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# Spiritana

NEWS  
MISSIONARY



**Salt** of the Earth

**Light** of the World

# Salt of the Earth Light of the World

It is estimated that 500,000 of them will gather in Toronto from July 18 - 28, 2002. Aged 16 - 35, they will come on pilgrimage from over 150 countries, preceded by the simple four metre wooden World Youth Day Cross which has been criss-crossing Canada since Palm Sunday 2001. The Cross of liberation and hope for

young men and women on a journey of hope, the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World.

The blue, yellow and red logo of this 17th World Youth Day portrays the bent cross so loved by Pope John Paul. It is rooted in and grows out of the yellow circle of youth and is surrounded by the waters of Canada's three oceans — the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Canada's emblem, the red Maple Leaf, opens wide its arms in welcome and hospitality.

Who are these pilgrims? Some may be drawn by the event itself rather than by any inner conviction about religion. Many of their contemporaries do not think it "cool" to be overly religious. In their personal lives they are in transition from where they have been to where they are heading, perhaps looking for a faith that makes a difference in their daily lives. They have their own sense of morality. A survey in Ireland

named twenty eight behaviours generally regarded as in some way immoral and asked young adults to rank them in order of seriousness. The three most seriously wrong behaviours were sexual abuse of children, followed by constant physical abuse and constant verbal abuse in marriage. The bottom three were missing Mass on Sunday, contraception and living with someone you intend to marry.

They are caring and irresponsible, serious and fun-loving, thoughtful and goofy, ready to reassure and in need of support, for the most part colour-blind as regards other people, eager and insecure, enthusiastic and moody. World Youth Day's founder, Pope John Paul, recalls those he met in Rome during the Jubilee Year: "They were happy but thoughtful, eager to pray, seeking meaning and true friendship."

Many of them would echo the faith of 18-year old Larry Brown from Neil McNeil High School, Toronto, who between losing a leg to cancer and dying wrote: "I believe in never giving up. Every day is a new battle. I believe in giving what I've got to anybody whenever they need it. I believe in the dignity of human life."

Many others would echo the conviction of 22-year old Terry Fox. He too lost a leg to cancer. But that did not prevent him from running 26 miles a day in aid of cancer research through five Canadian Provinces from St. John's, Newfoundland to Thunder Bay, Ontario where at mile 3,339 recurring cancer forced him to give up his run. His Marathon of Hope was inspired by his beliefs: "Dreams are made if people only try. I believe in miracles ... I have to ... Because somewhere the hurting must stop."

Relationships are at the heart of these young adults' life. Here, above all, they meet God. Perhaps their time in Toronto will enable them to meet a down to earth Saviour and Friend who is close to them and one of them, who in his day met people where they were and offered them life in all its fullness. Pope John Paul remains convinced that "if Christ is presented to young people as he really is ...

*Patrick Fitzpatrick CSSP*

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## WORLD YOUTH DAY CROSS

Hundreds of millions of people, young and old, wear a cross in some form. These crosses, like the meaning of the cross itself, have an infinite variety of shapes and sparkles. From delicately cut, golden earrings, chosen to match an expensive evening dress, to rough, crude, wooden crosses slung casually over a denim shirt, the cross of Jesus is everywhere evident. We see it on hillsides, on church spires, in cemeteries, and most everywhere where anything special, love or tragedy, has happened. And rightly so. The cross is the ultimate symbol of love: it shows what love is, what love costs, and what love does for us. Most important of all, it tells us that God never stops loving us, even for a second, no matter what we do.

— Ron Rolheiser, OMI  
Prayers for World Youth Day 2002  
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Front Cover: Photo © Bill Wittman  
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# Women and Spirituality

Faye Huber

There is a difference in the manner in which men and women approach the spiritual life. Men seek a theory about how to live whereas women place emphasis on relationships in their lives. To experience women's spirituality I convinced my husband to enrol in an alternative travel experience for faith seekers in Mexico, developed by the Franciscan Sisters of La Crosse, Wisconsin, which emphasised a woman's perspective on spirituality in a global world setting. We spent twelve days in Mexico City and the surrounding highlands learning how to reflect on the layered history of religion in Mexico using the female eye as our guide.

A typical day began with a communal breakfast, morning prayers using female images of the Divine, discussion to prepare us to visit a particular site with emphasis on its feminine aspects, then the excursion on public transportation. Using the buses or subways integrated us with the ordinary people of Mexico and invited us to experience their culture. At each sacred place we listened to its significance in respect to the feminine story. Then we spent time in meditation and gathered for a prayer ritual-reflection. A picnic lunch or lunch in a nearby restaurant concluded that part of the day. When we returned to the retreat centre we had time for personal reflection before the supper and evening group discussion.

One of the trips was to a parish-centred barrio to learn how some of these women had begun a daycare-primary school and women's clinic. Another excursion was to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe to explore the origins of the Mexican people's faith in Mary. The sacred sites are now familiar through still unpronounceable for me. Tonacacihuatl, is Lady of Our Sustenance and San Cuicuilco is the oldest ceremonial site in the valley. Women from Mexico City provided us with their stories and experiences of learning their religious history.

What did we learn about women's spirituality on this feminist spiritual quest?

My appreciation for a culture deeply steeped in faith and history was a lesson in itself.

Mother Earth was definitely a counterpart to the male divinities celebrated by the earliest peoples of Mexico. She was embraced and

revered in the pyramids built on sacred ground. Mary is now the new creation of the early female mysteries and myths. In the mountains south of Mexico City there is a village, Tlaxcala. We were privileged to be there on the feast of Our Lady of the Healing Waters, when the various parishes hold processions carrying statues of Mary to celebrate their ongoing devotion and hope. Legends of Mary are another layer in the religious response of these Christian or Catholic Mexican women.

But the manner in which we learned to listen with openness to each other was especially the key to "doing" women's spirituality for me. Each participant had peculiarities and opinions that were sometimes difficult to absorb. Each day we came to know more of their particular psychological needs and spiritual struggles. Their capacity to listen without judgment was amazing to me. When the Mexican women joined our group discussions they demonstrated to me respectful listening and patient endurance of some long-winded North Americans. The Franciscan Sisters also guided us in "doing" women's spirituality by their expertise in Women's Religious Studies and their compassionate outreach program with the women of Mexico.

We came away knowing there is so much to learn from other cultures. Although spirituality has no gender, acknowledgment of the feminine in the way we express our faith is the inclusiveness women invite. It is an invitation to listen and act from the heart. ❀

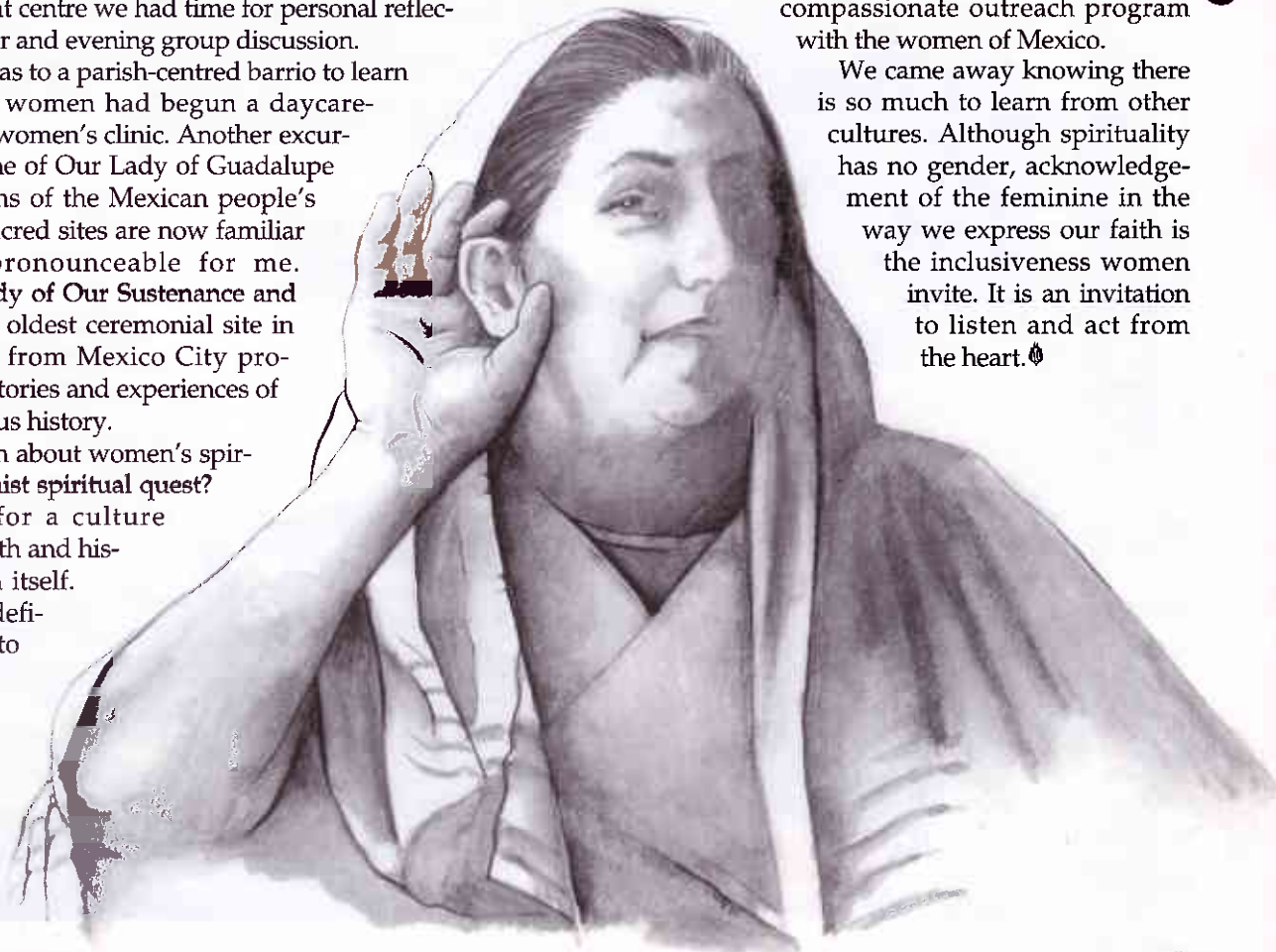
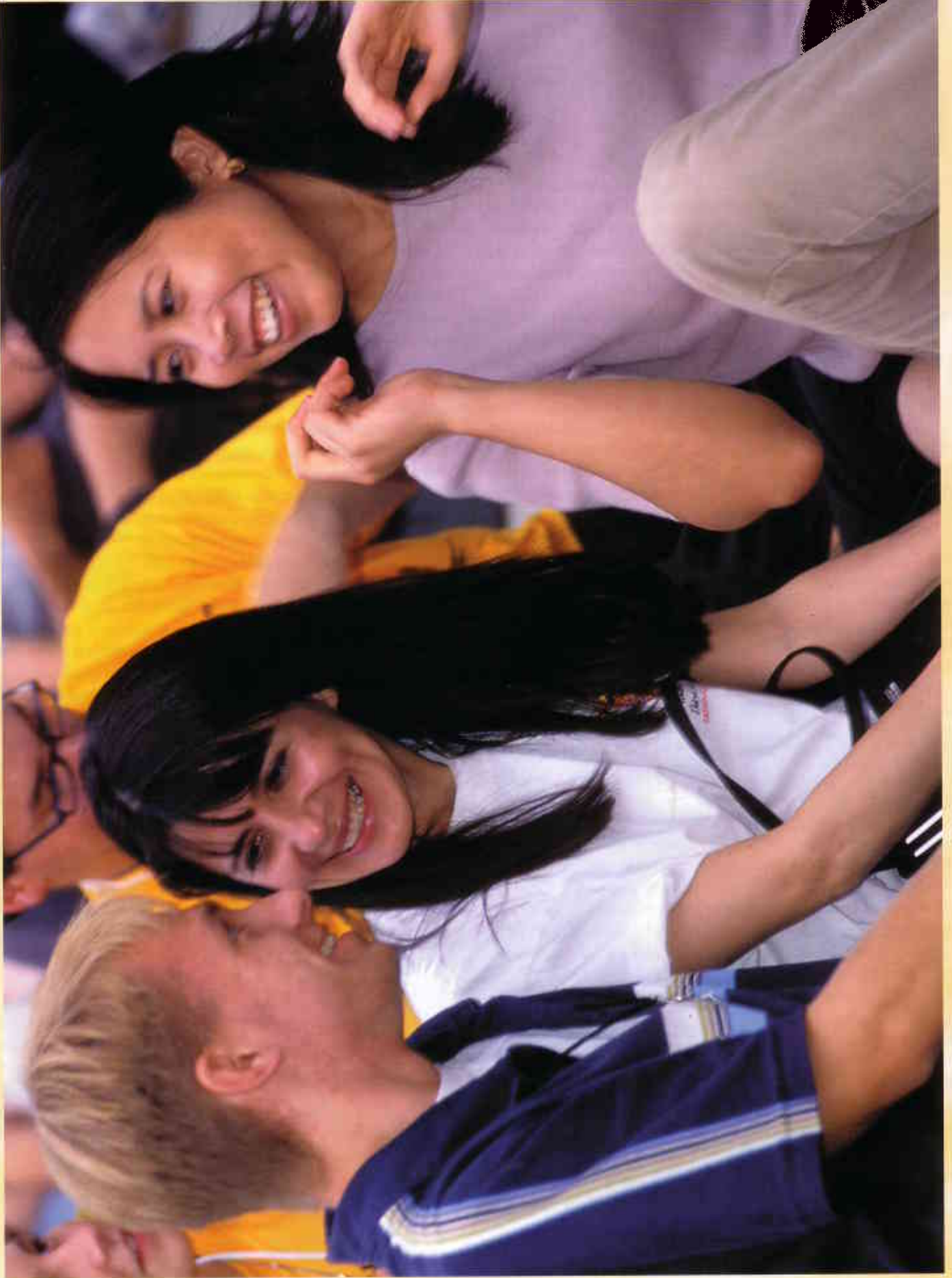


Illustration by David Wysotski



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 First Friday	5
6	7	8 Mary, Mother of God World Day of Peace Spiritan Martyrs, Congo	9 St. Basil and St. Gregory	10	11 St. Elizabeth Seton	12
13 Epiphany of the Lord	14 Eastern Catholic / Orthodox Christmas	15	16	17	18	19 St. Marguerite Bourgeoys
20 Baptism of the Lord	21 Martin Luther King Day (US)	22	23	24 St. Anthony Abbot	25	26
27 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time	28 St. Agnes	29	30	31 St. Francis de Sales	Conversion of St. Paul	St. Timothy, St. Titus
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	St. Thomas Aquinas			St. John Bosco	December 2001	February
					1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

# January 2002