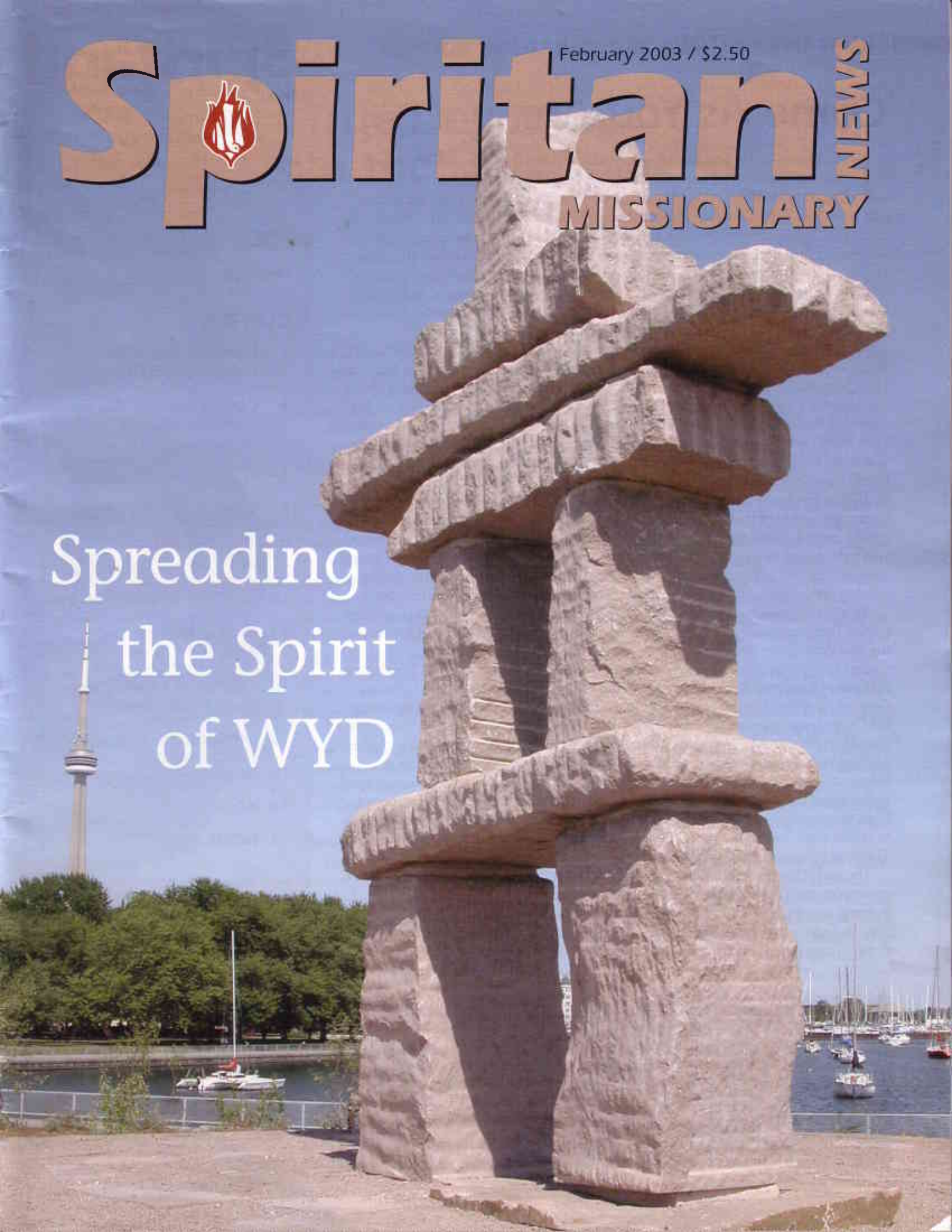


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Spiritana

NEWS
MISSIONARY

Spreading
the Spirit
of WYD



Come As You Are

Jesus knew what it was like to be a child, a teenager, a young man and an adult. He didn't live long enough to become old. But that doesn't mean that old people don't count in his eyes. If we look back on the Christmas season and its stories and ask ourselves, Who brings him into the world? Who recognizes him when he is born? Who gets it and who doesn't? We find a teenager, her somewhat older husband, her elderly relative unexpectedly pregnant in her 50s, some young adult shepherds, some older foreign visitors, an elderly man and a woman aged 84. From Annunciation, through Visitation, through Bethlehem, to Presentation in the Temple, the Joyful Mysteries remind us that all are welcome. Age is no barrier. Nor is youth. Nothing human is alien to him. Come as you are.

"You always seem to be looking over our heads instead of into our eyes". Larry said these words to me one Friday afternoon as he prepared to leave Neil McNeil High School and transfer to a local public school. He and I had been talking about this transfer. One thing led to another and we got on to the subject of religion. He admitted that my religion class did not really "turn him on". I already knew that. With forty two students and thirty eight desks, that Grade Twelve afternoon class was more a matter of crowd control than anything else. But his distinction between "over our heads" and "into our eyes" gave me food for thought that weekend. I had prepared the subject matter for each class and wound my way from beginning to end of it over the course of forty minutes with occasional timeouts for crowd control. In religion class I had presumed that the only subject that mattered was to be found in the textbook! I had neglected looking into the eyes of the young men in front of me. Here too was subject matter, perhaps the heart of the matter, a living curriculum, if I had not been so preoccupied with what was in the book. Larry's parting observation taught me that young people count more than printed pages. Their needs are what Spiritan Gene Hillman calls "God's way of interrupting and getting our attention".

Last July, I was privileged to be a spectator-participant at the World Youth Day Stations of the Cross on Toronto's University Avenue. Standing outside Toronto General Hospital, I found myself facing the Fifth Station, Simon helps Jesus carry his Cross. Jesus approached from the south, mounted the steps with his long cross over his right shoulder and stopped centre stage. To the right was a young man in a wheelchair. He glanced up, saw this criminal on his way to execution, and wheeled himself over for a closer look. He stopped, looked up, and then continued to the left of the stage, where he turned his chair around, came back for a second look, then carried on to his original position. He had third thoughts, reversed back to centre stage, raised the upright beam of the cross on to the arm of his chair. Together Jesus and the paraplegic exited stage right.

The text of the Stations belonged to Pope John Paul, the contemporary connection came from the Youth of Canada. For many people, including myself, that Friday evening was the highlight of a memorable week. No Pope, no surrounding bishops with strange hats, no grey hairs. A fresh contemporary dramatization of the age old story. Young people bringing the gospel story to life on the streets of Toronto.

Patrick Fitzpatrick, CSSp

Cover Photo: Inukshuk erected by the Mayor and City Council on Toronto's waterfront to commemorate WYD.

The Inukshuk (Inuktitut word for "looks like a person") is constructed of flat stones in the shape of a human being. It has been used across the Arctic for thousands of years to mark good hunting and fishing spots, the presence of food, or the way home. The Inukshuk is a beacon that says, "I've been here before; you're on the right path."

"World Youth Day has been a true navigational guide for millions of young people throughout the world. The Toronto Inukshuk invites each one of us to become beacons of light and hope, striving for justice and peace in this world." (Inscription)

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True Devotion to the Holy Spirit

Michael J. Troy, CSSp

It would be a pity if the present Spiritan Year was seen as something important and of benefit only to the members of the Congregation of Claude Poullart des Places founded 300 years ago in Paris, France.

One significant benefit and possibly the most important lesson that may be learned during these tricentennial celebrations may come from revisiting, however briefly, the remarkable devotion of Claude and his early associates to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

For one thing, he and they were indifferent as to whether their work or organization was called a 'seminary' or a 'community', so long as the operative distinguishing part of either title was that it be 'of the Holy Spirit'. This Claude himself also spelled out in the first of the 263 Rules he drew up for his first and future followers: 'All shall be particularly devoted to the Holy Spirit to whom they have been consecrated in a special way.'

In fact, if all the teaching of St. Grignon de Montfort (Claude's more widely known boyhood friend and lifelong collaborator) is often called *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, that of the Spiritan Founder might be summed up in *True Devotion to the Holy Spirit*.

Devotionalising Dogmas

To understand a little of the paramount importance Claude gave to the Holy Spirit, one has to know something of the confused doctrinal and devotional period of the Church in France in which he lived.

As Claude saw it, there was a crying need at this time for doctrinal clarity about the fundamental truths and moral teachings of the Christian Faith and in these matters, as heir to his native Brittany's loyalty to the Catholic Church, he called for faithful adherence at all times to its teaching authority (Rule 54).

At the same time, he saw that all these abstract statements of the Great Church Councils (e.g. Trent) would remain dead

letters incapable of renewing the face of the earth unless the Holy Spirit enlightened the minds of the faithful and enkindled in them the fire of God's love.

This was why for Claude the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (especially Wisdom, so different from that of the world) and the Fruits of the Spirit (especially Joy, so different from the dour asceticism of the Jansenists) were so important.

Devotion to the Blessed Trinity

For Claude, the central mystery of the Christian Faith was Christ's revelation of the inner Life of God, Abba Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so different from the Unmoved Mover of the philosophers.

Following from this came humanity's privilege — a sharing in this divine life through the Holy Spirit, the soul of all apostolate and the heart of every Christian community.

No wonder, then, that for Claude, devotion to the Holy Spirit was no once-in-a-lifetime prayer formula. It was a profound, all-embracing, lifelong covenant.

All this Claude spelled out in his great Prayer to the Holy Trinity, in his Morning Prayer that began with the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and in his choice of Pentecost Sunday as the founding date for his Society.

This Devotion to the Holy Spirit rapidly became the identifying charism of Claude's religious family so much so that even in 1848, when it was amalgamated with that of Francis Libermann, the twinned society continued to be called officially and popularly **The Congregation of the Holy Spirit**.

The year 2003, then, should not be just another calendar anniversary but a very precious *Kairos* for all Spiritans and their associates, a call to deepen their appreciation not only of the perennial mission of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church but their own special privilege, as Claude des Places' religious family, to be called Spiritans, Congregation of the Holy Spirit. ❀





The Seventh Continent

Michael Doyle, CSSp

Several years ago I was invited to lead a series of discussions with a group of parents concerned about the aberrant behaviour (as they saw it) of their “Boomer” children. To begin the sessions I presented to them the findings of a survey of youth published by a prestigious university and asked if they could recognize their sons and daughters in it. Their nods, knowing smiles and grunted approvals indicated that they thought the report was “spot-on.” The verdict was unanimous. Then I rolled in the grenade. I told them that the report, which so perfectly described their children, had in fact been prepared 25 years previously and was a profile of their generation. Disbelief, consternation and a sea

change in the tenor of the discussions.

These parents were no different from those who preceded them and those who would follow. The “previous” generation always seems to have a problem forming a balanced assessment of youth. Even someone as wise as Socrates was baffled by the young of his day who, he said, “have bad manners, contempt for authority... disrespect for their elders... gobble their food and tyrannise their teachers.” In part, at least, the problem seems to be that the older generation has unreal expectations of the emotional and spiritual maturity of their offspring together with the conviction that all will continue as it was before. In fact “The Seventh Continent” as youth has been labeled, has its own language, its own

music and its own value system in which peer relationships play an enormous part. Getting to learn the language and appreciate the music is further complicated by the fact that both are in a constant state of flux.

An event to remember

And who are the “youth” anyway? For World Youth Days in Toronto, with much discussion, the age parameters were set at 16 and 35 thus encompassing the latter half of the “Xers” and all the Millennials. Whichever cohort they belonged to, the “youth” who came together in Toronto in July 2002 were lively, courteous, prayerful and idealistic. The citizens of Toronto, no matter their religious persuasion (or lack of it), were impressed; and gra-