

## A life of passion

Michael MacLean

“Living a life of passion means being fully integrated: in our personality, sexuality, work and play.” These and other great insights were a part of the talks given at the Newman Annual Retreat, co-sponsored by Newman Centre and the St. Thomas More Campus Ministry from Saskatoon. U of S students, STM faculty and Campus Ministers all made the road trip out to Muenster, SK to St. Peter’s Abbey where this year’s retreat was held Jan 29-31.

Fr. Kevin Storey, csb led the retreat that looked at living a passionate life. Talks looked at the historical Jesus, the role Jesus plays in our life today, our own sexuality, relationships and intimacy—with God, with others and with ourselves. Fr. Kevin was a great facilitator, and was extremely well-received by staff and students alike. His ever-present smile and candid presentations set everyone at ease. A highlight for the students was to have Fr. Kevin join them in a rousing game of floor hockey. Other highlights included Friday’s opening events, Saturday’s reconciliation service and variety night, and joining the Benedictine monks for Sunday morning mass.

Newman Centre is the campus-wide Catholic club for students at the University of Saskatchewan, and its offices are located in St. Thomas More College, the affiliated Catholic college on campus at the U of S. STM was founded by the Basilian fathers in 1936, and continues in the Basilian tradition. We were happy to welcome Fr. Kevin, the vocations director for the Basilians, to our retreat. We wish Fr. Kevin well in all his work and travels, and definitely encourage other campuses to seek out this personable, friendly young priest as a retreat facilitator.

## Aspiring in Winnipeg

Rejean Boulet

Fourteen of us from Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface went on retreat Jan 15-17. The theme was “Our Dreams and Aspirations.” It was a journey of finding one’s self. Not only did it help each of us to be strong, but it gave us courage to grow and fall into God’s gentle love. One of us put it this way: “It gave me confidence to grow in His love. It made me feel better. I felt God’s love blessing me.” Each of us heard God speaking to us in a very special way. We may not have known immediately what God’s call was for us, but we felt stronger to seek His will and the Kingdom of Heaven.

God has already shown me where to live out my dream of serving Him and giving my life: one week after the retreat I received the great news that I will be working at L’Arche here in Winnipeg. God bless you all, every one!

## SNOW DOESN’T BURY T

Snow. Snow is beautiful. Okay so it can also be an annoyance or even a stresser, but it can also be seen as a blessing. The planning team at Assumption University knew that things may happen along the way where adjustments would need to be made, but when the phone calls began from universities who were snowed-in and unable to attend, disappointment was an understatement. Cancellation of the entire conference was considered for a fleeting moment before the realization that such an action would require even more work. So, despite the abundance of snow, on Jan 15, 52 participants arrived at Académie Ste. Cecile in Windsor for the CCSA Central Region Conference. They came from Western, McMaster, St. Jerome’s, Waterloo, Toronto, and, of course, Windsor. Those that could not attend were in our prayers throughout that night and the following two days. They were never forgotten.

Once everyone was settled-in and we had gotten to know each other through games led by Crystal Brennan, we had the privilege of listening to our keynote speaker, Fr. **Moe Charbonneau** of St. Ursula Parish in Chatham. He delivered uplifting words about how each of us is a very good creation of God and he helped us see that even though God’s call is not always easy to hear or to listen to, as long as one is open to it, we’ll get it eventually! During his talk, he mentioned St. Theresa of Lisieux and she became an on-going topic for the weekend. Fr. Moe also gave us prayer partners with a particular gift to pray for. For many people, both the prayer and the partner were complete ironies, yet absolutely wonderful gifts. After night prayer, many people sat in the chapel as Fr. Moe led us in song until 2am. Of course, it may have been even later (sight becomes quite blurry at that time!).

Saturday was an overwhelming and very busy day. After breakfast, prayer and yet another playing of the song “Caravan of Love,” participants had the opportunity to attend various workshops covering topics of Prayer, Scripture, Vocation, Relationships and Sexuality, Social Justice



# RETREATS

## THE “CARAVAN OF LOVE”

Toni Avon

and Campus Outreach. The presenters were amazing and spoke straight from and straight to the heart.

Before the real fun began, it was time to celebrate and thank our God with Eucharist at Assumption University. We were grateful to have Bishop Sherlock as our main celebrant with Fr. Moe and Fr. Dennis Noelke as concelebrants. The music for the celebration was led by the choir from St. Gregory Church in St. Clair Beach with

supplemental voices of conference participants who wanted to lend their vocal talents; it was wonderful. Bishop Sherlock told us he had been at a conference like this one, on the University of Windsor campus, thirty-five years ago when he was national Chaplain.

After having our hearts and souls nourished by the Word of God and the Eucharist, it was time to fill our physical hunger. Needless to say, the meal provided was fabulous. Once the meal was complete, we were graced with the presence and talent of young

teenagers from Detroit, Michigan. They provided their interpretation of the life and death of Jesus as it would be today in Detroit in a presentation entitled *Jesus in the Hood*.

Then it was time to dance, let go and have fun dancing, laughing and enjoying our time together. The end came early and the Caravan of Love returned to Ste. Cecile's where people spent time sharing stories, knowing that the next day we would all have to return to the place from where we came, but somehow a little different, a little better. Sunday morning we awoke to a very loud wake-up call for which Joe da Silva was later given a “blessing.” We had our business meeting, commissioning prayer, and lunch and then it was time to go our separate ways.

Throughout the weekend, memories formed that will forever be a part of the lives of participants. Sometimes it was a special moment for two people and sometimes it was for the entire group. Whatever the memory, hold it close to your heart, keep it with you, cherish it, let it remind you of the “little ways” that you can spread God's message of love to others. You are very good!!!



## Sweet Silence

Darren Berg

The Silent Retreat was a sweet blessing. I bypassed an opportunity for a weekend of sightseeing in Quebec in favour of the retreat. Life gets too busy, so an opportunity to relax and focus on God seemed sweeter than maple syrup.

Although I am not a member of the Roman Catholic Church, I was invited by a friend to attend the retreat. It was held Jan 22-24, at Camp Cadecasu near Bragg Creek. The “vow of silence” began Friday night and continued to Sunday noon. The only speaking was in the context of the meditations and discussions lead by Fr. Remi and Fr. Tom.

It was my first experience of a silent retreat with a group. It was very relaxing. In a sense it was odd to be interacting with a group of thirty people for a weekend, yet without conversation. This experience allowed a new sense of connection with the Body of Christ. I was aware of the presence of others. However in the absence of any physical interaction, our connection through the Spirit, as we focussed on God, seemed more obvious.

Unexpectedly, my sense of connection with and appreciation of creation was strengthened at the retreat. We were treated to musical slide shows by a member of the U of Calgary Catholic Community that touched my heart. That was complemented by the beauty of the Bragg Creek area, and God reminding me of my connection to nature. Nature was nurture.

The guided sessions were interesting and inspiring. I appreciated the honest and gentle style of the priests. While reflecting on the sessions, I still had the freedom to spend plenty of time exploring many issues with God through

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## “Launch into the Deep”

“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch” Matt 5:4

Fr. David Shulist, SJ

By the sound our name as a community, MUNCC (“monk”), one would think that we have turned to quiet solitude and cassocks at Memorial University. To the contrary, most of our lives are marked by activity: studying, teaching, socializing, playing sport, playing for the symphony, volunteering, and for some, raising families. In part due to such busyness, some of us took seriously our contemplative sides and went off to pray, reflect, enter into spiritual conversation with a director, with a desire to be renewed, affirmed and strengthened in our personal and communal sense of being followers of Christ.

For the first time MUN Catholic Community had a privately directed prayer retreat, Jan 22-24, called □ *page10*