold missions on a regular basis.

It was not until Pope Pius X (1903-1914), in response to the expulsion of religious in France by an anti-clerical government, that a move was made toward the training of diocesan missionaries. Pius X had also called for the codification of all the laws of the universal Church and this was accomplished in the subsequent papacy of Benedict XV (1914-1922). It is in the Code of Canon Law (*Codex iuris canonici*) that we find Canon 1349 which makes the holding of a parish mission at least every ten years obligatory on all pastors. It was primarily to the methodologies of the Redemptorists missions that most pastors turned

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

to fulfill this obligation and this was soon recognised to be one of the most successful ways to revivify the spiritual and moral life of the parish.

Although clerically dominated, the parish mission was the Catholic equivalent of the Protestant revival until, following Vatican II, emphasis on lay participation in the Church restored to the person in the pew the Christian mandate to participate in the evangelical work of the Church. The annual parish mission (many parishes did not abide by the obligation of holding a mission every *ten* years) was eagerly awaited by parishioners as much for its social ramifications as its spiritual aims. It became an occasion to re-bond and mission meals (breakfasts and suppers) were eagerly anticipated and well attended. The Code of Canon Law did not specify the particularities of how a mission was to be conducted, the religious orders who undertook the obligation were left to formulate the strategies most appropriate. The Redemptorist model became normative in most European and North American dioceses. Other 'missions' took the form of guided and preached retreats but the Redemptorist Mission was favoured in most dioceses. However the methodology of the preached mission after the style of the Redemptorists, which was characterised by a primarily passive congregation, was no longer *au courant* with the hopes and the mood of the post Vatican II Church.

#### PLACE OF DEVOTIONAL LIFE OF CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF 1963-1965:

The document "*Gaudium et spes*" ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World") was in turn inspired by the *nouvelle theologie* of the 1940's and for the first time dogmatically stated the desirability of the faithful to "...blend modern science and its theories and understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and

doctrine.”<sup>32</sup> At the same time, in the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*, it was stressed that popular devotions must harmonize with the spirit of the liturgy and never supplant it. To this end the constitution stressed the centrality of scripture and urged that liturgical reforms bring popular devotions into conformity with authentic liturgical piety.

A footnote to a portion of the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* posits the possibility that Bible services “will relieve the tedium of repetitious familiar devotions.”<sup>33</sup> In the pre-Vatican II Church, liturgies, other than the celebration of Eucharist, were characterised by litanies and devotional prayers. The *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* strongly recommended that “Bible services should be encouraged, especially on the vigils of important feasts...They are to be particularly recommended where no priest is available...”<sup>34</sup> The groundwork was being prepared for a renewal, not only with regard to sacred liturgy celebrated within the church building but, also, in the homes of the faithful. Prayer groups began to form in homes and bible sharing and its application to daily life provided spiritual formation for lay persons who had shared the experiences of renewal movements such as Cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal and for those who exhibited a need for a more intimate form of faith community. This was the beginning of Small Church Communities and was encouraged by the arrival of RENEW into the Montreal diocese.

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<sup>32</sup> Flannery (1975), 964.

<sup>33</sup> Abbott (1966), 150.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.



## Chapter II

### Origins of the Redemptorist Mission Movement and Strategies for Preached Missions in the Parish

The Mission Movement which was normative in parishes in Europe and eventually came to the shores of North America began with the founding of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (C.S.S.R) by Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787). Born in Naples, the eldest of eight children to parents of ancient and respected lineage – the Liguori’s were considered Neopolitan gentlemen<sup>35</sup> – Alphonsus grew up in comparative comfort. He attended university from 1708 until 1713 and eventually exercised the profession of lawyer in the civil courts of Naples.<sup>36</sup> In 1723 he abandoned his legal career, following a conversion experience, and in 1726, at the age of twenty-seven became a diocesan priest orienting his ministry to the poor and illiterate of the Neopolitan population.<sup>37</sup> Due to the long working hours of those he ministered to, Alphonsus and his priest comrades began to meet with their ‘congregation’ in the evening. These meetings became known as the *Cappelle Serotine*, or Evening Chapels. They followed the popular pietistic practices of the times: Gatherers prayed the Divine Office, the Rosary, and the various litanies of Our lady and the evening was usually brought to a close with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Alphonsus also preached to and taught those who came to the Evening Chapels. It was this contact with “soap-makers, masons, barbers, carpenters, dock-workers, porters and others”<sup>38</sup> that gave him his particular insight into the needs and desires of the lay-person for

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<sup>35</sup>Theodule Rey-Mermet, C.S.S.R., *St Alphonsus Liguori* (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press 1986), 22.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

a simplified spiritual formation. With twelve other ‘apostles’ he became a member of a team that ministered on the outskirts of Naples.<sup>39</sup> After working with the sick during an epidemic, Alphonsus succumbed to the illness that ravaged the city and was sent to recuperate at Scala. It was there among the “goat-herders who lived in a state of abandon” that he realised the extent of his call to missionary work with the rural poor.<sup>40</sup> In 1732, at the age of forty-five, Alphonsus gathered a few similarly disposed priests about him and founded the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour.<sup>41</sup> The name was eventually changed to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and the order became known as the Redemptorist.

The Redemptorist missionary style was simple. The precise aim was the “conversion of sinners”<sup>42</sup> and the imparting of knowledge of the articles of the Catholic faith through the use of the catechism. This was considered the most important exercise of the mission. To this was added the familiar prayers and gospel stories, but Alphonsus believed that the preaching of sermons on what he considered the five most important aspects of Catholicism to be equally important. These five were “love for the crucified Christ, devotion to the mother of Christ, the necessity of prayer, the flight from temptation, and the ruin of souls who do not make a good confession.”<sup>43</sup> These elements were to remain the foundation of Redemptorist Mission methodology for almost two hundred years.

In October 1784 Clement Hofbauer and Thaddeus Hubl joined the Order in Rome. They founded the first German house of the Congregation in Vienna. It was the beginning of the expansion of the Order. Two hundred years after Alphonsus’ death in 1787, Redemptorist missionaries were evangelising “through-out Europe, North and South

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

America, Oceania, Africa and Southern Asia from Beirut to Tokyo.”<sup>44</sup> The annual Redemptorist mission became an evangelising arm of the Church for the spiritual and moral renewal of the Catholic lay-person.<sup>45</sup>

#### REDEMPTORISTS ARRIVE IN AMERICA:

In 1783, the now independent country of America had three million people. Of these only 23,000 (less than 1%) were Catholic.<sup>46</sup> The first Catholic diocese extended over the whole republic and the first Bishop, Father John Carroll was appointed in 1789. During the next 40 years ten new dioceses were formed allowing for the first Provincial Council to take place in Baltimore in 1829. In 1827, however, the lack of priests had already been felt and Bishop Edward Fenwick, OP of Cincinnati, had sent his vicar general to Europe to recruit missionary priests. The Provincial Council meeting in Baltimore (1829) also recognized the problem, which was rapidly exacerbated the following year by an influx of immigrants many of whom were Catholics from Germany, France and Ireland. Once again an urgent appeal was made to bishops and supervisors of religious orders in Europe. The Redemptorists responded to the appeal and arrived in America in March, 1832 with the good will of the successor to Father Hofbauer, Joseph Pascerat.

#### REDEMPTORISTS IN CANADA:

In 1878 the Baltimore Provincial, Father Elias Schauer, visited St. Patrick's in Quebec City where the Redemptorists had been ministering (they had also conducted a successful

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 681.

<sup>45</sup> For a longer description of the life and ministry of Alphonsus Liguori see appendix.

<sup>46</sup> M. J. Curley, C.S.S.R., *The Provincial Story* (New York: The Redemptorist Fathers, Baltimore Province 1963), 2.

French mission in Montreal) and he took the opportunity to present himself to Archbishop Elezeur Taschereau. Taschereau, within twenty-four hours of learning that the Baltimore Province had about a dozen French-speaking priests, offered the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre to the care of the Redemptorists.

The Shrine received 46,000 pilgrims annually and only one priest was administrator at the time of Schauer's meeting with Archbishop Taschereau. A new church and rectory were also in the building process at this time. Fr. Schauer, realising that to accept the care of the Shrine would establish the Congregation in French Canada, proposed to his Superior General, Fr. Mauron, that they accept the offer. On receiving a favourable reply he immediately dispatched three priests and two lay brothers. Barely a year later it was realised that the few French-speaking priests of the Baltimore Province were needed to conduct French missions in Montreal and in the United States, so Fr. Schauer requested more men from France and Belgium. His request could not be acceded to due to the need for French-speaking priests in Paris (where a new foundation was established) and also in Spain. It was finally considered prudent to transfer the Shrine from the Baltimore to the Belgian Province and in 1879, four Belgian priests and three brothers arrived to administer the Shrine.

For many years the bishops and archbishops of Toronto had tried to secure the services of Redemptorists. It was not until 1881 that Schauer had enough men to fill the request. They were assigned the care of St. Patrick's church in Toronto. A new monastery on McCall St., Toronto, became the home of the community in 1887 and eventually became the headquarters of the vice province which was passed in 1898. At the time there were five Canadian (English speaking) priests in the congregation. A second foundation was established at the request of Bishop John Sweeney in St. John, New Brunswick in 1884.

It was also in 1884, that the first Archbishop of Montreal, Charles Edouard Fabae, decided to place St. Ann's parish (Montreal) under the direction of a religious community and so applied to the Belgian Province ministering at St. Anne de Beaupre. It is not clear why the Bishop placed an almost purely English language parish (most parishioners were either first generation Irish or directly from Ireland which prompted the nickname of the parish – 'Little Ireland') under the care of French-speaking priests. Whatever the reason, on August 15, 1884, an agreement was signed by the Bishop of Montreal and the Congregation. It reads as follows:

His Grace, the Bishop of Montreal authorizes the Redemptorist Fathers to establish a community of their Congregation in his episcopal city and to live there and exercise the holy ministry according to their rules and privileges approved by the Holy See. The Fathers shall establish themselves on the ground annexed to the parochial Church of St. Ann. Monseigneur the Bishop confides to their care the pastoral ministry of this parish. Permission is granted to add new buildings for the use of the community. Since the Redemptorists are a Missionary Order, they may carry on Apostolic works in the Diocese of Montreal and other Dioceses, with the consent of the respective authorities. These works consist mainly in the preaching of the spiritual exercises of Missions and Retreats.

The present Bishop accepts these conditions for himself and his legitimate successors. Each article of this Agreement is binding on both contracting parties, the Bishop of the Diocese and the Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Made in duplicate at Montreal, August 15, 1884.

(Signe): Edouard Chs, Eveque de Montreal.

In the name of the Most Reverend Father General, Nicolas Mauron, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer and by virtue of the powers communicated to me by him to this effect.

(Signe) J. Kockerols C.S.S.R. (Superior Provincial of Belgium).<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Centenary of St. Ann's Church, Montreal, 1854-1954* (Toronto: Archival Material), 28.

Less than three weeks later, on September 4, 1884, the first two Belgian Redemptorists arrived. They were followed in another three weeks by two more priests and three lay brothers and the pastoral jurisdiction passed from the 'caretaker' administrator to Fr. J. Catuice, Superior and pastor of the new foundation.

The strange situation of St. Ann's English-speaking parish being under the direction of French-speaking priests and therefore part of the French Canadian Province was not corrected until the Provincial, Father Joseph Schierder, formed an English-speaking vice-province in 1912. By that time the parish, which had over 5,000 people, was already dwindling.<sup>48</sup> It had housed the Juvenate in 1911-12 and again in 1919, and finally in 1941. The Studentate was also located at St. Ann's from 1925 to 1930; the Second Novitiate, 1948-55; and the Pastoral Institute 1958-62. The Redemptorists left the parish which had figured so largely in their North American history in 1970, and the diocese closed St. Ann's in 1982. The last Redemptorist priest, Fr. Martin Foley, left St. Richard's parish, Montreal in August 1990 after ministering as Pastor for twenty-one years.

A compendium of Redemptorist Foundations in Canada lists thirty-four in eastern Canada alone.<sup>49</sup> The acceptance of St. Anne de Beaupre, St. Ann's, Montreal, St. Patrick's, Toronto and St. Peter's in St. John, New Brunswick, as foundations, had led to the opening up of Canada to the Redemptorists and their Alphonsian spiritual methodology. This took the form of semi-annual and annual 'Missions' designed to renew the spiritual and devotional life of the parish.

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<sup>48</sup> Curley (1963), 267.

<sup>49</sup> *Catalogue of the Members of the Toronto Province* (Toronto: The Redemptorist Fathers, ca. 1987), 27.

## STRATEGIES FOR PREACHED MISSIONS IN THE PARISH:

In a privately printed document by Joseph Wissel, C.S.S.R., dated 1920, there are the following directions for various exercises on the preaching of Missions –

- a) A Mission must be given exclusively for the parish congregation.
- b) Missions are to be of one week's duration.
- c) Separate Missions are to be conducted for women and men.

(The document comments on the last directive thus: "It has even happened that we divided the congregation into four parts by giving a separate Mission, first, to the married women, then to the unmarried women; afterward to the married men then to the unmarried men. This arrangement has met with extraordinary success.")<sup>50</sup>

Permission to conduct a Mission in a particular parish had to be secured from the pastor and application had to be made to the bishop of the diocese to obtain special 'faculties'. These 'extraordinary faculties' gave the assurance that the priest was in good standing with both his congregation and the diocese.

In the first part of the book *The Redemptorist on the American Missions* there are explicit instructions on how to deal with "objections raised by some pastors against Missions" and the necessary "behaviour toward the pastors".<sup>51</sup> This would seem to indicate that not all parishes welcomed what may have been perceived as an intrusion by the missionaries into the sometimes jealously guarded territory of the pastor. However in discussion with some very old Redemptorists, I found that none could remember having to exert much persuasion upon the pastors. Since most of these men had been ministering since the mid-1930's, one could assume that most pastors in North America were amenable to the

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<sup>50</sup> J. Wissel, CSSR, *The Redemptorist on the American Missions* (Norwood, Mass: Plimpton Press 1920), Vol. 1: 27.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

parish Mission by the time of the advent of the second world war.

The customary practice of separating men and women was not unusual in many denominational settings in the era we are dealing with, but the reason for the separation during the Mission is rationalised in the directives for Missions: “Many churches...are not half big enough to contain the congregation even if we deduct those who must stay home”; and later they comment, “Another grave reason...is that there are very few churches in which men occupy seats separated from those of women. This crowding together is, no doubt, fraught with great danger to morality.”<sup>52</sup>

The spiritual disposition of the priest missionary was of the utmost importance, and strict admonitions were given to this end. Rule 50 of the *Constitution on Sacred Missions* demanded that in the case of a “fledgling Missionary”, his sermons were to be written, supervised and then memorised.<sup>53</sup> A young priest was to work twenty weeks with an older, more experienced man before ever being sent out alone, and before even leaving the house to conduct a Mission. Rule 116 decreed “they shall recite together in the church the *Itinerarium Clericorum*. Then they shall ask the Rectors blessing and set out in the Name of the Lord.”<sup>54</sup> On the journey, or on arrival at the church, prescribed prayers from the Mission Manual were said together.

Great stress was placed on the seal of the confessional. This was referred to as the “secret of the King”. Great prudence was to be exercised so that, “in public or in private, we should avoid even the appearance of a betrayal of the seal”.<sup>55</sup> This held not only for private conversation but also applied to the giving of examples in sermons.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> *Constitution on Sacred Missions* (Redemptorist Press - Private printing for internal use only).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Rule 16.

<sup>55</sup> Wissel (1988), Vol. 1: 77-87.



## SPIRITUAL DISPOSITION OF THE PRIESTS GIVING THE MISSION:

In preparation for the celebration of Eucharist, fifteen minutes of meditation was to be observed. The obligatory saying of the Office (daily scriptural meditations and prayers, usually including a psalm) was never to be postponed till bedtime when it might be omitted because of fatigue. The recitation of six decades of the Rosary was to be prayed. The usual number of decades was five, the extra one was for “the Holy Souls” who it was believed were in purgatory. Prayer visits to the Blessed Sacrament and short devout prayers known as ‘ejaculations’ were part of the spiritual preparation. In addition the preacher was to immerse himself in the Way of the Cross. These prayerful exercises were, as much as possible, to be performed in community, or at least with one other priest.

Spiritually strengthened, the Mission could begin. *The Toronto Provincial Statutes* declared that all the priests were to assemble at the church doors.<sup>56</sup> The pastor, (dressed in a ‘cope’ and the best sacramental regalia and carrying a large crucifix), upon seeing the assembled missionaries at the door, processed from the sanctuary (preceded by altar boys), to greet them. The crucifix was given to the priests to kiss, then the pastor blessed the missionaries with holy water and they all processed to the altar to the accompaniment of the Benedictus. Whenever possible this was sung by the priests, but if they were not sufficient the parish choir would sing the alternate refrains.

On arrival before the altar, the pastor introduced the missionaries, they all genuflected and the *Exsurgat Deus* was prayed. This prayer was limited to the refrains preceding the antiphon *Te Deum Patrem Ingenitum* and High Mass commenced. The first sermon of the Mission was preached after the reading of the Gospel of the day, and all the announcements

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<sup>56</sup> *The Toronto Provincial Statutes [TPS (1936)]* (Toronto: Redemptorist Fathers, Archival Material 1936), 7.

pertaining to the Mission were made at the end of Mass. Even here there were strict rules attached to the making of announcements, for instance, no words were to be used that had commercial connotation, such as 'for sale' or 'buy'.

The week long itinerary was also predetermined, (who preached which sermons on which evenings), and the pastor of the parish was given, ahead of time, a list of requirements so that there was uniformity in the conduct of the Mission. These included: making sure the organist was appraised of the appropriate music; instructions for the use of the 'sinners bell' (which was rung after the singing *O Salutaris*, and the recitation of five Our Fathers and Hail Mary's at the start of each session); six candles to be placed on the High Altar, and two candles on the altar to the Blessed Virgin; flowers and decorations for the Shrine of the Virgin; the Atonement service; and, finally, definite times were arranged for the hearing of confessions.

The custom of the tolling of the sinners bell, dating back to the time of Alphonsus, was peculiar to the Redemptorists. Just as the bells were tolled to announce the death of a person, the sinners bell signified the death of a soul due to mortal sin and signalled that the bell would soon toll over the sinner's remains. It was an effective method of prompting the most recalcitrant into church.

Missions were preached for men, women, children, those engaged to be married and those who might be in 'irregular unions'. Although the daily morning Mass was celebrated by the missionaries, it was the evening Mission that drew the crowds. On some evenings there were special devotions, such as the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, (or "Our Lady" as Mary was more familiarly addressed) – Benediction with its Gregorian chanted hymns, clouds of incense and splendid vestments was a particularly well loved service. The Way of the Cross, usually a devotion associated with lenten liturgies was encouraged all week

long. But it was the Great Sermon for which everyone awaited in anticipation.

The missionaries took turns to preach the Great Sermon and a particularly gifted preacher would be the topic of conversation in neighbourhood gossip, at the workplace, and even in the local bar for many a week after the event. These sermons were aimed at the particular errors that characterised the local population. The amount of beer that a man drank, his treatment of his wife and children, his propensity to lust, all met with fire and brimstone. The peculiarly female vices were exposed and dealt with at the women's Mission. And even the children had illustrated for them the terrible fate awaiting those 'in apprentice' to sinful ways. All these sins were then contrasted with the Life, Passion and Death of Jesus who had "died that all might live." Confessions were heard after all the evening services and long lines of penitents were shriven.

*The Toronto Provincial Statutes* directed that the "eternal truths" be preached.<sup>57</sup> These were sermons devoted to Salvation, Mortal Sin, General Judgment, Hell, Precepts of the Church, and the Blessed Virgin. This last sermon was to be preached every Saturday evening. The Mission Conference of 1938 decreed that of the four traditional sermons – Salvation, Mortal Sin, General Judgement and Hell – at least three of the four must be preached on a week long Mission. The decision as to the choice of the fourth sermon was to be made according to the local conditions. "The prevalence of the certain vice" was to be the determining factor.<sup>58</sup>

A popular misconception maintains that the tone of the sermons was *deliberately* set in order to inspire fear leading to a change of heart. In fact, according to Fr. Wissel it was the motive of love that should be employed to move the hearts of the people. St. Alphonsus

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>58</sup> Wissel (1988), 82.

maintained that a conversion effected through the motive of fear alone would not be lasting. The aim of the sermon was toward authentic *metanoia* and the directives stressed “avoiding especially exaggerated statements, intemperate language, lurid examples and an excess of severity...Hope should be held out. Despair in the heart should be the last thought of the preacher.”<sup>59</sup> However, it must be added that according to one of my sources, a lady of ninety-two, not only did some preachers “make you feel really scared” they were the ones who drew the largest congregations; their sermons provoked the most conversation when parishioners met; and everybody hoped for their return the following year. Sermons lasted between 35-40 minutes and the entire service was concluded within an hour and a quarter.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DIRECTIVES FOR PREACHED MISSIONS:

(One Week: Sunday - Sunday)

##### *Sunday -*

The formal welcome to the visiting missionaries was performed by the pastor of the parish, who, by his giving blessing and then leading the visitors to the sanctuary was ritually donating the parish to them. A Solemn High Mass was then celebrated. The theme of the Great Sermon set the tone for the Mission. All announcements pertaining to the week-long Mission were then made (e.g. the days devoted to the Mission for men, the day and times of the Mission for women, for children, etc.). The explanation for the Sinners Bell was given. An appeal was made for donations of candles and flowers for the altars. (Although this may appear unusual in a day of affluent parishes, it must be kept in mind that the first priority of

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

preaching was always to the poor. Frequently these poorer, rural parishes had very little money.) The themes for the Evening Instruction were outlined from Sunday evening to the close of the Mission the following Saturday. Scrupulous attention was given to the Morning Instruction directives, which were also announced.

*Sunday Evening: Mission for Women -*

The entrance processional was accompanied by the choir. Altar boys carried the Mission Crucifix, the Sinners Bell, and the thurible of incense. The evening instruction on Sunday always focussed on prayer, especially the efficacy of the Rosary. Eucharist was celebrated and the Great Sermon preached. *The Toronto Provincial Statutes*, commenting on the manner in which the sermon, dealing with the state of life should be preached, had this to say:

"...no one should be appointed to deliver [these instructions] unless [they] be thoroughly elaborated and carefully examined by the Superior or an experienced Missionary. He must above all refrain from ever using the slightest indelicate or objectionable phrase, but on the contrary should employ only the chastest expressions. Addressing young people he should not indulge in jocose language. He should never jest about matters pertaining to the sixth commandment or relating to courtship. He should also carefully abstain from scurrilous words and language liable to give offence."<sup>60</sup>

One of the most important sermons preached at both the women's and men's Mission was the sermon on the prohibition of birth control. It is remembered by elderly people interviewed as "powerful," "rollicking good stuff" and sometimes "scary". Birth control is considered a grave sin in the Catholic Church and the sermon was based upon the Encyclical on Christian Marriage.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *TPS* (1936), 15.

<sup>61</sup> Pope Pius XI, *Casti connubi*. Dec. 31, 1930. (Boston: Pauline Books and Media (undated)).

It was stressed that the Mission was to be a time of prayer, and morning and evening prayers were encouraged. Short ejaculatory prayers were taught and the congregation was urged to repeat them often during the day. (Anyone familiar with an Irish family will surely have heard "Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" expostulated, or "Saints preserve us!" They have become almost synonymous with Boston Irish portrayed in movies, yet it was just such phrases that were encouraged as ejaculatory prayers). Great stress was put on the giving up of "occasions of sin," (areas of temptation) and all were urged to attend the sacrament of Penance (Confession). The attendance at the Mission was considered so important, that the laity were urged to practice self-denial and not only give up all else to attend the Mission, but were encouraged to go out and bring along the backsliders. The names of any adults who were not confirmed were handed in, and if necessary a confirmation class was formed. Any un-baptised children were also listed with the priests. Sometimes children of parents in an irregular marriage were not brought to church for this sacrament (baptism) and the condition was remedied, usually after catechesis of the parents.

It was stressed in the women's Mission, that the success of the men's Mission depended on them. The Missionaries urged that they keep peace in the home, have the meals ready on time, keep the children in order... all so that the men would have no excuse to justify their own absence from the Mission.

#### *Monday Morning -*

The morning service was kept to an hour. There was instruction given on the importance of examining one's conscience and a special method (the 'Examen') was usually taught and employed. Mass was celebrated and confessions were heard. The Christian Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity were always read and the congregation encouraged to join in. The

announcements pertaining to the rest of the week were made. And, if a Mission for children was to take place, it was stressed that the children be watched, lest they break the Eucharistic Fast.

The Eucharistic Fast, a discipline placed on all Catholics, forbade eating or drinking for twelve hours before Holy Communion was to be taken. Complete twelve hour fasting had been widespread in the fourth century and became mandatory by the Middle ages. This remained the norm for centuries until it abruptly changed in the decade of the mid-1950's to the mid-60's. In 1953 food intake was still forbidden but water could be taken anytime up to one hour before Communion. In 1964 Pope Paul VI lifted the prohibition completely, except for an abstinence of one hour prior to the reception of the sacrament.

Ancient Catholic customs such as the fasting and abstinence laws were assiduously reinforced by the Mission. These laws required that Catholics fast on prescribed days and abstain from eating meat on Friday. The imposition on Catholics to abstain from meat on Fridays and substitute fish, or other meat-less dishes, has elicited criticism. The question, "Why fish?", has been asked. There has even been a suggestion that the practice was a popish plot to ensure the economic stability of places like Catholic Portugal. Food, however, has always been used to make societal distinctions. The eating of fish, vegetables, or pasta instead of meat, at least one day a week (Friday was chosen because of Christ's death on a Friday), became a way for one to align one's self with the poor—those who could not afford the luxury of red meats. "[L]owering one's sights from meat to fish was an exercise in humility and designed to raise the consciousness of elected self-restraint."<sup>62</sup> Two years after lifting the stringencies of the Eucharistic Fast, Paul VI, in the document "*Paenotemini*" ("Be

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<sup>62</sup> Margaret Visser, (*Since Eve Ate Apples*), *Much Depends on Dinner* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart 1986), 151-52.

Converted”), stressed the importance of seeking beyond fast and abstinence to new expressions of the goal of penance which were both more suitable for its practice and truly in accordance with the changing times. For more than a hundred years however, before these announcements were conveyed to the Catholic world, the Redemptorists reminded the faithful of their obligation to observe all Church disciplines, such as those pertaining to fasting.

#### *Tuesday Morning -*

The themes for Tuesday's instruction were 'Contrition' and 'A Firm Purpose of Amendment'. All of the announcements were repeated, with stress put upon the importance of the State Instruction. The importance of this was due to its content, which dealt with the duties demanded by one's state of life. It emphasised commitment to the vocation chosen, and how that commitment was best lived out. Mass was celebrated, confessions heard, and if there was any time left, perhaps a Rosary recited.

#### *Tuesday Evening -*

The theme of the Great Sermon on Tuesday would frequently be 'The General Judgement'. This theme fitted very well with the instruction of Tuesday morning (Contrition) and particularly well with the previous evenings sermon on 'Mortal Sin'. Linked as it was to the importance of commitment to one's state of life, and the instructions relating to birth control, this sermon is recalled as one of the more memorable. It seems to have inspired a sense of "delicious dread" so akin to what Rudolph Otto has termed the "*numinous*" and the "*mysterium tremendum*".<sup>63</sup> The theme of the sermon was adapted to reflect the nature of the

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<sup>63</sup> Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (New York. Oxford University Press 1950), 50.



congregation, hence, at the women's Mission it would speak of 'The Judgement of Female Sinfulness'.

The Missionaries frequently preached against birth control and women's participation in this act would be commented upon. The "hatred of the sin" however, was not transferred to the perceived sinner, and for those whose consciences were pricking under the weight of the condemnation of the sin, the Missioner was also instructed to quote extensively from *Casti connubi*, which taught that there was no sin "when for a grave cause she (or he) reluctantly allows the perversion of the right order."<sup>64</sup> The preacher was also encouraged to quote the validity of using the safe period, reminding the congregation that the "secondary ends, such as mutual aid, the cultivating of mutual love and the quieting of concupiscence" were also important elements that should be recognised.

One decade of the Rosary was prayed before the evening ended.

One would expect that a chastened congregation left the church, each fearfully contemplating her or his own particular General Judgement yet, of the women interviewed, almost all denied this and speculated that the atmosphere was cheerful and that the usual womanly practice of stopping and chatting and sharing the latest news was prevalent. The men interviewed were more reticent about remembering their reactions, and seemed to feel that there was very little overt comment about the content of the sermon and that any comments were usually confined to an evaluation of the priest's homiletic prowess.

I have tried to interpret these remembered reactions and reconcile them with my own particular memories. I believe that the sermons had interior effect but that it was the outward manifestation – the behaviour of 'social gathering' which occurred outside the church after

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<sup>64</sup> Anne Fremantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context* New York: Mentor, New American Library 1956), 240.

the service – which reveals an important component of the popularity of the Mission week: The advent of Mission season was looked forward to because it was a break in the usual humdrum nature of ordinary living. It was a time for the women to show off their new hats and the hard worked labourer to ‘knock off’ his shift earlier. It was a joke that the only real sinners in the community during a Mission were the pub owners, angry at the (temporary) decline in profits.

*Wednesday Morning -*

The Wednesday Instruction spoke of the importance of making a general confession. ‘General Confession’ was an opportunity to go over one’s life and confess all the sins committed. Obviously no one remembers all their sins and the purpose was to provoke reflection on the state of the soul. Had one overcome bad tendencies of the past or had there been no improvement? It was a sort of spiritual barometer. Persistent sinful tendencies were confessed and opened up to scrutiny and dialogue. Exhortation and encouragement to amend one’s ways followed, sins were forgiven and the person absolved. It was frequently a conversion experience. The psychological relief from the burden of past misdeeds often resulted in an authentic ‘turning over of a new leaf’.

The danger prevalent in an overemphasis on the need for General Confession was the cultivation of scrupulosity. This is in itself considered sinful, as the compulsion to confess sins already forgiven, shows a lack of faith in God's love and mercy. It was also the bane of parish priests who, in days gone by, often spent many long hours in the confessional. What they didn't wish, was to spend a long time reassuring someone that they were already forgiven. It should be considered that the tendency to scrupulosity was, however, often the result of a combination of the importance given to the duty to confess *all* sins and the

understanding that if a sin were omitted in confession due to an oversight, it had to be confessed as soon as possible. Many a child lay awake worrying about an offense which had been forgotten and wondering how quickly she or he could get back to the confessional box. This compulsion was usually outgrown, along with the one that forbade the stepping on cracks in the sidewalk, but in some people it persisted. It was considered to be more prevalent in women than men.

The recognition that a sin had been omitted unintentionally did not, however, create an obstacle to the reception of Communion, Fr. Wissel writes, "If after having gone to confession, they find they have forgotten some mortal sin or sins do not stay away from Communion. Go to Communion, and confess that mortal sin or sins at the next Confession".<sup>65</sup> You will note that he speaks of "mortal" sins needing to be confessed. According to the orthodoxy of the Church, venial sins did not require the same stringent attention, but the orthopraxis of the average Catholic was that all omitted sins had to be confessed as soon as possible.

### *Wednesday Evening -*

The Great Sermon on Wednesday evening was usually on the subject 'Hell, and it now becomes clear that the strategical planning of the instructions and the sermon followed a logical train of thought.

According to the priests and the elderly parishioners interviewed, this particular sermon received the best attendance. In a day when the church was filled to capacity for the Mission sermons, this evening is remembered as drawing people to overflowing. Perhaps also it required the best orator among the Missionaries. It is believed that the phrase 'hellfire

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<sup>65</sup> Wissel (1988), 79-81.

and brimstone', when applied to a particular type of sermon or preacher, originated with this particular homily. The phrase has been applied to sermons and preachers other than Catholic, but the Redemptorists had a somewhat longer history with this particular methodology than did the revival tent meetings of the early 19th century with which it is more usually associated.

Why this sermon should have exerted the fascination it did can perhaps be best explained by psychology. The horror genre of movies is known to be a box office success. The pyrotechnics and the sophisticated special effects of such movies only increase their popularity. In a day when all of this was undreamed of, the human imagination 'un-blunted' by the excesses of the visual media, could reach terrifying dimensions. A gifted orator in this instance could be the catalyst to a conversion through fear. This was never encouraged in the directives, because, as was stated earlier, St. Alphonsus recognised that a heart converted through fear was never lasting.

A devotional practice, such as celebrating a service of Benediction often accompanied this sermon. Benediction was a particularly beloved devotion. The priest would envelope himself in a richly embroidered stole called a 'cope'. After the recitation of litanies, which were echoed by the congregation, and the singing of time honoured hymns in Latin, the priest placed a large host, consecrated earlier in the day, into the crystal container in the centre of the 'monstrance'. The monstrance is an elaborate vessel which often takes the shape of the sun with rays emanating. In the centre there is a cavity which is large enough to hold a circular glass case about three inches wide. The monstrance has a stem and a stand. When the host and crystal case are placed into the centre, there is a 'solemn incensing' made before it. The priest then folds his hands into the fabric of the cope, elevates the monstrance and makes the sign of the Cross three times over the bowed heads of the people. The candlelight,

the smell of the clouds of incense and the rich timbre of the ancient hymns evoke wonder and peace in the souls which had earlier envisioned hell.

*Thursday Morning -*

The instruction was on 'Enmity and Restitution'. After an evening contemplating the punishment for such sins as these, this was a morning when the priests were tempted to spend more time in the confessional box than was encouraged in the directives. Penances were not restricted to the familiar prayers – "Say five Our Fathers and ten Hail Mary's" or "four decades of the Rosary" – practical acts of kindness (charity) and the clearing the good name of someone who had been maligned were insisted on. It was a morning for humility.

On this particular day the blessing of articles was done. Rosary beads, medals, water, were all brought to the priests. A prayer dedicating the articles to the service of God and asking blessings and protection for the owner of the articles was said. The sign of the Cross was made over them sealing the blessing.

The Second Vatican Council, recognising the sometimes superstitious aura that has surrounded blessed articles has clarified their correct usage. The Catholic Catechism says: "they are not some kind of fetishes that work magically just by being worn or said."<sup>66</sup> However, prior to the reforms of Vatican II great faith was invested in holy objects. Blessed medals of the Blessed Virgin and of various favourite saints were pinned on underwear, scapulars were not removed even to take a bath, and no one ever left the house without blessing themselves with holy water from the small font hanging by the door.

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<sup>66</sup> John A. Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1975), 553.

### *Thursday Evening -*

The theme of the Great Sermon on Thursday night was frequently left to the collective discernment of the missionaries and the pastor of the local parish. The pastor was usually well acquainted with the particularities of his people, whilst the visiting priests were able to judge the prevalent vices from their participation in the week long hearing of confession. Together, a theme would be agreed upon.

The laity did not know of the planned strategy, nor of the directives for preaching missions which had evolved through the analysis of Mission experiences carefully documented over many years. Successful Missions were analysed as assiduously as the unsuccessful, and years of annual visits to the same locale produced a knowledge of the area and its particular areas of vice. Over the lifespan of one aged Redemptorist, the local vices have changed from common drunkenness, fighting (or "fisticuffs" as he called it), lewd talk and behaviour, and gossip and backbiting (in the case of women), to a preoccupation with looks (vanity) materialism (greed) and marital infidelity. The average parishioner was always surprised at how insightful the Great Sermon on Thursday was, as it dealt with precisely the problem areas they experienced.

At the end of the service the announcement would be made for all to attend the important Friday night service because, as the priest advised, "on Tuesday evening we pointed out how to live as a good Christian – in the sermon tomorrow night we will tell you how to live as a good Catholic." (The Friday service expounded the 'Precepts of the Church'). And then the usual prayers were said and hymns sung as the priests and altar servers left the sanctuary.

*Friday Morning -*

The instruction was devoted to the Sins of the Tongue and once again all were urged to go to confession as soon as possible. The priest would frequently take the congregation through the 'Examination of Conscience' which they had been taught earlier in the week.

*Friday Evening -*

Friday evening's sermon was preached on the Church's teaching regarding the indissolubility of marriage; birth control; premarital chastity; Sunday obligation (attending Mass); and the fasting and abstinence laws. In addition there was the warning not to fraternise with Protestants lest it lead to mixed marriage, nor to send children to any of the public schools where they would not have the benefit of religious education. The warnings were usually accompanied by illustrations of the dire consequences of such lapses.

It was also on this evening that the announcement of the "five Cs" was made:

1. Confessions; 2. Communions; 3. Candles; 4. Close; and 5. Collection. The candles were used to decorate the Lady altar for the following evening's special service devoted to the Blessed Mother. The 'close' referred to the announcement regarding the end of the Mission (with the significance of the Triple Blessing given that evening) and the collection was taken to defray the travelling expenses of the Missionaries.

*Saturday Morning -*

After the usual celebration of the Eucharist and the hearing of confessions, the five C's of the previous evening were announced once again. All of the announcements were made clearly and joyfully in preparation for the evening ceremony in honour of Mary, ('Our Lady').

The peculiarly intense devotion to Mary which is synonymous with Catholicism, made this service one of pleasant anticipation. The 'hard' sermons were at an end. The 'mysteries' of the Rosary which had focussed on the Sorrowful (Passion and Death of Jesus) and on the Glorious (Resurrection and Ascension, etc.) now gave way to the Joyful, where the congregation meditated on those events in the lives of Jesus and Mary which reflected the Holy Family's domestic life and the sublime end of Mary's earthly existence.

#### *Saturday Evening -*

It was common for the Catholic school to urge all the parents of children who had made their First Communion that year, to dress the children in their white dresses and veils and best suits on Saturday evening so that they might process into the church with the priests and altar servers. Each parish also had an organisation called the Sodality (a group of young men and women dedicated to Mary, whose apostolate included visiting the sick) and an organisation of young girls called the "Children of Mary". These, too, dressed in white and wearing blue cloaks, joined in the procession. If the Mission was preached during good weather, the whole congregation would process through the village (or at least the church grounds) bearing a statue of Mary on a shoulder high litter. Often the small children would strew flower petals from decorated baskets, and all the favourite hymns of Mary were sung. Eventually they would end up in the church which had been decorated with many lit candles and vases of donated flowers. A small child, often to the accompaniment of ringing bells, would ceremoniously place a small wreath of flowers on the head of the statue of Mary. The Litany of Mary would be intoned and the Great Sermon would frequently address the meaning and origin of the devotions to Mary encouraged by the Church.

Because of the great emphasis given to the motherhood of Mary, this service had the



effect of up-building the female population. Mary's life with a devoted spouse, had the effect of impressing upon the male population the duty incumbent on them to cherish and support their wives. The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were presented as the ideal for all Catholic families and the evening ended with a dedication of all present to Mary.

*Sunday Evening -*

This evening brought to a close the first week of the Mission, in this case the Mission to women. The announcement of the opening of the Men's Mission was made. The women were, once again, urged to keep the peace at home and young women were warned of the great risk in keeping company with a fellow who scorned attendance at the Mission. His attendance (or non-attendance) would be a gauge by which to judge any suitor. The Rosary was recited, hymns sung and the last confessions heard.

The Mission for men followed the same over-all strategy: The Great Sermons followed the same themes on the same evenings of the week. The only difference was that they were tailored to a male audience. It was frequently the case that the pastor of the parish would request a Renewal Mission several months after the preached Missions. These were encouraged, as it became apparent that the religious zeal ignited by the Mission had a life span of about six months.

## Redemptorist Mission / Conclusions:

What conclusions can be drawn concerning the effectiveness of the Mission format for Renewal? If we define a parish renewal as a movement to renew faith – one which fosters a new vitality, renews energy at the parish level and empowers the laity toward cooperative leadership with the clergy – how does the Redemptorist Mission fair? A quick summary of the characteristics of the movement might be helpful.

- a) The Redemptorist Mission was initiated by the clergy in the local parish following a mandate by Canon Law (19th cent.).
- b) It was an annual event characterised by intense week-long preaching and participation in familiar devotions. There was a request for the services of a trained team of clergy. Men from the order of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists) were contacted by the local bishop who then informed the diocesan pastors of team availability. Therefore the team was imported.
- c) The Mission was characterised by a passive listening congregation who participated in devotional services and processions as directed.
- d) There was gender segregation for most of the week long services with the final climactic evening service being attended by both sexes.
- e) There was no conscription of lay-persons to provide ongoing support. Parish organisations continued with their agenda in much the same way as they had before the Mission event.
- f) The week long retreat followed set strategies (formulated by the Mission team) with the aim of vivifying personal morality.
- g) There was sometimes a request made to the imported team to return after six months for follow-up reinforcement. This does not seem to have been a recurring feature.

- h) Parish organisations (mainly those with female membership) met with the pastor to prepare for the Mission event by undertaking certain organisational tasks, e.g., to plot processional routes; to provide flowers and flower baskets; to polish sacramental artifacts; and to prepare altar linens, etc.
- i) Several weeks in advance the Mission was advertised to the parishioners, and then the news was spread by word of mouth.
- j) The Mission was seen as a staple of the parish life, and was eagerly anticipated by the target group.

The longevity of the Parish Mission movement would suggest success. Certainly personal experience<sup>67</sup> and the responses of those who participated in the Missions bear out the assertion that they were, at one time, a high point in the religious life of the active Catholic. But if the aim of a parish renewal is to sponsor well-grounded leadership at the parish level (a laity working cooperatively with clerical leaders), the effect was minimal.

Prior to Vatican II, there were no such things as Pastoral Parish Councils. The priest and his clerical associates "ran" the parish. Directives came from the bishop, who in turn received his directives from Rome. The chain of authority was clear and unchallenged. There

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<sup>67</sup> I participated in Mission weeks from the age of seven, an age when one was recognised by the Church as having reached the "age of reason". Until adolescence, I attended the Mission for children, then graduated to the Mission for young people. Up until the age of twenty I attended the adult Mission. Following that, I came to Montreal and I continued my participation for several years.

The Montreal regional parishes hosted the Mission team and the venue was advertised in all the churches. My recollection is of the hosting church being filled to capacity. Because the congregation came from a number of parishes, the social bond which was an important element in a Mission week was lost. In my home parish, a much smaller congregation, the bonding aspect was very evident by the number of people who participated in the shared meals during the Mission week. I recall no such celebrations being offered and because of this lacunae, a built-in component to the possibility of renewal was missing. This seems to have been noted by the revision team as shared meals have been inserted into the new strategies. In hindsight, in spite of the attendance level, I believe that the charism the mission exerted in the past was already waning. I put this date as circa 1960.

would always be a certain priestly pride in how many sodalities and fraternities etc. were in each parish, but these organisations focussed on prayer and good works. They were not seen as taking part in any decision making at the parish level. Decisions belonged to the structures reserved for authority.

In a time when there were no televisions and few radios, when entertainment was home based and social life restricted to the local tavern or to associations of men and women's guilds, the annual Mission was anticipated with the same pleasure as was the yearly country fair. I hesitate to describe it as entertainment as the pejorative connotations which the term may carry deny the congregation's perception of this as a pious event – with the Mission, something different was happening to them *within* the church setting. They listened, enthralled, to the ancient stories of God, Jesus and the saints and a good preacher could make the hair rise on the head.

People loved the opportunity to proclaim their affiliation by processions. Immigrant groups could not only feel the fervour of their religious piety but also of their national passion. The procession was more than just a holy exercise, it defined the people taking part in it. The psycho-social dimension of the processional aspect of Mission activity should not be underestimated. Many Catholic populations, especially immigrants, were marked minorities whose identity, both religious and ethnic, suffered from an ideology which was negative to them.<sup>68</sup> Processional activity took place outdoors, often in view of an (often hostile) audience of other townspeople. As one person interviewed expressed it, "We felt safe as a group and I can only speak for myself, but I actually felt defiant! The Mission procession outdoors said to those people who often made fun of me 'This is who I am and

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<sup>68</sup> To better understand the implications of this phenomenon see Eric Erikson, *The Young Man Luther* (New York: Norton 1958), 22.

I'm not alone'.”

The Mission experience acted as a reinforcement of long cherished religious, ethnic and cultural values. The success of the Redemptorist Mission lay not so much in the area of renewal as defined post Vatican II, one where the pastoral life of the parish was shared conjointly by lay and clergy effort, but more as a reinforcement of personal continuity and an affirmation of those realities that made up the most deeply held (but frequently negated) areas of self perception.

The recognition that a follow-up to the Mission six months later might be necessary suggests that the pastors perceived an amount of backsliding into old faults or sins. This would suggest that the initial religious fervour was short lived and that perhaps the Mission provided a temporary 'shot in the arm' rather than an authentic renewal.

## CONTEMPORARY PARISH MISSIONS

The revised Mission methodology (post Vatican II) has produced a change in form rather than content and applies the same principles to the present-day situation. The Missionary fathers describe their strategy as that of being “a lion in the pulpit and a lamb in the confessional”<sup>69</sup> and the prevailing tone of the preaching as lying midway between a high and a low Christology. The Missionaries preach and preside at all the Sunday masses and the homily is based on the scripture readings proper to the normal liturgical calendar.

The week-long format starts on Sunday and continues through to Thursday. Unlike the old format, there is no gender-separation and indeed older children are invited to attend the sessions which are thought to be instructive to them, especially the celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick (Tuesday morning). The RCIA is invited to participate in all the evening sessions and neighbouring priests are invited to assist with the Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Wednesday) provided they feel comfortable celebrating the sacrament face to face with the penitent, a custom initiated with Vatican II. The contemporary format reveals a noticeable move to simplicity.

### *Sunday Evening -* CREATION-THE FULLNESS OF LIFE.

This service concentrates on the goodness of God's creation particularly the goodness of the human person. There is an instruction and discussion following the service which deals with the positive experience of 'Christian Family Life'.

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<sup>69</sup> Quote by Rev. David Furlonger, C.S.S.R. Toronto Province, 1992.

*Monday Morning -*  
MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD.

Mass is celebrated, focussing on Mary as the model for the Church and for all Christians. The discussion following concentrates on various methods of prayer.

*Monday Evening -*  
JESUS CHRIST.

The focus is how Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God's love for all. The instruction and discussion will centre on Separation, Divorce, Annulment and Remarriage in the Church.

*Tuesday Morning -*  
ANONING.

This service concentrates on the woundedness of the Christian Community and there is a communal celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick. There is no instruction/discussion period as the celebration is followed by a social gathering.

*Tuesday Evening -*  
LIVING THE REIGN OF GOD TODAY.

The Mission service focuses on the life and values of those living in the Kingdom of God and the discussion following is on the "Formation of Conscience."

*Wednesday Morning -*  
JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Both the Mission Service and the discussion deal with the call of Jesus Christ to bring Peace and Justice to the world. This would be the last morning Mass celebrated during the Mission week.

*Wednesday Evening -*  
RECONCILIATION.

This evening focuses on God's desire for reconciliation with each person. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered. Once again there is no discussion period, and a social gathering is planned instead.

*Thursday Evening -*  
DISCIPLESHIP.

The final Mass of the Mission is celebrated and the emphasis is on Christ's invitation to discipleship and the catholic response. Once again there is a social gathering to bring the week-long mission to a celebratory conclusion.

There is usually full attendance at these Missions. Parishes which cannot afford to bring in the Missionaries themselves will frequently advertise the hosting parish to their congregations, consequently the church is filled to capacity. As can be seen by comparing the revised Mission with those with a pre-Vatican II format, a major change is reflected in the theological perspective. The old paradigm has been altered to focus on the love and mercy rather than the judgement of God. The preaching is still powerful but it is frequently peppered with humour. At a recent Mission, laughter played as essential a role as prayer and the congregation were engaged as equals – that is, as thinking adults –in contrast to the past Missions' treatment of them as recalcitrant children. However the outcome of the Mission appears to have been the same as in the past. Whilst people were quick to praise the preacher and seemed to have genuinely enjoyed the Mission experience, it does not appear to have had any long-term effect on the spiritual life of the parish. It was an enjoyable interlude rather than a "metanoia" experience. This is borne out in the comments of men and women who had



participated in Redemptorist Missions and were interviewed for this thesis. All of them remarked that although the church was filled to its utmost capacity during the event, the *re-vivifying* of faith was short-lived. They also confirmed that the teaching followed the ‘hell-fire and brimstone’ method, yet everyone agreed that they enjoyed the Mission; that its social component was appreciated; and that the annual occurrence was favourably anticipated.

During an interview with a teacher in his seventies it became apparent that, given small cultural differences, his subjective memory of the Redemptorist Mission in his hometown of West Roxbury (U.S.A.) in the Boston area, was remarkably similar to the memory of the people interviewed who had lived (or still live) in Quebec. West Roxbury is a deprived area today, but in the 1930's through the sixties it was a mainly Irish middle class stronghold. The Mission was of two weeks duration and was only given every two years. The congregation was separated by gender, and the interviewee remembers with particular clarity that on Tuesdays the men were separated from the boys for the talk on sexual temptation. Another night would focus on the women and girls and stressed the wifely duties, (which the interviewee’s wife interpreted as “sex on demand”), the prohibition on birth control, and in the case of girls, their obligations to chastity and “showing good example”. The actual structure of the mission program had been forgotten, but the impression that the sermons were of the “hellfire and brimstone” category was clearly remembered.

The gentleman interviewed also confirmed the phenomena of the “packed to capacity” church for each occasion. Even his parents, whom he defined as not being “Church people” attended every event and made sure that their children also attended. He speculated that social pressure was the reason for the capacity attendance. Certainly this is borne out by the opinions of others interviewed. The organisations in each parish, be it the Holy Name Society or the Sodality of Mary would expect their membership to attend. The person

interviewed recollected that there was an emphasis on the need to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, (referred to as “going to confession”), and many people took the opportunity to be shriven by a priest who was a stranger, as it was always believed that the local priest could recognise the voice of each of his parishioners. It might also be valuable to realise that the practice of going to confession and receiving Eucharist only once a year was still part of living memory, and the admonishment to be a regular communicant had only been encouraged since the time of Pope Pius X.

The interviewee also shared a valuable retrospective insight: It is only in more recent history, with the advent of the Liturgical Renewal of the 1950's, that the priest's sermon became a reflection on the scriptural readings of the day and how they impact on the daily life of the believer. Up to that point, the sermon dealt with whatever might be closest to the concerns of the pastor, be it a commentary on the dangers of modernity or the need for more generous contributions. The sermons given during the Mission were more like the homily experienced by a post-Vatican II congregation in as much as it spoke to the lived experience of the listener.<sup>70</sup> It is regrettable that preaching is not always the gift of every priest<sup>71</sup> and this

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<sup>70</sup> The people who agreed to be interviewed ranged in age from 60-92. All had participated in the Redemptorist Missions, and most had participated in at least one of the modern renewal movements.

<sup>71</sup> The lack of nourishment provided by able homilists was particularly noted at the recent synod (1994-98). Strong recommendations were made by the delegates for increased homiletic training in the seminaries. It was noted that compared to Protestant ministers, many Catholic priests were not competent in this area. I believe this may be due to the importance that scripture is given in Protestant assemblies, whereas the sacramentality of the Catholic Church has always been emphasised. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which emanated from the Vatican Council clearly shows the connection between scripture and the Eucharist when it says, “*the teaching of the Word is necessary for the very administration of the sacraments, in as much as they are sacraments of faith, which is born of the Word and fed by it*” (Flannery, 109) and in the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* it says, “*all clerics particularly priests...should immerse themselves in the Scriptures...for it must not happen that anyone becomes an ‘empty preacher of the Word’...*” (Flannery, 764).

After reviewing the recommendations proposed at the synod, Archbishop Jean-Claude Turcotte has agreed to the formation of a program for “the initial and on-going training of homilists, including lay men and women” (Jean Claude Turcotte, Archbishop of Montreal, “Pastoral Orientations”, April 28, 1999.

was as true in the past as it is now. But, while it is doubtful that the type of preaching prevalent during the Mission would be acceptable to today's congregation, it cannot be denied that the Redemptorists were trained to preach. In the opinion of the above mentioned gentleman, a thirst was slaked by the powerful oratory.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT</b>	
<b>Redemptorist</b>	
<b>Origins and History</b>	Clergy initiated. Mandate. Canon Law (1918)
<b>Purposes</b>	Vivify Morality.
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	Annual week-long retreat.
<b>How Organized and Led</b>	Imported teams. No lay formation. Possible follow-up 6 mos. later.
<b>Characteristics of Meetings</b>	Passive audience. Intense week-long preaching Sacraments, Processions and Devotions.
<b>Parish/Individual Focus</b>	Parish movement.
<b>Participation Levels</b>	Parish attendance.
<b>Gender Factors</b>	Gender segregation.
<b>Characteristic Ritual Activities</b>	Benediction, Confession, Mass, Devotions.
<b>Clergy Involvement and Commitment</b>	Clergy directed.
<b>Training for Lay Leadership</b>	None or very little.

<b>INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS</b>	
<b>Redemptorist</b>	
<b>Lay Participation</b>	Full lay participation. Evidenced by full church.
<b>Increased Lay Leadership</b>	No increase that is measurable in lay leadership. Not encouraged by authoritarian structures.
<b>Increased Attendance at Worship</b>	Evidence of increased attendance - falling off in six months.
<b>Increased Knowledge of Scripture. Church Document</b>	No evidence of knowledge of Scripture. Exposure to Casti Connubi.
<b>Increased Lay Piety (prayer life, personal commitment)</b>	Piety is expressed through devotional life. Good attendance always at Mass and Benediction and traditional times of worship, e.g. May devotions. Quarant Ore vigils etc. Catholics characterized by pious obedience.

## MISSION AND DEVOTIONAL ACTIVITY

### An Introduction to Communal Devotion and Personal Piety

The setting for devotional activity is sometimes formal, such as within the worship of the Mission services, but may also be highly informal and unstructured and may take the form of “a lone individual performing an act of devotion to a special saint.”<sup>72</sup> Religious devotion is characterised by the faith that the devotee has in the efficacy of the object of reverence, of the saint honoured, or of a particular practice of prayer (e.g. the Rosary). It is often characterised by intense commitment and loyalty to the person or object of veneration. “Spiritual techniques that aim at focussing and concentrating the mind”<sup>73</sup> such as the fingering of beads when reciting the Rosary are often used.

In the years that the Redemptorist Missions were taking place, the Catholic milieu was characterised by liturgical practice *and* popular devotions. Some of the more prevalent devotions, particularly the recitation of the Rosary, the Marian litanies, the practice of ‘making’ the Stations (or Way of the Cross) and Benediction (a devotion dedicated to the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament), were a natural concomitant of the Mission strategy. If the central focus of the Mission was the preaching, the devotions that were woven into the format were integral to the tapestry of the event. They lent colour, fragrance and softness which frequently ameliorated the hard message of the sermons. The repetitive ‘telling’ of the beads, the cadence of the prayers and the familiar hymns which had been part of childhood experience offset the strict message of Church obligation. This was particularly true in the case of the Marian devotions. Mary was perceived as the “maternal face” of a sometimes incomprehensible and stern God and the familiar patterns of prayers directed toward her had

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<sup>72</sup> Mircea Eliade, ed.-in-chief, *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* (New York: MacMillan 1987), Vol.4: 323.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

a comforting effect on those who felt the need of an intercessor with a wrathful Father.

The devotions which had been beloved for centuries grew out of the traffic of human emotion and spiritual need. The celebration of the Eucharist has always been the central act in the life of the Church,<sup>74</sup> but for the greater majority of worshippers it was an act shrouded in mystery, one in which they were passive viewers. Devotions filled the yearning to reach and feel “the face of God.” A perennial devotion with a transnational appeal was the Rosary. By praying the Rosary, the devotee entered into a relationship with both Christ and Mary. As will become evident, the prayer is a meditation on the Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ, but for many, the Rosary is seen as a Marian prayer. It is entered into because of a belief in Mary as a loving mother and a friend in times of need.

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<sup>74</sup> In the *Constitution on Sacred liturgy* it states that “ the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.” Flannery (1975), 6.

## Chapter III

### Various Popular Devotions

#### THE ROSARY

The term 'rosary' denotes both the prayer and the manner in which it is prayed. The circlet of beads is named the 'rosary' but one also *prays* the 'Rosary'; in other words a person will say "I'm going to pray the *Rosary*, so I will go and get my *rosary* from my room."

To pray the complete Rosary, one recites 150 "Hail Marys". These prayers are separated into sets of ten called decades. Before each set of ten Hail Marys the devotee prays the "Our Father" (Lord's Prayer) and following the decade of Hail Marys says a prayer called the "Glory be to the Father". A crucifix hangs from the circlet of beads, which is usually kissed at the beginning and completion of the devotion. Salutory prayers are recited at the end of the Rosary and these differ with local preference. In English-speaking areas the "Hail Holy Queen" is preferred. The full Rosary of 150 beads is usually broken up into three stages, therefore the most commonly used set of beads consists of only five decades. The full Rosary is recited by religious orders and those with lots of time to spare, consequently, the average Catholic actually prays only a third of the full Rosary. Although the Rosary is understood as a Marian devotion, the aim of the prayer is as a meditation on what are called the "Mysteries of the Rosary" and these are divided into the Joyous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, each set being meditated upon on specific days of the week. Hence:

Joyful Mysteries (Monday, Thursday & 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent and Lent)

Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel

Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth

The Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem



Presentation of Jesus at the Temple

Finding of Jesus in the Temple

Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday, Friday & All Sundays of Lent)

Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

His Scourging at the Pillar

The Crowning with Thorns

The Carrying of the Cross

The Crucifixion and Death

Glorious Mysteries (Wednesday, Saturday and all Sundays from Easter to Advent)

The Resurrection

The Ascension

The Sending of the Holy Spirit

Assumption of Mary into Heaven

Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven

The meditative purpose of the Rosary is sometimes overlooked.<sup>75</sup> There is a belief that the saying of the prayers alone, suffices as a devotional practice. Indeed the Rosary can be prayed *without* benefit of the beads, but the original purpose is as a meditation on the life of Christ and Mary and therefore the fingering of the beads is an important aid to a calm disposition.

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<sup>75</sup> Michael P. Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press 1989). Carroll offers a fascinating psycho-analytic theory on the practice of popular devotions. He says that the Rosary satisfies Freud's theory of anal-erotic desire, i.e. the desire to play with one's feces. (p. 16).

In the realm of Catholic religious yearning, Mary has always played a major role. For women particularly, the psycho-social and religious dimensions are interconnected. There is an appeal to Mary as the only agent of understanding of the female position, and she has been seen as the unarticulated feminine metaphor for the Divine. Mary, as a source of strength and endurance has had a centuries-old appeal for women, even though the titles *Mother of God* and *Virgin Mary* are used interchangeably. This feature of devotion to Mary was responsible for what Vatican II considered an excessive Mariology even though it recognised that popular religious expression is often rooted in the culture of the people.<sup>76</sup>

Women were not the only devotees of Mary. In *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women* the author asserts that it is crucial to understand that popular religiosity is rooted in marginality and oppression.<sup>77</sup> In many places and times throughout history, men, experiencing a sense of their impotence in the face of oppressive masters and poverty, have had recourse to Mary under her title of "Our Lady of Perpetual Succour" and to the Rosary. (The Rosary which has been part of the devotional life of Catholics was thought to have originated with St. Dominic, but this assumption has been disputed.)<sup>78</sup>

#### HISTORY OF THE ROSARY

For many centuries the use mechanical prayer-counters has been common practice. Muslims have, for centuries, used a prayer string ('*tasbeeh*'), which varies in length (33 or 66 or 99 beads), to count how many times the pray-er utters the name of Allah. St. Francis

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<sup>76</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Marialis cultus* (Ottawa Canadian: Catholic Conference 1974), 33.

<sup>77</sup> J. Rodriguez, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican-American Women* (Texas: University of Texas Press 1994).

<sup>78</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* C.G. Herbermann, ed., (New York: R. Appleton 1912), Vol. XIII: 184-189.

Xavier reported seeing a form of rosary used by Japanese Buddhists to count their prayers. The number 50 seems to have a particular significance. In religious houses it was customary to say a set number (50) of prayers and psalms and to use pebbles to keep track of the number said. In the 11th-12th centuries, berries or discs of bone threaded on string were used. Strings of prayer beads were well-known in the Middle Ages and were known as '*paternosters*' as they were used to count the number of times the "Our Father" was recited. There is evidence that the Countess Godiva (1075 CE) (who inspired the legend of the naked ride through the streets of Coventry), left instructions in her will for "the circlet of precious stones which she has threaded on a cord in order that by fingering them she might count her prayers exactly"<sup>79</sup> to be given to a monastery for the statue of Mary. Almost certainly this would not be the rosary as is used today, because the recitation of the Hail Mary, so integral to the Rosary, was not in use as a devotional prayer until the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>80</sup> Lady Godiva probably used the beads as a Paternoster. The Paternoster was in such common usage that a street in London, England is named for it and exists to this day. The Hail Mary first came into the prayer life of the individual as a salutation, often accompanied by genuflections (bendings of the knee as a gesture of reverence). These salutations were often broken into sets which were counted with the use of a circlet of beads. A rudimentary Rosary was beginning. According to H. Thurston there is a text, presumed to be written in the mid 1100s but no later than 1200 CE, that instructs a group of anchoresses on how they must break up the fifty "Ave"s into sets of ten. Since the Dominicans (whose founder, St. Dominic, is always credited with the institution of the Rosary as prayer) did not have a footing in England at the time, it is doubtful that this is referring to the Rosary. Saint Dominic never actually

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-189.

laid claim to the title of originator of the Rosary, but a Dominican priest, Alain de la Roche (circa 1470) was the first to say that "Our Lady's Psalter" (which was 150 Hail Marys )was the inspiration of his founder . The devotion became popular almost immediately and Rosary Confraternities began to flourish circa 1474. There was some hesitation on the part of Rome to credit Dominic with authorship (especially on the part of Leo X) but subsequent popes espoused both the devotion and Dominic as founder. The Rosary is also known in the Greek and Uniat churches but it is most closely associated with the Roman Catholic Church.

The "Perpetual Rosary" came into being in the 17th century and derived from the Rosary Confraternity. The members promise to say the Rosary day and night so that, worldwide, the devotion is being recited every hour. Although this organisation still exists, the de-emphasis placed on Marian devotion after Vatican II caused a decline. Pope John Paul II seems to be encouraging a revival, but parishes in Montreal who offer May Devotions to their congregation declare a substantial drop in attendance. St. Patrick's and St. Gabriel's parishes continue to have weekly devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help but other parishes have dropped May devotions altogether.<sup>81</sup>

The "Living Rosary" (1826) consists of a number of circles of 15 members who each promise to recite a single decade every day, thus saying the whole Rosary between them.

It can be seen that the Rosary, as Devotion to Mary, can be recited as a communal prayer or as a private act of piety.

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<sup>81</sup> This information comes from Father Gilles Suprenant, Pierrefonds, Quebec; May, 1999.

## THE ROSARY AS BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DEVOTION

The recitation of the Rosary was included in almost every part of the Catholic communal expression of worship. It was, however, excluded from the celebration of Eucharist. The Rosary was inserted into the celebration of Benediction and the liturgical action associated with Marian celebrations such as May devotions. The entire months of May and October were times set apart by the Church for the honour of Mary. May, particularly, heralded the affection that Catholics felt for Mary and the services incorporated processions, crowning of statues of Mary with garlands of flowers, Marian hymns and, of course, the Rosary. But it is in the frequency with which the Rosary was used as part of the non-liturgical and private activity of the Catholic that we can detect the dedication given to Mary and this particular form of prayer.

The Rosary was included in all rites of passage, but not necessarily as they were celebrated as sacrament within the liturgical rubrics of the church (the initiation ceremonies of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation each had a set Rite of Service). Rather, it was in the lay or family domain of these events that the affection for Mary and “her” prayer, the Rosary, could be evidenced. The ‘at home’ celebrations following baptism and confirmation often included setting aside fifteen minutes for the Rosary to ask Mary's protection on the newly baptised or confirmed. The Rosary, and therefore Mary, was seen as a “guest” at the party.

It was, however, in the presence of the dying or the bereaved that the Rosary exerted its greatest influence. Up until modern times when funeral parlours proliferate, it was not unusual for the bereaved to bury the dead from their homes. The body was washed and dressed by a local woman chosen by common consent of the community. It was then laid out on a bed which was dressed with special "laying-out" linens. When everything was decently

accomplished, the 'wake' began. The wake might take on different cultural forms – ranging from the importation of paid 'wailers' to all-night community celebrations – but no matter the form or the mood, Mary was incorporated into the event via the Rosary.<sup>82</sup> Friends and relatives paid their last respects, and the members of church groups, such as the Catholic Women's League and the Marian Sodalties, visited *en masse*, and led the gathered mourners in praying the Rosary along with the prayers for the dead. Vigil with the body was kept through the night, and these groups relieved this onerous obligation from the grieving family. Once again the companion of preference was Mary and "her" Rosary. Mary, evoked by her special devotions, was intimately present to the sick, the dying and those in mourning.<sup>83</sup>

Today the Rosary is sometimes still prayed in funeral homes by pious families but there is evidence of an overall decline in usage. At one time, children in parochial schools prayed the Rosary; today a child may see a set of Rosary beads in mother's purse but not know what it signifies. The Catholic Church recognizes this defection from the Rosary. Pope Paul VI in *Marialis cultus* encourages the devotion by "recognizing its suitability for fostering contemplative prayer,"<sup>84</sup> but warns that it also be recognized not as a prayer *to* Mary but as "a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation."<sup>85</sup> This is meant not only to encourage renewal of this pious practice, but as a strong reminder to practitioners to avoid

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<sup>82</sup> According to Nathalie Zemon Davis, in *Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion* (p. 332), children were not excluded from the wake. The wake and the feast following the funeral were often accompanied by dancing in which the children took part. The merriment present at wakes was recognized as a "triumph over that horror," and a way of learning what death was all about.

<sup>83</sup> This example is drawn from my own childhood experience and is confirmed by Catholics of the same vintage, as being a custom in many parts of Europe and Canada. According to Mr. Bill Burn, of MA Blythe Funeral Services, William, Wray and Armstrong had funeral homes in Montreal as early as 1910, because of the law requiring embalming. But, after satisfying the demands of the law, most Catholic families preferred the custom of 'viewing' and preparing their deceased for burial from home. The crematorium on Mount Royal opened in 1901 but Catholic families did not cremate due to a prohibition of the Church.

<sup>84</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, (Ottawa: C.C.C.B. 1974), 36.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

the “vain credulity...[and] sterile and ephemeral sentimentality”<sup>86</sup> which is often associated with avid Marian devotion. Recognizing also that “religious expressions...may be less suitable to men and women of different ages and cultures,”<sup>87</sup> Paul VI urged that Mary be venerated, not in images of a cultural expression associated with the past, but as a woman with a message for contemporary times.

#### THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Another devotion prayed during the Mission week and, like the Rosary, in the spectrum of both public and private piety, is the Stations of the Cross. This devotion is essentially a commemoration of the journey of Christ from his arrest to his Crucifixion.<sup>88</sup> The roots of this devotion belong to fourth century Jerusalem. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem had originally been in charge of *catechumens* (those seeking initiation into the Christian faith) and as part of his catechesis he gathered his neophytes during Holy Week (Palm Sunday to Easter Saturday) at certain sites associated with the events of Jesus' last walk to Golgotha. Although he had planned these Holy Week activities only for those under instruction, as the catechumens came into full communion with the Christian body they continued this lenten practice. There is evidence of its attraction in an account by a woman pilgrim (circa 381) whom recent scholarship reveals was a member of a religious community in either Spain or Gaul. She wrote of her experience to members of her community.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>88</sup> Michael Carroll says: “The appeal of this devotion is that it is a sadistic phantasy...[and] produces a diffuse sense of sexual pleasure [which] gratifies the repressed desire for the father.” (p. 50).

<sup>89</sup> Egeria, “Diary of a Pilgrimage” in *The Ancient Christian Writers Series* (Ramsey, New Jersey: Newman (Paulist) Press 1970), Vol: 35.

In the fifteenth century the custom of erecting little shrines that commemorated events in the Passion and Death of Jesus began. There was no particular guidance as to which event would be the focus of veneration, nor of how many shrines would be erected. In 1731 Pope Clement brought order to the practice by stipulating fourteen Stations of the Cross, each depicting specific incidents of Christ's Passion and Death. In the past, the fourteen plaques have been used as a teaching tool to tell the mostly illiterate people about the important events of Christ's Passion and Death.

Each Holy Week, Christian pilgrims go to Jerusalem to process the Via Dolorosa, stopping at various sites traditionally accepted as incidental places which marked Jesus' walk to Calvary. The traditional list of the stations has recently undergone a significant change.<sup>90</sup> In 1975, the traditional format was changed to emphasise the Resurrection and the Last Supper; and in 1991 Pope John Paul II, in his annual Good Friday celebration of the Stations of the Cross, omitted centuries-old familiar stations, substituting for them events recorded in the New Testament. The table below shows the change.

Stations of the Cross pre-1991

First Station	Jesus is condemned to death
Second Station	Jesus takes his cross
Third Station	Jesus falls the first time
Fourth Station	Jesus meets his afflicted mother
Fifth Station	Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross
Sixth Station	Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

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<sup>90</sup> *Novalis* (Ottawa: St. Paul's University Press 1989).



Seventh Station	Jesus falls the second time
Eighth Station	Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem
Ninth Station	Jesus falls the third time
Tenth Station	Jesus is stripped of his garments
Eleventh Station	Jesus is nailed to the cross
Twelfth Station	Jesus dies on the cross
Thirteenth Station	Jesus is taken down from the cross
Fourteenth Station	Jesus is laid in the sepulchre

Stations of the Cross as of 1991

First Station	Jesus in the Garden of Olives
Second Station	Jesus betrayed by Judas
Third Station	Jesus condemned to death
Fourth Station	Jesus denied by Peter
Fifth Station	Jesus judged by Pilate
Sixth Station	Jesus flogged and crowned with thorns
Seventh Station	Jesus carries his cross
Eighth Station	Jesus is helped by Simon the Cyrene
Ninth Station	Jesus encounters the women of Jerusalem
Tenth Station	Jesus is crucified
Eleventh Station	Jesus' promise to the good thief
Twelfth Station	Jesus with his mother and disciple
Thirteenth Station	Jesus dies on the Cross
Fourteenth Station	Jesus is placed in the tomb

In this new arrangement, the three falls of Jesus and the respective encounters of Jesus with his mother and with Veronica which are not scriptural, have been replaced with events found in the gospel accounts. In many places another station is added, and veneration taking place before the altar (or 'tabernacle'— where the reserved sacrament is kept) and commemorating the Resurrection. This addition situates the Stations of the Cross within the Passion, Death *and* Resurrection. For many Catholics the "new" stations have proven to be a distraction, however, because the Congregation for Divine Worship has authorised various versions of the Stations of the Cross in recent years, the pious lay-person may comfortably still use the traditional form.

In most churches, the pictures or plaques depicting each scene are fixed to the side walls of the church. In a public devotion when there are many people participating, the priest with altar servers carrying candles, starts at the first station, intones the title of the station and reads a description of the event depicted. A time of silent meditation follows and then some short prayers such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory be to the Father, are recited. The priest then moves to subsequent stations repeating the ritual. At the Fourteenth Station the prayers used to be followed by an Act of Contrition, a penitential prayer; today it is more likely to be a prayer of praise and petition in keeping with the new emphasis on the Resurrection. In private devotion, the devotee follows the same pattern with, or without, the aid of a prayer book. There are no set times devoted to the Stations of the Cross as they are applicable to any time of the liturgical year, but the public act of veneration as a church service would normally take place during the lenten period, particularly Holy Week.

In the past, the Stations of the Cross were an opportunity for Catholics, who were characteristically passive recipients rather than active participants, to express the emotional dimension of their fervour. Today, the reformation of liturgical forms is an attempt to

promote a more active participation. Perhaps this is why the popularity of the Stations of the Cross has waned in recent years. There is in the Montreal area, however, an attempt to retrieve some of the devotions that were popular in the past.

In 1983 a mimed version of the Stations of the Cross was introduced at Lasalle Catholic High School and by 1998 pastoral animators were presenting the “Stations” in various schools through different forms (slides, drama or mime). The schools involved were Lasalle Catholic, Bishop Whalen, Laurier Macdonald and John Paul I High School in St. Leonard. Recently a unique feature has been introduced. Two presentations were taken by high school students to five feeder elementary schools, thus exposing more than 3,000 children to a devotion they had never previously known. This prompted an elementary school to present its own dramatised version. One of the high schools, Laurier Macdonald, scripted its own performance of a traditional/modern version of the Good Friday events.

In several parishes, parishioners, without benefit of an officiating priest, pray the Stations of the Cross. The devotion also forms a portion of the Holy Week services in about eight Montreal English-speaking parishes. The Stations have become part of the Good Friday service in some parishes and are prayed as an evening devotional in others.

A retreat directed by the Franciscans in May 1998 which drew more than 500 young people, between the ages of thirteen and twenty, focussed much of its catechesis on an explanation and daily recitation of the Rosary.

From these tentative experiments with young people it appears that there is a move to involve students in devotional expressions once part of the historical piety of the Church. The cyclical re-introduction of popular devotional piety indicates that, once again, at least part of the Catholic population, namely the youth of the Church, experiences a lack of understanding of the central acts of liturgical worship, (e.g. Eucharist) and may be

substituting devotions as expressions of veneration. Many young people say they are bored during church services. Margaret Visser says, "Boredom arises from the loss of meaning which in turn comes in part from a failure of 'religio' or connectedness with one another and with our past."<sup>91</sup> Perhaps the aridity young people feel during their participation in communal worship is, as in the past, alleviated by participation in devotional activity.

In his essay "The Two Reformations: Communal Devotions and Personal Piety,"<sup>92</sup> Francois Lebrun, referring to the two types of worship says that "there is a tension between these two contradictory vocations."<sup>93</sup> Perhaps the "tension" exists between two *complementary* practices. The Church is wary of excessive personal piety and Lebrun believes it encourages communal worship because its unanimity is more indicative of docile conformism than of sincere deliberate commitment. Yet, for centuries, the prayer life of the individual remains the primary form of personal piety. According to the synoptic gospels Christ frequently went "to a lonely place to pray" (Lk.4:42;Mk.6:46-47;Matt.6:6) and he stressed the importance of private prayer to his followers: "When you pray, *go to your private room and when you have shut the door...pray in that secret place.*"(Matt:6:6). Following this injunction the Church has always encouraged in its membership the importance of private prayer. To that end it began publishing small pocket prayer books in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries which were, considering the high level of illiteracy', popular. Bibles were purchased at considerable cost and handed down through the generations.

Religious orders began to teach the layperson how to pray 'The Hours'. This Benedictine form of prayer was particularly popular. The Benedictine Rule "girded the day

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<sup>91</sup> Visser (1986), 70.

<sup>92</sup> Francois Lebrun, *A History of Private Life* (Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 1989).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

with prayer”, and the work of the monks was interrupted throughout the day and night, with bells that called them to prayer. This became known as the ‘Liturgy of the Hours’. Although the average parishioner could not always stop his work to pray in like manner, the leisured classes, especially those of the Middle Ages, who may even have had household chaplains or spiritual directors, followed the Benedictine method and enjoined their households to do the same. The majority of folk prayed upon rising and before sleep, often praying as a family.

The artist Jean-Francois Millet (1814-75) has immortalised the practice of stopping work to pray the prayers at noon, called the ‘Angelus’.<sup>94</sup> In earlier days the Angelus was prayed three times during the day, morning, noon and night. In Quebec it could be heard daily on French radio as late as the mid 1960’s. It was a devotion commemorating the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel to Mary of her impending conception. Bells announced the time to stop and pray the Hail Mary’s that formulate the devotion. It is called the Angelus because of the introductory prayer “*Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae*” (“The Angel of the Lord announced unto Mary”). The Angelus bridges the gap between communal and private prayer and as with the devotion to Mary through the Rosary, it can be whispered singularly and also recited by a group.

The acts of worship which are now recognised as exclusively communal (Eucharist) were also, in the past, used for private prayer. In 1610 Saint Francis de Sales wrote to a penitent: “At Mass I advise you to recite your Rosary.” Jean Huchon (curé of St. Sauveur, Lille, France; 1635) said that it was not necessary to be able to see or hear the Mass as long as the person was present and attentive.<sup>95</sup> Forty years later another commentator from Lille, with differing advice, stated that it was a mistake to think that the recitation of the Rosary

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<sup>94</sup> According to Michael Carroll (p. 30) the repetition and orderliness which characterizes the Angelus and the Rosary, fit with Freud’s hypothesis of anal-erotic origins.

<sup>95</sup> Lebrun (1989), 71.

or other personal prayers were preferable to joining “ones spirit and intention with the priest.”<sup>96</sup> In 1642 Saint John Eudes recommended saying the Litany of the Hours or the Rosary during Mass. But a new realisation of the need for lay participation in the celebration of the Eucharist was dawning and measures were begun to that end. Toward the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the ‘reredos’ (rood screens) were removed and choirs were rearranged in an effort to bring the congregation into closer contact with the drama at the altar. Recognising the inaccessibility of Latin to most of the laity, bilingual missals were published. A missal is a printed version of the Eucharist. Due to the high rate of illiteracy it is doubtful whether they afforded much of the desired impact. There was a move to have the celebrant speak aloud so that the people could hear. One wonders what good could be expected if the words spoken were in Latin, an unknown tongue to the majority, but there were also suggestions that the gospel, after being proclaimed in Latin, be retold in the vernacular.

History shows that none of these tentative efforts toward the full participation of the laity were fully implemented for another four hundred years. The general opinion of the clergy would have been that it was unnecessary for individuals to hear or see the drama of the Eucharist. They would have shared the opinion of Jean Huchon that the person “be present....attends to the entire mass...it is not necessary to see the celebrant or hear his voice.”<sup>97</sup> A pastor in France said that it was not necessary that every word be heard, what was important was “the devotion with which they accept...the wishes and duties of the Church.”<sup>98</sup> This in itself, was considered sufficient to allow the person to share in Gods grace. While this may be so, it entirely ignores the need of the layperson to be able to participate in the sacred

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

liturgies. Yearning for contact with the divine was not recognised as a legitimate component of religious fervour.

Even though efforts were made to involve the lay-person in active participation of the celebration of Eucharist by the publishing of various prayer manuals and missals, “all attempts to involve the congregation in the prayers of the liturgy at the altar ended in failure.”<sup>99</sup> The chasm between the clergy and the laity was practically unbridgeable. Mass was celebrated by a priest with his back to the people, at a distant altar which was separated by an altar rail or screen from the body of the Church. The prayers were said quietly in a dead language and there was very little that was familiar and understandable to the congregation. This led to the decline in the understanding of the Mass, which in turn, led to infrequent reception of communion. The lacunae had to be filled. Personal piety needed an outlet, and there was an increase in religious devotion which was divorced from the Mass.

In the 13th century there was an attempt on the part of the lay person, to replace the reception of communion with a move toward ‘visual communion’.<sup>100</sup> The worshipper recognised the importance of the elevated host and chalice, and gave to this moment during the Mass almost magical qualities. People rushed from church to church to see the sacred species raised.<sup>101</sup> It is reported, that in England someone shouted at the elevation of the host, “Heave it higher Sir John!”<sup>102</sup>

The reverence that the consecrated host provoked caused devotional Eucharistic practices to come into being. Corpus Christi was an example of the sort of piety that revered

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<sup>99</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>100</sup> “Liturgy and Devotion” in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (Ottawa, Ont: C.C.C.B. 1978), No. 62.

<sup>101</sup> Carroll (p.112) says the attitude of ‘gazing’ satisfies the childhood desire to make reparation for “Phantasy attacks against the mother’s breast which develops in children during the paranoi-schizoid position.”

<sup>102</sup> “Liturgy and Devotion.” *Op. Cit.*, 42.

the *sight* of the Eucharist. Corpus Christi was made a feast day by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and remained a popular devotion until Vatican II. As reported earlier in this dissertation, it still exerts a nostalgia over those who attend the candle-lit processions – even if they consider themselves ex-Catholics. The devotion has been in decline for some twenty years or more and is largely unknown to younger Catholics. The focal point of the devotion is the host which is displayed in the *lunette* (glass case) at the centre of the monstrance. This reliquary came into use in Germany and France in the fourteenth century. The popularity of this veneration was so great, that in the fifteenth century some monstrances were too heavy to be merely carried and had to be transported, in procession, in a cart.<sup>103</sup>

The host encased in the monstrance was used for blessing the people, and the Benediction liturgy came into being (15th cent.) to surround the sacred moment of blessing with appropriate prayers and hymns. Benediction was such a popular devotion that it was used to conclude other pious activities such as May Devotions. In this way devotion to Mary, through the Rosary, melded with veneration of Christ. Incorporated into the Corpus Christi procession was the practice of stopping at various "stations" for prayer and blessing with the Eucharistic Presence, thereby emulating and enlarging upon the already established devotion, the Stations of the Cross. Following the procession, the monstrance would be "enthroned" on the altar for all to gaze upon in adoration. This became known as *Quarant Ore*, or Forty Hours, and developed as a devotion in Milan in 1527. It was so named because the monstrance was exposed for forty hours (in imitation of an old practice of keeping watch for forty hours at the sepulchre at the end of Holy Week) and members of the congregation kept vigil throughout.

A popular devotion honouring Christ is the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The practice

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.



developed in the 17th century after a nun, Margaret Mary Alacoque (1690) received revelations that purported to show Jesus exposing his heart "burning with love for all mankind". The revelation promised certain spiritual benefits to anyone who would attend Mass and confession on nine monthly consecutive Fridays. In the parlance of the devotee, these were known as the 'First Fridays'. In 1889 permission was given to have a special Mass – the Mass of the Sacred Heart to be celebrated on the first Friday of each month – and a custom arose of performing liturgical devotions in honour of the Sacred Heart, both in church and at home. The communal celebration in the church comprised the celebration of Mass or evening devotional services, and at home, the lighting of vigil lights and family prayer. It became the practice for Catholic families to have their homes consecrated to the Sacred Heart in a special home liturgy in which lay members of groups dedicated to the spread of the devotion, would come at the request of the householder and recite prayers of dedication.

Veneration of individual saints also fall into the category of private devotional piety. There are some perennial favourites: St. Jude, patron saint of hopeless causes; St. Anthony; and St. Therese, who is honoured under the title "The Little Flower."

Saint Jude was a first century saint. In scripture he is also called Thaddeus (Jn 14; Matt10) but is more traditionally identified as the "brother of James" and the writer of an epistle attributed to him. He is believed to have died an evangelist to Persia with a fellow apostle Simon. Other than that, not much is known of him. He is more popularly identified as a saint who is a powerful intercessor for those in dire circumstances. His name is frequently found in the classified advertisements of newspapers, where he is publicly thanked for aiding in the solution to a seemingly insurmountable problem.

Saint Anthony of Padua was an Augustinian priest who eventually left the Augustinians and joined the Franciscans in order to become a missionary priest. Ill-health

prohibited his desire and he became a teacher instead. He died at an early age in 1231 and was canonized a year later. Many miracles were attributed to him and he gained a reputation as the saint “who finds lost things”. The wave of popularity that swept through Europe after his canonization did not abate until the latter half of the 20th century. He can be numbered as a saint whose veneration is still current, especially with older Catholics.

Saint Therese was born (1873) in Alencon, France, the youngest of five daughters. After the death of her mother in 1877 the family moved to Lisieux. At the age of fifteen she joined two of her sisters in the Carmelite convent in Lisieux. After a little over nine years as a professed nun, Therese died on Sept. 30th, 1898 at the age of 24. A year later 2,000 copies of her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, were published. It has since become a manual for devotees all over the world. Up until 1956 when the book was edited, its phrasing had a cloying sweetness to it – so much so that a Vatican decree in 1921 declared, that though Therese had led a heroic life “the salutary results produced by reading [it] could not possibly be explained except by the action of divine grace.”<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, her book launched a devotion to Therese (under her title “The Little Flower”) which sustained the piously inclined for generations. A *novena*, which entails nine days of prayer, is integral to the devotion. She is still known to an older generation by her familiar title The Little Flower. It is believed by her devotees that when she has succeeded in her intervention on behalf of the supplicant, she sends a rose by way of encouragement. The popularity of her devotion is thought to lie in the fact that, unlike some ‘greater’ saints, (such as her namesake the Spanish mystic St. Therese of Avila, or St. John of the Cross), her prescribed method to union with God lay in what she called “The Little Way”, and is devoid of the spiritual heroics associated with a life of perfection. She was canonized only twenty-five years after her death.

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<sup>104</sup> J. Beevers, *St. Therese: The Little Flower* (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books 1976).

I have chosen to tell of these saints as objects of private devotion because their charism is still recognised to some degree today. Whereas there are many who dismiss the efficacy of intercessory prayer of certain saints, Jude, Anthony and Therese can still exert an attraction on some Catholics today. The devotion assigned to each of them has diminished in the post-conciliar church, but there are still those who continue to take their concerns to them, convinced that their prayers will be answered.<sup>105</sup> The attraction to these devotions lies in the belief that these saints care about the everyday concerns of human existence.

In the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformers sought a cessation of the institutionalised abuses of the Church. Some of their targets were the worship life of the Church and the proper celebration of the Eucharist. The Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) began by denouncing these same problem areas of Church life. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) reformed the worst abuses but, fearful of being seen as capitulating to the demands of the dissidents, felt unable to bring in new adaptations.<sup>106</sup> Significant change in liturgical worship only began with the Second Vatican Council. In the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* "popular devotions" were commended by the Council, but were to be reformed according to the principles underlying the liturgical renewal, and were to be "filled with the spirit of the liturgy."<sup>107</sup> In keeping with this injunction, the Council included in the document the "The Constitution on the Church"<sup>108</sup>, a separate document on Mary's relationship to Christ and the Church. In support of this revised approach to Mary, Paul VI (1974) issued a letter, "*Mariialis cultus*", which laid down guidelines for devotion to Mary: Catholics were to reject

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<sup>105</sup> In conversations with parishioners over the age of fifty, three in ten (30%) said that they occasionally pray to the saints associated with their childhood, especially in times of crisis. At Vanier College (Montreal), Catholic students aged seventeen to twenty three, said they had never heard of the saints, but, when introduced to the charism of the saint, expressed interest.

<sup>106</sup> "Christian Initiation: Into Full Communion" in *National Bulletin on Liturgy* No. 62. Vol. II: 43.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>108</sup> Flannery (1975), Ch: 8, no:52-69.

the credulity and sentimentality that for so long had characterised and were substitutes for authentic devotion.<sup>109</sup> In seeking this authenticity the letter laid down biblical, liturgical, ecumenical and anthropological guidelines.<sup>110</sup> The Marian document from the Constitution on the Church had the effect of de-emphasising Marian devotion and "*Marialis cultus*" reformed it. The Rosary, once prayed as a communal devotion has, in the main, taken its place in the private sphere of the devotee.

Catholics of earlier eras have also had a devotion to certain saints and this is continued in those born before the Vatican Council. Devotion to saints appears to have started as far back as the primitive church with the veneration of the martyrs in the second and third centuries. At that time it became customary to gather at the burial site of the martyr, to pray together and to eat a funeral meal called the *refrigerium*. (This honouring of the martyrs led to the veneration of relics. Relics were placed in church altars until 1970 when it no longer was considered obligatory.) With the end of persecution of Christians in the fourth century 'white martyrdom' was honoured. With the end of the blood of martyrs it was thought that certain people led a 'martyred life' even though they did not die for the faith. Included in these were desert ascetics, virgins and widows, confessors (those who had confessed their faith in tribunals and were often imprisoned but not killed), and also a group strangely named "neither virgins nor martyrs". This negative term described holy women who were wives and mothers venerated as saints.<sup>111</sup>

In the early years of the Church, veneration of a recognised worthy person took place by a process of informal canonization. The local bishop allowed the honour, and many saints came into the prayer life of the lay church by a process of long usage. Pope Alexander III

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<sup>109</sup> Pope Paul VI, "*Marialis cultus*" (Ottawa: Canadian Catholic Conference 1974), Section 1: p 9.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>111</sup> Francis X. Weiser, *Christian Feasts and Customs* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World 1958).

(d.1181) began a *formal* process of canonization but it was not until 1588 that the *Roman Martyrology* issued by Gregory XIII listed the saints whose veneration was approved and the Congregation of Rites was established a few years later (1588) to undertake the process of canonization. The process remained in force from 1634 until the Vatican Council. In the Middle Ages the Calendar of Saints multiplied excessively, and reforms were introduced in hopes of curtailing the number of saints to be honoured. Few of them worked. The need for identification with the human blessed was too great. History has revealed how easily the veneration of the saints led to abuse, particularly with reference to relics.<sup>112</sup> Once again reform was attempted, this time by the Vatican Council (and reaffirmed by “*Marialis cultus*”) which emphasised that veneration of the saints must be subordinate to the celebration of the liturgy.<sup>113</sup> The *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* ordered that the lives of the martyrs and the saints be investigated and proven to be historically verifiable. The search proved disappointing to a number of devotees who saw their favourite saint taken from the Calendar.

Almost three hundred “saints” (primarily male) were removed from the Canon of Saints. Saints Jude, Anthony and Therese *were* historically verifiable, which may have had some part in their continued popularity. However we cannot credit their verifiability as the only reason since another favourite saint, Christopher, the patron saint of safe travel, omitted from the lists as being an amalgam of legends, continues to be invoked by Catholics and Protestants alike by way of car medallions. Although it cannot be considered veneration, many young people find the devotion to certain saints a fascinating subject, and will even sometimes “give the saint a chance” with a particular problem. In general however, the

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<sup>112</sup> Apart from the many excellent texts on the subject of relics in the Middle Ages, Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* shows us, through the social history of the age, the awe in which relics were held.

<sup>113</sup> “*Marialis cultus*”, 28.

eneration of saints has undergone a substantial decrease since the Vatican Council even though the creedal statements of the Catholic Church support a belief in the Communion of Saints.

Modern renewal movements have given minimal focus to the cult of popular devotions, as will be recognized by an observation of their personality and structure. The renewal movements such as Cursillo, the Charismatic Renewal, and Renew have traditionally focussed on evangelising and teaching (Cursillo); scripture and communal prayer and the exercise of spiritual gifts (Charismatic Renewal); and scripture reading and faith sharing (RENEW). There is a focus on group participation and the inclusion of devotional activity is minimal. In Cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal there is sacramental celebration (Eucharist and Reconciliation) and within the RENEW experience, there is a para-liturgical component, (blessings and healing prayer). None of these movements incorporate devotionals as part of their ritual.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Devotions to Mary have been incorporated into some prayer group activity since the early nineties. The Rosary and the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour appear to have replaced the more exuberant worship, usually associated with the Charismatic Renewal. A group in point, is the prayer group that meets at St. Edmund of Canterbury, Beaconsfield. Quebec.

## Chapter IV

### An Examination of the Cursillo Movement

Following the Second Vatican Council the Redemptorist Mission format did not fulfill the criteria for parish renewal. Much had changed, not only in the self-understanding of the Church but also in the 'global village'. Technological advances abounded, and the behavioural sciences were applied collectively and individually. In the Province of Quebec the Quiet Revolution with its attendant shift in religious focus had taken place. The visual and electronic media of movie-making and computerization provided a new psycho-social dynamic. There was a paradigm shift in the religious consciousness of people which initiated a new search for religious meaning and personal quest for the "Wholly Other."

In the Catholic world the search left the Mission format behind. Its methodology was seen as outdated and belonging to another, and past, era. Paradoxically, one of the renewal movements which found a large following came directly out of another 'old' movement. It was called Cursillo and had its inception in the Church's call for Catholic Action. In order to understand the popularity of Cursillo it will be necessary to trace its beginnings.

#### CATHOLIC ACTION: SEED-BED FOR CURSILLO

Cursillo was one of the renewal movements which proved to be effective in the revitalising of the post Vatican II Church. It had its genesis in renewal movements which pre-dated the advent of the Ecumenical Council (1962): Catholic Action, the Liturgical Movement, and the emphasis given to the study of scripture in the Vatican documents were the seed-bed for Cursillo. The political, religious and social factors of postwar Spain provided the distinctive milieu for the conception of the Cursillo Movement.

The political modus operandi of Spain under Francisco Franco (1892-1975) is recognised as dictatorship. Political dissension was nonexistent and the country could be described as a police state. The Concordat with the Vatican in 1953 proclaimed Roman Catholicism as the official state religion, but Franco insisted on his prerogative to appoint bishops.<sup>115</sup> The Civil War had left the country in extreme poverty. More than 50% of the people lived off the non-arable land and political instability hampered industrial growth. Illiteracy and its concomitant narrow parameters were endemic. The state did not prioritize education and the (unsuccessful) Second Republic had suppressed any parochial schooling. Consequently Catholicism was “intellectually medieval and scholastic”.<sup>116</sup> During the course of the war anti-clericalism had been rampant, but it was the religious apathy of Spain's young men who saw religious observance as a feminine preoccupation, which became the focus for the evangelising efforts of Organised Catholic Action.

The President of the National Technical Association rallied support by declaring that “Catholic Action youth must save the forces of Spanish youth in general which perhaps right now is suffering from the dangerous boredom of inactivity.” He called for them to “build a new order with the vigour of primitive Christianity, maintaining however the pure lines of the gospel...outlined by the sacred magisterium.”<sup>117</sup> His comments were confluent with the mandate given to Catholic Action by Pius XI in his encyclical *Urbi arcabo* in which he invited the laity to become the true leaven of Christ in the human dough in order to counteract anti-clerical and anti-Christian influence. The message was not new: Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891) which is usually associated with social justice and the

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<sup>115</sup> Ivan Rohloff, *The Origins and Development of Cursillo* (Dallas, Texas: National Ultreya Publications 1976), 11.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>117</sup> Eduardo Bonin, *Cursillos in Christianity. The How and the Why* (Dallas, Texas: National Ultreya Publications 1981).



concern for the working man, had also called for “a network of clerically led Catholic associations for social, benevolent, economic and political purposes.”<sup>118</sup>

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE INCEPTION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

It was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that a sense of the fundamental baptismal mandate of all Christians to participate in the proclamation of the gospel message was gradually recovered after centuries of inactivity. This mandate had been fully understood and acted upon by the early Church but in the eras between the conversion of Constantine (and the subsequent Christianisation process) and the Reformation, the secular and the religious world formed a single entity in Europe. “Christendom”, or the “*Respublica Christiana*” demanded of the laity only obedience and the observation of the laws under the spiritual hegemony of the hierarchy. As a result of the schism of the sixteenth century and the emergence of religious divisions there was a desire, in what has been referred to as an “elite” of the laity, to become part of the active apostolate of the Church once again.<sup>119</sup> Little has been recorded of their efforts and we only know of them from references to their participation in endeavours such as the Company of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sodalities of Mary which were devotional in nature, and also from some apologetic writings. As may be seen in the appendix to this dissertation, the missionary activity of several leading religious leaders of the time was changing from an emphasis on evangelisation in foreign fields to concentration on the local scene. One of these leaders was Alphonsus Liguori, who among others was one of the most successful in his efforts to integrate into his pastoral work the charism of the layperson.

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<sup>118</sup> Rohloff (1976), 20.

<sup>119</sup> Yves Congar *Lay People in the Church* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press 1965), 359.

Alphonsus would surely have expressed his confidence in the efficacy of a lay apostolate, agreeing as he did with John Chrysostom who said: “If only you would, you can do much more for people than we can. You have more opportunities for meeting one another...you know each others faults, you have more freedom, charity and ease among yourselves...In this way you lighten our task...together working out one another's salvation...”<sup>120</sup> It was a recognition of this strategy that informed the inspiration for Catholic Action. It has been quite rightly claimed that Catholic Action was created by Pius XI but the seeds had been sown much earlier. The shared pastoral ministry of religious leaders and lay people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was prophetic in the sense that a section of the clergy and some insightful laymen stood in the midst of their community, and recognising the need for change, retrieved the shared discipleship portrayed in the Pauline Epistles – that of being engaged *together* in the service of the gospel message.<sup>121</sup>

Action, on behalf of Catholicism by lay people, was referred to by Pius IX (1846-78), Leo XIII (1878-1903) and Pius X (1903-14) as a necessary response to a nineteenth century society “born of the Enlightenment, rising industrialism and the French Revolution...aggressive and widespread unbelief and the disappearance of the props to faith provided by political powers.”<sup>122</sup> Pius IX saw Catholic Action as political and apologetic in nature and to be carried out by laymen as well as religious. In a world order where the traditional structures were shaken and the faith of the Catholic in peril, many priests and laymen engaged in activity aimed at changing opinion. That such an activity belonged in the arena of Catholic Action was later reiterated by Pius X in his encyclical *Il fermo proposito*,<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>121</sup> Colossians 1,7, IV,12; Romans XVI, 4-6;1 Corinthians XVI,15.

<sup>122</sup> Congar (1965), 359.

<sup>123</sup> Pope Pius X, “*Il Fermo Proposito*”; June 11, 1905.

in which he said “...it is certain that the present constitution of States offers to all without discrimination the power of influencing public opinion... These civil rights...going as far as a direct share in the political life of the country by representing the people in the legislature...This makes it incumbent on all Catholics to prepare themselves prudently and seriously for political life in case they should be called to it...”<sup>124</sup>

People such as Chateaubriand, Joseph de Maistre, Montalembert, J. S. Bailly, and O’Connell were active in this area and Newman had already foreseen the efficacy of lay contribution to the work of the episcopate.<sup>125</sup> The notion that Catholic Action could be extended to the political sphere was, however, debatable. Whereas Pius X said that Catholic Action excluded nothing of what pertained to the direct or indirect divine mission of the Church<sup>126</sup> official statements of the Church also emphasised that Catholic Action “does not and must not engage in politics.”<sup>127</sup> Pius XI however, said that Catholic Action, because of its religious concern could bring Christian perspective to wherever the faithful lived and worked. In the encyclical *Non abbiamo bisogno*,<sup>128</sup> in response to the accusations and abuse of the Fascist party in Italy which accused members of Catholic Action of political infiltration, the Pope said: “Catholic Action, both from its nature and essence and Our precise and categorical directions and dispositions is outside and above every political party ... [Rather than] meddling in politics ... [Catholic Action members are] ... trained to a Christian pattern ... to become good servants of the political common good, good magistrates, officials and the like.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Anne Freemantle, *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context* (New York: Mentor, New American Library 1956).

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>128</sup> Pope Pius XI, “*Non abbiamo bisogno*” June 29, 1931 (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media (undated)).

<sup>129</sup> Freemantle (1956), 381.

The implication was that the Christian mandate of the laity to participate in the furtherance of the gospel message could be brought to bear on temporal structures. Here, a distinction should be made. Much Christian influence in the social milieu would only be made by men and women bringing to their tasks and relationships, in a purely personal fashion, the example set by all decent humans. This is not militant Catholic Action, which hoped to bring to social structures “christofinalizing” as an organ of the Church.<sup>130</sup> For this task personal holiness or piety was not enough. If a person aspired, or more properly, felt ‘called’ to the christofinalizing of social structures, then he had the obligation of fitting himself for the task by acquiring the necessary education and training.

In Spain, Catholic Action was structured under the hierarchy and the role of the lay person was to be an extension of the priest. But there was ambiguity about the nature of Catholic Action when, in the 1950’s, the term became “superceded by the term ‘lay apostolate’... which was endorsed by the Vatican Council.”<sup>131</sup> The lay-apostolate became understood, not as an extension of the bishop or priest, but as a mandate from Christ. It was this view that underlay the charism of Cursillo.

In 1936, Pius XI said that the “resources of a not-numerous clergy” could be augmented, if tried and trusted lay people could be trained to “complement their work. and even take their place...in certain fields, for instance religious instruction.”<sup>132</sup> An example in point could be made for what is, today, referred to as Pastoral Animation, an activity associated with the transmission of religious training to school age children. Pastoral Animators work in schools with the permission of the parish, the local school board and the

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 389.

<sup>131</sup> Rohloff (1976), 22.

<sup>132</sup> Freemantle (1956), 373.

individual principal of the school. They are trained by the diocese as catechists and must have attained at least thirty university credits. Since they are not allowed to actually teach in the classroom, (this being the function of an accredited teacher), a major part of the training is in learning the value of para-liturgical forms. This is a method of teaching through liturgical, non-sacramental celebrations, which actualises what the child has already been taught in theory. Although Pastoral Animation is a relatively new creation (originated in the 1960's) its methodology (the training and the execution of the task) would have fulfilled the criteria for Catholic Action.

However, according to Congar, the authenticity of the lay apostolate, is not just because of a “not-numerous clergy” but because there is an “intrinsic ineffectiveness in the apostolic set-up, if the laity is not organically associated in the work of the gospel.”<sup>133</sup> Pius XI’s definition of Catholic Action as “the participation of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate,”<sup>134</sup> caused a certain amount of concern and set off a heated debate on the implications of the word “participation” which in some circles was understood as having quasi-sacramental value. The question was, did the word imply a new ecclesiastical order or office? The German Bishop’s response was to stress that Catholic Action is participation in the hierarchical apostolate but not in the hierarchy itself and the French Cardinals and Bishops declared: “Catholic Action is not a participation in the power of the hierarchy in its function as Magisterium.”<sup>135</sup> These statements were meant to clarify any ambiguity that might have been entertained.

Catholic action (with a small "a") is as old as the Church. As Congar says, “every faithful Christian can and ought to adopt the magnificent saying of John Wesley ‘I look upon

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

all the world as my parish’.”<sup>136</sup> But the statements issued from the hierarchy made it clear that Catholic Action as an organisation, though created for the coordination and direction of what has always been understood as a fundamentally Christian mandate of discipleship, was to carry out its efforts in subordination to the hierarchical order. Pius XII clarified once and for all the position of Catholic Action in the Church’s apostolic mission, by substituting the word “cooperation” for “participation” but clearly the institution of Catholic Action by Pius X officially opened up the ministry of discipleship to a long silent element of the ecclesial body.

#### CATHOLIC ACTION IN SPAIN

The encyclical *Rerum novarum*<sup>137</sup> is usually associated with its concern for the working conditions of the common man and social justice, but it also spoke to the desirability of Catholic Action associations which would be under clerical leadership and which would address themselves to social, economic, benevolent and political concerns. As seen earlier, the ideology of Catholic Action was further developed by subsequent popes, in particular Pius XI, but it assumed different dimensions in different countries. Whereas in Belgium Catholic Action assumed a social and economic orientation, Italian Catholic Action was very politicised. In the United States, though the ideology was embraced, there was no formal organisation of the movement. In Spain however, it preoccupied itself with a revival of Christian morality and piety. It became organised between 1920-30 and concerned itself with education and athletics.

In 1937 Catholic Action followed the lead of the Spanish bishops and endorsed

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>137</sup> Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum novarum* (May 15, 1891) (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media (undated)).

Franco. It was structured nationally under the hierarchy, then under each diocesan Bishop and eventually had a parochial structure under the parish priest. It was divided into four sections. There was a division, by gender, into groupings of young men and young women (16-30 years) and adult men and women. There were also groups for the young unmarried. If a person married before the age of thirty she or he moved into the men's or women's groups.

As was mentioned earlier, the ambiguity attached to the mandate of Catholic Action defined by Pius XI ("the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy") caused much controversy. It eventually was one of the primary reasons for the birth of Cursillo which understood lay apostolate, not as an extension of the bishop and priest, but as a divine mandate from Christ through baptism and confirmation.

Prior to the Civil War, Spanish Catholicism was seen as 'class religion' and was apathetically practised by all classes of society. As a result of the war, there grew a potent anti-clericalism and this, in turn, awakened a residue of Catholic sentiment in reaction to the intolerance. "This spirit associated with the defence of social and economic status provided the principal and moral incentive behind the Nationalist effort in the Civil War." There was a veritable explosion of religious enthusiasm in 1936-37. This revival was linked to political and social interests and the Primate of the Spanish Church was under no illusion as to its true renaissance for he declared that there had not been a real religious revival since the Civil War. The real situation lay somewhere in between. Stanley Payne states that the middle-class still associated the security of the established order with the beliefs and authority of the Catholic Church.<sup>138</sup>

The Civil War and the chaos and pain that followed, provoked in some the need to cling to the moral and religious absolutes which pre-dated twentieth century secularism. In

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<sup>137</sup> Stanley G. Payne, *Franco's Spain* (NY: Thomas Y Cromwell Co. 1967).

August 1940 compulsory military service was brought in and is considered to have influenced Catholic Action toward the militant Catholicism which is evident from early writings. Later, Catholic Action played a major part in the effort to recognise the social and economic injustices. In particular, HOAC groups (*Hermandades Obreras de Accion Catolica* - Workers Brotherhoods of Catholic Action) established a Catholic syndicate in the 1950's and in 1960 had organised as many as 50,000 workers in small independent groups dedicated to economic improvement and Catholic piety. According to Payne, "they were vigorous in their denunciation of social abuses and stood shoulder to shoulder with leftists in illegal strike manoeuvres for higher wages." However, the Spanish Catholic Church still had millions of people who were Catholic only in name and never observed any of the Church's services or religious practices. It was this situation gave impetus to what is now recognised as the Cursillo Movement.

#### OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY AND THE STRATEGIES OF THE CURSILLO MOVEMENT

After the Spanish Civil war, the Church in Spain experienced great unrest. Catholic Action groups which comprised a great many young men and women, attempted to channel this ferment into constructive apostolates which would provide active outlets for their membership. The most active wing of Catholic Action in Mallorca were the young men's groups under the leadership of their President Eduardo Bonnin. Bonnin recognised that Catholic Action was elitist. It appealed only to the educated Catholic male who was sought for membership. Bonnin was himself educated by private tutors, and was not part of the Catholic education system. During his military service he came into contact with many young men who were not educated but who, though often anti-clerical, were receptive to the



message of Christ and the gospel. He questioned how a so-called catholic Country could involve itself in a civil war where brother killed brother in contradiction of the Christ-message. In 1944 Bonnin met with Catholic Action clerical leaders for a week-long seminar to plan a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostella. The original plans had been laid 1938, but due to the outbreak of the second world war were delayed and not reactivated until 1948. During the pilgrimage a spirit of enthusiasm took hold of the participants. The spirit endured and after the event Bonnin continued to meet with six friends to study the Acts of the Apostles and the gospel and to pray together, This was the prototype for what became known as Leaders School. Eventually a leadership formation programme was created which gave "little courses" in Christian living. The term "little course" is in Spanish "*cursillo*", hence the name of what became to be known as the Cursillo Movement.

In the beginning these *cursillo* were given by the lay and clergy leaders of the Catholic Action groups and took place over a weekend. The clerical aim was to educate laymen for the Church. Bonnin's vision however, was to educate men so that they could go out into the world and by their force of character be evangelists for the Christian way of life. Over a period of time these weekends were refined and included in the structure the TRIPOD of Piety, Study and Action which was already initiated by Catholic Action methodology. It is still in force today date. This formative period lasted from the 1940's to approximately 1955.

Initially, Bonnin's activity drew antagonism from the Spanish clergy, who were not interested in hearing about an empowered laity, but the success of the movement could not be dismissed. In 1949 Bishop Hervas opened up to a wider section of people, the opportunity to "make" a *cursillo*, which at that point in its history was to be led by the clergy. As a result, people other than Catholic Action members began to make the Cursillo weekend and the

movement developed a new momentum by drawing its membership from the wider church on the island of Mallorca. The movement had its critics and detractors and as a result of opposition the structure was streamlined and the first Cursillo literature was produced. This literature, bolstered by the reports of enthusiastic *cursillistas* (those who have participated in a Cursillo weekend), spread to the mainland of Spain where the Young Men's branch of Catholic Action began to promote the Cursillo weekend.

In 1955, Bishop Hervas was transferred to Ciudad Real. His departure from Mallorca signalled the dispersion of the leadership. The Mallorca-based movement, in the hands of men they had trained, had moved into Spain and other parts of the world. The new bishop was antagonistic to the movement and Mallorca no longer functioned as the centre of the Cursillo movement. The new bishop (Bishop Encisco 1955-62) insisted that Catholic Action groups work under the direction of the hierarchy and that whenever a lay person present a talk, a priest be present. He locked the movement into the parochial structures, submitting it to the control of the priest. The movement all but died as a lay apostolate. Eduardo Bonnin was officially silenced.

Being 'officially' silent did not prevent Bonnin from meeting with his friends and he continued to have group reunions in his home. It was these 'home cursillos' that kept the cursillo mentality alive. The original charism of the movement had gone underground in its birth-place Mallorca. When Bishop Hervas was transferred he took Cursillo with him but in trying to mould the movement so that it was more acceptable to the Spanish hierarchy, he allowed it to become more clerically controlled. It would not be too extreme to say that the Cursillo movement was persecuted in Mallorca from 1955-62. Yet, it was also a time of great

growth: Cursillos were held in Portugal, Austria, Germany, France and Spanish Guinea. The movement reached the United States in 1957.<sup>139</sup>

#### NORTH AMERICAN ORIGINS

In 1955, two Spanish airmen training with the United States Air Force in Waco, Texas, met the Spanish priest Fr. Gabriel Fernandez who had made a Cursillo weekend prior to his stay in the U.S. The result of this meeting was the inauguration of the Cursillo Movement in the U.S. After the second weekend retreat had been completed under the leadership of Fr. Hernandez and the two airmen, Bernardo Vadell and Agustin Palomino, a school for leadership was formed. By 1959 eighteen weekends had been held, all of them in Waco. The airmen were transferred in 1957 and again in 1958 and they arranged weekends in the places to which they had been moved (Mission, Texas and Laredo, Texas). Eventually the Cursillo Movement even showed up in Corpus Christi. From Texas it spread into Arizona and in August of 1959 the first national convention was held. By 1960 the movement had spread into the south western states, New York City and Lorain, Ohio.

Until 1961 all Cursillo weekends were given in Spanish, but in that year English-speaking weekends took place in San Angelo, Texas; San Francisco, California; Gary, Indiana; Lansing, Michigan; and Gallup, New Mexico. In 1962, twenty-five more weekends had been held and the movement had spread through the Eastern United States. Chicago, Brooklyn, Detroit, Baltimore and Boston had all hosted Cursillo weekends.

The first Canadians to experience a weekend journeyed to Detroit, Michigan and Seattle, Washington. In the early sixties Canadian dioceses adjacent to the U.S. border began to invite American teams to give weekends in their own territory. To date the number of

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<sup>139</sup> Rohloff (1976), 103.

weekends given in Canada is somewhere in the region of 4,000.

#### MONTREAL ORIGINS

The Montreal Cursillo experience began with a clerical initiative. In 1963 Fathers, Matthew Dube, Bob Nagy, Don Whitton and Xavier, approached approximately 12 men and outlined the basic vision and strategy of the movement. It was successful from the start. The format was a departure from anything experienced up to that point. It was dialogical, had in-depth teaching in the Socratic method, energetic music and meaningful para-liturgical and sacramental celebration. It was also riding the crest of the changes wrought by Vatican II. Although the cleric/layperson relationship was readily accepted, it became recognized that the laity had to be empowered. Barry Guihan and Bill Foster from the English speaking sector of the Diocesan Cursillo Secretariat initiated, in the mid-nineties, the move to retrieve the original vision of Eduardo Bonnín. The process is ongoing. Father Mike Shaw was the first priest to initiate the practice of having a nun, deacon or layperson fulfill the role of the spiritual director which up until recently (1996) had usually been filled by a priest.

The first French Cursillo was held in Sherbrooke with a team imported from Boston and the movement came to Montreal in 1963. As of 1999 more than 10,000 people have been involved in participating in the French sector of the Montreal diocese and the 76th mens' Cursillo and the 63rd women's Cursillo were held in 1999 bringing the number of English-speaking participants to more than 2,780 people.

In 1984 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Cursillo was formed in Ottawa with delegates from Newfoundland to British Columbia attending. In 1988 it was formally recognised by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and regional leaders attended the World Encounter of Cursillo Leaders in Caracas, Venezuela.

Church life, as presented by the Cursillo Movement was not to be found only in the church building but was to be fully realised through a 'tripod of study, piety and action. Lay people were invited to carefully study their environment, reflect upon what they observed and then take appropriate action that would change the environment to a more Christian one. The aim was to encourage those working in that environment, to rethink the direction of their lives and perhaps enquire about the movement itself and their own participation in it. The structure of the Cursillo organisation was formed in such a fashion that the layperson was made almost totally responsible for the financing, organising and operation.

Unlike previous Catholic organizations, where the priest was primarily in charge, Cursillo functioned almost completely through the efforts of the layperson. The obvious results of the Cursillo on the 'ordinary' Catholic are seen in the number of Cursillo participants (*cursillistas*) who become involved in activities ranging from social justice issues and advocacy groups for the poor, to becoming deacons in the Church and activists for Christian education, human rights, equal opportunity, Christian values and third world concerns. Furthermore the use by the Cursillo of small group meetings (*ultreya's*) and an emphasis on personal sharing seems to cause a spin-off of bible study groups, spiritual direction, catechesis of children and behaviour in the workplace that strongly reflects basic human values of charity, self-sacrifice and honesty.

#### THE CURSILLO TRIPOD

Cursillo methodology is based on providing a retreat atmosphere for those interested in the movement. The three-day week-end is based on foundational talks entitled the 'Tripod'. The Tripod comprises twenty four talks and spiritual reflections under the headings of 'Piety', 'Study' and 'Action'. The Study talk, given by a layperson, emphasises that any

action aimed toward making a change for the better which is not based in the study of, and reflection on, theologically sound books, will prove unproductive. The Piety talk presents prayer as a natural and normative part of a cursillistas life. Finally, the Action talk encourages the participant to be a leader in the local community and exercise the role of leadership. The talks are called '*rollo's*' (pronounced royo).

#### THE CURSILLO WEEKEND

Unlike the Redemptorist Mission strategy which focussed on preaching, the aim being a re-invigorated morality of the parishioner, the Cursillo focus is evangelistic. To prepare people to evangelise, the retreat weekend is designed to teach, meditate and celebrate as a group. An extraordinary bonding is usually the result. The three-day weekend is prepared well in advance. A team of approximately twelve people meets weekly for three months before the anticipated week-end.<sup>140</sup> The purpose is not only to plan but to bond the group. The retreat is divided into three parts: Proclamation, Reconciliation, Evangelisation. The talks take place within these three divisions. Each team leader is trained and rehearsed in his/her role and the talks are presented for critique. In this area, the bonding aspect is crucial. On the weekend itself, it is usual to have twenty to twenty-five participants. This number is divided up so that, with two members of the team, small groups of six to eight men/women are formed. These 'small groups' are maintained throughout the three days.

On the weekend, talks which range from "Sacraments", "Grace" and "Obstacles to

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<sup>140</sup> Because of gender separation, the teams are either all-female or all-male – with the exception that, on a women's Cursillo team, there is priest present. The latter is necessary because of the practice of celebrating the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation during the weekend. Although a priest can be, strictly speaking, 'flown in' for the sacramental activities, it is thought that because of the bonding that occurs, the priest should also devote time to the three day experience. Due to the dearth of priests and demand for their services over a weekend, particularly Sunday, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure the services of priests.

Grace” to “Ideals, Leaders and Christian Community”, are presented and discussed. At the end of each day summaries of the talks are presented to the whole group. In addition to the listening to and discussion of the talks, the day is interlaced with prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, or, as they are sometimes referred to, the Mass and Confession. The result of such activity is that the cursillista is given an experience, albeit short, of a living Christian community. It is this experience that the new cursillista tries to create in his/her everyday world.

As on-going support for the new cursillista, gatherings called ‘*ultreyas*’ (which means ‘onward’) are organized on a monthly basis throughout the local region, so that the new cursillista can find encouragement to continue in his/her new life. Some participants desire to go into the Christian way of life more deeply, and to meet that need a ‘Leaders School’ is arranged. In this ‘school’, talks, discussion groups, spiritual exercises, group techniques and leadership workshops are offered to those who desire a deeper Christian lifestyle. It is from Leaders School that future team leaders emerge, and it has become the foundation upon which further development of the Cursillo Movement can thrive. This has been the situation for approximately forty-five years (internationally) and thirty-five years in Montreal.

The leadership of the movement meets periodically to review and update the apostolate in tune with the needs of the times. Cursillo have been given on five continents and in more than fifty nations to more than two million men and women. There are 600 diocesan Secretariats, 30 National Secretariats and two continental offices (Latin American and European). There have been four world meetings, besides those in Latin America, and regular meetings of the leadership in each region and diocese. Cursillo literature, in the form of magazines and newsletters are published in the language of each country, consequently

Cursillo has its own publishing company. Since its beginnings, more than forty years ago, in Canada, it is reckoned that over 50,000 people have made a Cursillo weekend.. In Quebec, the number is approximately 24,000, of which 2,780 are from the English-speaking section of the Archdiocese.

#### STRUCTURE OF A CURSILLO WEEKEND

As the word 'cursillo' implies, the weekend experience rests primarily in teaching the short courses in Christianity which characterised the early days of the movement. The main outline of the Cursillo methodology was worked out in these earliest days (1948-55), and apart from some fine-tuning to harmonize with local attitudes and conditions, remains the foundation of the weekend retreat.

Retreatants arrive at the designated place, usually a retreat centre, on Thursday evening. They are registered and assigned their rooms. The team members who have been meeting and planning the weekend for several weeks choose, from among the participants, those whom they feel show openness and an aptitude for leadership to be the 'table leaders'. The assembled retreatants are divided into groups. These will share a common table together for the next three days. Each table is assigned a name, usually of a saint, so, for example, the conference room may hold five round tables, each named and with places for five or six people, who are then frequently referred to as "St. John's table," or "St. Theresa's table".. Over the period of three days the intensity of contact has the effect of bonding the table partners for life. Cursillistas who made their retreat sometimes as many as ten years earlier tend to remember who was at their table and it is not uncommon for there to be contact between them varying from mild and episodic to frequent rendezvous, for shared meals as individuals and as families. The team members choose someone to be the table leader. This



is usually someone who shows possibilities of being an able facilitator. A person is appointed to act as secretary for each table. The secretary records, in an informal manner, the discussions and decisions periodically required of the group, whilst the table leader animates the discussions.

This part of the first evening is usually accomplished in about one and a half hours and the participants are gathered together for the Retreat Phase of the Cursillo at 8 p.m. A typical first evening schedule would be:

6:30 p.m.	Registration
8:00 p.m.	First Conference(Welcome and assignation of tables etc.)
8:30 p.m.	Retreat Phase (Chapel)
9:00 p.m.	Way of the Cross (First Meditation)
9:30 p.m.	Penitential Rite
9:45 p.m.	Break(Silence)
10:15 p.m.	Second Meditation
10:40 p.m.	Night Prayers
11:00 p.m.	Retire

The first evening's activities are not the usual evening pattern for most cursillistas and it is not unusual to encounter discomfort and tension in many of the people who have (usually) arrived at the centre after a week's work. Their "after-work" pattern has usually followed a simple domestic pattern of dinner and relaxation. To be immersed in a retreat atmosphere with collection of strangers, and to be subjected to prayer and meditation, is

frequently disconcerting. Men tend to feel particularly threatened. Most participants retire to their rooms without delay.

### THREE DAY CURSILLO SCHEDULE

#### *First day -*

7:00 a.m.	Wake-up
7:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer and Meditation
8:00 a.m.	Eucharist
9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
10:00 a.m.	First talk ("Ideal" or "The Call to be Fully Human")
10:30 a.m.	Free Time
11:15 a.m.	Second Talk ("Grace")
12:15 p.m.	Free Time
1:00 p.m.	Lunch and Free Time
2:30 p.m.	Third Talk ("The Layperson as the Church in the World")
3:30 p.m.	Free Time
4:15 p.m.	Fourth Talk ("Faith")
5:15 p.m.	Free Time
6:00 p.m.	Supper and Free Time
7:30 p.m.	Fifth Talk ("Piety")
8:30 p.m.	Marian Devotion and Chapel Visit
9:00 p.m.	Reunion of the Groups
10:15 p.m.	Night Prayer
10:45 p.m.	Retire

Apart from the different contents of the talks, the second day follows exactly the same schedule – except on this day, the participants are asked to draw (with large pieces of paper and coloured pencils) their response to the talks. The period of time given to this exercise is usually characterised as "fun" and "we acted like kids".

There is also a surprise element to the evening of the second day. One of the leaders distributes to each participant, letters which had been elicited prior to the weekend, from friends and former cursillistas. These extend good wishes and prayers for the participants and the reading becomes a very emotional experience, ("I cried for hours"; "I felt so cared for...even by perfect strangers." Everyone interviewed mentioned this as a highlight of their weekend. There is also a member of the team assigned the role of 'joke-master/mistress'. Their job is to tell jokes at mealtimes, and it is a role easily fulfilled as there are always others at the table who have heard a joke worthy of retelling. Following the end of the day for the participants, the team gathers together for a dialogue on the day's events and to plan the next day.

Because of the intensity of the day's activities, concerns experienced the night before are often dissipated, although in some cases people have left the gathering and gone home with even stronger reservations than they originally held. According to the people interviewed these must be proportionately few, as when I asked the question "How many did not complete the weekend?", most said they'd never heard of anyone leaving. In an interview one person who had left she said she felt the pace and intensity reminded her of an experience she had as a teen with a group she identified as a cult. I followed this assertion up by asking the question of several people: "Do you think that the intensity of the daily programme was designed to create fatigue leading to a breakdown of resistance?" I don't think many of my respondents knew that this is the methodology used for the recruitment

purposes of cult organizations. Most of them readily admitted to the weekend being tiring, but added that this is usually the case when people stay up into the small hours of the morning talking. Apparently the close contact leads to bonding over a very short period of time and a great deal of sharing is carried on 'after hours'. Some people did however speak of some sensory overload. When this was mentioned by me to several of the leadership, they agreed that the weekend was full, citing the need to complete the program in the short time allowed by the schedule of working people. All agreed that the ideal length of time would be five instead of three days. Certainly other facets of cult methodology were absent and the majority of participants felt that they had participated in something which (they claimed) had revitalised their flagging faith.

The week-end ends at supper time of the third day. As the participants meet for the last time, a large group of friends and former participants, enter the room singing the signature tune of Cursillo ("*De Colores*"). Once again, this is a surprise element to the closing of the week-end. It has the effect of welcoming the new member into the wider community of cursillistas. It also has the psycho-social effect of re-bonding past members.

Originally, a rule was established by the founders of Cursillo that a married woman could not participate in the program until her husband had made Cursillo. This example of discrimination was a strategy that apparently worked for decades in Spain and other European countries. The founders recognised that women are more open to spiritual experiences – women wishing to participate in a Cursillo often exerted pressure on their husbands to precede them. One of the notable successes of this strategy was that not only did it work, but the belief in the efficacy of Cursillo was borne out by the fact that these reluctant

males stayed with the movement and many became leaders. The strategy was doomed to failure in the North America of the 1960's where women were exercising a greater sense of their own autonomy. Many women were separated or divorced and would not tolerate exclusion based on their gender or marital status. In the Montreal area this rule was abandoned in 1978 because of feminine ire.

The Movement took a surprising turn in Montreal in the 1980's, when the Anglican diocese approached the Cursillo leaders and asked them to supply a weekend for their own congregation. Subsequent to the first weekend they began to plan and implement their own events following the original format. Cursillo was also introduced into the evangelical arm of the United Church in Montreal. The Korean, Hungarian and Spanish Catholic communities have also successfully participated in the movement. It has recently (1997) become active on the First Nations' reserve (Kanawake) in Montreal.

It is also active on five continents, and has an outreach in Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Ukraine.

## CURSILLO MOVEMENT : CONCLUSIONS

- a) Cursillo had its roots in the Catholic Action Movement in Spain in the 1930's.
- b) A search for the true origins of Cursillo had been undertaken by the Canadian National Secretariat. In 1944 Eduardo Bonnín, the founder, operated the “little courses” for three years in spite of dire warnings that his efforts would fail. When its success was recognized, Bishop Hervas (in 1947) gave hierarchical support to the movement, and in 1949 this support guaranteed its continuance under clerical leadership. However it is recognized in some quarters that the original charism of the movement went astray. According to spokespersons for the National Secretariat, Bonnín’s vision saw Cursillo as a lay movement “for the world” and not specifically for the Church. Once it was operated under clerical leadership, it soon became a vehicle for Church recruitment. Bonnín was silenced for ten years. In that time Cursillo became an officially sponsored Church movement.

The clerical dimensions differ in each country that hosts Cursillo. In Canada the clerical input is minimal, lay organization predominates, whereas in Spain, (except in Mallorca) Cursillo is dominated by the clergy. A return to the charism of the original founder is active in Canada, Ireland, Latin America and Spanish groups of the U.S.

- c) Its original vision was as an evangelical tool aimed toward personal conversion with a ministry in prisons and with street people. This has shifted to conversion of the workplace.
- d) Advertising is primarily spread by word of mouth with some advertising in the parishes.

- e) There are two gender-separate retreats annually.
- f) The Movement is predominantly lay organized with clerical input. Priests often give one or more, of the five talks (*rollo's*) on the weekend and celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. All planning is by a lay team.
- g) A Leaders School is organized by the lay leadership and is a weekly event except for a break in the summer holiday months.
- h) There are monthly follow-ups for anyone who has ever been a participant in a Cursillo. These *ultreya* are held regionally.
- i) There is a contemporary move toward smaller intimate gatherings which usually follow a prayer, faith-sharing and scripture format. This is also the format for Small Church Communities.
- j) Cursillo retreats follow a set format. *There is a secrecy component to Cursillo not found in other renewal movements. Participants are requested not to divulge the format of the week-end. The purpose is to provide a pleasant surprise to future participants.*
- k) The weekend retreat experience closes with a surprise element as past cursillistas and family of the participants are present to support the new members. This is called a '*clausura*'.

Whereas the Cursillo format undertaken today is the same as when it first came to Montreal, indications point to a distinct change in the face in the movement. In the early sixties there was more clerical involvement, but it was energized by the hopes engendered by Vatican II. The clientele was younger, usually in the 20-30 age bracket and comprised Catholics thirsty for a new form of spirituality and knowledge of the scriptures. The

Redemptorist Mission mentality, with its passive congregational participation was still current. The format of Cursillo was refreshing, new and exciting. During the week-end experience, the participants explored the gospel message and learned a basic understanding of how it applied to life. The characteristic ritual activities of Eucharist and Reconciliation found new expression. Participants were given a basic understanding of the gospel message and the focus of the movement was one that appealed to them. They were to be yeast in the dough and since yeast causes the dough to rise merely its presence, their witness as decent Christians without overt evangelical obligations was acceptable to them. A Cursillo weekend in the sixties and seventies, would draw anywhere from 35-50 participants with a team of twelve. The *clausura* (closing rituals) would host 250-300 people and the attendance at the follow-up *ultreya* would number 150-200.<sup>141</sup>

Today the role of the priest has decreased and the structure of the team is entirely in the hands of the lay people. In the mid-nineties, the first woman was named as the Spiritual Director on a mens' Cursillo. At the request of Father Mike Shaw, Sister Helen Normandeau took the place usually reserved for the priest. Since then, deacons will also assume this role and women from the team will sometimes give the homily during the celebration of the Eucharist, a function which was previously the prerogative of the priest.

The age of the average participant has increased. The average participant today (1999) is middle aged and instead of being adults with a childlike knowledge of their faith, as was the case in the sixties, the contemporary cursillista has a better knowledge-base, and

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<sup>141</sup> Because of a twenty-one year association with Cursillo, much of the information has been drawn from my own familiarity with the movement. I am a teacher of Leaders School and in frequent contact with the leadership of the movement both in Montreal and Vancouver. However, all of my assertions are confirmed by Mr. Barry Guihan, President of the National Secretariat for Canada; Canadian Conference of Catholic Cursillos.



the level of spirituality is more mature. However, alongside the more mature spiritual outlook, there is a conservative mind-set that is a direct contrast to the somewhat ecstatic energy of the earlier Cursillos.

Cursillo produced men and women for the Montreal Church. The Permanent Deaconate (made up of married men) drew 70% of its personnel from the Cursillo and Charismatic Movement and 65% of women in the Order of Service.<sup>142</sup>

Today the Cursillo movement produces, not a conversion experience as happened in the sixties, but a renewing of a latent spirituality. It stokes the embers, rather than ignites the flame. Some of the reasons for the change undoubtedly lie in the socio-economic fact of the Quebec political scene. There is a shrinking base to draw upon, due to the exodus of young Anglophones. Consequently, the Movement is the host to an older stratum of the Catholic population which brings an attendant conservatism.

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<sup>142</sup> Directory of Services: The Office of English Language Affairs.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT</b>	
<b>Cursillo</b>	
<b>Origins and History</b>	Roots in Spain. Catholic Action Movement (1930's).
<b>Purposes</b>	Conversion (personal) and workplace.
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	2 annual gender segregated retreats.
<b>How organized and Led</b>	Lay organization. Minimal clerical input except for Sacraments. Movement to original charism as of 1998.
<b>Characteristics of Meetings</b>	Lay Led. Specific strategy. Leaders School.
<b>Parish/Individual focus</b>	Focus on individuals.
<b>Participation Levels</b>	Active. Participation mostly lay.
<b>Gender Factors</b>	Gender segregation.
<b>Characteristic Ritual Activities</b>	Eucharist. Reconciliation. Table groups. Meals (jokes) Closures/Ultreya
<b>Clergy Involvement and Commitment</b>	Once clerical initiative. Now minimal. Effort to retrieve original charism.
<b>Training for Lay Leadership</b>	Leaders School.

<b>INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS</b>	
<b>Cursillo</b>	
<b>Lay Participation</b>	Vatican II spurs original enthusiasm. Drop off significant from 70's to 90's. Drop of 50% men's participation. Women's participation level stable.
<b>Increased Lay Leadership</b>	Lay leadership increased. Significant numbers aspire to ordination. Drop off once again 70's to 90's.
<b>Increased Attendance at Worship</b>	Yes, especially since disenfranchised Catholics experience w/end Sacraments. It disposed participants to return to church.
<b>Increased Knowledge of Scripture, Church Documents</b>	There is increased knowledge of Scriptures. Characterized by willingness and desire to learn. Leaders School.
<b>Increased Lay Piety (prayer life, personal commitment)</b>	Initial increase - drops off once again if attendance at Ultreya is absent/minimal.

## Chapter V

### Charismatic Renewal

The Charismatic Renewal came to the North American Catholicism through the formation of a prayer group among faculty members and students, at Duquesne University in 1967. It came to Montreal Catholic churches in 1969. It is believed in Catholic circles to have been the answer to a prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, made by Pope John XXIII at the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. It is doubtful whether this Movement would have entered Catholicism if the Council had not recommended that the Catholic Church become actively involved in the move toward ecumenism. The *Decree on Ecumenism* stated: "...whatever is wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our separated brethren can contribute to our own edification. Whatever is truly Christian can never conflict with the genuine interests of the faith ..."<sup>143</sup> The phenomena that characterised the movement, was already recognised in Protestant churches in the Holiness Movement of the late 19th century. The advent of what became known as Pentecostalism, began at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Pentecostalism of the first half of this century has been called classical Pentecostalism. The Charismatic Renewal is a child of that movement.

#### PENTECOSTALISM

According to Harvey Cox, Pentecostalism is possibly the fastest growing form of Christian religious worship in the world.<sup>144</sup> The first Pentecostal experience belongs to Christian history of the first century (Acts 2:1-5), where it was recognised as the fulfilment

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<sup>143</sup> Abbott (1966), 349.

<sup>144</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven* (New York: Addison Welsey 1994), Book jacket.

of the prophetic message of the prophet Joel (Jl.3: 1-5), but all 'Pentecostals' agree that this experience has intermittently manifested itself throughout the history of the Christian Church. It has not, however, been the teaching of the mainline western Churches since the fourth century. Since the tradition was 'lost' to western Christianity, (there was always evidence of a strong pneumatology in the Eastern tradition), contemporary Pentecostals understand the movement as being unique to the twentieth century.<sup>145</sup>

The ecstatic worship, accompanied by the spiritual gifts received at Pentecost, was superceded in the post-apostolic age, and further still by the permanent appointment of the ministry of presbyter-bishops and sacramental preference. By the fifth century the 'charismata' were virtually nonexistent. However, with the Reformation (16<sup>th</sup> C.) there was evidence of a sporadic reappearance of the spiritual gifts. 'Glossolalia' (speaking in tongues) was (though infrequently) noted among the Radical Anabaptises (16<sup>th</sup> C.), Camisards (Huguenot), Jansenists (17<sup>th</sup> C.), and in the mid eighteenth century, most notably among the Shakers. In 1830 there was a report of an outburst of tongues speaking and some instances of healing in Port Glasgow Scotland.<sup>146</sup> The report was introduced into the congregation of Edward Irving in London, England, by an emissary of the Church, who had journeyed to Scotland and brought back the news that the Holy Spirit was active in the lives of those who prayed as the disciples of Jesus did at Pentecost. (The Irvingites, who were basically Presbyterian, can be viewed as the forerunners of the Pentecostalism, which flourished some seventy years later.) Central to all of these religious experiences of speaking in tongues is

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<sup>145</sup> Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, Patrick H. Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Regency Reference Library; Zondervan 1988), 2.

<sup>146</sup> John T. Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper & Row 1966).

what is called “the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>147</sup> It is not simply an ‘experience’, but a doctrine of the Holy Spirit which occupies a place of critical importance. The Pentecostal Fellowship of North America says: “We believe that the full gospel included holiness of heart and life, healing for the body, and *baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance*”<sup>148</sup> The Charismatic Movement is grounded in the same religious experience and so it will be helpful to devote space to the historical beginnings of classical Pentecostalism in the twentieth century.

The movement began in obscurity at the beginning of this century, within the black community on Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Today, it has a membership of more than 410 million worldwide. The leader of this fledgeling movement was William Joseph Seymour, born in 1870, the son of a Louisiana slave. He was a travelling preacher in the tradition of the Holiness Movement. On his travels he met, in Houston, a woman who had worked as a governess for Charles Parham, a preacher in Topeka, Kansas. Seymour saw the witnessing ‘in tongues’ and as a result sought to become a pupil of Parham’s school. Parham had Klux Klan sympathies and did not readily accept Seymour. He eventually relented, allowing Seymour to listen to his teaching from outside an open window, and permitting him to enter only when it rained. It was here that Seymour felt the desire to receive what was called the second baptism and he met with a woman in Los Angeles to learn further about it. Speaking in tongues which was seen as the ultimate evidence of the anointing by God's Spirit, occurred in a relatively short time. The group had taken up residence in what was called the Bonnie

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<sup>147</sup> In Pentecostalism, a pre-requisite for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is Sanctification. This requires that a person recognise the need for sanctification, believe in the salvific act of Christ’s death on the Cross, have a burning desire, personal consecration, and claim the experience of sanctification by faith. see Kevin M. Ranaghan, *Rites of Initiation in Representative Churches Part 2* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International 1974), 555. This element does not appear in Catholic Charismatic practice.

<sup>148</sup> Burgess, (1988), 40.

Braes establishment, and it was there that a black janitor, working in the local bank, was visited by the “anointing” on April 9, 1906.

Because of the growing crowds, an abandoned stable was cleaned up and rented. The first service was held April 14. The crowds that kept swelling the numbers came, not as a result of even the simplest advertising (flyers and posters), but as a result of the grassroots grapevine. The significance of the interracial mix of the crowds was not lost on the participants who saw this phenomenon as the authentic unifying action of the Spirit. Pejorative reports in the newspapers did not have the expected negative results. More and more seekers arrived at Azusa Street as a result. Many who went to criticize, (and this was a common response to the media reports), stayed to worship. Soon some of these converted sceptics brought the news to other places in the U.S., and even to other countries.

Charles Parham was invited to the Azusa street pulpit by Seymour, who still saw Parham as a spiritual expert. Parham accepted, but did not like what he saw and wrote condemnatory letters deploring the free mix of black with white worshippers, and describing the manifestations of emotion as being too much like a “darky revival”.<sup>149</sup> Seymour was offended, believing that the interracial fellowship was the most telling action of the Holy Spirit. Parham was asked to leave and never return. He mounted a rival evangelistic campaign which failed, and Parham's claim to leadership failed with it. Seymour was also virulently attacked by William H. Durham, whose theology was received by primarily white members who had sprung from Baptist and Presbyterian congregations which had a Calvinistic thrust. Enough of the Azusa Street congregation followed Durham to warrant the beginnings of a rival congregation called the Assemblies of God, where the leadership would be white.

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<sup>149</sup> Cox (1994), 61.

The condemnations of Seymour by Parham and Durham, and the subsequent blame-raising and contentiousness took its toll. Following Seymour's marriage to a black leader, two white female members left the congregation taking the subscription lists with them. Seymour reacted defiantly, having himself consecrated a bishop, contrary to the non-hierarchical stance of Pentecostalism. He went further by stipulating that any successor must be "a man of colour".<sup>150</sup> "He slid into obscurity once again and died in 1922, unheralded as one of the early leaders of the Pentecostal Movement."<sup>151</sup>

There are distinct differences between Pentecostals and Fundamentalists. Both believe in the primacy of the Bible, as written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but Fundamentalists apply the letter of the law to the inspired word, each word being understood in its most literal sense. Pentecostals place their emphasis on the *experience* of the Spirit. There were many divisions, and even subdivisions, which fractured the movement, nevertheless it grew and proliferated, finally reaching across the globe.

Pentecostalism has seen its most spectacular growth in South American countries which have a centuries-old history of Catholicism, and is doing something which the European and North American churches have not been able to do: It is attracting young adults in ever-increasing numbers. It has been forecast that Pentecostals could outnumber the Catholic majority in South America by early in the twenty-first century. Pentecostalism travelled to Russia as early as 1915. In time it spread through the Soviet Union and existed as an underground church until the recent fall of communism. Now it is actively drawing into its membership, thousands who have hungered spiritually for decades. China and other Asian countries have a growing number of Pentecostal assemblies. Dr. David Yonggi Cho (Seoul,

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*



Korea) pastors one of the largest Christian churches in the world with the help of lay ministers men and women.

One of the signs which Seymour interpreted as *the* authentic sign of the action of the Holy Spirit, aside from the dissolving of all racial boundaries, was the call of women into leadership with all the spiritual gifts necessary for the task. Whilst Pentecostalism has often preached the headship of men, citing St. Paul to reinforce this predilection, it has long been recognised that it was the first denomination to recognise the indwelling of the spiritual gifts of women, given for the up- building of the community. Consequently, in cultures where the most avid male chauvinism has been practised as a way of life for centuries, this tendency breaks down within the sphere of Pentecostal worship. This has happened in Italy, which had its introduction to Pentecostalism in 1908 via a migrant worker recently returned from America. In Italy, known not only known for its *machismo* but also as the home of Vatican City, women participate fully in Pentecostal worship, assuming major roles as teachers, healers and pastoral leaders. It is most notable in South America where although the formal leadership appears to be male, women have a high profile. The belief that the Holy Spirit gives His gifts equally is preached, believed, observed and appropriated. The same can be said for the African congregations, and the transition is effected with a minimum of strife. When divisions occur, the dissenters just move away and open up a new church...thus continuing the growth.

Pentecostalism as an international movement has penetrated Asia, Africa, Latin America, the British Isles, the Benelux countries, Scandinavia, Balto-Slavic countries, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and Latin-Europe.<sup>152</sup> Pentecostalism is not a single denomination but a broad collection of different groupings. Some of the more prominent

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<sup>152</sup> Nichol (1966), 45 ff.

denominational branches are the Church of God, Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church.<sup>153</sup>

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC PENTECOSTALISM

If Pentecostalism in the first half of the twentieth century can be called classical Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement, which took place in the mainline churches in the early 1960's, could be referred to as neo-classical. It is believed in Roman Catholic circles to have been the answer to a prayer invoking the Holy Spirit made by Pope John XXIII at the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962:

“Renew your wonders in our time, as though for a new Pentecost...”

Once again, there was an evaporation of class distinctions which was attributed to the action of the Holy Spirit. Whereas in the Azusa Street church the recipients of this spiritual anointing were mainly black domestic and janitorial workers, the newest Pentecostal experience involved academics and intellectuals at Duquesne University.

A group of academics, active in the liturgical renewal of the Catholic Church had been meeting regularly to plan their newest strategies. They had had some successes but their efforts brought forth small achievements at a painfully slow pace. It was suggested at one of their meetings, that maybe what was absent was the action of the Holy Spirit. Prominent in this group were the Ranaghans, a married couple with an academic theological background. They had read books by David Wilkerson and John Sherrill about their experiences of effective prayer, the gifts of the Spirit and the charismatic revival within some Protestant churches. Through William Lewis, an Anglican rector, they made contact with an ecumenical

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-122.

charismatic prayer group and experienced what they believed to be the power of the Holy Spirit. They then returned to their group at Duquesne University where their associates listened with open minds. They all left the meeting resolved to re-read Acts 2. At their next meeting, they decided to spend the evening in prayer, during which they asked for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They experienced the same manifestations as had the assembly at Azusa Street. The word of the event spread rapidly, and within a very short time Notre Dame University in Indiana became the rallying point for what was to be known, as the Catholic Charismatic Movement.

Astonished at the spiritual phenomena that were being manifested, the leaders commissioned a Benedictine, Kilian McDonnell, to search the roots of the revival. The prayer meetings, which were initially called "Catholic Pentecostals," shattered the economic-deprivation theory that had routinely been set forth as an explanation for older, classical Pentecostalism. Walter J. Hollenweger says "it was not the uneducated but the intellectuals, not the uncritical but the critical exegetes, not frustrated Puritans but quite normal Christians who took part in these meetings. There is not only speaking in tongues but critical discussion of theological and social problems; not only the singing of hymns but the composition of new hymns, not only praying but eating drinking and smoking."<sup>154</sup> Catholics recognised that the revival had its beginnings outside the Catholic Church but the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" with its stress on the necessity of the spiritual gifts for the Church<sup>155</sup> and the report of the National Conference of (American) Catholic Bishops which approved the movement as being theologically sound, gave the freedom for the full exercise of the spiritual charismata to flourish. In warning of possible dangers in the movement, the bishops urged

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<sup>154</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London, England: S.C.M. Press 1972), 8.

<sup>155</sup> Abbott (1966), 492.

priests to become involved.

Like classical Pentecostalism the Charismatic Renewal is neither a church nor a denomination, in fact, it is essentially trans-national and includes Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and Protestants of all denominations. It was said that, "Here the Pentecostal experience is understood to transcend denominational walls while it clarifies and underscores what is authentically Christian in each tradition without demanding structural or even doctrinal changes in any given church body."<sup>156</sup> This ecumenical aspect caused some concern at higher ecclesial levels but as Michael Harper says "the movement is more concerned with *spiritual* unity at the grass roots level."<sup>157</sup>

#### THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT IN MONTREAL

The Charismatic Renewal entered Canada through Madonna House in Combermere Ontario in 1968. The first gathering in the Montreal area took place at Saint Patrick of the Island on Ile Perrot in 1969. Attended by a large mixture of lay people and clergy, (French and English), it was held in this particular locale because, at the time, the parish priest was a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This religious order of missionary priests has an extensive network in the USA and Canada. Hearing of the events at Duquesne and Notre Dame, the pastor of the parish invited the leadership from Notre Dame to bring the news of their experience to Montreal. He called to a meeting selected people from Montreal parishes who, it was deemed, might be open to the message.

There was a mixed reaction from those who attended the St. Patrick gathering. The Pentecostal experience is recognised as a powerful phenomenon, and whilst it was greeted

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<sup>156</sup> Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics* (New York: Doubleday 1976), 6-7.

<sup>157</sup> Michael Harper, *None can Guess* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International 1971), 154.

with joy and astonishment by many, the same experience frightened others who were there. Once again the message was spread via a grassroots network, and St. Augustine's church in Notre Dame de Grace became the place where hundreds of people met weekly to pray together. The ritual celebration of Eucharist was central to the movement and attendance by Charismatic Catholics could last several hours. A typical prayer meeting lasted approximately two hours. There would be a time of catechesis. In the case of St. Augustine's this was given by Father Paul Sauvé who became an acknowledged leader amongst the English-speaking charismatics.

Following the teachings the assembly prayed, sang hymns and shared from Scripture. During the prayer meeting the spiritual gifts of prophesy, praying and singing in tongues (*glossolalia*) and the interpretation of the message given in tongues, were manifested. For eight consecutive weeks those who had specifically asked for prayer for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, (later called the Release of the Spirit), were individually taken into a separate area before the prayer meeting began, and taught by members whose gift of teaching had been discerned by the community. After finishing the prescribed series of teachings, the teaching team would ascertain together with the priest, whether or not hands would be laid on the aspirant in order to call upon the Holy Spirit to fill the person. This was in conformity to Scripture. St. Paul's first letter to Timothy warns, "Do not be too quick to lay hands on any" (I Tim: 5:22). Although the ritual was never completely refused, sometimes it was discerned that a person may not have had enough teaching as to the meaning of the action. It was a common experience to inquire as to whether something was scriptural or not before action was taken in any area of ministry.

In a surprisingly short period of time, a structure emerged. It comprised men and women who were acknowledged by the community to have a charism to lead, and was a

stabilising feature of most of the local prayer meetings. As had happened to the early Pentecostals, people branched out from the larger group and brought the message to their own parishes. In most cases when this happened, the pastor agreed to having a prayer group in his parish. However there were some pastors who would not even entertain the idea and refused permission. Undeterred, the people either left that particular parish and joined one that had a prayer meeting, or they prayed in small household groups maintaining their weekly attendance at St. Augustine's.

The small groups who did not have the blessing of their pastor, met in each others homes. These groups did not celebrate Eucharist together. The meeting comprised scripture-sharing and prayer. Sometimes it would include healing prayer for a member, but the evidence of most of the spiritual gifts was missing. These gifts were manifested in larger gatherings. In some Anglican parishes, (e.g. St. Cyril) the prayer group met in a home. In the case of St Cyrils, the group had the services of a priest who celebrated Mass with them. However when the priest could not be present, the prayer group was cancelled. According to one account, the function of the priest is "to keep the holy from leaking into ordinary time...discussion of God, reading the scriptures, all these activities are acceptable; when the priest is not present, they are not."<sup>158</sup> When a parish-based group grew "large enough to warrant some extra attention in terms of planning programs to fill the needs of the group" meetings would be held in an area of the church building.<sup>159</sup> This "Core Team" in the Anglican arena, had its counterpart in the "Pastoral Team" in the Catholic setting. In some parishes, (e.g. St. Thomas a Becket, Pierrefonds. Quebec), the pastor himself approached certain parishioners and asked them to begin a prayer group. By the late 1970's, many

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<sup>158</sup> Judith A. Castle, *Moves Toward Separateness and Reconciliation: An Analysis of the Ritual Acts of Five Religious Groups*, MA Thesis. Concordia University, Montreal. Quebec. Canada. 1981, 49.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

English-speaking Catholic parishes had a prayer group and each parish congregation could number charismatics in their midst.

It was in the early seventies that pastors of some Anglican communities in Montreal began to have requests for prayer groups as part of worship.<sup>160</sup> The pastors requested Catholic parishes to send experienced helpers in order to establish prayer groups. Once again the crossing of denominational lines had been effected.

Women played a very important part in the leadership of the Charismatic Renewal. Although many priests of the Catholic Church were involved in the Charismatic Renewal, or were at least sympathetic to it, lay women and men comprised the Pastoral Teams which formed the leadership of individual prayer groups and eventually, of the Montreal Diocesan Team, which was the umbrella committee for all the prayer groups.

In 1971, some of the earliest members of the Montreal renewal organised a conference on the Loyola campus of Concordia University. It had an estimated attendance of about 2000.<sup>161</sup> In the same year, a prayer group was taking place at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Started by an American and a Canadian, most of the participants were clergy and nuns from all over the world. This not only kindled the movement throughout the world as the participants returned to their own countries, but did much to assure the international clergy that this was a legitimate Catholic movement.<sup>162</sup> The *New Covenant* magazine, an arm of the movement, was being sent to subscribers in ninety countries by the end of 1971 – only four years after the first prayer meeting at Duquesne University. In 1975 it had sixty thousand subscribers.

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<sup>160</sup> St. Barnabus' Parish in Dollard-des-Ormeaux was one of the first Anglican parishes to request this service. The writer helped a group of people to begin a prayer group in 1977.

<sup>161</sup> This number was furnished by Rev. John Legros (initially of the Montreal diocese and now residing in Kingston, Ont.) who headed the organising team.

<sup>162</sup> Burgess (1988), 112-113.

The initial enthusiasm of the Charismatic Renewal in the English sector of the Montreal diocese created a burgeoning of spiritual appetite. Retreat houses were booked for at least a year ahead. Charismatic conferences, healing sessions, teaching, Bible study and silent retreats were recurring features. Bishop Leonard Crowley imported two Jesuits priests from Guelph, Ontario, to begin a spiritual centre (Ignatian Centre of Spirituality) which is still actively serving the diocese. Dom John Main took up residence in a donated mansion on Pine Avenue (MacConnell House), and opened the Benedictine Centre for Meditation. These institutions were not part of the Charismatic Renewal *per se*. Their focus has been a feature of the Church for many centuries. Bishop Crowley's purpose in introducing them to the diocese, was to aid in the *on-going* formation of Catholics whose (prayer-group) spirituality demanded further deepening. For many Charismatics, the prayer group experience developed into a need for further spiritual direction.

To illustrate the extent of the appetite: at a local church (St. Thomas-a-Becket, Pierrefonds) the parish leaders initiated an open teaching conference. It was to be a one-day event and the organisers expected modest support from prayer groups within the West Island parishes. Approximately 400 people and six priests and ministers from the local Catholic and Protestant parishes attended. Invitations had not been issued, the response was a result of the grapevine telegraph. Nor was this an isolated event – it seemed the spiritual appetite could not be assuaged.

This spiritual euphoria was credited to the action of the Holy Spirit, who had become the focus of the Church's efforts toward ecumenism. In the *Decree on Ecumenism*, the Council Fathers wrote:

It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in those who believe... who brings about that marvellous communion of the faithful and



joins them so intimately in Christ that He is the principle of the Church's unity.<sup>163</sup>

and in the document *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*" they stated :

It is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies...charismatic gifts, whether they are the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church.<sup>164</sup>

Here was made explicit a church-approved mandate for the existence of the Charismatic Renewal and the exercise of the spiritual gifts for the up building of the Church. Moreover, it was inclusive and applied to the average lay-person and did not reside only within the ranks of the ordained. The Charismatic Renewal drew young as well as middle-aged people and as Richard Quebedeaux states: "This enthusiasm has occurred in people who have abandoned churches and formal religion. Some are consciously seeking a personal encounter with God; for others the search is less consciously religious. In addition, very little patience is apparent in this quest; results are expected immediately. The enthusiasm for that experience ['instantism'] is integrally related in modern culture."<sup>165</sup> There is no doubt that the religious experience of the Charismatic Renewal and the phenomena attached to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a major attraction for many who became part of prayer

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<sup>163</sup> Abbott (1966), 344.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>165</sup> Quebedeaux (1976), 185.

groups. This had some disadvantages. The leadership of almost every group could number within its ranks those who were emotionally unstable and those who were seeking the sensational. It was evident in the early years of the Renewal, that the dangers alluded to by the American bishops at the National Conference of Bishops were a reality. Being forewarned meant that sound teaching, both scriptural and doctrinal, became of prime importance. The foresight of Bishop Crowley, in bringing in solid spiritual support (Jesuits and Benedictines), assured a minimum of abuse and supported the personal need for ongoing spiritual growth.

One of the results of the Charismatic Renewal was evidenced in the number of prayer group members who entered parish ministries. Liturgy committees, hospitality groups, Eucharistic ministry, religious formation for children, pastoral animation in the schools, charitable works and even social groups received an influx of people who desired to participate in the parish growth. Secondly, the effect was seen on the diocesan level, where men from various prayer groups studied for three years to become the first Permanent Deacons in the diocese. These were often accompanied by their wives, who studied alongside their husbands, to enter the Order of Service.

The enthusiasm so evident in the seventies, began to wane in the mid-eighties. People who had been part of the initial charismatic experience began to “feel” that something was missing. The manifestation of the gifts decreased, and a certain “dryness” was perceived. The “Joy of the Spirit” (euphoria?) was absent from prayer meetings. Monsignor Knox says that the first fervours evaporate and the charismatic is merged with the institutional. Some mourn the loss, and nostalgic efforts have been made to retrieve the ambience of the past (see

appendix). Prayer groups still persist, but there is a felt difference from the ecstatic worship of the seventies. The Catholic Charismatic Services of Montreal lists ten prayer groups in the Greater Montreal and West Island areas, and one each in Laval, Brossard and St. Hubert, Quebec. It would be incorrect to say (as some have) that “the Spirit left”. Perhaps it would be more correct to ask “Can euphoria be sustained?”<sup>166</sup> In John's gospel we read the “Spirit blows where it pleases” (Jn 3: 8-9) and it is recognised that the Montreal church benefited from the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. Pastors say that there is a renewed awareness of the role of the laity because of the formation of parish groups, and many who received their ministerial impetus from prayer group participation in the past, have taken their place in traditional parish groupings. People who provided the music at prayer meetings (music ministry), have become choir leaders and instrumentalists, and many of the teaching groups, (Bible Study, Religious Formation, Social Action, Liturgy Committee, etc.) are still functioning. The Benedictine Centre for Meditation, however, has now become UNITAS, a centre for ecumenical activity and the retreat houses are more available. The charismata have found a position in the established parish setting, not as ecstatic devotees, but as the previously quoted Church document stated, serving “the needs of the Church.”

In 1975, Pope Paul VI had given a special mandate to Cardinal Suenens to oversee the growth of the movement. When the Cardinal resigned in 1982, Pope John Paul II passed the mandate to Bishop Paul Cordes. Since then, the International Office of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (ICCR) is located in Rome, in buildings owned by the Vatican. This not only signifies its acceptance into the heart of the Church, but also its institutionalisation.

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<sup>166</sup> Knox (1961), 1.

Today (1999), another renewal is taking place in the Montreal area. The Alpha Movement which began in the Brompton Street Church, London, England, twenty years ago is making significant inroads into the English-speaking Catholic Church of Montreal. Once again it is spread by word of mouth and has groups in parishes all over the world. It is a “Holy Spirit” movement, is charismatic in content and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is central to its purpose. To date (1999) only two parishes, both in the West Island, have instituted Alpha but in at least one of them the movement is ongoing. St. Thomas-a-Becket entered its seventh ten-week session with a participation level of twenty to thirty per session.<sup>167</sup> The psycho-social dimension of Alpha provides a more culturally acceptable manifestation of the spiritual gifts, and may provide for a better social cohesion in the parish setting. One of the criticisms of the practices of Charismatics was, in fact, the ecstatic manner of worship. Critics applied the label of ‘emotionalism’ in a pejorative sense, to people who prayed with arms outstretched or sang with verve. In the Alpha program the language is more familiar. Participants who were uncomfortable with evangelical jargon (“I have a burden of the Lord on my heart.”) are able to worship in their own familiar vernacular. There is an almost staid order to the prayer meetings, however an emphasis on Scripture and the same promise of a personal relationship with God, identify Alpha with the Charismatic Renewal and its Pentecostal antecedent.

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<sup>167</sup> The parish of St. Thomas à Becket has been used as a target group for this thesis. It was one of the first to host a prayer group and remains lively to this day. It is one of the examples of a parish becoming ignited by the presence of a prayer group, whose members continue to accelerate growth in the parish. The prayer group experience was nourished by the pastoral care of the resident priests.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL MOVEMENT / CONCLUSIONS

1. It was a grass-roots movement, an offshoot of classical Pentecostalism. In Montreal a priest who had experienced the movement imported a team of leaders from the U.S. and enlisted the support of local Catholic pastors to advertise the first assembly which was held off the island of Montreal.
2. Initially it was not parish based, but was a regional prayer meeting held in downtown Montreal. As participants were trained (usually within the space of two years), they began to base their meetings in parishes which allowed them to use the church building.
3. The prayer evening followed a set ritual script. It comprised:
  - a) Opening hymns, often with instrumentalists.
  - b) Short Teaching (twenty minutes)
  - c) Sharing of scripture and witnessing.
  - d) Intercessory prayer sometimes accompanied by prayers for healing. Manifestation of the spiritual gifts of prophecy, glossolalia, interpretation of tongues, exhortation and teaching were a characteristic of the prayer meeting.
  - e) Song was an intermittent feature.
  - f) Refreshments were usually served. (Provided by a Hospitality Ministry. A donation was collected for supplies).
  - f) Most groups accumulated spiritual literature and a book table was available for borrowing. This was the responsibility of one or two people who saw it as a 'Ministry'.

Eventually pastoral teams were formed in each group which, in turn sent, a representative to a diocesan Pastoral Team. Collective effort made excursions to out-of-town rallies a possibility (Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio and Notre Dame University, Indiana) and conferences, retreats and healing services were available to the entire membership. Although the great majority of members were lay people, priests, nuns and religious brothers were involved. The movement had the support of the hierarchy, and at least one cardinal was actively involved (Cardinal Suenens of Belgium). Financial support was minimal from any central body (parish or diocese), as each member provided for their own expenses. The growth in spiritual awareness was provided for by the importation of a group of Jesuits and Benedictines. Religious houses opened up their facilities for the influx of lay-people who used them for retreats and teaching conferences.

The diocese and the individual parishes felt the impact of the Charismatic Renewal. In most cases it was well-received, but for those not involved the ecstatic manifestation of the spiritual gifts clashed with cultural norms. There was an increase in piety, knowledge of the Bible, and prayer at all levels of the diocese and this led to a larger lay-base from which to cull willing involvement. Annual conferences, which were held at Notre Dame University, and were attended by members of Montreal prayer groups, increased from 450 participants in 1969 to 37,000 in less than ten years (1977).<sup>168</sup> In Montreal, the fact that today only ten groups still remain active signifies a gradual decrease in number.

The personality of the Charismatic Renewal has changed. As the level of spiritual awareness becomes an integrated part of the spiritual life of the members, the movement becomes less ecstatic, more settled and more mature. There was minimal defection of

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<sup>168</sup> Burgess (1988) 112.

Charismatic participants from the Catholic Church, and when this occurred the person usually became a member of a Pentecostal assembly. Almost all remained faithful to the Church and many assumed leadership roles in their parishes. Charismatics will often still meet to pray in small groups. Almost all of the facilitators of RENEW came from the Charismatic Renewal.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT</b>	
<b>Charismatic Renewal</b>	
<b>Origins and History</b>	Grass roots movement (1960's). Child of Pentecostalism.
<b>Purposes</b>	Personal Conversion
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	Ongoing weekly meetings (2-3 hrs. long). Climaxed with Eucharist.
<b>How Organized and Led</b>	Pastoral teams. Parish/Diocesan. Initially imported teams. Grass roots leadership.
<b>Characteristics of Meetings</b>	Workshops, retreats, conferences. On-going formation. bible study, faith and sharing groups.
<b>Parish/Individual Focus</b>	Parish prayer groups resulted after St. Augustine's experience.
<b>Participation Levels</b>	Drew People interested also people in search of community. Sick often drawn to groups.
<b>Gender Factors</b>	Mixed.
<b>Characteristic Ritual Activities</b>	Release of Spirit. Initiation ritual follows catechesis. Much hymn singing. Celebration of Eucharist.
<b>Training for Lay Leadership</b>	Lay involvement varies, acc. to spiritual gifts. Exercise of gifts. It is encouraged. On-going formation produces leaders not only individual groups but for the Church (diaconate, Order of Service)



<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT</b>	
Clergy Involvement and Commitment	Initial experience (Duquesne) propelled participants to bishops. Permission given with warnings. Not all priests got involved.

**INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS**

<b>Charismatic Renewal</b>	
<b>Lay Participation</b>	Swelled dramatically. Decline in 80's.
<b>Increased Lay Leadership</b>	Increased lay leadership, but often not cyclical. Same people in leadership - tendency to "age" the Movement.
<b>Increased Knowledge of Scripture, Church Documents</b>	Definite emphasis on Scripture. Minimal teaching on documents.
<b>Increased Knowledge of Scripture, church Documents</b>	Definite increase in knowledge of Scripture - not church documents.
<b>Increased Lay Piety (prayer life, personal commitment)</b>	Definite increases in piety. Need draws participants to Ignatian Centre and Benedictine House of Meditation. Retreat houses booked well in advance. Leaders in Diocesan Movement are invited to speak/teach etc. Drop off in late 80's - 90's. Benedictines leave Montreal Centre for Meditation.

## Chapter VI

### The RENEW Movement

#### RENEW AS A DIOCESAN ENDEAVOUR TOWARD RENEWAL

Contemporaneous with both Cursillo and the Charismatic Movement, a new effort was made in the English-speaking sector of the Montreal diocese. Its aim was renewal through the reigniting of personal faith and through the restructure of the parish organism by the formation of small faith sharing groups.

RENEW originated in Connecticut, USA, and was undertaken in many northern U.S. parishes. Its success prompted the Office of English Language Affairs (O.E.L.A.) in the Montreal diocese, to implement it as a programme aimed at the renewal of parish life. The planning committee met for twelve months, during which time the members went on retreat together to pray and plan for the three-year programme. The idea of the project was greeted enthusiastically in most parishes. In those where the pastor was reluctant, it often happened that parishioners themselves borrowed the necessary materials (primarily workbooks) from parishioners in RENEW-active parishes, to begin informal sessions on their own initiative. The programme was formally opened with a celebration of the Eucharist on September 30, 1987, at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral. The presiding Celebrant was Bishop Leonard Crowley, and there was representation from forty-seven participating parishes.

It is believed that one of the benefits to be gained from small 'living-room' communities, is that they could be the answer to the shift toward privatism and anonymity in our times. This aspect of the culture of the second half of the twentieth century has seeped into church communities. It is recognised that the days are gone when one can go to the local

parish church and be instantly recognisable or recognise others. The Church describes Herself as a 'Community of Believers', yet it has become apparent that the authentic aspect of community cannot be realised when the assembly that gathers to worship, does so with disparate others who are basically unknown to one another. Because we are a culture that is bombarded with information but experiences loneliness, (even for those who get involved in church activities and know the names and faces of their colleagues), there is the complaint of a lack of support in personal lives. The subtle message is "you'll belong because of what you're doing" but that message is the same as that of secular society. Small communities are perceived as counter-cultural, and provide a way that ordinary parishioners can serve each other. They offer a way of belonging to the church community that is measured, not by what the person does but by who they are. It is hoped that small communities meeting together on a weekly basis, will not only provide for personal growth and support, but could be an effective method for restructuring the church. "When the Church had a lot of priests and sisters, we had an institution that ran itself. People just belonged to it. The institutional part is fading now and the community is coming to the fore."<sup>169</sup>

The RENEW programme based much of its methodology on this philosophy, but added to it a scripture and faith-sharing component. It took as its model the Latin American Small Base Community experience that impacted Liberation Theology. This controversial theology had its genesis in the realisation that as Leonardo and Clodovis Boff maintain, true Christian faith, confronted with the collective poor, demands a commitment to the "life, cause, and struggle of these millions of debased and marginalised human beings, a commitment to ending this historical-social iniquity."<sup>170</sup> In other words, the Boffs believed

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<sup>169</sup> Rev. A. Baranowski, in an interview with *U.S. Catholic* (Jan. 1992), 6-13.

<sup>170</sup> Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1987), 3.

theology must never be ideologically aligned with the privileged classes but with the oppressed and so become a tool for liberation.

In his 1971 encyclical, "*Octogesima adveniens*" (Call to Action), Paul VI said that a preferential love should be shown to the poor, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes.<sup>171</sup> The 'poor' is understood to refer to the economically disadvantaged who, because of their sociological status are oppressed and powerless. This 'preferential option for the poor' is understood as a characteristic of God. The liberation of the poor is seen as the work of the God of Scripture, who enters into history to "set [the] people free." Therefore Scripture is central to Liberation Theology which chooses to be aligned with the suffering of the poor in Latin America. The social form of this alignment is the Base Community movement. Both the Medellin Conference Documents (1968) and the follow-up Puebla Conference Documents (1979) emphasised the importance of Small Base Communities. Medellin said that these communities were essential for the task of forming a social conscience. Puebla reiterated and added that base communities fostered interrelationships, reflection on reality and the Gospel, and that Jesus' mission is directed to, at first, the poor. Latin American Small Base Communities became synonymous with Liberation Theology. The emphasis was on restructuring and changing the existing parish environment. 'Empowerment' became the defining word as a condition necessary for authentic renewal. It is this empowerment of the laity to fulfill their Christian potential through a knowledge of Scripture and the restructuring of the parish into small 'churches', which fuelled the implementation of RENEW.

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<sup>171</sup> Pope Paul VI, "*Octogesima adveniens*", (Vatican Library Translation), (Boston: Mass: St. Paul Books 1971).

## RENEW

There was a six-step plan basic to the development of Small Church Communities (SCC) within the parish:

1. In order for the parish staff to understand the aim of the *vision*, they came together with some key parishioners (open to the idea), to study the literature describing the process.
2. From this, a Core Team was created meeting together to become familiar with each other and any additional literature on the program.
3. The Core Team assessed the plans for the parish and created a critical path for the achievement of the goal viz.: implementation of the program.
4. Parish advertising, recruitment, formation of small communities followed. The appointment of the Parish Facilitators who would be the "pastors" of the small developing churches (communities) was made.
5. Implementation of the program.
6. Core Team and parish staff were mandated to evaluate the ongoing process, and sustain the SCC.

The Core Team was an-going group, usually of about 8-10 people, whose task was to make small communities become a reality in the parish. One of their responsibilities was to provide each group with the materials they would use. These were provided by the Diocesan "Pillars Trust" which sponsored the program. The Core Team was also responsible for the training of each parish facilitator and for planning and executing the necessary steps for the continuance of the vision, by keeping both the parish and the pastor accountable to

this vision.

The ideal of RENEW, was to restructure the parish organism so that different activities that functioned in a parish became themselves restructured according to the small group format: “quieting, reflection on life, speaking one's experience to another.”<sup>172</sup> In order to ensure that energy was available to the small group cell “the amount of parish activity is controlled by dropping, delegating and delaying”<sup>173</sup> activities that may tend to drain away or dissipate the energy necessary for the life of a healthy cell, or small group. Once the Pastoral Facilitator was trained and a small group formed, it began to meet in the living-rooms of parishioners. Another term for these Small Base Communities was ‘living-room communities’ or in some places ‘living-room churches’. Together, group members they studied a scriptural theme and shared their life experiences as they related to the gospel message. The program was ongoing for six weeks over a period of three years (or five phases) and a different theme was chosen (by the diocesan coordinators) for each phase. The following is an example of the topics for the six weeks of a season:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| WEEK 1 | The Role of the Holy Spirit (Luke 6:32).    |
| WEEK 2 | The Power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:17). |
| WEEK 3 | Our Mission (Galatians 5:25).               |
| WEEK 4 | Our Experience of Injustice (Mark 10:52).   |
| WEEK 5 | Roadblocks to Mission (Mark 12:31).         |
| WEEK 6 | Continuing Human Tension (1 Cor.: 13:13).   |

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<sup>172</sup>: “Non-negotiables, no.2.” in *RENEW: Pink Paper* (Archdiocese of Montreal, 1986), 1.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

A follow-up theme was chosen for the following phase drawing upon the realisations received from the previous session.

WEEK 1	Invitation to discipleship.
WEEK 2	The life of the disciple in the community.
WEEK 3	Nourishing discipleship.
WEEK 4	Cost of discipleship.
WEEK 5	Healing of the disciple.
WEEK 6	Mission of the disciple.

The following weekly format was suggested in order to give some structure to the session, but flexibility according to the discretion of the Pastoral Facilitator was considered important as a means of providing a comfort level for participants, many of whom did not know each other:

<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Elements of Small Christian Community</u>
15 min.	GATHERING Introductions Sharing the Past Week's Experience Opening Prayer Focus Question
20 min.	SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION Gospel Reading Commentary



20 min.	<p>FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION</p> <p>The small Christian community shares how the readings and the discussions are related to their daily lives and relationships.</p>
10 min.	<p>RESPONSE IN ACTION</p> <p>The small Christian community decides how to put into action what they have learnt.</p>
15 min.	<p>SENDING FORTH.</p> <p>Closing Prayer</p> <p>Ritual</p>

The ritual at the end of each evening was not always implemented. If, however, a special season was confluent with the week of the session (e.g., Mothers Day, Armistice Day, or even the birthday of a group member), a short para-liturgy might take place to mark the importance of the event. Usually, the ritual which closed the 'Sending Forth' element of the evening comprised a simple blessing and invocation to the Holy Spirit to assist those who might be engaged in a specific task in the days to follow.

'Para-liturgy' is non-sacramental liturgy, which can be celebrated by a lay-person. There is a simple Order of Service, which usually involves the lighting of a candle, blessing with blessed (or holy) water or anointing with oil if the para-liturgy is dedicated to healing prayer (James 5:13-16). The assembly disposes itself in a prayerful attitude as the leader proceeds through the liturgy. Pastoral Animators, who work in the schools, are trained in the creation of para-liturgies to fit the needs for many situations. The Pastoral Facilitators were not necessarily trained in this manner, and a long association with the attitude that only

priests should pronounce blessings, often prohibited the acting out of the ritual.

In addition to the weekly sessions there was a social dimension added to the parish life. This came under the designation 'Outreach'. There was time set aside devoted to such events as Hospitality, Pot Luck Suppers, Masquerade Parties, and Welcome Back Evening (specifically designed to reach out to those who had decided to give the church a second chance in their life). There were, 'Come As You Are' parties (often a barbecue) and Wine and Cheese Evenings. The success of the outreach activities emphasized the need to offer social gatherings in a welcoming spirit, and was credited with keeping the participation level of the Small Communities stable. Another element of Outreach was the implementation of group ministry. Each group took upon itself a commitment to the needy. For some it was the preparation of meals for the homeless, for others, visits to the shut-in. Volunteerism included: driving the elderly for doctor visits; picking up prescriptions; and babysitting (especially for single parent families). One lady interviewed, had advertised in the local super-market that she would supply anyone in need with hot soup. She claims her offer was never abused. Another aspect was the implementation of Parish Pastoral Councils in areas where they had been absent.

The RENEW project which had begun with the *formal* celebration of Eucharist with the Bishop and clergy presiding, culminated three years later at Pentecost in a joyous celebration of huge proportions. The setting was St. Joseph's Oratory and the congregation exceeded a thousand worshippers. Instead of celebrating a Eucharist, the service took the form of a para-liturgy which lasted almost two hours. It is believed that 'good' liturgy is a form of ritual drama. The celebration that was the finale of RENEW was considered to be 'good' ritual drama, and according to those present, a memorable event.

A committee of two priests, two nuns and four lay men and women planned the

event. It took place on the feast of Pentecost, consequently the theme was the “Signs of the Holy Spirit”. The Oratory was hung with blue, yellow, red and orange flags symbolising the “fire” of the Spirit. Lectors stood on platforms at the four compass points within the body of the congregation (instead of within the sanctuary) to proclaim the Scriptural readings in English, French, Italian and Chinese. Instead of the usual lectionary familiar to churchgoers, the planning committee made an enormous book which was held high to signify the importance of the Scriptures. Vari-coloured ribbons hung from high on the walls, and hidden fans were activated to keep them flowing during the liturgy. This was to signify the “wind” of the Spirit, and in a huge bowl a fire was lit, to again convey the idea of the “fire” of the Holy Spirit. The choir and instrumentalists were drawn from several church choirs and the music and songs were a mixture of traditional and modern. The congregation not only sang, but holding each other’s hands, swayed and danced together.

It was decided to request a minimum of input from both Cardinal Gregoire and Bishop Crowley. They spoke briefly, commenting on their hopes for the continuance of the spirit imbued from RENEW. The coordinator of the undertaking, Sister Marie Azzarello (C.N.D.) opened the proceedings. Scripture readings followed each selected person who witnessed as to the effects of RENEW on their parish. Responsorial singing punctuated each element of the service, and liturgical dance illustrated the theme of the Scripture texts used. The liturgy was designed to evoke response on the sensory level. There was no final blessing, instead, each member of the assembly left the Oratory carrying a candle lit from the Paschal Candle – symbolic of carrying the Light of Christ and the Word of God into the world.

What had begun three years earlier at Mary Queen of the World in a somewhat staid and traditional way, ended with an exuberant living proclamation of hope for the Church in Montreal.

Did RENEW achieve its aims? A report based on the responses (of each active group) to a questionnaire was prepared at the diocesan level.<sup>174</sup> A precis of the report stated that:

1. For the majority, sharing and reflection on Scripture was a new and satisfying experience.
2. Most groups decided to continue the RENEW format with their living-room community, which was a sign of bonding.
3. There was a low-level attrition. Most groups were stable, although some lost members due to out of town moves. Evangelization lost its negative connotation and was understood as *living out* one's faith.
4. A development in the understanding of the role of the laity.
5. A deeper awareness of the message of the Scriptures and their relevance for daily living.
6. The return to the Church for some who had left.
7. A growth in community spirit. An improvement in the spiritual health of the parish.
8. There was a movement toward the formation of social action groups. Justice and Peace groups were also formed.
9. A new appreciation for the concerns of the sick and shut-in. Action was called for in this area.
10. A youth choir emerged from RENEW.
11. A general revitalization of the parish community life.

As can be seen the report, fresh from the RENEW experience in 1990, was hopeful and enthusiastic. In an interview with Sister Azzarello six years later, she shared her concerns that the vision for the parishes of the diocese had not been sustained. The 'non-negotiables' which were aimed at the restructuring of the parish organism did not succeed. Living-room

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<sup>174</sup> Marie Azzarello, (C.N.D.), "Evaluation of RENEW: Final Report on the RENEW process." Montreal, Archdiocese publication, 1990.

communities continued to function in several parishes and had succeeded in dissipating some of the sense of anonymity originally experienced, but parish organisations, (especially those with a long history, e.g., Catholic Women's League which had a nationally imposed format), could not restructure their meetings. Resistance was met in other parish groups who were loathe to change their *modus operandi*. The mood seemed to be summed up in the slogan "If it works don't change it!" The largest impediment to the ongoing life of RENEW was the energy drain. Most parishes could not, or would not, suspend enough of their activities, in order to make available the necessary time and space to sustain the RENEW vision.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RENEW MOVEMENT / CONCLUSIONS

1. Originated in Connecticut, USA. Promoted by the Archdiocese of Montreal.
2. The concept was realised in the creation of parish-based small living-room communities.
3. Programme had a duration of five sessions spread over three years. Each session was six weeks long. A guide book for each session/season was provided by the diocese for each group. Social gatherings were integrated into the process.
4. Participation was drawn through advertising in the weekly church bulletin and by word of mouth. Each group had a cross-section of people of all ages and marital status (except for youth between nineteen and thirty who had an age defined grouping). Groups were of mixed gender.
5. Meetings opened and closed with prayer. A previously selected scripture text was read and discussion followed. There was a closing 'Sending Forth' ritual encouraged by the guidebook, but reticence often meant it was omitted and the gathering ended simply with a prayer. There were amalgamated gatherings of a social nature and worship together at selected times. The three-year programme began and ended with a diocese-wide liturgy.
6. The programme materials were supplied by the financial arm of the diocese (Pillars Trust). The large gatherings were funded by the parish and participant contributions. Evening refreshments were provided by the hosting group.
7. Although initiated by the diocese and organised by a nun with a lay committee, there was minimal clerical input. All participants in the small groups were lay-people. Training of the parish coordinators was provided by the diocese. The leaders and

organising body met for eight training sessions. They also went on two "discernment retreats" to review the strategy kits and pray as a group.

Given today's mobile environment, the participation levels in the RENEW groups stayed very stable over the three-year duration, except for a slight drop in Session IV. According to conversations with various pastors, volunteerism increased and many participants took on leadership roles in subsequent activities. There was also a small increase in worship participation. This was probably due to the fact that the purpose of RENEW was not to proselytize but to teach and deepen the faith of the average parishioner. In this sense, the groups succeeded in some of the RENEW purpose as there was a marked increase in understanding the Scriptures. Scrutiny of Church documents was not included in the guide books and the programme was aimed toward fellowship and faith-sharing. The definitive document prepared by Sister Azzarello (Diocesan Coordinator) was positive as to the effects on both the individual and at the parish level. A youth choir was formed by young participants and social action groups were an outcome. Most are still active after eight years and some faith-sharing groups maintained their association with each other. However, RENEW was not repeated after the closing of the programme. In the opinion of the Coordinator, the energy drain of other parish activities precluded the ongoing nature of the Movement.

Recently it was stated in a workshop on evangelisation that, "Renewal without a missionary aspect, is the Church in maintenance mode."<sup>175</sup> The modern day renewal movements featured in this thesis disturbed, to some extent, the complacency which has been

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<sup>175</sup> Rev. Robert S. Rivers, CSP. (PNCEA), Workshop on Evangelisation. Villa Margaruite. Roxboro, Qc. May 12. 1999.

a feature of the Church. A statement of only six lines in *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, was to have a far reaching impact. It said:

The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be put into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the period of the catechumenate, which is intended as a time of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by the sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals.<sup>176</sup>

This was not to be realised until 1988, when it became a program designed to catechise (teach) adults who expressed desire to become members of the Catholic Church. It is known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or the RCIA. In this document it will be described, and promoted, as a proto-type of Small Church Communities.

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<sup>176</sup> Abbott (1966), article 64, 159.



<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT</b>	
<b>Renew</b>	
<b>Origins and History</b>	Promoted by Arch-Dioecese. Originated in New England, U.S.A.
<b>Timing and Duration</b>	Active over 5 seasons in parish setting.
<b>How Organized and Led</b>	Minimal clerical participation, but support the lay leadership (trained by diocese).
<b>Characteristics of Meetings</b>	Prayer and Scripture sharing. Exercise of gifts. Teaching. Eucharist. Periodic "laying on of hands".
<b>Parish/Individual Focus</b>	Parish based. Focus on individual spirituality. Supposition is that this latter will enhance parish life by greater involvement.
<b>Participation Levels</b>	Lay (trained) teams lead - facilitate groups of interested participants usually drawn by parish advertising. Renewal Movement participants active as facilitators.
<b>Gender Factors</b>	Mixed
<b>Characteristic Ritual Activities</b>	Opening/closing prayers. Refreshments. End of season liturgy.
<b>Clergy Involvement and Commitment</b>	Minimal but supportive of the "idea" but not the "vision".
<b>Training for Lay Leadership</b>	Diocesan Training (approx. 8 sessions plus 2 discernment retreats). Review Kits. Patterned on Ignatian Ex.

<b>INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS</b>	
<b>Renew</b>	
<b>Lay Participation</b>	80% of parishes participated; 50% of congregations. Some continuity, but most groups terminated after three years.
<b>Increased Lay Leadership</b>	No dramatic change but leaders were well trained.
<b>Increased Attendance at Worship</b>	Outreach to community produced new church membership. In some parishes significant increase. Some alienated Catholics returned, but percentage not measurable.
<b>Increased Knowledge of Scripture, Church Documents</b>	This area represented the movements most significant results.
<b>Increased Lay Piety (prayer life, personal commitment)</b>	In parishes where the leadership energized a continuance, a healthy piety was evident. However, this was minimal in the overall movement.

## Chapter VII

### The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults RCIA and the Renewal of Parishes

In an effort to revitalise her liturgy and practice, the Catholic Church drew new awareness of her missionary intent by investigating her ancient sources. Joseph Jungmann together with other historians “made it possible for a series of reforms to be undertaken *in line with the Church’s deepest traditions*”(my emphasis).<sup>177</sup> In its ecclesiastical use ritual is a prescribed Order of Service and is, more often than not, of historical antiquity. The Church's liturgy, however, had slowly grown from the days of the early Church and adapted to the peculiarism of local characteristics.<sup>178</sup> The Council of Trent unified the liturgical rubrics, but worship practices were hedged in by proscriptions until all conformed to a single model. It seemed that man was made for ritual, not ritual for man. Change was necessary.

In his 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei* Pope Pius XII urged research into ancient sources of sacred liturgy in order to find greater meaning for contemporary practice.<sup>179</sup> Prior to the Second Vatican Council, planners recognised the need. A considerable amount of historical material pertaining to liturgical traditions was amassed by scholars, historians, theologians and liturgists and made available to the experts who comprised a commission appointed for the purpose of reform. This material allowed the commission to return to ancient sources and conduct comparative studies of different rites so that the Church could

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<sup>177</sup> Abbott (1966), 133.

<sup>177</sup> E.C. Whitaker, *Documents of Baptismal Liturgy* (London: S.P.C.K. 1960). This book contains accounts of baptismal practices from the Didache (ca. 100 CE) and The First Apology of Justin Martyr (150-160 CE). Hippolytus (ca. 215 CE) also describes a baptismal format, but I have concentrated on a later and more fully developed ritual according to Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 360 CE)

<sup>179</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (Boston: St. Paul Books & Media [undated]).

better understand her use of symbol and what the liturgy was trying to convey. This thrust toward reform opened up new horizons for liturgy and catechesis. After many years, the research found voice in *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. The result was the restoration of the catechumenate in 1972 with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

In her book, *Natural Symbols*, Mary Douglas states: “Ritualism is most highly developed where symbolic action is held to be most efficacious.”<sup>180</sup> The rediscovery of the ancient Christian practice of *procatechesis* is being implemented in Roman Catholic parishes whenever a candidate for initiation comes forward. It is here that the catechetical lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem (ca 350 CE) have important relevance. Properly implemented, they could add efficacy to a renewal of a personal commitment on the part of the Catholic community. The catechetical lectures give us an accurate account of the practices of the early Church, particularly with regard to the initiation rites for those seeking membership in the Christian faith. The majority of lectures were given for the benefit of those preparing for baptism. An introduction titled ‘Procatechesis’, (comprising eighteen lectures and directed toward the baptismal candidates), and five follow-up lectures for the additional instruction of the newly baptised are the basis for the RCIA.

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<sup>180</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books 1970), 26.

## INITIATION RITES OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

St. Cyril (Bishop of Jerusalem) in the first pre-baptismal catechesis, urges the correct spiritual mind-set and practices, before entering the baptismal waters. In further elaborating, he tells of the manner in which this ritual was enacted:

1. The neophyte entered the baptistry and faced the west, with outstretched hand he renounced Satan and all his works (Mystagogical Catechesis 1).
2. Once in the inner chamber, he was stripped of his garments, symbolic of his putting off the "old man" and in imitation of Christ's nakedness on the cross.
3. In this state of nakedness, he was anointed with the oil of exorcism over his entire body. The oil symbolised the oil of the olive tree, Christ, on to which the neophyte was now grafted. By the invocation to God and prayer, the "evil one" was chased away.
4. He was then led to the water. After his assent to belief in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, he descended into the pool three times. The triple plunging is symbolic of Christ's three days in the Tomb and Resurrection. At this moment it was believed the candidate died and was reborn. The water was simultaneously his "grave and his mother."<sup>181</sup>

From the description, it would appear that baptism by immersion was the rule of the day. However, Charles Davis notes that baptismal frescoes in the catacombs and the shallow depth of newly unearthed fonts, would indicate that the rite employed both immersion and affusion. Following upon baptism, the neophyte was anointed on the forehead, ears, nostrils and breast with oil called *chrism*. It is usually assumed that this anointing is what we refer to as confirmation. It is thought to be bringing to completion, or ratifying, what is begun by baptism. It was at this point that the newly baptised and confirmed completed the initiation rite by being invited to and joining the Eucharistic meal.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> F. L. Cross, ed., *St Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments* (London: S.P.C.K. 1951).

<sup>182</sup> Charles Davis, *New Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation* (New York: Sheed and Ward 1964).

The Eucharist was the essential core of the primitive Church's liturgy. In its earliest form it was known as the "breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42) suggesting that it was part of a meal, possibly based on the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper and the ritual of the Sabbath meal. Later, it was referred to as the "*Agape*" and was symbolic of the unconditional love that the name implies. The Agape meal developed further into the thanksgiving meal called "*Eucharistia*". The consecration of the bread and wine were no longer separated by a meal and were contracted into one solemn act of thanksgiving.<sup>183</sup> By the time of Justin Martyr (150 CE) a ritualistic form had emerged.

The rites of initiation according to the standards of Cyril of Jerusalem began to undergo changes within a very short time of their inception. There was a ferment of historical, geographical, social and theological change which resulted (in a few short centuries) in the practice of infant baptism and the catechumenate almost disappeared. Baptism was understood as a washing away of 'original sin', which if not removed as quickly after birth as possible, could mean the loss of heaven for the newly born. The notion of initiation into the Christian community was obscured, private baptism was the norm, and babies were baptised with a sigh of relief. Adult converts were instructed privately by the local parish priest.

At the beginning of the 19th century there was an active movement toward the renewal of the liturgy. Concerned priests and laity joined together in ever-increasing numbers, and they began to experience small but significant changes. It was not, however, until the Vatican Council recognised the need to reach back to retrieve the "original charism" of the Church, that change became effective. With a renewed understanding of sacraments, evangelisation, and the Church as a people of God and a community of believers the

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<sup>183</sup> J. A. Jungman, *The Early Liturgy* (London: Dorton, Logmann and Todd 1959).

catechumenate was restored. The RCIA was promulgated in 1972 and parishes across the world began to tentatively experiment with its implementation. Its use was mandated by the bishops in the U.S. in 1988 and Canada followed suit. The process is marked by several stages.

1. The Pre-Catechumenate or Time of Enquiry

In this stage, the person hears the gospel message and makes an initial faith response. It is a time for meeting the parish community and for that community to introduce itself to the neophyte. During this time the candidate assesses his/her decision to seek membership within that parish community. When the person feels ready to seek membership in the Roman Catholic Church, he or she is admitted to the second stage (there is no time limit).

2. The Catechumenate

This stage can last up to three years – the period of time set in the early Church – but today it is usually a one year process. During this time the candidate is received by the community in the Liturgy of the Word, during which the participants pray and listen to the Scriptures of the day. This precedes the Liturgy of the Eucharistic and is the first part of the celebration of Mass,. After the homily, the catechumens leave with their sponsors and teachers. to study the scriptures just heard. The empty seats left after the candidates leave is a powerful sign as the assembly, (who take their faith for granted), continues to celebrate without them. The candidate also receives instruction during weekly (or bi-weekly) teaching sessions and the person is accompanied on this journey by a sponsor. Ideally the candidate also becomes acquainted with members of the parish community in social ‘get-togethers’. If and

when the catechumen makes a decision to be baptised or desires to come into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church through confirmation, he or she moves to the next stage.

3. The Rite of Election

This takes place the first Sunday of Lent and the catechumens of the diocese gather with the Bishop, (usually at the Cathedral), to celebrate a non-Eucharistic liturgy and to be enrolled in the Book of the Elect. This liturgy signals the entry into the next stage.

4. Purification and Enlightenment

This coincides with Lent and the parish preparations for the Easter Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil. This stage calls for the whole parish community to ratify the decision of the catechumen. Once it has done so, it has the responsibility to help in the formation of the person. It is at this stage that the whole community can be renewed in the faith they have often taken for granted. Preparation becomes more intense as the catechumens undergo what are called "scrutinies".

5. The Scrutinies.

It is at this time that the Church community prays for the catechumen that all that is weak be healed, and that which is good, be strengthened. The Scrutinies are celebrated on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent and the catechumen is received into the Church at the Easter Vigil, and as a newly initiated Catholic, is entitled to receive the Sacraments.



## 6. Mystagogia

This is a time for post-baptismal catechesis and is designed to help the new Catholic to deepen his/her new faith. Through contact with the community they are encouraged to become part of an existing ministry, thereby becoming integral to parish life. Usually the newly baptised Catholic is invited to the various organisations in the parish to see why they exist. By doing this, the person may be moved to join in the mission of the group.

### IS RCIA EFFECTIVE IN THE RENEWAL OF PARISH LIFE?

For the vast majority of Catholics infant baptism will continue to be the primary way of gaining new members, and the RCIA has had to adapt the ideal process mentioned above to the practical circumstances of each parish. In the English-speaking sector of the Diocese of Montreal seven parishes have an active programme and some parishes join their neighbouring communities if they do not have the necessary resources (teachers) for the catechetical process. This is usually because there are time constraints on the parish priests and there are not enough teachers available. As can be seen, the commitment level for both the candidate and the catechist is time consuming but, for the RCIA to be an active force for renewal, the liturgical process is paramount. Victor Turner states that "symbols are dynamic entities, not static cognitive signs."<sup>184</sup> In these terms, the potential for drama in the period of the catechumenate could revivify the faith-consciousness of the parish if the process as outlined in the RCIA manuals is followed. If a certain amount of creativity is added to the already outlined procedure, the effect could actually galvanise the parish congregation to a

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<sup>184</sup> Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (London: Cornell University Press 1974), 96.

re-evaluation of its faith status. William James tells us that the dimensions of psycho-social and religious life are interconnected and that “religion is not just an intellectual exercise; there must be an emotional and even passionate element in it.”<sup>185</sup>

Sadly, the opportunity for a renewal of the parish is sometimes missed because the congregation is not catechised as to the full meaning and process of RCIA. Consequently this deprivation of the parish precludes a reassessment of individual faith commitment. The process toward full initiation, which could be the vehicle for a renewal of the parish, is nullified when the congregation is left in the dark as to what is actually happening. The neophytes are anonymous and the congregational awareness is merely that, at a certain point, some people get up and leave the body of the church and disappear into a side office. Perhaps this is a worst example but, in most parishes, the moment is lost.

However, in one parish there is a truer appreciation for the potential of RCIA, and symbols that are fresh and authentic are used to great effect. At Transfiguration of Our Lord in Cartierville, the Eucharistic celebration begins with the customary processional from the back of the church to the sanctuary. This procession includes the primary celebrant (priest) acolytes (altar-servers) and the lector. The priest mounts the steps to the altar and turns to welcome the congregation. All this is normative...until a loud hammering is heard on the church doors. The congregation is surprised – one might even interpret the whispers and hasty glances toward the back of the church as shock. The priest pauses and then in a loud voice asks “Who is there and what do you want?” Disembodied voices respond: “We want to become part of this Christian community.” The priest invites them in, saying, “Enter in Peace.” The congregation can hardly restrain their curiosity, and turn to see the strangers come through the doors and down the aisle to the sanctuary. The priest welcomes the new

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<sup>185</sup> William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: The Modern Library 1995), 53.

comers and introduces them to the community. The congregation relaxes, smiles and shows signs of welcome and acceptance by applauding. The strangers with their sponsors from the parish are seated in the front pew. This will be their seat each Sunday for the duration of the catechumenate. Each week, as they are sent from the community to further study the Scriptures, the significance of their departure quickens in the heart of each member of the congregation. The congregation recognises that they are being asked to leave because they have not been fully initiated into the sacramental life of the church which the average person in the pew has, so often, taken for granted. The signs of friendship increase until, many weeks later, the congregation welcomes the catechumen into the fullness of Eucharistic participation at the Easter Vigil.

In this scenario creativity was added to the liturgical outline. The symbolic drama at the very onset of the RCIA process set the tone for a recognition, and perhaps a new appreciation of what it is to be a Christian. In parishes where the barest essentials of the RCIA directives are followed, the process falls flat. The assembly does not participate in the journey with the catechumen; there is no vested interest in their progress; the rituals (as such) are empty and meaningless; and the opportunity for parish renewal is missed.

It is also possible for a renewal of a parish to occur during the period called the *mystagogy*. The vision for such is found in the RCIA directive no.245:

Since the distinctive spirit and power of the post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is the Sunday Masses of the Easter Season. The presence of the neophytes should speak to the assembly of their own participation in a Eucharistic community. The faith

development of the community should echo the faith development of the neophyte. This should be fostered by homilies that reflect the sort of catechesis that was received by the person whilst in the catechumenate so that the whole community may develop a fuller and more effective understanding of the mysteries through the gospel message they (the catechumens) have learned.<sup>186</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the period of mystagogy is the Dismissal to Mission. The priest is asked to exhort the newly initiated to grow “through meditation on the gospel, sharing the Eucharist and doing the works of charity....since the Church's life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Good News”(RCIA, no.75). If the period of mystagogy is followed correctly (and I might add, enthusiastically), then the assumptions of the directives, which state “the period of post-baptismal catechesis is of great significance for both the neophytes *and the rest of the faithful.*”(my emphasis) and that newly initiated should “experience a full and joyful welcome into the community,” then it should follow, that by fully participating in the journey that the catechumen makes to full communion, the assembled parish family should “derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook” (RCIA, no.246).

At the celebration of the Rite Of Election at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral in February 1999, approximately 32 English language catechumens were entered into the Book of the Elect, bringing a total of 182 since 1995.<sup>187</sup> The ethnic origins of the participants reflect the changing face of the Church in Montreal. There are 259 parishes and twelve Missions in the Archdiocese of Montreal and many include a significant number of ethnic

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<sup>186</sup> All RCIA directives quoted are from: National Liturgical Office, eds., *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (Ottawa: Concacan Publishing 1989).

<sup>187</sup> Linda Coady, (Coordinator); Adult Religious Studies Services. OELA, Archdiocese of Montreal.

minorities. The RCIA has behind it the full weight of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. If each parish implemented to its fullest potential the process for welcoming, teaching and initiating those who seek Church membership, then I believe, that through the process, the Catholic Church in Montreal has the best possibility for authentic renewal. It is unfortunate that the opportunity may be missed because the pastoral care aspect is, in some areas, ineffective. This is due to a variety of circumstances, not the least of which is the dearth of priests who are aging, overworked and tired. It is however, the perfect opportunity for the Church to raise up (in accordance with the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*) an educated lay leadership who could aid in the rebuilding of a dwindling church.

One of the most important elements of the RCIA process, is that the teaching takes the form of *small groups of people meeting in homes*. In the non-threatening atmosphere of a home, the new enquirer can relax, and the mood is conducive to more open questioning and discussion. In some groups the process begins with a meal. With this intimacy, social cohesion begins as eating together effects the breaking down of barriers. This leads to the beginning of a bond of trust. During the time it takes to complete the instruction, the group “gels” and friendships are established. This model, which includes the sharing of a meal, has been effective in other evangelising movements, such as Alpha, where each group meeting begins with a simple supper. Initially the food is provided by the host, but eventually everyone contributes the components of a dinner.

The model of the RCIA, has five successful dynamics: a) small group meetings which are home-based; b) sharing of a meal together, leading to bonding; c) simplicity in teaching leading to inter-active discussion; d) introduction to the church congregation; and, e) the revitalisation of the congregation through good use of ritual action and symbol. Robert Rivers of the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association used the analogy of “new

wine in old wineskins” (Matt.9:17), when he referred to a need for a “*new*” theology of Church and called for: a) *new* behaviour which includes increased lay participation; b) *new* theology which places a value on the individual human experience; c) *new* forms of worship (liturgically and revised use of worship space); d) *new* ways of relating, co-responsibility and clergy/laity collaboration; e) *new* ways of relating to other denominations and those of other faiths; and, f) *new* ways of relating to the world, acknowledging faith contained within culture.<sup>188</sup>

My thesis is that, it is in the re-structuring of each parish into Small Church Communities that the Church could be renewed, and that the leadership, characterised by good pastoral care, can be provided by those who have been actively involved, and well trained in the modern-day renewal movements examined in this document.

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<sup>188</sup> Rivers, *op. cit.* ( May 12, 1999).

## EPILOGUE

### A RATIONALE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF SMALL CHURCH COMMUNITIES WITH A VIEW TO THE RE-STRUCTURING OF THE PARISH.

For centuries, the parish was at the heart of Catholic family life. What took place in the parish was pivotal to the lives of the parishioner, so much so that in Quebec, the whole village took its name from the parish church. It was not only a place of worship, but the centre for much of the parishioners' social activity. It was central to the village culture. In as little as fifty years societal change has moved the Church to the periphery of life. It has been stated by many in the Church, that today's parishes are service institutions; yet they celebrate and dispense the Sacraments, offer counselling, marriage preparation and in fact much more – much good is happening. Recognising the obvious decline in membership, most parishes eagerly search out and implement programmes designed to enhance parish participation and outreach. Parishes which are considered "live" (in contrast to too many which are considered "dead"), often have a surfeit of activities. If it were activity and programmes that people were looking for, the many churches would be overflowing. But they are not. So what is it that people are looking for? Why don't people come? For some it is the institutional stance: birth control, abortion, clerical celibacy, the place of women in the Church, homosexuality. We are all familiar with the large impediments, but this does not seem to be the sole reason. Society is crying out for personalization. There is a great loss of self-identity. At one time, part of that identity was in one's religious affiliation – it imparted meaning to daily life. The parish today is task-oriented. The Church is cognizant of the dilemma and realises there must be another approach, perhaps better described as a mission to be accomplished. Programmes and activities are aimed toward this goal, and no one

would dispute the ardour, hard work, planning and amount of time given to make the goal a reality. Yet still, people are not returning to the Church. Why the decline in attendance? We need look very little further than the media reports. Urban alienation, economic distress, rampant crime at all age levels, galloping technological advances, cyberspace which threatens the right to privacy, and medical experimentation, some of which operates without a firm ethical base, have all contributed to a societal angst that longs for simplicity, intimacy and stability.<sup>189</sup> Nostalgia fills the airwaves. Alongside, there is another longing – a universal longing for Otherness: *Something* or *Someone* to believe in. This is a “felt” experience, even of those who go to church, but for many Catholic churchgoers “...sufficient for Sunday is the Mass thereof...” For the rest of the week they, like everyone else, struggle to deal with living on terms the world dictates.

Is it possible for the Church to provide for at least some of the needs of a polymorphic membership?<sup>190</sup> I believe it can, if three criteria can be met:

a) There must be a fundamental shift in the restructuring of the parish base into small manageable groupings – Small Church Communities of people sharing their lives and faith together. Elton Trueblood says: “When a person is drawn into a little circle, devoted to prayer and to deep sharing of spiritual resources, he or she is well aware that he or she is welcomed for his/her own sake, since the small group has no budget, no officers concerned with the

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<sup>189</sup> Yves Côté. Trans. Belva R. Webb. *L'Église du Québec: un héritage, un projet*. Montreal: Éditions Fides, 1972; 59.

<sup>190</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx in *Ministry. Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* sets out to legitimize his claim that for the living apostolic vitality of the Christian community, we must open the way for leaders in the pastoral unit (parish) which come from the grassroots to participate in the ministry of the church. New York. Crossroad. 1984.



success of their administration, and nothing to promote.”<sup>191</sup>

- b) There has to be a palpable change in the local parish environment.
- c) The WILL to embrace the IDEA of major change.

There is a need to de-emphasise the institution and emphasise the sense of community which is missing today. I believe that by forming voluntary small faith communities, which by their living vitality will change the environment of the parish setting, there would be a renewal of parish life and by extension, the Diocese of Montreal.

This means a major restructuring of the present parish system, yet what I propose is not new but only a retrieval of how the early Church was formed. For the first three hundred years, before the Constantinian era when the Roman world became Christianised, the Church patterned her organisation on the Roman municipal system. Small local communities formed a diocese. The leadership of the diocese was the *episkopoi*, or elder (whom we call today a bishop). The bishop pastored each small community (parish), which was a sub-community in the larger local body. This diocese in the first three centuries of the primitive and early Church comprised a small city (by today’s standards) and the rural area surrounding. Because of the demographics and the shared Christian espousal, there was a close social cohesion. Today, although we maintain the same organisation, it is not possible to offer to the community the support for Christian living which was possible before the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Given the phenomenon of the population growth of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with its consequent urban alienation, parishes, and by extension dioceses, cannot provide for the average Catholic, the same support extended in past eras. Yet the human need is perhaps greater than ever. We no longer suffer the threat of execution for believing, but a form of death is imminent. We are

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<sup>191</sup> Parish Team, St Boniface Parish. *Leaders Training Manual*. Pembroke Pines, Florida. (Private Printing); 89.

experiencing the demise of the Christian community. Because we no longer meet the individual human need of the people, there is a withering on the Christian vine and a famine in the Christian world. But are Small Church Communities the answer? One can find a small community of people able to meet the desire for friendship in many places other than the local church. Groups of like-minded people will always congregate. Book lovers form literary societies, ecologists form associations, all sorts of people espousing certain causes are drawn to each other and societies are created. All of these groupings of shared endeavour can change the environment, and the environment, in turn, affects the people involved. People will also come together in the parish setting because of a defining feature: They are Christian...if only by initiation.

*One cannot find intimacy with two thousand people, which is the average size of a parish today. However, it IS possible with twenty-thirty people, (which is probably the optimum number). A Small Church Community should foster an environment which makes it possible to live a supported Christian way of life. I believe it is in this area that the modern-day renewal movements, such as described in this thesis, will become integral to the process.*

If there is good leadership, if the voluntary interaction is wholesome and nourishing, thereby meeting the individual need for its members to have a sense of Belonging, and if the primary focus is living out the gospel, Small Church Communities can be instrumental in renewing parish life and therefore the local church. These small groups would function within the institution, thereby benefiting from the resources that only a larger body can provide. It is unlikely that small groups can be wholly self-sustaining but Pastoral Care would not be laid on the shoulders of the pastor alone. The pastor and the small group of

pastoral leaders of each Small Church Community would form a pastoral team which facilitates and sustains the needs of the different groups – the primary task being the ongoing formation of the group, NOT promotion of parish programs and activities. This does not imply that the parish would have only an inward focus, but that the outreach efforts would come from the conviction of the Christian message which has formed the attitudes of group members. It does mean however, that there be restrictions placed on task-oriented activities with long-range goals that place time and energy burdens on parishioners.

Where do renewal movements fit into all this? Or do they have a place at all? It would appear from the data collected for this document that movements have an indeterminate life-span but they do not appear to have accomplished the hoped-for renewal of the Church. Whence Transformation? Is there a measurement for success or failure? Perhaps, by relying on observation of the renewal movements outlined in this document an opinion may be offered.

#### REDEMPTORIST MISSION MOVEMENT

The sociological explanations are probably numerous, but are outside the scope of this document and of my competence. Suffice to say, we recognise that we live in a far different world. The Redemptorist ‘world’ was a much more stable environment. It also ran counter to the proposals of the Enlightenment. It preached the time-honoured beliefs of Catholicism to a Catholic society that was less literate, and more submissive to authoritarian structures such as the Church. In my personal experience it also thrived because of an immigrant ghetto mentality, where to be ‘Catholic’ meant that one was perceived as having “second class” status. It not only reinforced religious beliefs and values but bolstered a sense of national pride and self-worth within the safe confines of a fortress mentality. Because

people had geographical stability, (they were born, lived and died in the same area) they had a shared history, which lent commonality to the group. This familiarity with others in the same societal strata, and with their local parish structure guaranteed the longevity of the Mission Movement.

However, change in *world structures*, together with a growth in literacy and a wider world view provided by increased media exposure, produced a consciousness of global citizenship. Previously unperceived, but formidable barriers, began to melt. There was a gradual integration from the “spiritual-mind-emotion” ghetto into the mainstream of the local society. The immigrant mentality became less defensive and old prejudices and fears began to fade.

The changes wrought by the Second Vatican Council, were greeted with spiritual angst by many in the Church. For others the realisation that the Church is more than the hierarchy (and the local priest), and that all the members make up ONE Church was a liberating message. The new experience of the Church's liturgy spoke to people ontologically. It spoke to the human need “to be” and caused an “...opening up [of] dimensions that were not there before.”<sup>192</sup> Lay participation was encouraged at all levels. Such a shift in paradigm contributed to an attitude that could no longer tolerate the Redemptorist Mission format. Vatican II fostered a sense of personal spiritual growth, childish spirituality had to undergo a metamorphosis. The organism which is the Church, followed the human pattern of growth; for many it meant a movement from child to adolescence with all that implies. Old ways of approach to spirituality were abandoned and for many, the transition was painful. The Redemptorist Mission format was one of the first

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<sup>192</sup> Paul Waitman Hoon. *The Integrity of Worship*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1971; 65.

casualties, and whereas the Redemptorists themselves realised the necessity for a new approach a new format was not forthcoming for some twenty years.

One of the elements which *was* missed by an older section of the Catholic parish, was the lack of oratorical power, associated with the Mission. Although the content of the homily had the validation of Church teaching, the delivery method did not fit with the new spiritual awareness and expression, and therefore was unacceptable. There was nothing created to fill the void until the laity (and clerics) got used to the idea of the Vatican II call for the participation of the laity in the life of the Church. Retreat teams began to be formed, liturgy groups emerged in the parish and a general maturing of the Church population began.

The Redemptorist Mission has reemerged with a format acceptable to the parish congregation, but the ubiquity of the old Mission that literally “put the fear of God” into hearts is no more. Because of the authoritarian Church structures of the day, the Mission did not promote a parish life based on the reciprocity of pastor and layperson. The Church had to wait for the Second Vatican Council for that to become even a possibility. The Church community continued to base much of its lifestyle around the church building, but this was not an outcome of the Mission process, but of demography. The purpose of the Mission was spiritual and moral renewal and, as has been observed earlier in this dissertation, had a limited effect. Its legacy remained in the memory of older Catholics, but after 200 years, the time had come for the Redemptorist Mission to leave the Catholic landscape. It could no longer exert the influence for which it was designed. It can be said it withdrew gracefully.

## CURSILLO MOVEMENT

The original ideal of the Cursillo Movement was as an apostolate to those who were “faraway” from the Church. It developed to the extent, that the conversion of the workplace became the focus. This would be accomplished by presenting the opportunity for personal conversion and solid Catholic teaching. The weekend retreat format has been successful for many years and is operating with a significant measure of success. Cursillo periodically undergoes intense periods of self-reflection, and is currently engaged in a revision of its mandate aimed toward a retrieval of its original charism. The follow-up elements of the Cursillo methodology provide the sort of spiritual support that Small Church Community groups hope to achieve. Cursillistas are people who share a community bond. But not all parishioners “make” a Cursillo, and therefore do not benefit from the effects of such support. However, in many parishes in Montreal there is a nucleus of people who have participated in Cursillo and continue to meet for mutual support. They are convinced Catholics, and each parish can number cursillistas in its activities and ministry, from participation on parish councils to Eucharistic Ministry and visitation of the sick and shut-in. It is a strong lay movement which has clerical approval. It is not parish-based, but draws its membership from parishes, and from person-to-person contact as in the early Church, when, it is remarked, “...countless converts, by their good lives and witness, brought the good news to others on a very personal level, whether in church or in conversation.”<sup>193</sup>

Although Cursillo was operating during the latter part of the Redemptorist Mission years, its focus lay, not with the re-invigoration of personal morality, but with immersion in the Scriptures - not in gatherings of whole parishes, but in individual contact. Its slogan “Meet a friend, make a friend and take a friend to Christ,” was/is, contrary to the

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<sup>193</sup> E.Glenn Hinson. “Ordinary Saints at First Church.” in *Christian History* 1:57 (1998).

Redemptorist thrust, which was to preach to large congregations and according to Fr. Robert Rivers is the only effective way to evangelise.<sup>194</sup>

#### CHARISMATIC RENEWAL.

Much the same can be said of the effects of the Charismatic Renewal. Although the early ecstatic manifestation of the spiritual gifts has been ameliorated and now fits with the wider parish personality. Prayer Groups still operate in some parishes. The Charismatic expression through music, is evident in choirs in most parishes, but perhaps the greatest contribution came from the movement's commitment to Scripture as the guiding vehicle for Christian living. Small groups of people who have had the prayer group experience, continue to meet in living rooms to pray and share their life-experience in the light of gospel values. Perhaps one of the most telling examples of the effects of Charismatic Renewal, was its motivational quality. As members began to recognise that they possessed the spiritual gifts which (as they believed) were given to them for the up-building of the community, they also developed a new sense of service. They began to understand that service is a constitutive element to the life of the Christian, and to the Church as a whole. The Charismatic Renewal motivated people to become Pastoral Animators in schools and hospitals, leaders of Bible Study groups, workers with troubled youth in group settings and social justice advocates. In many parishes, Charismatics are to be found in groups of involved parishioners at all levels. When the diocese originated the Permanent Diaconate Programme (and its corollary, [minus ordination] the Order of Service for women), 70% of deacons came from the Charismatic Renewal and Cursillo experience. Like Cursillo, the difference between the Redemptorist Mission Movement and the modern-day movements, lay with the

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<sup>194</sup> Rivers (1999).

“empowerment” of the laity. Because of the greater exposure to the media, horizons broadened. Literacy was common-place, and the changes wrought by the Vatican Council began to filter into the mentality of old and young alike. The speed with which the Charismatic Renewal spread across continents had much to do with this new mentality and the advancement of communication. In the Church, the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, meant that the lay-person found a place of consequence. They were no longer only “pew-sitters”, but had a voice that could bring about change. This was in direct contrast to the age of the Redemptorist Renewal.

## RENEW

This effort toward renewal has come closest to the idea of how the Small Church Community model could revitalise the Church. Its format of five seasons, consisting of six sessions each, did not present an overbearing or onerous commitment. Most people can handle a commitment of six weeks. Its work materials were simple, yet conducive to reflection and sharing. The weakness was in the discontinuity. Small groups of disparate persons need a longer time- frame to “gel” with each other.

Another lacunae lay with the fact, that at the end of the fifth session there was no “coming together” of the leaders for the mutual support and the encouragement needed to continue with the programme. In spite of what is perceived as a weakness however, in most groups the membership remained stable during the life-span of the programme, and some parishioners were faithful to the vision of RENEW, continuing to meet in each other’s homes, using as guidance booklets especially prepared by *Novalis*, a publishing arm of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. One such parish is St. Monica's in Notre Dame



to Grace district (N.D.G.), where fourteen groups meet biweekly to pray, study and share their lives with each other. They have been meeting for eight years.

I believe that RENEW could have been the instrument for the renewal of the Church. The failure lay, not with the idea, nor the methodology, nor a disinterested laity. It suffered its demise mainly because the pastors were not fully committed to the vision, and allowed unrestricted activity and programmes to place a burden on the time and energies of the parish. This was a failure of Pastoral Care. RENEW was parish-based, but initiated in the parishes by the Archdiocese which funded the groups study materials. Group facilitators were drawn from people who had shown leadership at the individual parish level. Most had participated in Cursillo and/or the Charismatic Renewal. They had experienced “empowerment”. It is the latter, that differentiates the Redemptorist Movement from both Cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal.

#### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Although my thesis proposal did not include an examination of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), I have added a small section describing its historical roots and its present day implementation, because I believe that the formation process of incorporating adult inquirers into the Church is something from which each parish could benefit. Within the intimacy of a *small group*, inquirers hear the Church's story and the meaning of her tradition and modes of worship. The inquirer begins to share, in a warm and caring *environment*, his/her life story, and begins to relate individual life experience to the experience and life of the Church. The period of Mystagogia is designed to bond the new Catholic to the community by mutual *prayer* and *faith-sharing with a Scriptural base*. This Rite of Initiation, correctly implemented, and using symbol and sign and ritual drama to its

best effect, can aid toward an authentic conversion at the parish level. It has within its format the elements needed for restructuring the parish. It uses the Small Church Community model which changes the environment, and in turn could lead to a community of Christians supporting each other in a world of complexities and anxiety. RENEW is compatible with the ethos of both Cursillo and the Charismatic Renewal.

## CONCLUSION

In order to ascertain whether the renewal movements I have observed and participated in over the last fifty years succeeded in their purpose, I would have to try and view them in the light of a two thousand-year history of the Church. Leonardo Boff says that the faith-life of the Church can be described as *contestatory* in its pre-Constantine years, *conservatory* in the post-Constantinian era (its aim being the preservation of the status quo) and that we are now moving into a period of *construction* by referring back to the early Church and taking a longer-range view.<sup>195</sup>

If the Church identifies the spiritual life of a person as one which is a journey, then perhaps the time has come to move up to the next milestone. The times (and parish life) that we associate with the Redemptorist Mission effort toward renewal are now part of Catholic history. It is time for a new model of Church.

I would like to appeal to two sociologists already quoted in my Introduction. I agree with Durkheim's assertion that religion is both social and individual and this (if given the opportunity) results in a community called Church. I also believe Weber's thesis that the bonds forged by religion change structures. Small Church Communities, functioning within

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<sup>195</sup> Boff (1987), 92.

the parish setting can effect such change. It could be, that by changing the present inadequate structure of monolithic proportions to manageable intimate groupings of supportive friends, the gospel message will be heard. In this way, not only will the parish be renewed but so also, by extension, will each diocese. This needs the courage and the WILL to risk.

Residual pockets of people who were active in leadership roles in the modern-day renewal movements, such as Cursillo, Charismatic Renewal and RENEW are still functioning in their respective parishes. They have not lost their enthusiasm and their spiritual life has matured as they availed themselves of the spiritual aids available to them; including the supports of the Ignatian Centre, Benedictine Prayer and the broadening experience of the ecumenical centre, UNITAS [see Appendix II: "Selection of Interviews"]. While remaining appreciative of the devotional life of the Church, many are aware of the directives of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* which warn of misdirected devotional enthusiasm that detracts from the centrality of Eucharist. From their experience with Scripture, prayer (both private and communal) and the dynamics of small group interaction, they are the natural candidates for the role of Pastoral Animator of the Small Church Communities which, I propose, are the hope for a true renewal of the Church of the twenty-first century.

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## Appendix I

### ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

#### Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

#### (THE REDEMPTORISTS)

Alphonsus Liguori was born in Naples in 1696. His family ranked among the Neapolitan nobility; consequently, Alphonsus inherited the benefits accompanying a prestigious lifestyle. He received a fine education and was admitted to the bar when he was only sixteen. According to his biographer,<sup>196</sup> Alphonsus had believed in the supreme principle of the Justinian law code, that justice and equity prevail over the letter of the law.<sup>197</sup> After arguing a case in court in defence of the legitimacy of an ancient fief, he lost on the observance of the letter of the law. Convinced that "...power had crushed right and trampled on equity,"<sup>198</sup> he became disillusioned with the legal profession.

In 1722, he had attended an eight-day retreat in a house of the priests of St. Vincent de Paul (Vincentians), which had a profound effect on him and he began to devote much of his time and energy to the poor and the sick. In 1723 he related that he had a religious experience,<sup>199</sup> which caused him to renounce his titles and properties. He was determined to become a priest and so gave up his primogeniture in favour of his brother Ercole. In October 1723 Alphonsus entered the seminary under the tutelage of the Vincentians, and prepared to become a diocesan priest (that is, a priest not attached to a religious order). In order to have

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<sup>196</sup> Rey-Mermet (1989).

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

a clearer perspective on this decision it is necessary to take a closer look at the state of the Neapolitan clergy at the time. Rey-Mermet says that there were "at least three thousand, but maybe even twice as many...who teemed and croaked on the edge of the diocesan clergy in this cesspool of priests."<sup>200</sup> It would appear that Naples did not need another priest.

#### NAPLES: DIOCESAN BACKGROUND

The Diocese of Naples comprised eighty parishes with half a million persons. About half were urban parishes, the rest were rural. There were four categories of clergy, - two secular and two regular. Of the regulars, 4,500 monks, clerics and brothers lived in 104 monasteries, a great majority of whom were "mostly monks who basked in riches".<sup>201</sup>

Conversely, there were a few congregations devoted to evangelical poverty, ministering to the poor, catechising children and actively preaching the gospel. Among these were the Oratorians (founded by Philip Neri), a group called the Pious Workers (Pii Operai) and the Vincentians.

The laxity of the convents and monasteries was deplorable, due perhaps, to the custom of the day that saw so many so-called "vocations" forced by the authoritarian pressure of wealthy families upon their children. Alphonsus' sister Barbara, for example, was cloistered as a boarder with the Franciscan sisters at the age of nine and another sister Annella before the age of five in the same convent. In the case of Annella, a dispensation had to be obtained, as the Church ruling prohibited girls being cloistered before the age of reason. The custom of placing children with religious orders was not unlike the practice of modern-day parents who send their children to boarding schools.

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<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.



A by-product of the custom however, was that the religious idealism of the young, coupled with a certain amount of persuasion (subtle or otherwise), had the effect of producing "vocations" that proved later on, to be regretted. The social milieu of the day did not lend itself to a renunciation of vows, and consequently the inner life of some religious orders became characterised with apathy and the original charism of the founders intention was lost.

The Council of Trent threatened excommunication upon anyone who obliged girls or widows to "take the veil," but the embedded customs, sociological pressures and economic imperatives were difficult to eradicate, even in the century of the Enlightenment. The Liguori family were an example of this. Barbara was fifteen, and Annella sixteen, when they asked permission to take final vows. Alphonsus' brother Antonio took his solemn vows at eighteen with the Benedictines, and another brother, Gaetano, was given an ecclesiastical benefice (secured for him by his father) at the age of fourteen, even though he was only ordained twelve years later.

As the eldest son, Alphonsus was expected to inherit the patrimony of the Liguori family; therefore, not only did he escape any pressure not to enter religious life, he was actively dissuaded from it. When eventually he made his decision to enter the priesthood his father tried, alternately, persuasion, coercion and his considerable influence, to make Alphonsus' decision null and void.<sup>202</sup>

Entering the legal profession, however, does not imply a disinterest in things spiritual. His early religious formation was fostered by his mother who was pious, and had a predilection for the poor and supported those that worked with them. For example, she

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

befriended, and was patroness to the young Jesuit Francisco Geronimo who worked with the prostitutes and galley slaves of Naples.

He saw Alphonsus three days after his birth, and holding him in his arms is reputed to have predicted "This child will live to be very old and will not die before he is ninety. He will be a Bishop and will do great things for Jesus Christ".<sup>203</sup> Alphonsus mother is reportedly the conveyer of this message, and certainly did not live to see her son turn ninety-one, or be consecrated a Bishop at sixty-six. Whether or not this prophecy is post-canonization, one thing is certain, - both Alphonsus and Francis Geronimo were canonized on the same day, May 26 1839.

The influence of Alphonsus' mother cannot be discounted in providing the context in which he eventually chose to devote his life. Certainly he would be aware of the institutionalised abuses of his day, and perhaps it was because of his mother's influence that, despite the knowledge, he persisted in his decision to enter religious life, focussing his ministry on the poor.

#### SEMINARY FORMATION

The Council of Trent decreed in 1563 that seminaries be established, for the correct education and spiritual formation of young men who wished to be ordained to the priesthood. The seminary in Naples in which Alphonsus was educated was founded in 1568, and when Alphonsus entered, had at least a hundred boarders and even more day students. Alphonsus' "uncle" (he was Alphonsus' mother's cousin) was the rector, and Alphonsus himself was a day student. His experience as a lawyer prepared him intellectually for the rigorist training of Francois Genet, whose *Theologie Morale* (1676) was *de rigueur* for seminary training.

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<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

Comprising seven volumes, (the severity of which was applauded by the church hierarchy), they propounded what is called, "probabiliorism."<sup>204</sup> This taught confessors that if in any doubt in matters of conscience the most *probable* opinion was to be followed. What it amounted to was, "when in doubt, follow the law". The Jansenists completely endorsed this *Theologie Morale* of Genet, which advised severity with penitents and indeed there were thirty pages advising priests about the withholding of absolution, a practice which produced intense anxiety in the penitent, and accorded a great measure of psychological control to the confessor.

Genet's *Theologie Morale*, begun in France, was, within thirty years of being formulated, approved by more than 160 Italian synods and consequently was firmly entrenched in the moralist teaching in the Neapolitan seminaries. Alphonsus was therefore thoroughly exposed to this rigorism and even confessed "I myself was for a long time a passionate partisan of probabiliorism."<sup>205</sup> Alphonsus was a man of his own times and did not entirely repudiate the probabilism upon which he was nurtured.

The Lutheran historian Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) said, Alphonsus was a champion of probabilism and his popularity ensured its success.<sup>206</sup> As a professor of moral theology, he used the writings of H. Busembaum a noted probabilist and his *Theologia Morale* was inspired by Busembaum. Alphonsus espoused the system of probabilism for thirty years and only defined his own moral system when he was sixty-six. The climate of

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<sup>204</sup> The definition given by Rey-Mermet with regard to "Probabiliorism" is that it is a Thomistic position. "In the area of dogma, grace does everything; in the area of morality, when in doubt one must follow the more probable opinion...Therefore they were "probabiliorists" (Op. Cit. P.469.) He says that Alphonsus was "nourished on probabiliorism.....after a long period of practice he realized...that it was speculatively unsound and practically harmful. Thus he moved over to probabilism." (Op.Cit. Page 475), Both approaches were rigorist, the latter, a little less than the former which required that the harshest opinion be taken, re: matters of conscience. (Op.Cit. p. 9).

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

severity that characterised the era considered probabilism to be bordering on laxity, and Alphonsus' *Moral Theology* was opposed by rigorists and was suppressed/forbidden in Spain and Portugal. Later, when his Order was founded, he was diligent in ensuring that the doctrine of probabilism did not contaminate the congregation even though this "spiritual terrorism"<sup>207</sup> influenced the whole church.

What can account for this contradiction in Alphonsus' attitude? His disillusion with the legal profession was based in a rejection of the application of the letter of the law, and yet he attests to his own inclination toward the same tendency in religious life. Harnack (quoted by Rey-Mermet) believed that Alphonsus never reached "...the shameful extremes of the eighteenth century probabilists."<sup>208</sup> He was greatly influenced in a more compassionate direction, by the writings of the Jesuits but it was his contact with the poor peasantry in the rural areas that eventually made him an adversary of the severity imposed by probabilism.

There was a paradox in his acceptance of the seminary training so heavily imbued with rigorism, and his rejection of the similar attitude in civil law which is not easily explained. Certainly, it does not appear that he was by nature a rigorist. Allowing for the tenor of the age in which he lived, all of Alphonsus' writings lean toward compassion if not leniency. He was opposed to delayed absolution and the Augustinianism of his era,<sup>209</sup> and he taught priests that, "Nothing must be imposed on men under pain of grave sin unless reason

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<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>209</sup> Augustinianism refers to a doctrine on grace that appeals to St. Augustine as its authority. It maintains that the pure state of humankind was forfeited by the fall and that the essence of Original Sin is the absence of grace. It stressed that human beings could not be anything other than depraved unless they were the recipients of God's grace. In popular Catholic thinking this emphasised the sacraments of the church as the primary conduits of grace. Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638) tried to bring a reform to the Church of France through restoring the theology of grace according to Augustine. It taught a doctrine of predestination for fallen humankind and led to a form of rigorism and scrupilosity that was prevalent in the perception of the average catholic for many decades. Its teachings affected seminary training and ultimately the parishioner. Personal experience can attest to its pervasive effect, which produced religious scrupilosity

evidently induces this. Considering the fragility of the present human condition it is not always true that the safest way to direct souls is through the narrowest path.”<sup>210</sup> The paradox remains unsolved; perhaps the influences of his mother lay dormant whilst he listened to the oratory of his seminary professors, and only reemerged when in contact with the spiritual plight of the poor. It is also fortuitous that he studied dogmatics under Monsignor Torni, who, though undoubtedly a rigorist himself, nevertheless gave to Alphonsus the *Medulla Theologice* (*Theological Marrow*) which was the product of the Vincentian theologian, Louis Abelly.

Louis Abelly, in opposition to the Jansenists, taught of God's desire to save all people and the dispensation of grace, necessary for the observance of the Commandments. This work tempered Christian duty to the law with a recognition of God's mercy. This aspect of Abelly, the realistic experience of the Vincentian ministry with the poor, and the exposure to the Jesuits (prior to their suppression, first by the Bourbons and then by Clement XIV in 1773) evolved within Alphonsus, an opposition to the rigorism of the period. In fact, so opposed was he to Jansenism, he emphasised that procreation was not the “first end of marriage.”

Prior to his ordination in 1726, Alphonsus met with friends to pray and worship together at what were called "Evening Chapels" (*Cappelle Serotine*). At first it was a meeting of priests, but after his ordination it grew to include many of the poor of Naples. The teachings were kept simple, in keeping with the lifestyle and education of the listeners. Alphonsus taught the central tenets of the Catholic faith, told the stories of the lives of the saints and the importance of repentance. There was vocal prayer and singing. The group quickly grew and became a confraternity. It was reported by Tannoia, Alphonsus biographer,

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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, .9.

“...the door is open to all and if dissolute and obnoxious persons present themselves, this is a cause for joy.”<sup>211</sup>

The exposure to the poor, who made up a large part of the Evening Chapel gatherings, was the beginning of Alphonsus' interaction with a segment of Neapolitan society that, until now, he had no opportunity to meet with on a social basis. Alphonsus *organised the meetings so that they were led by lay people*, an innovation foreign to the priestly entality of his day, but one which was to be prophetic. Often they were manual workers who were trained by the priests as catechists, in very much the same way as the early Christian Church trained its teachers, in the reasoned belief, that these men alone possessed the working experience and could communicate to their peers in the common vernacular. It is not on record who actually began the Evening Chapel gatherings. It appears to have been a spontaneous decision of a few priests to have fellowship with each other, but Alphonsus was quickly recognised as a man of compassion, and when he was given the faculty of hearing confessions in 1727, he drew “a multitude of penitents.”<sup>212</sup>

It might be deduced that these "penitents" became the first lay members of the prayer group. The Cappelle movement flourished and eventually spread through Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Bavaria, France and Poland. In 1900 there were half a million members in 1600 centres for both men and women. Matteo Ripa, a close associate of Alphonsus, introduced the Cappelle model into China. The model was characterised by simplicity. First place was given to preaching and teaching of a simple catechism of Catholic doctrine. The lives of the better known saints were told with emphasis on their own particular charism, and devotional practices were incorporated where possible.

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<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

The focus given here to the work of Alphonsus Liguori and his Congregation of Redemptorists, is not meant to imply that the work of renewal was his alone. As has been mentioned, much missionary activity was already actively, and successfully, underway by such orders as the Vincentians (France), and the Theatines, co-founded by St. Cajetan and Gian Pietro Carafa (who eventually became Pope Paul IV, 1555-59). These latter were priests, living under the three vows as parochial clergy, and were devoted to preaching and ministering in the slums of Italy. The Barnabites (founded by St. Anthony Zaccaria, 1532), gave open-air missions in Northern Italy and the Capuchins were popular preachers amongst the uneducated masses of Italy, France and Germany and were themselves the fruit of Franciscan reforms. The work of ecclesiastical reform, according to the legislation of the Council of Trent (1545-48; 1562-64), was undertaken by Charles Borromeo (1535-79), (a nephew of Pius IV), Philip Neri (1515-95) was, (with good humour), applying himself to the reform and spiritual direction of the Roman Curia, and the work of the Jesuits cannot be overlooked within the period of the 16-18th centuries. Moreover, the desire of Alphonsus to preach to the poor and uneducated peasant, had been the aim of Martin of Tours (375-397) who was the missionary pioneer to country folk.<sup>213</sup> Alphonsus' style of plain homiletics was the preferred style of Gregory of Nazianzen (330-390) whom he admired for his lucid theological preaching.<sup>214</sup>

Closer to the Alphonsian era, a spiritual revival had been initiated, in Italy, by the Franciscan Observant St. Leonard of Porto Maurizio (1617-1751). When Alphonsus was

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

only fourteen, this redoubtable cleric was already preaching the need for prayer and the sacraments across Tuscany, Genoa, Corsica and Rome.<sup>215</sup> In him, Alphonsus recognised “*the great missionary of the century.*”<sup>216</sup> Paul Danei, (Paul of the Cross (1694-1775) founded the Passionists and preached in Northern Italy during Alphonsus' lifetime. However, several differences served to make the Redemptorist Mission activity successful as a parish renewal:

1. Alphonsus' order was founded specifically for giving missions in parish churches. *He declined to make his mission available to monasteries and convents where the “Christianised” were living.*

His total aim was the catechesis of the illiterate peasant; therefore, this narrow focus allowed a dynamic thrust, his ministry was not scattered, and his pedagogical approach was basic and fundamental.

2. It has been suggested (by Philip Hughes) that “devotion and dogma do not always go hand-in-hand; there begins to be in some cases a mischievous divorce between theology and piety.”<sup>217</sup> Alphonsus' methodology avoided this tendency. His catechism contained all the necessary dogmatic elements, his preaching and teaching emphasised the essential Catholic truths, whilst his particular affection for Jesus, Mary and lives of the saints were fleshed out in the popular piety of the day by current devotional practices.
3. Along with the traditional forms of devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross (an emphasis on the Passion of Christ) there had begun in the first half of the 15th century devotions to Our Lady of Seven Sorrows and the recently

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<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.



established. Its devotions to the Sacred Heart begun with Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690). Allowed by Pope Clement XIII in 1765, these formed an integral part of the revitalization of popular piety.

Consequently, whilst the peasant population were being intellectually catechised, the human need to be in communication with the supernatural was satisfied, and nourished, by these forms of popular devotions.

4. It had been the custom to preach in the stilted vocabulary called "*Tuscan*," which was used by all the prominent speakers of the period.<sup>218</sup> Alphonsus forbade its use, insisting on preaching and teaching in the vernacular of the peasants themselves. His written works too, were easily comprehended and assimilated, as Alphonsus actually created "an alert and popular written Tuscan" and "he fathered a form of Italian which became classic and is still understood today."<sup>219</sup> This served to make his writings understandable. (There was always one literate person in the village, usually the parish priest, who would read to the people in the evenings.)
5. The missionaries trained lay catechists from amongst the peasantry. This proved invaluable in bridging the gap between the religious professional and the people.
6. The practice of popular devotions was continued in each parish after the mission period ended and the laity, contrary to the prevailing spirit of

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<sup>218</sup> Rey-Mermet (1989) 544.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 649.

Jansenism, were encouraged in the frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

Prior to his application to the Chinese College, Alphonsus had already had the devastating experience of preaching missions, to the countries despised population. As a member of the Congregation of Cathedral Priests, he preached short missions in the same spirit and manner as had the apostolic genius, Vincent Ferrer (1350-1456) Bernard of Sienna (1380-1444) and John of Capistrano (1386-1456). These were the men who, through trial and error, found and forged the manner in which to best reach the poor and ignorant. In this they were following the injunction of the Lateran Council IV (1215), which said that Bishops were to enlist worthy men who could preach to and “visit the people entrusted to them, edifying them by word and example...assisting the Bishops personally in preaching, hearing confessions, administering the sacraments ...”<sup>220</sup> Francis of Assisi and Dominic Guzman were present at this council and good pastoral care began with mendicant orders. They incorporated preaching, teaching and hearing confessions.

Because of the impetus given by the mendicant orders, this missionary movement flourished for three hundred years. In the 16th century the Jesuits spearheaded the thrust. The General of the Society of Jesus, who was also the Provincial of Naples, drew up the rules for the subsequent methodology of missionary activity (Fr. Claudio Aquaviva (1543-1615). The popular missions in France, which so inspired Alphonsus, were dominated by Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and his congregation of Vincentians, but many orders flew the missionary banner; The Oratorians, Eudists, Clerics Regular, Capuchins, Theatines (1524) Barnabites (1530) and, of course, the ubiquitous Jesuits.

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<sup>220</sup> Canon 10 *Documents of Lateran Council IV.*

Alphonsus' uncle, Father Emilio Cavalieri, became the first Bishop of the Pious Workers founded in Naples in 1601 by Carlo Carafa. It combined the vocations of secular priests, (those without vows) and a religious life of community living which included nobles, students, artists, tradesmen and doctors, all of whom were attracted to this austere manner of living, and who espoused the ideal of the preaching communities.

In Naples there were three principal Congregations devoted to preaching the popular missions and the Neopolitan seminarians had to be apprenticed to one of them. They were: Clerics of the Assumption (1611), Santa Maria dell Purita (1680) and the Apostolic missions, also known as the *Cathedral Missions*. This latter was founded to preach in "pagan" lands, and it was to this group that Alphonsus was drawn. It was due to his involvement in the Cathedral Missions, that he applied to the Chinese College for permission to reside there as a boarder. The Chinese College prepared men for the foreign missions, but Alphonsus had experience with what was referred to as the "Neopolitan Chinese", of whom it was written "The needs of our Chinese peasants should be provided for first because there can be no more barbarous and ignorant populace than ours. And why does this condition exist? Is it because there are not enough active clergy to teach and instruct them?"<sup>221</sup>

Rey-Mermet tells us that there were at least ten times more priests than the country needed, but that according to a book written by a friend of Alphonsus, Guisippe Iorio, not ten percent of priests were concerned with the spiritual life, and even though they may not have actually lived scandalous lives, they were idle and self-serving.

Alphonsus first real experience of the plight of the "Chinese peasants" began in May, 1727 and he was deeply affected by the degradation he beheld. The overabundant clergy were

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<sup>221</sup> Rey-Mermet (1989), 205.

ignorant, lazy “villainous men who charged for the sacraments and sold spells,”<sup>222</sup> and the peasant population of 3,938 of the diocese of Campagna practised a syncretistic religion of ancestral paganism “where Satan held first place, the Virgin second and then God.”<sup>223</sup> The experience of Campagna, and other rural areas, eventually shattered his health and on May 7, 1730, he collapsed.

With a few friends he set sail for Amalfi to recuperate, and whilst paying his respects to the local Archbishop, met the Vicar General of Scala, who urged him to go to Santa Maria dei Monte where there was not only a chapel and a house he could use but “many poor goatherds who live in a state of abandon.”<sup>224</sup>

The news of the arrival of Alphonsus and his companions soon spread, and the shepherds, goatherds and peasants flocked to meet them. The spiritual bankruptcy of these so-called “Christians” appalled Alphonsus, but what was even more shocking was that the peasants lived in a “state of abandon whilst the cities overflowed with idle priests.”<sup>225</sup> The idea, or vision, of a congregation of missionaries, founded for the purpose of catechising the ignorant peasant population of rural Italy, was born. His plans ran counter to all of his more illustrious admirers' advice, who saw him as a visionary and a maverick, but on November 2, 1732, Alphonsus resolutely set his face toward the abandoned in the countryside, and left Naples forever, except for rare occasions when business demanded. On November 9, Alphonsus, together with five committed friends, celebrated Eucharist in the oratory of a convent in Scala and their mission began under the original name of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Holy Saviour.

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<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

It began slowly. Alphonsus' work was impeded by the lack of ordained priests for this specific work. Ordination was conferred only on men who held "title of ordination," which was either a personal income or a Church benefice, and although many zealous men wished to become part of the Congregation, Alphonsus could not open a seminary for their training. Apart from that, men who were ordained, and had determined to join Alphonsus, often left "because not everyone could stand the hard life and extreme poverty in which they lived."<sup>226</sup> As of April 20, 1743 there were still only six brothers and nine priests in the congregation<sup>227</sup> but it was reported of the villages where missions had been preached: "These places have become a paradise."<sup>228</sup>

What was the first of the houses of the Congregation, was begun in 1736 at Ciorani, and within three months the fervour awakened by the missionary activity had swept up the surrounding hamlets. It was Alphonsus' custom to establish Stations of the Cross, devotional practices (veneration of the Blessed Sacrament and devotions to the Blessed Mother Mary) and group meditations, which were continued after the mission period ended and which nourished the renewal of the parishes. It was said later by another missionary of the Pious Workers that they had no need to go to Scala as "we have not found even a single venial sin here."<sup>229</sup>

Alphonsus gave first place to preaching and the teaching of a simple catechism and in 1744 authored a *Compendium of Christian Doctrine*. A mere twenty pages, it followed a question and answer format, and the one hundred and thirty-three answers were to be learned

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<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

and recited until they were imprinted in the minds of the illiterate population, which made up ninety-five percent of the people.

By 1747 the Congregation was fifteen years old and had four houses. It was decided that they ought to have legal status with both Church and State, and so preparations to formulate a Rule were begun. Eventually, after four months of negotiations with the Roman bureaucracy, the Rule was approved by Cardinal Benozzi on January 18, 1749. He emphasised the importance of the “mission renewals”<sup>230</sup> but requested that the name be changed from the Institute of the Most Holy Saviour (because there was already a congregation of Regular Canons by this name) to the “Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.” From thence forward the disciples of Alphonsus became known as *Redemptorists*. On February 25, 1749 Pope Benedict XIV approved the Congregation and the Rule by Apostolic Letter *Ad Pastoralis Dignitatis Fastigium*. The Rule and Constitution remained in force for the governing of the Redemptorists until the Second Vatican Council.

The missions followed a pattern of preaching in the parishes for eight months of the year and by 1752 Alphonsus found his writings, and the demands placed upon him as Superior, sufficient to keep him in one of the houses (at Pagani) for the next ten years. His writings illustrate the piety and the cultural climate of the day. Aside from his famous *Moral Theology* (1750-1758), some of the titles reveal the religious milieu: *Preparation for Death* (1758) which treats of the themes of Life, Death, Sin, the Last Judgement and Hell, God's Mercy, Grace, Heaven, Prayer, God's Will, love of Mary and Eucharist is typical of the content of the preached sermons and teachings. Other books were: *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament; The Glories of Mary; The practice of the Love of Christ Jesus* to name only a fraction. His literary output was phenomenal.

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

In 1762, the Congregation numbered ninety-one priests and students, and forty Brothers, when he was appointed Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths by Pope Clement XIII. It was an appointment that he resisted, since he had taken “the vow to renounce all ecclesiastical dignities”<sup>231</sup> according to the Rule. Writing to Cardinal Spinelli, he protested:

“If any member of the Congregation were to accept a Bishopric, I would shed tears of blood. What a scandal it would be and what spiritual harm it would cause all the members if I myself were to give this example ...”<sup>232</sup>

Nevertheless Clement XIII insisted, dispensing Alphonsus from his vow to renounce all dignities outside his Congregation. After living thirty years with his disciples, he left for the diocese of St. Agatha. He remained the Rector Major of his Congregation (even though absent) at the request of his confreres in the Redemptorist community, and with the permission of the Pope. He chose a Vicar General (Father Villani), and settled himself into the poverty of his diocese. The Redemptorists lived an austere Carthusian-style life, and Alphonsus continued in this lifestyle, selling anything he could - carriage, mules, pectoral cross, cutlery, to help the poor in his diocese.

True to his decision never to waste a moment of his life, his Bishopric was full of trials and joys. His health, which was never robust (he was asthmatic from his youth), deteriorated until after many illnesses, he contracted lumbar osteoarthritis and cervical osteoarthritis, which pressed his head down on to his chest so that only the top of his head could be seen (1768), yet, he carried on his work without complaint until, eventually, he requested Pius VI to allow his resignation. He left his diocese on July 27, 1775 in great joy.

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p. 510.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p. 511.

Contrary to assumption, Alphonsus was not excluded from his Congregation when he left his bishopric; he was received with honour by his confreres, and continued a productive life until his death on August 1, 1787 at almost ninety-one years of age.

Two years before Alphonsus' death, the Redemptorists had expanded beyond the Papal States and into northern Europe under the leadership of Clement Hofbauer and Thaddeus Hubl (1785). In 1784 the Congregation reached Vienna under two German Redemptorists; the Cappelle Serotina begun by him in 1727 were still continuing, and two hundred years later the Redemptorists were still preaching in Europe, North and South Americas, Oceania, seven African countries and Southern Asia from Beirut to Tokyo.<sup>233</sup>

A story has come down to us that Alphonsus, seeing a ship in Naples bound for New Orleans, prophesied that one day the congregation would settle in America, but it was not until twenty years later, that Hofbauer, tired of seeing his priests and seminarians driven out of country after country during the Napoleonic Era, gave serious thought to establishing the Congregation on American soil.

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<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, .681.



## **Appendix II**

### **A SELECTION OF INTERVIEWS**

## **CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.**

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Margaret Million as part of her dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary Hale of the Religion department of Concordia University.

### **A PURPOSE**

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows.

To use within the body of the work (dissertation) my memories of my participation in certain renewal movements.

### **B PROCEDURES**

The research will be conducted by the participant in their own time and place of choice, usually at home. When asked how quickly I need the information I ask how long do they think they need. Usually I receive the information within a month. There are no risks or discomfort involved. Confidentiality is respected if desired.

### **C CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

I understand that my participation in this study is freely given. I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

I have carefully studied the above and understand this agreement

I freely consent and agree to participate in this study.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THESIS INTERVIEWS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help you recall your experience as a catholic parishioner. The time frame I am interested in are the years between 1950-90. This will obviously take into account the differences in the parish renewal experience before and after the reforms of Vatican II.

- Q. Please name the different parishes you belonged to in the years mentioned above. How long were you in each parish?
- Q In your parish what were the major changes you experienced during those years?
- Q. Can you remember being present at any of the parish Missions that were given each year by the Redemptorist priests? If so just talk about your memory of them... what was the preaching like? Did people attend? What sort of attendance was there? What did you see as the drawback of this type of Mission. Did you find them uplifting spiritually? (were they scary?, hell fire and brimstone types or were they comforting and up-lifting?)
- Q Could you say that the result of the Mission was such that people reformed their ways? or was there an initial fervent response and then things went back to the status quo?
- Q Did you enjoy the Mission time? Did you see it bring the parish together? Were there any social events that accompanied the Mission week?
- Q What, for you, was the greatest benefit of the Mission... the spiritual component, the social aspect (meeting old friends etc?) or all of the above?
- Q What is your clearest memory of the old Mission?
- Q If you are married (or were) can you remember how your spouse reacted to the Mission experience?
- Q How did your children respond to the childrens Mission? Were there any long-term affects in their behaviour. If so, for how long?

PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT USING UP TAPE. TAPE I HAVE... YOUR MEMORIES ARE PRECIOUS TO ME. PLEASE JUST TALK AS YOU WOULD A FRIEND. IF YOU NEED ANOTHER TAPE PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

- Q What are your memories of the changes that took place after Vatican II? Did you like the changes? If so WHY? If not WHY?
- Q Were you an "involved" parishioner?. If so what groups did you belong to?. Please talk about the group and your experience of it.

- Q Have you ever heard of the Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo, Renew, R.C.I.A.? Please explain and if you were part of any of these I need to hear of your experience. JUST TALK! (when did you get involved?, why did you? did someone encourage you to join? What was the greatest impression? did you feel affected by the experience? HOW and in WHICH WAY? Are you still involved in the group? If so what made you remain? If not why are you not still involved in it?
- Q What is your clearest impression of the group? Was it a good experience or not? Explain why?
- Q Has the way the group operates changed or has it remained the same. If changed, how is it different and why has it changed focus and do you like the change?
- Q FOR YOU, what was the greatest impact this group had.
- Q WAS THERE A SOCIAL COMPONENT TO THE EXPERIENCE? (MEETING NEW PEOPLE, MEALS TOGETHER, FRIENDSHIPS FORMED)
- Q Was the greatest impact spiritual or social? (Remember that our inter-action with others is also prayer)
- Q Have you remained involved in your group? or in the parish generally. Have you moved on to other parish based activities? If so, would you have done so if you had not had your group experience? In other words was your life style TODAY affected in any way by your renewal experience?
- Q What do you think was the primary difference between The old Mission form of parish renewal and the renewal movements after Vatican II. Please use as much tape as you like. If you think I've missed an important point please elaborate. I really do wish for your opinion.

THANK YOU!

## Thesis Interview

Female, Age: 89

Names of Parishes.

From birth to 19291 belonged to St. Ann's Parish. Then St. Anthony's. From there we moved to Decarie Blvd. and we belonged to St. Augustin's. Then we moved out to Chateauguay. I belonged to different churches out there. When we first moved there, there were only a couple of houses on the street. We moved to different houses as we rented houses out there in the Summer. My father had a house built out there on Desrochers Street. At that time we went to a church in Chateauguay Village. We were driven there by a young man who had a buggy. It cost a quarter. The church was named St. Joachim. This church was on the opposite side of the river. That went on until we helped build Christ the King Church. We had card parties for that. It was French and English. This was in the 1950's. Afterwards they decided to build a church on our side of the river. That was called Chateauguay Station. The church was Our Lady of the Assumption.

The French and English people also built that church. Then we got our own English Church (Our Lady of the Assumption was mostly French speaking). Our English Church was Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Since leaving there I am now in Kirkland. (note: Mrs. Warren left Chateauguay in 1992.)

The First and only parish I belonged to as a young girl was St. Ann's. There were an awful lot of Redemptorist priests there. They were just lovely.

Missions:

As a young girl we would go to the Missions. Good Friday was a "humdinger" as the Redemptorists would have their "hell and high water" sermons. You were afraid of those as the priest would get up in- the pulpit and yell and scream - they had clappers going and the church would be all dark. Everybody would be scared because you were going to hell then. You would hear all the noise and think the sky was going to open up. I was old enough to go to missions (around 17 years old.) We couldn't go younger as you weren't allowed out at night.

My mother went to the missions by herself. . . my father didn't go. . . he had to get up too early in the morning...for work.

When you were going to school:

Every Sunday we'd go to mass at 9:00 a.m.( the children's mass.) Then at 11:00 we'd go back. then at 3:00 there would be Catechism...that lasted an hour. Every Sunday we did that. They'd have processions around the church during the month of May....every Sunday night. At Christmas time the high school would be dressed like the angels in green at Midnight Mass. They'd be in green, blue, pink and white. You would wonder if you would be picked for the choir by the sister in charge. She was a Sister of Service.

In 1929 we moved to St. Anthony's Parish. That was the year Fr. O'Brien died. He was not a Redemptorist. There were no more French Redemptorists. There were French and English Redemptorists but I don't know where the French Redemptorists went. Fr. O'Brien was an Irishman. His sermon's were not like the Redemptorists.

My father died when I was 17 and my mother moved us around to different apartments in the city, giving them up each Summer (to save money) as we would move back out to Chateaugay to the summer cottage. In the Winter, we moved to NDG where we belonged to St. Augustine's parish. Fr. Healey was there. He married us. There were concerts there like St. Patrick's Day. It was far from our house and too dark for us to go out at night.

I can't remember any changes which took place during this time. There was never anything going on in the churches in Chateaugay.

The Legion of Mary:

My sister Irene (being older than me) belonged to the Legion of Mary when we lived in the City of Montreal. Every week they would go visiting people who had fallen away from the church....to get them to go back. There was one family who they kept visiting as they were fallen away Catholics. It was through my sister and her friend (who visited with her) that these people came back to church and had the children baptized.

My Brother studied to become a Redemptorist priest::

He went to Brockville as a young boy, age 12, to study to become a priest. He got a wonderful education. He had one year to go when he left the order. Many of the young men left the order that year. They couldn't get along-with the priest in charge. It was a disgrace to my mother. There were three other young men with my brother but none of them stayed.

## Thesis Interview

Male, Age: 53

Q Please name the different parishes you belonged to in the years mentioned above. How long were you in each parish?

A St. Roch Parish, Park Extension  
St. Francis Assisi, Park Extension  
St. Edmond of Canterbury, Beaconsfield  
Notre Dame de la Defense, Montreal  
St. Thomas a Beckett, Pierrefonds  
Itinerant Faithful, the world

Q In your parish what were the major changes you experienced during those years?

A Not very much really until the effects of Vatican II started to filter down. For the most part, parish "life" was all about D-U-T-Y and the famous old PRAY-PAY AND OBEY.

Q Can you remember being present at any of the parish Missions that were given each year by the Redemptorist priests? If so, just talk about your memory of them. What was the preaching like? Did people attend? What sort of attendance was there? What did you see as the drawback of this type of Mission. Did you find them uplifting spiritually? (Were they scary?, hell fire and brimstone types or were they comforting and up-lifting?)

A I only ever attended two parish missions. One was held in St. Francis of Assisi and the other in St. Edmonds. The first was better characterized (in retrospect) as spiritual fear mongering with much emphasis on our unworthiness and the need to overcome our basic human instincts that were impediments to our holiness.

The second was a whole lot more meaningful to me, but I was by then a 14 or 15 year old and no doubt my own relative maturity had much to do with my perception of it. Clearly though, it still presented a God that was JUSTICE oriented and benevolent but certainly not loving and compassionate.

The first one was well attended and the church was full of parishioners. The second had a much smaller number of attendees, but to my mind they were really trying to seek some answers and insights.

Q Could you say that the result of the Mission was such that people reformed their ways? Or was there an initial fervent response and then things went back to the status quo?

A Yes and no. To my mind, both missions stirred up quite a response. The first died immediately the mission was over and it was my impression that attendance was high because Fr. King insisted we attend.

The second really did have an impact I think, but once it ended, the parish priest (??) was quick to correct those teachings he wasn't in agreement with and for me, anyway, his actions resulted in me deciding that church and religion were a complete waste of time.

Q Did you enjoy the Mission time? Did you see it bring the parish together? Were there any social events that accompanied the Mission week?

A Not really.

Q What, for you, was the greatest benefit of the Mission; the spiritual component, the social aspect (meeting old friends, etc.) or all of the above?

A The spiritual component mostly because they revealed to me that there was room for disagreement in our understanding of the scripture, since the mission leaders often applied interpretations quite different from that supplied by the pastor.

Q What is your clearest memory of the old Mission?

A A God that was going to "get me" one way or the other if I screwed up!

Q If you are married (or were), can you remember how your spouse reacted to the Mission experienced?

A N/A

Q How did your children respond to the Children's Mission? Were there any long-term affects in their behaviour. If so, for how long?

A N/A

Q What are your memories of the changes that took place after Vatican II? Did you like the changes? If so, WHY? If not, WHY?

A The most obvious one was the switch to the vernacular, the removal of the Altar rail (more slowly) and the orientation of the celebrant. At first, I felt strange, but quickly - very quickly - got me interested in trying Eucharist again as if for the first time. I felt more present to the celebration and kind of like the feeling I had when I was "briefly" an altar boy.

I was quite shocked, however, to realize that something that could be so enjoyable for me could bring such despair to my paternal grandmother, who for the very same reasons died feeling that our church had gone to hell in a hand basket. Even though I didn't like my grandmother, I still felt for her turmoil. This seemed so unfair to me and she died really wondering why.



The most significant change, though, for me, was the bit on Religious Freedom. I remember reading that Vatican II concluded that every person had the duty and therefore the right to seek the truth in matters religious so that we could form for ourselves right and true judgements of conscience. WOW!

Q Were you an "involved" parishioner? If so, what groups did you belong to? Please talk about the group and your experience of it.

A In 1981 or thereabouts, I again became involved in my parish. I was a lector, a member of the liturgy committee, various fund raising committees, the parish council, etc. I finally felt like I belonged to a parish, but it wasn't because of those activities, on the contrary, I got involved in those activities because I felt I belonged and that it was MY parish, therefore involvement where I was needed or asked to serve flowed naturally.

The main catalyst for my involvement was the bible study courses and the incredible sense of family that resulted from the weekly meetings.

These study sessions gave truth to the concept of Religious Freedom that had so intrigued me when I first read of it but was so absent in my parish experiences until that time.

Q Have you ever heard of the Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo, Renew, R.C.I.A.? Please explain and if you were part of any of these I need to hear of your experience. JUST TALK!

(When did you get involved? Why did you? Did someone encourage you to join? What was the greatest impression? Did you feel affected by the experience? HOW and in WHICH WAY? Are you still involved in the group? If so, what made you remain? If not why are you not still involved in it?

A Yes, I have heard of all of them. I almost became a member of the Charismatic Renewal because of the fact that many fellow parishioners who I respected were involved in it. I'm not really certain why I didn't pursue it like I have Cursillo, but somehow I never quite felt comfortable in it as I did when I was in bible study.

The R.C.I.A. program also had a fleeting appeal to me, but very fleeting as it had to my mind too many of the elitist trappings that so upset me with the hierarchy of our church.

Cursillo is, and was, another kettle of fish all together.

I was sponsored to a weekend in 1984 by members of the bible study group. I actually hated the experience as most of the team who put it on should have died from terminal migraines their halos were so tight!

The sole saving grace, at the time, was its similarity of method to that of our bible

study wherein people came together weekly to share their spiritual journey in almost total religious and spiritual freedom.

I am still very active in this movement, and have served as the director of the Diocesan Movement, the Quebec Movement and currently serving on the National Secretariat of the Canadian Movement.

I remain committed to the movement because I am convinced that it exposes a method of spiritual growth that re-captures the zeal and simplicity of the early church and provides exactly what is lacking in the institutional church - a practical means of applied Christianity.

Q What is your clearest impression of the group? Was it a good experience or not? Explain why?

A Both the Cursillo group I am involved with and the bible study group that got me into Cursillo, have one defining characteristic that for me sets them apart from the others. They both are founded in friendship and teach how to fish rather than simply feed me pre-cooked fish.

Q Has the way the group operates changed or has it remained the same. If changed, how is it different and why has it changed focus and do you like the changes?

A In the case of Cursillo, it is a movement so change is inevitable. However, it has managed to stay more or less true to its founding vision and charism for 54 years and my primary responsibility now is to lead a review of those changes over time and see if we can't recapture the founding vision more fully.

Q FOR YOU. what was the greatest impact this group had?

A This group has reaffirmed my value as a layman and reinstalled for me a sense of mission and truth to my baptismal call.

Q Was there a social component to the experience? (meeting new people, meals together, friendships formed?)

A Yes, certainly. but just like the bible study group, the social aspect while very important is more the inevitable result of consistently applying Christian values rather than asserting them.

Q Was the greatest impact spiritual or social? (Remember that our inter-action with others is also prayer.)

A Spiritual

Q Have you remained involved in your group, or in the parish generally? Have you moved on to other parish based activities? If so, would you have done so if you had not had your group experience? In other words, was your life style TODAY affected in any way by your renewal experience?

A Yes

Q What do you think was the primary difference between the old Mission form of parish renewal and the renewal movements after Vatican II. Please use as much tape as you like. If you think I've missed an important point, please elaborate. I really do wish for your opinion. THANK YOU!

A The old mission for taught a God of Justice, a God of Retribution.

Cursillo which is also a pre-Vatican II form of renewal since it got started in 1944, teaches a God of Compassion who deals with us NOT as we deserve but where we are and according to our needs.

The older renewals taught that if and when we became acceptable, we could enter the Kingdom on earth. Cursillo teaches a God who loves us just as we are and further says we are loveable.

The old method, by implication, suggests the creator made a mistake which we need to remedy by becoming more acceptable to him. The Cursillo suggests that God is God and therefore cannot make a mistake and that we are already acceptable to Him and He is willing to show us how we can have the abundant life in Christ, if only we follow him.

The old method preached the Good News but presented it as Bad News. The Cursillo shares the Good News and invites all to witness to its reality.

The old methods deny spiritual freedom by displaying a notion that we are not capable of making informed spiritual decisions. so we must obey those who have the proper credentials. The Cursillo says we have all the credentials we need through baptism. All we need to do is start the journey and the rest is simply on the job training.

The old method tries to imply that we can actually feel a strong sense of belonging to a parish of virtual strangers. The Cursillo suggests that in reality we need the training wheels of much smaller groups within the larger community in order to feel connected.

## Thesis Interview

Female, Age: 50

- **Please name the different parishes you belonged to in the years mentioned above (1950-1990). How long were you in each parish?**

St Aloysius 1949-1955

Our Lady of Fatima, St Laurent: 1955-1962

St. Monica's, N.D.G.: 1962-1967

Newman Centre, McGill University, Montreal: 1967-1974

St. Thomas a Becket, Pierrefonds: 1974-1994

Holy Cross 1994-present

- **In your Parish what were the major changes you experienced during those years?**

The first Parish that I remember was Our Lady of Fatima. I remember the old days when we could not eat until after "Communion" and being embarrassed about having to receive by sticking my tongue out. So silly but so important at the time. Also not eating meat on Fridays. It seemed like there were so many rules to remember. But in all I have always found joy and peace in my church. I had the Sisters of Holy Cross, an American order, as my teachers in elementary school. They taught us a God of Love. Joy and Fun. Going to Church for me was My "special place". Even at 9-10 years old I would go to Mass on the way to school - A French church that I used to pass walking to school. This was certainly not typical of my age group, in fact I rarely told anyone, even my parents. I do not remember when all the changes started happening, when we switched from Latin to English, when the priest started facing the congregation, but I was young enough that these changes did not bother me but rather made perfect sense. Newman Centre was a wonderful experience for me, being part of a small community, celebrating Eucharist with a great group of friends and also an incredible social experience as well. And then came St. Thomas a Beckett. Our downtown friends scoffed at the thought of us moving to "Suburbia" and the "rich West Island Parishes" as they were known. But they never met Father Charlie!! I do not think I will ever experience a parish like St. T in the 70-80's anywhere else again. I certainly have not found any parish like it in Ottawa. I have looked for a parish here for the last four years, and have only settled on Holy Cross because they have a Sunday Evening Eucharist and this works best with my job schedule. But I have never even registered there, as yet. It just does not feel like home.

- **Can you remember being present at any of the parish Missions that were given each year by the Redemptorist priests? If so just talk about your memory of them... What was the preaching like? Did people attend? What sort of attendance was there? What did you see as the drawback of this type of mission? Did you find them uplifting spiritually? (were they scary? - hell fire and brimstone types or were they comforting and uplifting?)**

No, I am happy to say I am too young!! I can remember my Mother going to the "mission" when I was a little girl. I remember that I would have liked to have gone along because I enjoyed anything "church" but was told it was not for kids, and it took place in the evening, and I had school.

- **Could you say that the result of the Mission was such that people reformed their ways? Or was there an initial fervent response and things went back to the status quo? I do not remember my Mother being any different at mission time but I was a child. Did you enjoy the Mission time?**
- **Did you see it bring the parish together? Were there any social events that accompanied the Mission week?**
- **What, for you, was the greatest benefit of the Mission... the spiritual component, the social aspect (meeting old friends etc?) or all of the above? What is your clearest memory of the old Mission?**
- **If you were married (or were) can you remember how your spouse reacted to the Mission experience?**
- **How did your children respond to the children's Mission? Were there any long term affects in their behavior. If so, for how long? What are your memories of the changes that took place after Vatican II? Did you like the changes? If so, why? If not, why?**

If I look back over the years, Vatican II seemed to bring break down the walls between the clergy and the parishioners. For the most part this was a good thing but at times I have seen some priests "run" by their parishioners, to the point of telling them what and how to preach. One small change over the years is the language - and I don't mean Latin-English. And I must admit I really do not know the reasons for these changes, or I do not remember why. Examples: Mass became Celebration of the Eucharist. Communion became Eucharist There are lots of others too numerous to mention

- **Were you an "involved" parishioner? If so what groups did you belong to? Please talk about the group and your experience of it.**

Yes, other than in Ottawa, I would say I was almost over-involved, never joined any Women's League stuff - I found them too cliquish, too much gossiping, not enough done. As a child, I was in the choir, I did all the religious plays. I stayed after school most days until the nuns went home! As a teenager, I joined the Church Teen group, and whatever was going on, I was very involved at Newman Centre, during university years. I was on my first liturgical committee, Choir as well- or rather "music Ministry". I also worked on the organization of a lot of social stuff as well, i.e. meals, camping trips, helping less fortunate projects. At St. T., after Fr. Mike arrived on the scene, I spent lots and lots of time on "everything and anything" from Beckett Players to decorating the church for Christmas, to the Family Choir, etc. etc., etc. The thing I liked most about that experience was the way we

would outreach to non- active parishoners, ask for their help on some little project, like sewing albs. They would come after being called, very timid and cautious.

And the next thing you knew they had joined some more spiritual group and loving it. It was so great watching the "magic" happen. The Bible study group I joined was a special place for me. Again a small group of people, who came to trust each other, share and learn from each other, sharing scripture and life. Special friendships were made that will last forever, even though many of us have moved away.

- **Have you ever heard of the Charismatic Renewal, Cursillo, Renew, R.C.I.A.? Please explain and if you were part of any of these I need to hear of your experiences. Just Talk! When did you get involved?, why did you? Did someone encourage you to join? What was the greatest impression? Did you feel affected by the experience? How and in which way? Are you still involved in the group? If so, what made you remain? If not why are you not still involved in it?**

I was encouraged to experience Charismatic renewal by our Bible Study group and for me it was just a natural progression in the changes of my church. I was not struck by lightning, but it was a greater learning experience, a deeper learning experience. One of the changes for me since my childhood was that even in high school, we hardly ever picked up a Bible or read directly from scripture. I was of the Baltimore Catechism era and our Bible History book was the closest we came to a Bible. So the Charismatic renewal was a very different experience, a wonderful opportunity to learn more, actually study scripture and again meet people and share.

- **What is your clearest impression of the group? Was it a good experience or not? Explain why?**

A great experience!

- **Has the way the group operates changed or has it remained the same. If changed, how is it different and why has it changed focus and do you like the change?**

The group changed over the years, with the original group that met at church ending. The new pastor was not very supportive of the Renewal so we went back to our small Bible study groups.

- **For YOU, what was the greatest impact this group had?**

As noted above

- **Was there a social component to the experience? ( Meeting new people, meals together, friendships formed)**

As noted above

- **Was the greatest impact spiritual or social? (Remember that our interaction with others is also prayer)**

Both equally

- **Have you remained involved in your group? Or in the parish generally. Have you moved on to other parish based activities? If so, would you have done so if you had not had your group experience? On other word was your life-style TODAY affected in any way by your renewal experience?**

Very definitely, I believe that I became stronger because of all my church involvement. I had the support to make the changes that I had to make in order to be alive today. When I first moved to the West Island I was a very unhappy young mother married to a very troubled man. I felt trapped, scared, lonely and was told that I was useless on a daily basis. I will never forget volunteering to do a project and being terrified that I would not be able to accomplish it. When it was done successfully, I was absolutely shocked! But it gave me courage to do more and more and eventually I built a life for my children and myself.

I must mention the Annulment Process. I do not know all the history of annulments or when they came into being but I thank God that this opportunity for healing was available to me. When I married in 1970, I made those vows very seriously . For me it really was "for better or for worse". But that does not mean that my emotional spirit should be destroyed by my spouse. And it very nearly was. The divorce process is so unjust and so cold, but in the annulment process, I was forced to re-live those awful years but it was in a healing way - putting closure to it, feeling OK about ending the marriage, feeling like a new life was possible without feeling guilty.

The only really negative experience I have ever had in my church life was when my husband, at the time, went on his first Cursillo weekend. He came back and I can still remember the scene when he entered the house on his return, and proceeded to tell me that he was a changed man. He would never hit me or the kids again. He cried, I believed, and a few days later, he was back to his usual degradation and violent behavior - even worse than before. As you can imagine, I do not have a high opinion of the Cursillo experience. It was explained to me recently that he was supposed to have gone for a follow-up session so he would not "crash" as he did, but he had not gone. And he even continued with this organization as a weekend "leader", but I refused to have any involvement, as you can imagine. Then one time they had a party for everyone and I was called and invited. I thought that was a nice touch and was to go but in the end they called me back to un-invite me! The reason given was that they thought I had made the weekend and since I had not, I was not allowed to go!! Well so much for Cursillo. In fairness to that group, I should not judge them by another person's behavior, but it certainly is an example of a "Band-aid" religious experience.

- **What do you think was the primary difference between the old Mission form of parish renewal and the renewal movements after Vatican II. If you think I've missed an important point please elaborate. I really do wish for your opinion.**

My concern for the Church today is that more and more I find many Catholics in my age group are not finding what they are looking for in their parishes. Even St. T. is not the same happy beautiful, vibrant place it used to be. Maybe because the nineties have been so hard on everyone. You are either overworked to the point of burnout or unemployed, it seems. I certainly do not have the time I once had for involvement. And like anything else- you get out what you put into it. I do not have a solution for this but maybe in my retirement years.



## **Thesis Interview**

Female, Age: 57

Before I start, perhaps a brief background of my Filipino beginnings would help to understand our religious practices and changes that have taken place at the time when masses were celebrated in Latin and the vernacular and that statues of Saints were on the center wall and the Crucifix was in the corner.

The focus of attention then were the Saints. At least that's what I did. Prayed intensely to the Saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary. My awareness of the Trinity was very limited or perhaps I wasn't particularly paying much attention to those religious details at that time. The priests were celebrating Mass with their backs to the congregation.

I grew up in the parish of St-Joseph in the southern part of the Philippines where approximately 95% are Catholic and the people are deeply devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. We had a huge church (twice the size of Becket). Sunday masses start at 5:00am (there are 5 hourly masses with the last one starting at 10:00am). This would allow the people from the rural areas to attend mass and avoid the stifling heat of midday in the tropical sun. Sermons at that time used to be long .forceful and full of admonitions.

Religious experience at that time was that of obedience, never asking the meaning of our faith and practice. We were indoctrinated with the slogan of "Death rather than sin" and after a while it didn't mean anything anymore but rather made us believe in a punishing God. Religion as a subject was compulsory and we had to memorize the Baltimore Catechism and as a result we were not at all motivated and interested. Liturgical practice was not interesting then but attending mass was not an option but a must. Sermons were long and full of admonitions- there was no indication of a loving and caring God.

In school I remember retreats or missions given by foreign priests or missionaries. I was probably not interested at all because it was a boring part of my religious experience. The thing I remember most was a week before Holy Thursday, there was a radio broadcast consisting of a series of talks given by different speakers. They were forceful and uplifting because people in different walks of life would look forward to this event and would stop what they were doing and to listen to these talks.

Our family, I remember would gather in the living room and at one point I glanced over at my grandmother who was brushing away tears from her eyes. The theme was the last 7 words of Jesus before His death on the Cross. It seems like everybody was moved by those words and obviously that made an impact on me because I would ponder the words after and share it with my parents. It was very encouraging and full of hope. People wouldn't want it to end .They would hang around and share what they had heard. The interactions that occurred after the talk was that of a loving and sharing event.

After high school, my college years were years of discovery and learning with very little religious life. I moved from one parish to another until 1965 when I moved to Chicago for

two years with no parish religious experience. I then moved to Montreal. In 1975, we moved to the West Island and first went to St-David's Parish which we were not particularly interested in. A cousin invited us to go to Becket and Father Mike Shaw was instrumental in bringing us back to church. Life in the spiritual sense was never the same.

The first retreat I attended was given by the prayer group at Villa Marguerite. That was a day retreat and each of us were given a scripture passage to read and I was at a loss because I didn't even know how to use a Bible let alone where to locate the passages. The sharing part was intimidating and I was too shy to even open my mouth.

The part that touched me most was the acceptance and the support that I got and the reassurance and attention that was given.

From then on, I never missed Mass on Monday nights and I stayed for the prayer meetings. The charismatic movement was powerful. That was my encounter with the Life in the Spirit. It was an awesome experience. Not only did I come to know the God of Love and Mercy but also the joy and contentment that one feels when we start having a relationship with Him. Sometimes it wasn't easy and there were "Ups and Downs" but belonging to this group was very reassuring and powerful. Like a burning bush to Moses, this was my conversion experience.

Cursillo movement was very powerful. The Holy Spirit continued revealing to me through the community. I was touched by the outpouring of love and support. Here I began to open up and feel a sense of freedom and acceptance and a lot of healing took place

With Renew, the experience was to meet weekly for 6 weeks before lent. It taught us how to pray with Scripture and gave me a strong sense of community spirit. The project with our group was to serve food at Benedict Labre House. Our group lasted 3 years meeting and sharing the Word and fellowship and trust developed.

A prayer partner from the Ignatian group taught me a lot about praying through Scripture meditation and journaling. All this opened my eyes and deepened my awareness of God's presence in my life.

My most profound experience is the Bible study group of which I am still a part of and I feel privileged and blessed to be with a wonderful group of people with whom I have built up a strong sense of love, friendship and support because of a loving person who leads us and perseveres with us sacrificing her time and place to keep this group going. The leader can make the most boring part of the Hebrew bible come alive and present it with ease and colour. For the leader no question is dumb or stupid, she's one to make you feel special and accepted.

Parish missions were not known to me until I attended one 6 years ago at St-Luke's church. It was given by a Redemptorist missionary well known to many, Fr. Eugene O'Reilly. The church was packed with people and that really attracted the attention of many. He brought

humour and a lot of analogies to his talk. He was very interesting and realistic, down to earth I should say. No one got bored. People talked and talked about this mission for years until we brought him back to Becket in 1997. He wrote and played his own music and sang it too. The only drawback was that the following year ,people expected another Eugene O'Reilly but felt disappointed when he wasn't there.

Another parish mission at St-Thomas a Becket was given by Fr. Sylvio . At the time when our church was undergoing a rough and rocky transition, the mission was very comforting and uplifting. Dispelling darkness to light, he turned all the lights off completely. The church was pitch black and then prayers followed and slowly tapers of light were handed from one person to another until the whole church was flooded with light. I thought it was such a meaningful and healing experience. There were lots of tears in people's eyes. He was a good speaker and talked straight to the heart and I was touched.

Over and above these religious and spiritual experiences, activities extended to close friendship and fellowship-the breaking of bread made all these memorable and meaningful events into a worthwhile journey.

## Thesis Interview

Female, Age: 67

In the early fifties I belonged to Our Lady of Good Council Parish, and then from 1958 to 1986 to Our Lady of Fatima, and from 1986 to 1990 to the present day to St. Thomas a Becket.

The big changes that came about for me were when the altar was turned around and taking the Host in the hand, which I strongly objected to at first, until a Christian Brother finally said to me, did I think that Jesus laid nice, neat wafers of bread on the disciples' tongues? I said No, very indignantly, of course, that Jesus broke the loaf of bread and passed it around the table. 'So what is the difference, you taking the Body of Christ reverently in your hand?' When I thought about it I could see the logic of what he was saying. Now I think it is better for the priests and Eucharistic ministers today than putting the fingers into everybody's mouth. However, I changed and liked it. Having the altar turned around towards me and the priest turned towards me, I felt I was participating more in the mass.

Each year we had a Mission by either the Redemptorists or the Jesuits or some others and the church was always crowded and people seemed to really like the singing, everybody got into it. I can remember there always seemed to be one priest who was thumping the pulpit and was shouting, and always saying that God was going to catch up with us one of these days. We were all such sinners, we were all so bad. And then there would always be a gentleman who would tell us how much God loved us and how much He wanted us to come back to him. But it seems too that maybe the shouting and the pulpit-thumping at that time was what we needed, because on the nights that the strong priest was preaching the church always seemed to be full, because people seemed to like that kind of thing at that time. There was always one week for men and one week for women. The women first, of course, so that they could go home then and tell the men, so that the men would be interested in going to hear all that they had to say. Of course, on the night that there was talk about sex all the women were there, but the men didn't go!

We always thought that by going to the Missions we could redeem ourselves, because we were always getting Plenary Indulgences for doing this and that and the other thing. So by going to the Mission and making a general confession, boy, we had really wrapped up our Indulgences then. It seemed to me I was always making general confessions just in case I forgot something in my weekly confession, as I always felt it necessary to go as often as I could for fear I might forget something by going once a month. Although I went to Mass every morning, during the Missions I felt I was not worthy to receive Jesus every day. I had a big struggle with this.

During the Mission everybody made these resolutions during the week, to do different things. This lasted for a while and then everybody just seemed to go back to their own selves. I enjoyed the Missions very much, seeing all the people always made me feel so good. We had no social events to mark the occasion of the Missions, not that I can remem-

ber. I always felt so let down when the Missions were over, because everybody went back to doing their own thing and that was it.

The greatest benefit of the Missions for me was meeting old friends who I never got to see because they went to different Masses. And then I felt my spirituality uplifted. The old Missions drew people out and I loved the church being full, hearing all the voices singing, especially the men's. During the men's week I used to go to stand outside the church just to hear the men singing, and also to meet the boyfriends - in the beginning so we could talk about what was said. Later my husband never seemed to hear the same things that I heard. I thought they made special topics for men that the little woman at home would bend to his every command and that was our way of life.

Oh yes, my children went to a three-day Mission and I would say their behavior was no more changed after the Mission than it was before. Sometimes we would talk about things and we would try to get around to do something good, but that didn't last for very long. Usually it was during Lent where we all did something really good, especially my kids, they did something good during Lent but not after that.

After Vatican II in our Parish of Our Lady of Fatima nothing much changed after the altar was turned and the priest facing us and taking communion in our hand. It took a long time before we had the altar rail removed and people stood two by two to receive in the hand. I was reading about all the changes, of Eucharistic ministers serving more and lay people getting more involved; and all the wonderful things were happening everywhere else but nothing happened in our parish. So I just had to pray that somehow somewhere we would move and get into another parish where there was more activity.

We tried to get involved and start a Parish Council. We went to other Parish Councils to see how they were run and came back and nothing much changed. However, we continued on with the Social Committee and brought people together in that way. Mind you, the socials did bring people into church because they got to know people and then they came out. Most people don't like going in when they don't know anybody, at least that's what people said to me: 'I don't know anybody, so that's why I don't go'.

It was 1986 when we moved to the West Island and went to this parish and I was so excited about everything. I really became involved, in the Parish Council, in Bible Study and everything that was going on I got involved in. I got ready and took the courses for Sacramental Initiation, in which I learned more than I ever could have anywhere else, because I found the real Jesus, he was waiting there for us. We were told we couldn't tell the children things like that God was going to be there and get us for things that we did bad. No - God was there waiting with his arms wide open for us and I so much believed that myself that it really changed my life. I learned more for myself than what I could really teach the children.

Then I joined the Charismatic Prayer Group. At first I was very skeptical. I thought the leaders gave everyone a reading to bring to the next meeting and that was how everything came together, until I made the Life in the Spirit Seminar. One group was in one part of the church and

another in the hall. When we came together at the end to reveal what God was saying through the readings I was stunned to see both groups were hearing God saying the same thing.

A lady was always saying to me I should make a Cursillo. Three times I tried and each time I was ready to go, something happened that I couldn't go. After the third time I said, this is it, nothing is going to stop me this time. So, I made my Cursillo. I enjoyed every minute of it, I enjoyed it so much. What I enjoyed even more was going to the Clausuras every time there was a Cursillo for women. I really enjoyed that so much, there was real camaraderie, everybody getting together and everybody singing. It was so nice, I really liked that.

Renew came along then and I was a facilitator. First of all we were ten or eleven in the group, then it dwindled down to seven, because people moved. Yes, it was a good experience. We talked about all our experiences and we prayed. It helped me in a lot of ways, I kept a journal and I could see the change in my own life.

Then I became part of a Bible Study group. I learned so much that my whole life has been changed. I see God is very close to me, I see Him in everything I do. I really live my life as if He is walking with me and that's the way I want to go.

Yes, I know what the RCIA is about but I have never gone into it. I think it's wonderful and maybe some time I should be a sponsor, I have thought about it, to help somebody else along the way and maybe in doing so I could learn something more myself, as my daughter did. She was a sponsor for a girlfriend of hers, she went to all the meetings with her and they had a wonderful time. She learned so much. Some day I would like to do it.

Getting back to the Renew group, I think the three years that we committed to Renew were very good and very spiritual in a way. We made lots of friends and we had dinners in one another's homes, which was really nice. But after Renew ended everybody went their own way, because I think people felt it was time for them to move on to something else. Like myself. I joined this prayer group to which I go to every Wednesday night and which I cannot live without, because these people, the prayers and the Bible study that we do help me to keep my mind focused on where we are going and what we have to do. I think in times of trouble it is good to have a group you can rely on, or you can talk to people and really trust and know that what you say is not going any further.

Then I stayed active with the Eucharistic ministers, which I joined in 1987. The highlight of the ministry is that I take communion to the sick at the nursing home and a lady and her husband in a home. I think that is more meaningful to me than anything that I have ever done, because I know that these people cannot get out and they are so happy and they really and truly appreciate it. And I appreciate it too, being able to sit and talk with them and listen to their stories. Sometimes they like to talk about their families, so I just sit and listen and I enjoy it very much.

I stayed on the Liturgy committee, which I have been on for quite a while. On the Liturgy committee I guess there is a lot to learn and it keeps me updated on things, because I have to

look and make sure that I am asking for the right thing to be done in the church. It keeps me on my toes and I like that very much.

Was my lifestyle changed through Renew? Yes, it was, because I found that before when we were told one didn't talk about religion or politics because it wasn't very nice, now I talk of God, it doesn't matter who they are, if they don't want to listen then that's okay. But I never feel ashamed or shy to talk about my religion or God or how I feel.

When I was working I had this little Bible on my desk, and to a lot of young people I was the grandmother there (they didn't bother going to church but were brought up Catholic), they would come and ask things and I would say, well, let's look and see. Then they would start and say: Can you look this up, Mary? Can you look that up, Mary? And in my own way I feel that that was evangelization, which came from Renew and which I would never have done before. So, yes, Renew did a very good thing. The whole change since Vatican II has really done a good thing for me and maybe for other people too, because I find people are not afraid to talk about God and their experiences of God, and what God has done in their lives. I never used to look and see the little things, I was always looking for the big things that I would ask for, but now I have learned that I can't keep control, it is only God who controls. He is the one who knows what I need and He will give me what I need, not just what I want but what I need.

Yes, I think there may be some things that were pushed aside that we maybe have to emphasize or get back to, which is our fasting and days of abstinence. I think it is important, it is important for our discipline, but people think it was thrown out but I don't think it was ever thrown out but pushed by the wayside. Maybe it is time we picked that back up.

## **Thesis Interview**

Female, Age: 67

1950 - 1955 St. St. Theresa' s Parish

1955 - 1959 St. Anne's Parish

1960 - 1969 St. Joseph' s Parish

1969 - 1990 St. Thomas a Becket Parish

I think that the major changes that we experienced in the parish during the years from 1960 on were the priest facing the congregation instead of having his back towards us and that the mass is being celebrated in the language of the country. These are the ones I remember most. I can't seem to think of any other right at this present time.

Most of the parish Missions that I have attended I have really enjoyed. I cannot seem to recall too much fire and brimstone, but then what we used to do is, find out what preacher was preaching and follow him from church to church. So you kind of knew what you were getting into. The Missions were very, very well attended by all the people and I can't really see much of a drawback in these kind of Missions. I found them really uplifting spiritually and not much fire and brimstone and things like that, except that there was one time when I was not granted absolution when I was at one of these parish missions, because I was going out with a guy, we had kissed and hugged and was told that that was against everything that we had been taught and that he could not give me absolution until I vowed that I would never do it again. Well, I don't think we could do those sort of things in those days, but that's how it was.

Like I said, mostly the Missions were very well attended, but a lot of the time just for that week or 5 days, or however long they were, and maybe for a couple of weeks after that everybody was gung-ho, going to church and doing things like that, but a lot of the time you fell back afterwards to the way that you used to do things before. The Mission times were very, very good; we had lots of singing and preaching and I think it did bring the parishes together, but like I said at the beginning, a lot of people just went where they found the preacher they liked. There weren't many social events that accompanied these mission weeks. I think a lot of the time the greatest benefit for me was the aspect of meeting people, meeting old friends and going with them to the missions. Plus there were times when after the missions we would all get together and go out socially.

When I first got married, my husband was not a Catholic but he never stopped me from going to the Missions. I used to come back and I tell him about them and he was quite interested but did not accompany me to any of these Missions. My children were at that stage a little bit small, so they did not go to them and I don't remember having children's Missions, except in the schools where they had their own days, it was like one day at a time.

### **Memories of the changes that took place after Vatican II.**

I must say I liked a lot of the changes. There were a lot of things in the Mass that I did not understand before Vatican II. We used to go to church and I think sit down and just maybe



pray a Rosary during the Mass, because nobody understood what was going on. Like I said, I did enjoy the changes. It was like a breath of fresh air to me, knowing that I could listen to the Mass, attend it in my own language and not have to look into a book and see what it was. I could listen to what the priest was saying and be able to understand.

I also liked the idea of receiving communion in my hand, instead of going up to the altar and everybody kneeling down and the priest going up and down the aisle; that you walked up to the priest one at a time. I think this is a much better way for me. You seem to be one on one with the Lord, rather than everybody getting together in one long line.

I cannot say that I was really involved in much until about 1980. By that time my husband decided that he wanted to join the Church, so we got together with a priest friend of ours and he gave him instructions and this was one of the nice things that happened to me. Until he became a Catholic I really was not involved, I was one of those Sunday Catholics, but after he became involved he said he didn't want to be just a Sunday Catholic, he wanted to do things. We heard about the Charismatic Renewal and we joined that. There we met lots and lots of friends. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life, and I guess it was his too.

I did hear about Cursillo and Renew and the RCIA, which of course he was involved in a bit when he decided to become a Catholic.

I guess we first got involved in the Charismatic Renewal through friends who came and encouraged us to join, and it really was a lovely experience meeting people and seeing one another. We used to get together on a Monday night and I think it was a wonderful experience. I am not involved in the Charismatic Renewal any more because it is not in our church any more.

I was involved in Renew for a while and I think it was there for three years. After the three years it sort of petered out. It don't know what has become of it. I am not involved in that sort of thing any more.

Right now I am involved in various activities in the parish. one of them is helping to coordinate the Confirmation for the children, seeing about the retreats and also the Confirmation Day.

At one time in the parish I was also involved in the Altar Servers. I have trained the altar servers for many years. This I found was a wonderful experience and I think that a lot of the children who were there as altar servers did enjoy what was going on

I do think that being involved in parish groups like the Renewal movements has helped me to open up myself more to parish activities. I don't think I would have done it, because I was a very shy person, if I didn't have the experience of a group and people encouraging me to get involved in things and to get out of yourself.

Thinking back I don't think there is much of a difference between the old Missions and the parish renewal Missions that they have now after Vatican II. I think that maybe some of the changes would be that the priests are now more down to our level than preaching from on high, as if they were up on a pedestal and we were lower down. I can't see much of a difference from what I remember of the old Missions that I used to go to and the ones I go to now. They seem to be the same, you go there and there is singing and then there is preaching, and maybe sometimes you even have a dialogue with the priest, which I think is a good thing because I think we all need to be able to dialogue with the priests and tell them what our opinions are.

I just wanted to add a few things. I am glad to see that we have now both boys and girls serving as altar servers. instead of just boys. It is nice to see young girls up at the altar. Maybe one day, not in my lifetime but maybe in theirs or a little bit after that, they will be allowed to become priests. So that is a good thing.

Also it is nice to see that the laity is much more involved in the celebration of the Eucharist, as well as having Eucharistic ministers both male and female, male and female lectors instead of just men, like it used to be an all men's club before. Maybe one day we will have married priests and women priests.

## Thesis Interview

Female. Age: 60

Up to the age of 23 I belonged to St. Agatha's Parish. From 1962 to 1972, did not belong to any particular parish, I went to church here or there. When we moved to the West Island in 1972, we joined St. Thomas a Becket Parish and we have been parishioners ever since.

I remember that parish Missions were held in our parish, but I do not remember a thing about them. I must have gone to some, but I draw a complete blank as to what they were all about. Obviously they did not have an impact on me, probably because they were about the same old thing - that we are sinners and have to repent. But then - we knew that already. That's about it about missions. As I said, I draw a complete blank.

I liked the changes that took place after Vatican II, especially that the priest is facing the congregation instead of having his back to us and doing 'his thing' way up there. I really liked it very much when communion was given into the my hand, because I always hated it to close my eyes and stick out my tongue. I remember one time kneeling at the altar rail, sticking my out tongue expecting the host. when the priest had turned around and went the other way. Needless to say, was I ever embarrassed.

I also liked that the Eucharist is celebrated in the vernacular, because now we understand what we are responding to. Although we had learned all the Latin responses and prayers by rote and knew what they meant - vaguely I guess - I can't say. looking back - that I said them with any great feeling. It was just a response.

I joined the Charismatic Renewal in 1970. I think. The reason I got involved was that I felt an urgent need to get closer to Jesus. I felt really empty inside and thought that there had to be more than going to church on Sunday. And what an awakening it was! The Scriptures became alive, whereas before all that had happened a long time ago. And the Eucharist became more meaningful. the way we prayed and came together with joy and celebrated. And the realization that Jesus loves me and is not interested in how often I fall as long as I get up and try again. It was a far cry from the way we were brought up.

I am no longer part of the Charismatic Renewal. I miss the excitement and joy I felt in the beginning, and the people. I really don't know what happened. In our parish we had a prayer group and held many Life in the Spirit seminars, but no matter what we tried our numbers started dwindling until we finally had to say: The Spirit must be telling us something here. I think what He was telling us was: You had your mountaintop experience, now you have to come down and share your gifts with others.

When attending diocesan prayer meetings, I noticed that subtle changes were taking place which I did not like. There were always the same people there and no new faces showed up. And I particularly had a beef with people who acted as if they had a direct line to God.

But on the whole it was a very, very good experience and I wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world. And the greatest impact for me was initially spiritual. That is not to say that I did not like most of the people there. We formed friendships and we still meet.

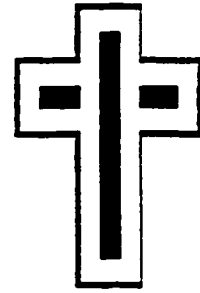
I also got involved with Renew when it came to our parish. But after the Charismatic Renewal it was a little flat. I could not get excited about it, so I did not join the next session.

I had heard about Cursillo and wanted to go on a weekend, but I was told that it was only for men. Some years went by and then, all of a sudden, women could go. But then I did not want to go anymore.

Since I don't remember the old Missions, I can't really compare the Renewal movements. I am only familiar with the ones after Vatican II.



***“Praise Him, Praise Him  
Praise Him in the morning,  
Praise Him in the evening,  
Praise Him, Praise Him,  
Praise Him when the sun  
goes down.”***



*Remember those good old days when we'd all gather on a Tuesday night to “Praise Him when the sun went down”.*

*The music would welcome us into St. Augustine's hall with familiar tunes and lively beats. Before you knew it, we would all feel the warmth of the spirit through the love of our brothers and sisters in Christ.*

*The worries and concerns of the week would be lessened as we would hear and share the word of God. Listening to personal witnesses would touch and encourage us.*

*By the time the evening was over, we would all be feeling a little bit brighter and ready to face the next day with more enthusiasm and hope.*

*So many people were deeply touched over the years by the Tuesday night prayer meetings at St. Augustine's. Many marriages came to be through friendships formed at St. Augustine's. The community fostered relationships and bonds which are still going strong today.*

*Do you ever wonder about what ever happened to so and so, or whether or not the prayer meetings are still going on?*

*If you're like me, then you must feel nostalgic and a little bit sad when you remember how pleasant our meetings used to be, and how long it has been since you've had that kind of positive experience.*

*Well, now you have the chance. Some of those same people that you grew with physically and spiritually are organizing an evening (or day), to reunite all those who were so closely linked over the years at St. Augustine's.*

*An opportunity like this does not come along very often, so won't you please join us and recapture the warmth that was shared Tuesday nights, so that once again, we can join together as one and “Praise Him until after the sun goes down.”*

*Accompanying this letter you will find a list of those who we have been able to locate and are in the process of contacting. Should you think of someone who you would really like*

*to see, but whose name does not appear on the list, please ensure that they are aware of the occasion by:*

- contacting one of the organizers with the individual(s) name,*
- or*
- photocopy this letter and forward it to the individual(s) so that they can respond as soon as possible.*

*We look forward to hearing from you soon. God Bless you!*

(Used With Permission of Mary Jane Casey)