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# Spiritans **NEWS**

## MISSIONARY



*One HEART*  
*One SOUL*



# A Golden Anniversary

The entry for October 12 in the Spiritan Anniversary Diary is dry and matter of fact:

**TransCanada 10.10.1954:** Some Spiritans from the Irish Province arrive in Montreal en route for Woodstock, Ontario. The Irish Province has been asked to found an Anglophone Canadian Province. The community of Woodstock opens the following day, October 18th.

These Irish Spiritans were in fact the third wave of Spiritans to roll into Canada from the Atlantic. In 1735 Pierre Maillard came from the Holy Spirit Seminary in Paris to Louisbourg, Cape Breton, to minister to the native Miqmaq people of Atlantic Canada. He spent many years learning their language and developing a pictorial hieroglyphic script that they could use. He composed the first Miqmaq dictionary and grammar, handbooks of prayers, hymns, sermons, and texts for baptisms, marriages and funerals. He is buried in the Anglican cemetery in Halifax. Other early Spiritan missionaries, Maillard's co-workers and successors, were exiled from Canada during the French-English wars of the 18th century.

The second wave of French Spiritans arrived in Gatineau in the early 20th century and established the Province of Canada with headquarters in Montreal.

Then came the Irish in the mid-1950s. Fifty years later two of that original Group of Six are still with us — Fathers Garry McCarthy and Bob Hudson.

This Golden Anniversary calendar portrays some of the diverse activities we have engaged in. These have taken us through Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan in Canada; overseas to Malawi, Papua New Guinea and Brazil. We have become well known in both Toronto and Edmonton for our involvement in Catholic secondary education and university chaplaincy. Over the years Spiritans from Trinidad, Portugal, Great Britain, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Ghana have come to study and work among us. Ours is now a rich mixture of seniors, middle aged and younger adults.

We are no longer exclusively Irish. Neither are we exclusively clerical or exclusively male. Our Lay Spiritans have brought their rich experience of life for others and a welcome dose of married and family reality to our thinking and our expectations. Volunteer International Christian Service (VICS) has enabled us to be a life giving presence among the poor of our contemporary world in many countries and a voice back home for refugees and those whose voice is rarely heard.

Our 2004 Calendar portrays a selection of those with whom we have lived and worked. We have endeavoured to walk beside them rather than ahead of them, to listen to them rather than lecture them, to be with them rather than drop in on them, to live with them rather than apart from them, to share our faith with them rather than proselytize them.

At a recent Retreat, Spiritan Fr. Tony Gittins, Professor of Missiology at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, encouraged us to see Mission as a job description of God. God goes out to gather people in. We are invited to launch ourselves into this outreach of God, to see ourselves as disciples chosen by God to take part in this mission. Jesus is God brought down to earth. Followers of his are down to earth people. It is our hope that as a small group of Spiritans, part of a three thousand large worldwide group, we in Canada have been and will continue to be earthed in our particular surroundings, in touch with life as it unfolds and willing to be led by the Holy Spirit rather than remain in a comfortable cocoon.

Ours is a windmill spirituality that seeks to capture the power of the Spirit from whatever direction it blows. We endeavour to live under the influence of the Spirit. We bring the Spirit with us — yes. We also realize that the Spirit fills the whole world and so is there ahead of us. We try to remember that the principal actor is the Holy Spirit and that ours is a supporting role in the great and ongoing drama of God and planet earth.

*Patrick Fitzpatrick CSSp*

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*Photos by Jack Hourigan*

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# Call and Response

The call went out to Ireland from the 1950 General Meeting in Paris: "Let us establish a Holy Ghost Congregation presence in English-speaking Canada." The Irish Province responded and that presence became a reality in Woodstock, Ontario in 1954 where Bishop John Cody (past student of Spiritan Collège Saint Alexandre in the Gatineau) offered the Holy Ghost Fathers St. Rita's Parish. From it fanned out the Mission Band of Irish preachers. Call and Response — a pattern that has been repeated for fifty years.

From Woodstock came expansion eastward. By 1956 the immigrant group had undertaken to look after Holy Rosary Parish, Guelph. By 1958 they responded to Cardinal McGuigan's call to start a new high school in Toronto.

Four years after their arrival the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers were making a name for themselves in southern Ontario and beyond.

By the mid 1960s a change of direction in answer to another call. Archbishop Jordan invited them to a new Catholic High School in Edmonton and gave them charge of the new Holy Spirit Parish.

## Parishes

Biafra then became a household word across the world. Three hundred Irish Spiritans were expelled, never to return. Several came to Canada — in particular to the West. Parishes in Edmonton and Calgary dioceses, mainly rural, were confided to their care. Between 1969 and 1971 four new parishes were accepted in southern Alberta: Claresholm, Vulcan, Raymond and Coaldale and two in southern Ontario: Port Elgin and West Hill.

The list of parishes grew longer as the 1970s progressed: Crowsnest Pass, Fort MacLeod, Vauxhall, Strathmore, Beiseker, Carstairs and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Calgary. Later came Banff and Rockyford. In Edmonton the list is no less long: St. Andrew, Immaculate Heart and St. Theresa in the city of Edmonton; Villeneuve, Mayerthorpe, Grande Cache, Innisfail, Stettler, Hinton, Red Deer and Devon.

Parishes in Coquitlam and Victoria took individual priests to the Pacific. Parishes in

Kincardine, Scotland, Kenilworth, Hamilton, Sioux Lookout, Dundalk, Waterford and Erin spread the Spiritans through Ontario and in 2002, when the former widespread outreach was seriously curtailed because of retirements, a new call-response arrangement between the Diocese of Regina and the West African Spiritan Province saw two young Africans take up residence in Moose Jaw and Marquis, Saskatchewan.

Two particular flavours were added to the downtown Toronto parish mix in the mid 1970s. The Spiritans opened the first centre for new immigrants from the Caribbean in 1975. It became Our Lady of Good Counsel Caribbean Catholic Centre in 1983 and is still a "going concern". In 1976 ministry to Portuguese immigrants from the mainland and the nine islands of the Azores began. Currently four Portuguese Spiritans are involved in this ministry in Toronto, Hamilton and Oakville.

## Education

Mention has been made of Cardinal McGuigan's invitation to found Neil McNeil High School in 1958. By the 1970s there were twelve Spiritans on staff. From it several of them achieved positions of prominence and respect in Catholic education as their influence spread to the community college system, high school chaplaincy, university teaching, the founding of three new Toronto High Schools (Francis Libermann, Regina Pacis and Marian Academy) and school board administration at local and provincial levels. Influence in education was not confined to Toronto. In Edmonton on October 1, 2003, a new junior high school in Mill Woods was named the Father Michael Troy Catholic School.

Spiritans also became chaplains in three universities; York, Queens and McMaster.

## Missions

Call and Response joined hands again in 1973 when the Calgary Spiritans promoted the desire of Bishop O'Byrne and formed a mission team for Malawi, south Central Africa, consisting of two Spiritans and a Calgary diocesan priest. Four Spiritans have worked in this mission during its thirty years of existence.

From 1980-2001 up to ten TransCanada missionaries lived and worked in Aitape diocese, Papua New Guinea. In addition, for varying lengths of time, other Spiritans have gone on mission to Brazil, Mauritius, Haiti and Nigeria.

## Vocations

Currently there are five Canadian born priests in the Province. New members first joined the original group in the mid 1960s and as many as nine seminarians were in formation towards the end of that decade. But, as one chronicler wrote, "the instability of the late 1960s and the turbulence of the post Vatican II air were enough to knock the young buds off the Spiritan tree." A second intake began in the 1980s and from it came the present group of five. Currently a third intake sees four seminarians in formation.

## VICS

A new and exciting venture, Volunteer International Christian Service (VICS), started in 1970. VICS provides professional and technical personnel the opportunity to assist and work alongside the people of the developing countries. Currently there are eighteen volunteers in "far flung fields."

In what could be called reverse mission, Spiritans have helped resettle hundreds of refugees across Canada. In 1991 returned VICS volunteers started Brottier House in east Toronto. It has been an oasis of security for more than six hundred refugee claimants from forty countries. One mother from Afghanistan spoke for all: "Here we be safe."

## Lay Spiritans

The TransCanada Spiritans have long ceased to be a totally clerical group of men. From the mid 1970s Lay Spiritan men and women have found a place in their midst. Over the years twelve of them have made formal commitments to the Congregation. Their presence has enriched it greatly and their outreach has taken it to the margins of society in matters of justice, reconciliation and integration of outsiders.

Call and Response have gone hand in hand for fifty years. The years ahead will surely see several encores. ☪

January 2004



Brotter House in east Toronto has been an oasis of security for more than six hundred refugee claimants from forty countries. "Here we be safe."

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>December 2003</b> 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	<b>February</b> 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	6	7	8	9	10
Epiphany of the Lord	Blessed Brother Andre			Mary, Mother of God World Day of Peace Spiritan Martyrs, Congo	St Basil and St Gregory	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Baptism of the Lord	St Marguerite Bourgeoys					St Anthony, Abbot
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time			St Agnes			St Francis de Sales
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	St Timothy and St Titus	St Angela Merici	St Thomas Aquinas			St John Bosco

# The Spiritans Golden Jubilee

1954

2004

