

SUMMER 2014

DATAFACE

ministries



**United
Conference**

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THE DOTS**

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Quadra Island Testimonies:

"Adoration was so amazing; to be able to feel God in such a different way. It was so freeing to surrender myself to Him and whatever He has planned for me." - Anela

"I hadn't been able to go to confession for years. I finally got all that stuff off my chest and I don't have to feel guilty any more."
- Megan



"What blessed me was learning about the identity of Jesus; logically breaking down why he is God. I've never had that experience before." - Eamonn

Taste and see that the Lord is good - Psalm 34:8

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A TREE WITH MANY BRANCHES

BY JON COURCHENE, FACE TO FACE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The continued growth of FacetoFace Ministries always amazes me. What God has established continues to branch out by His grace.

As I look upon God's ministry from a bird's eye view, it is starting to look more and more like a beautiful tree. The trunk of the tree is first and foremost Christ. Without Him we can do nothing. Jesus himself states, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

The trunk of the tree is also the core vision and message that Christ has called us to proclaim: that all people encounter Christ and embrace the call to be saints. Our vision, mission, and values set a foundation and give our tree great strength.

The various ways we reach out to others in order to help people encounter Christ, those are the branches. Each branch comes out of the trunk and is rooted in Christ and the FacetoFace values. God has blessed us with many incredible branches which bear much fruit. Ken Yasinski speaking full time is just one example of a branch reaching out to new audiences all over North America with great effectiveness. We are blessed to have someone of his character and giftedness within FacetoFace.



Our school retreats continue to bear much fruit as well. Student's find these retreats very attractive, but it is really the moments of prayer that makes them so effective.

Another branch that has grown more recently is the United Conference. It is an opportunity for initial and deeper encounters with Christ. It was very affirming to recognize many participants from previous FacetoFace

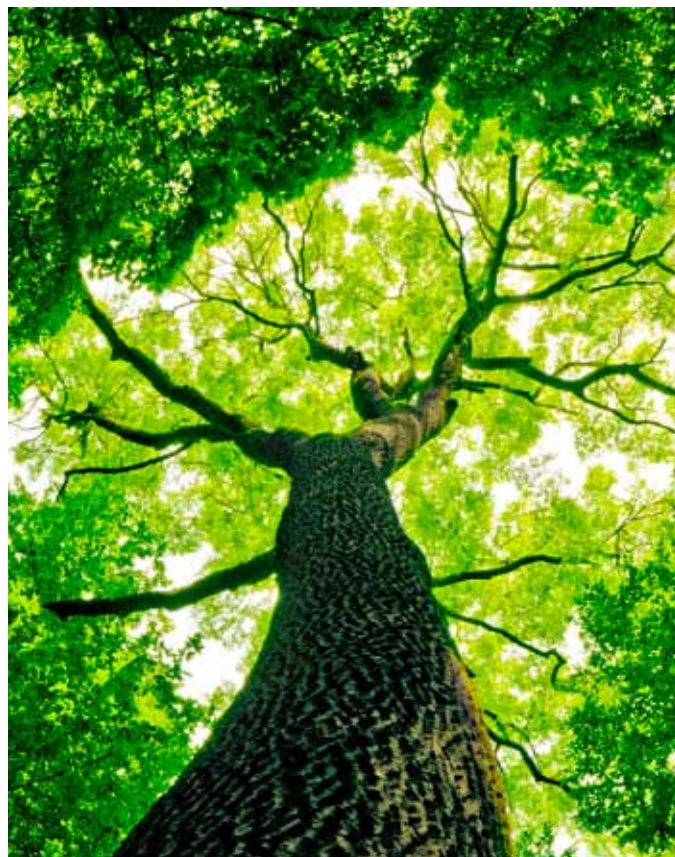
events. The impact from the previous experiences lead them to desiring more. We are blessed that one branch of the ministry drew them to another. For many, the weekend retreats and parish missions were the starting branches, but certainly not the final ones they visited.

Our summer branches, the Bus Trip and Ignite Camps, continue to create new interest every year. Being longer events, we are able to see fruit very tangibly, whereas other branches we are planting seeds and trusting God. I am particularly excited to see what God has in store for the Bust Trip and Ignite

Camps as they continue to grow.

The India Mission branch also continues to excite me. Though this branch looks a little different on the outside, it is still nourished by the same FacetoFace values as our other programs. And God is beginning to reveal that they have an even more profound impact on the ministry than we first realized.

Just as the many branches make up a tree, together, as many programs and speakers, we make up FacetoFace Ministries. I am always honored and humbled to be part of it all. I hope that for years to come people will continue to recognize the tree and branches FacetoFace Ministries by its beautiful fruit (Matthew 7:16).



UNITED CONFERENCE

Article on pg 8



(1) Participants raising their hands to commit to striving for sainthood during Adoration.

(2) Mike Landry, one of the keynote speakers, shares about his own experience while presenting the topic 'Infleshing Christ.'

(3) One of the breakout speakers, Erin McQuaid, speaks on the importance of building Christ centered community.

(4) Participants praising God through song.



(5) Janaya Trudel leading the group in music and prayerful moments of surrender.

(6) The band kicks off the evening session with praise and worship.

(7) Fr. Colin Roy elevates the Eucharist during Adoration, a highlight for many participants.

(8) A small group puzzled over a FacetoFace trivia question during the afternoon youth session.



Pictures by Tianna Mallett: ti-graphy.ca



SCHOOL RETREATS OPEN TO THE THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Clark Jaman, FacetoFace School Retreats Co-leader

Clark has been serving with Face-toFace Ministries for the past 5 years. He recently completed his Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Saskatchewan. This is Clark's first year serving as the School Retreats Co-leader.

In January, FacetoFace re-launched its school retreat ministry. Along with Jon Courchene, I am privileged to facilitate these retreats and be a part of this beautiful branch of FacetoFace Ministries. Jon and myself have travelled to dozens of schools in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, challenging students to understand and embrace the purpose of their lives and become saints.

In order to lead our school retreat ministry, I've found it more and more necessary to stay rooted in a stance of receptivity and openness. Jon and I don't have all the answers to the tough questions that children and teens are facing today. It's humbling to walk in to a school and be accepted as spiritual leaders. All we can do is trust in the Lord, whom we know called us to do this work, to sustain us with His grace and fill our mouths with His words. The more Jon and I serve together, the more organic and spirit-filled our ministry becomes. **Like Mary, our Blessed Mother, our main job in leading school retreats is to be open to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to be the primary facilitator of each event.**

I am always blown away with how eagerly and enthusiastically the students and staff receive us. I often stand outside the doors to the gym and welcome the students as they file in for their retreat. I especially love watching the younger grades enter the space. They get excited and start jumping around at the mere sight of our LED light show and the sound of blaring music. We meet the students right where they are at by engaging them through, with and in their culture and, we find that the students are very quick to open up and receive the message we offer them.

More importantly, they are eager to build a relationship with Jesus as we invite them to encounter Him.

As the day draws to a close it's customary to give out a few hundred high fives, some hugs and even autographs to the students. I am consistently amazed by the warm reception they offer us, and often struggle to rectify the apparent "stardom" that we experience. But ultimately, we are only messengers by the grace of God whom we invite the students to encounter through a life of prayer and purpose. The student's openness to God always proves that it is the Holy Spirit's work and not our fancy light shows that have really captivated the students.

Retreats Participant Quotes: WHAT HELPED YOU GROW IN YOUR FAITH?

"The great examples that Jon and Clark showed us"

"I think a lot of different things helped my grow in my faith, but some of the things were learning about all the different saints and their stories, and how to become a saint!"

"The words in the song I think helped me the most. Because when we sing the songs it helps me because you can worship God in a fun way"

"It inspired me that anything is possible if you just try! It made me believe that anything is possible if you just believe in Jesus Christ."

"Learning about how saints made a difference in the world and how even one saint [St. Therese] did normal things but with LOTS of love and that really made me think about what I can do. Oh I also loved the skit at the end it was soooooo funny"

"Learning that we can all become saints"

Want to know more
about FacetoFace
School Retreats?

If you are
interested
in having
FacetoFace
come to your
school, contact Jon Courchene
at jon.courchene@f2f.ca



CONNECTING THE DOTS ON QUADRA ISLAND

By Christy Dupuis

"You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth." In the book of Acts, Jesus convoked this blessing and responsibility upon the apostles. In the footsteps of the apostles, FacetoFace Ministries has been given privileged opportunities to go to all sorts of places to proclaim the Gospel. Quadra Island off the coast of British Columbia may not be "the ends of the earth," but it is a far cry from the prairies of Saskatchewan. For the past three years, FacetoFace has been sending a team to Camp Homewood to conduct retreats for youth.

The message is always the same. God loves You. He created you to be in a relationship with Him. We don't experience the joy and intimacy of that relationship because we have been separated from God through our sin. But, God loves us so much that He sent His only Son to make a way for us. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. He conquered sin and death and rose again to new life. We can now choose to live in the fullness of the life God offers us now and in eternity.



It might be said a little different each time, but the message remains the same. Every time this message really sinks in, really gets down deep in a person's mind and heart, you begin to see the joy and freedom that surfaces. The organizers for the "I Believe" retreat at Camp Homewood on Quadra Island created a space where this message could be heard and received by young people looking to put the pieces of their faith together.

Participants at the "I Believe" retreat at Camp Homewood had an opportunity to reflect on their experience. Many of the students were inspired by the talks. One student put it succinctly: **"I learned the response to the question: 'Who is Jesus?' The answer is now clear to me...He is HEROIC LOVE, he is God's Son and He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We should all want to be like Him."** In our rich Catholic tradition it is a common experience to grow up in the Church knowing many things about

Catholicism but not really understanding what or who ties it all together. Understanding who Jesus is and what He has done for us is essential to really living the Catholic faith.

Part of living the Catholic faith is embracing the gift of the sacraments. FacetoFace always seeks to provide opportunities for students to experience the Gospel through the

sacraments. After Eucharistic adoration one young student shared: "I experienced God for the first time in a powerful way during the song



'I need you.' It felt like God was right there with me." Another student marvelled at his experience of the sacrament of reconciliation: **"I felt His [God's] presence very firmly in reconciliation when Father Stephen lifted his hands and relieved me of my sins. It was as if a pure, happy wave flooded through me."** The sacraments are such wonderful examples of how God meets us exactly where we are at and FacetoFace seeks to provide opportunities that match up with God's initiative to welcome us as we are.

It has been an incredible privilege to bring the message of the Gospel to the young people on Quadra Island. Please keep these young people in your prayers that the seeds of faith would continue to take root and grow in their hearts.

CALLED TO PROCLAIM

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD: KEN YASINSKI

For nearly 15 years Ken Yasinski has been proclaiming truth about Jesus and the Catholic faith. His ministry began after he completed University, leading youth groups for a number of small towns in the Prince Albert diocese. From the very beginning he felt compelled to present youth with an opportunity to say “yes” to Jesus and understand why it is important to make a choice about their belief in God. As a young Catholic, he felt a need for revival in the Church. He knew that a “yes” could change our culture because his own “yes” to God had changed his life profoundly.

Over the years, opportunities continued to present themselves. The youth groups grew and a core group of young people emerged who were thirsty to know God and to live for Him. Ken’s father, seeing an opportunity, invited Ken to lead a retreat for young people in St. Walburg, Saskatchewan. We really have Dave Yasinski to thank for the birth of the Face to Face retreats. Following that first retreat in 1999, more requests followed and Face to Face Retreats was born.

Hundreds of young people flocked to the retreats that were designed to reveal the core truths of the Catholic faith in an atmosphere that was both inviting and exciting for young people. Ken grew in his ability to communicate the Gospel and it was evident that a real gift for reaching people through proclamation was emerging. The talks always led people to a deeper understanding of who God is and how we can grow in relationship with Him through prayer, community, and the sacraments. People were able to respond to the message because it was clear and simple.

Soon it was not just young people that were being drawn to the retreats, but their parents and grandparents as well. FacetoFace Ministries blossomed and began to run programs and retreats for all ages, always with the hope that people would have the opportunity to encounter Jesus and respond to His call for relationship in their life.

Ken’s gift for communicating the Gospel simply, clearly, and with humour, has produced countless invitations to speak nationally and internationally. As Ken continues to grow and develop in his own ministry, he feels a real call “to proclaim truth,” and to speak boldly about the faith and the challenge to be

saints. He is doing just that through opportunities with Lighthouse Catholic Media (recorded talks being mass produced), his Video Blogs, (which can be found at www.catholicspeaker.com), speaking engagements to a broad and diverse audience in Canada and throughout the States, and a T.V series set to be recorded in late June. The opportunities continue to come and Ken feels so blessed to be in this ministry.

What an incredible evolution! A simple “yes” to ministry truly has become a “yes” that has changed culture. Ken continues to speak on behalf of FacetoFace Ministries and will focus all of his time and effort in proclaiming Christ through a variety of mediums. Please continue to pray for Ken as he responds to God’s call in his life to proclaim truth and share our Catholic faith. Please pray for the people he meets and the faith that is stirred through his presentations.



A POVERTY OF LOVE



By Courtney Craswell, 2013 FacetoFace India Missionary

It was just an ordinary day back in April of 2013 when I found out that FacetoFace Ministries would be sending a team of missionaries to India to serve with the Missionaries of Charity. Knowing FacetoFace Ministries well, I was immediately interested. As I read further, I had a growing sense that I would be going on this mission.

was ready to learn what it meant to serve the poor.

Though we spent our mornings and evenings together, the seven of us were separated into 5 different homes for our volunteer time. Along with Katherine, a fellow team-mate, I was initially placed in Prem Dan, the home for ill and injured

being with the patients and trying to communicate with them the best that we could.

As I settled into my volunteer placement, I began to feel more comfortable with my surroundings. I was still, however, left with an unsettled feeling every time I would walk by someone who lived on the streets. There was not a street that we walked down that didn't have someone living on it. With each person that I would walk by, I would feel more and more helpless. Of course, I could give them the little bit of money that I had, but my money would only be a temporary fix to a more complex problem. For a while, it felt like all I could really do was offer a smile on my face and a prayer in my heart.

As the mission progressed, my goals began to change. In the beginning, I thought, "this will be great, I'll just give them clothes, food, and blankets, and then my job will be done and I'll be ready to come home." And then, somewhere along the way, I got attached to the patients and the poor people on the streets. I began to look forward to seeing the patients every day, and would think about them when I laid in bed at night. They became my friends, people that brought me joy.

As I held disabled children in my arms at Daya Dan, or sang to the sick people in Prem Dan, I realized that their greatest poverty was loneliness. The more love I gave them, the more I realized that love was what they needed all along.



Six short months later I was on a plane to India. All of the fundraising, packing, and other preparations happened so quickly. Before I knew it, I was in a completely foreign country feeling abandoned to God's plan for me. Together we were a team of seven ladies with our director Micheline Thibault. With the other girls by my side, I

people. I spent the first half of the mission there, and in the second half of the mission I volunteered in Daya Dan, the home for disabled children. The daily tasks at each of the homes were similar; washing floors, doing laundry, making beds, feeding the patients, doing dishes, and the like. In both homes, we also spent a great deal of time just

FACE TO FACE INDIA MISSION 2013

Although these people endure material poverty, they also experience an aching emotional poverty – loneliness and neglect.

a strong desire to give the street people and the patients the things they needed, but rather to give them the love they longed for.

university, and the people I teach swimming lessons to – essentially, the people God has placed in my life. Though the poor in Canada may look a little different from the poor in Kolkata, we all have a universal longing to give and receive love. I feel very blessed, knowing that God has allowed me to take everything I learned in India to reveal my continued mission at home.

Who is God calling you to serve in your midst? Who has been forgotten, un-cared for, un-loved? How will YOU extend the mission of charity in your home today?



I remembered Mother Teresa had once said that “loneliness was the greatest poverty of all.” Suddenly, I knew that this was true. With no family, friends, daily visitors, or close companions, these people longed to be loved. I no longer felt

Returning to Canada, I don’t feel like the mission is finished. The poor that I’m serving now are no longer the people on the streets of Kolkata. The people that I am ministering to are my family, my friends, the people I encounter in

Join thousands of readers and learn more about the trip through first hand stories of all seven missionaries:

www.f2f.ca/F2F-Blog



Being **UNWANTED,**
UNLOVED
UNCARED For
FORGOTTEN
BY EVERYBODY
I think that is a much
GREATER HUNGER,

A Much
GREATER POVERTY
Than the **PERSON** who has
NOTHING TO EAT.



The FacetoFace Missionaries spent time caring for those on the street, including giving gift bags.

UNITED CONFERENCE

Pictures on pg 2

Unite - Support - Challenge

Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, priests, religious, babies, teenagers, old-timers, saints and sinners, all attended the second annual United Conference held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in February. Among the crowd of nearly 250 participants were supporters and friends of FacetoFace Ministries who were returning to help, provide support, and be nourished in their own faith.

Joyce Willick has attended at least 35 FacetoFace retreats and she usually had several youth in tow. Joyce says that FacetoFace Ministries has made her own faith life more "spiritual and joy-filled." And if you know Joyce, there is a reason that "Joy" is in her name. Joyce has been a participant and chaperone at the Ignite Camps and this year she attended the United Conference.

Roxanne Millette says: "My faith life was non-existent before attending a F2F retreat in Albertville January 12-13, 2002. I'll never forget that weekend! I attended the retreat as a young adult to 'check up' on my little sister, and was instantly and forever changed by simply opening the door to my heart to Jesus. ... I continued to be involved in FacetoFace Ministries as a participant because it provided me with much needed fellowship and encouragement." For the next two years Roxanne attended every retreat that she could and continues to be involved to this day, now attending local retreats with her husband and growing family.

Don Courchene is a father whose children have been impacted by the ministry of FacetoFace. Don has

been a supporter of FacetoFace for many years and for the past few years has been part of the prayer ministry team that serves at the Ignite camp. This year Don offered the adult workshop on "Busyness" at the United Conference.

Roxanne, Joyce and Don took some time to weigh in on their experience of the United Conference and offer some reflection on FacetoFace ministries.

How were you personally impacted by the United Conference?

Joyce: "It had been 2 or 3 years since my last retreat and it brought back a renewal of my faith and in that, a commitment to again encourage youth to do the same [grow and be challenged in their faith]."



Roxanne & David Millette

Roxanne: "I felt that many of the talks provided challenges to continuously surrender to God's mercy, love, and divine will. As a wife, homemaker, and mother of (soon to be) 5, life can get pretty busy! Sometimes I find myself very much caught up in trying to manage my family, home, and volunteer activities by my own strength. It was refreshing to return to my 'normal life' with an attitude of surrender; relying on His strength and seeking His divine will rather than my own."

Don: "I was challenged by the messages from the 3 keynote speakers. I was challenged to let go of what I am holding on to that hinders my relationship with God... Like Mary, our spiritual mother, we need not be afraid but put our trust in the Lord.



Don Courchene, with granddaughter Chasidy Westman

I was reminded of the importance of and challenged to give thanks and praise to God in all circumstances, for both the good and bad in our lives, the most difficult times, in the suffering, because that is believing, trusting, having faith in God. He is in control and will indeed look after all things as He sees fit. His love will never leave us.

I was challenged to be more open to the Holy Spirit and to ask for the Spirit to renew me daily. As Mary was we need to be open to receiving the Holy Spirit and His working in us. The power of the Holy Spirit transforms us from within, and equips us with His gifts in doing the work of Jesus, in helping others, and in building up the Kingdom of God."

FacetoFace has grown and changed over the past 14 years. From the inception of the ministry at those early retreats like the one Roxanne attended in 2002, to now with the second annual United Conference, these alumni have a unique perspective on the development of the ministry.

How have you seen FacetoFace grow and develop over the years?

Roxanne: "FacetoFace Ministries has grown and developed in **diversity**; spiritually challenging not only youth, but also children, young adults, parents, and grandparents."

Don: "Over the years God has moved mightily through FacetoFace ministries. What began as an outreach to youth has touched the lives of their parents and whole families. ... The Holy Spirit has led FacetoFace to make changes, step out in new ways, and offer their ministry through a multitude of approaches: retreats, missions, school ministry, parishes, Ignite youth camps, Steubenville bus trips, the mission service to the poor in India, the United Conference, internet blogs"

Joyce: "The growth of FacetoFace has been the best thing that has happened to our youth and to our church ever!!!"

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that "Hope is the sure and steadfast anchor for the soul." Hope drives us forward while keeping us rooted in what matters most. Joyce, Roxanne, and Don all agree that FacetoFace has been for them, and continues to be, a sign of hope for the church.

Hopes and prayers from our alumni...

Joyce: "It is very gratifying for me to see so many FacetoFace alumni getting married and raising their little ones in the Church. ... I pray that FacetoFace Ministries continues for the future of our Church and as a blessing for our young people."

Roxanne: "FacetoFace Ministries serves the Church today by challenging the members of the body of Christ to become Saints and to achieve our eternal reward: Heaven. I hope that this message continues to be spoken boldly, to make for a stronger, more unified Church."

Don: "I hope that FacetoFace Ministries is led by prayer and seeks the will of God. That the Lord sends the leaders, workers, graces and gifts necessary, and the support needed both spiritually and financially. My hope is that what God has begun and is doing through FacetoFace will continue, and that He will open doors and make new ways possible for the ministry to reach out in love and service to strengthen, renew and recapture those within the Church, and to our world in need."



UNITED CONFERENCE STRENGTHENS FAITH

By Daniel Richard, United Conference Participant

"This last February was my second time attending the United Conference. When I left for the United conference last year I thought it would be a good opportunity to connect with the friends I had made at Ignite and on the Steubenville Bus Trip. I quickly realized, however, that while I was connecting with friends I was also being established in deeper trust in God and greater support in my faith. This experience stayed with me for a long time. Needless to say, it was easy to convince me to attend this year's conference despite the 10 hour drive from Winnipeg.

United 2014 was once again an opportunity to connect with friends and receive support in my faith. I also met many new, unreal people that I could honestly see God in through our conversations. I undoubtedly grew closer to God and the people around me through the sets of thought-provoking talks, a newly introduced variety night, prayerful adoration, and sincere conversations. I know for a fact that both the United conferences in 2013 and 2014 were a major factor in keeping my commitment to the faith and supporting those people around me. I hope to continue being a part of these awesome conferences as long as possible."



United Conference

November 22&23, 2014

Holy Family Cathedral, Saskatoon, SK

Register online at www.f2f.ca (starting in August)

More information, contact Jon Courchene
at jon.courchene@f2f.ca or 306-381-7789

FROM WRESTLING TO FREEDOM

An Interview with Fr. Colin Roy by: Christy Dupuis

Fr. Colin Roy was ordained to the priesthood in June 2013 for the Diocese of Saskatoon. I got to sit down with Fr. Colin and listen to his story.

When Fr. Colin was in high school, growing up on a farm near Hoey, Saskatchewan, their local parish received a new youth minister: Ken Yasinski. Fr. Colin says though he didn't really want to attend the youth group, his mother said: "you're gonna go!" The first time he attended youth group Ken shared his testimony which Fr. Colin says "hooked him in."

"Faith was always important," said Fr. Colin, but the youth group challenged him to a new personal commitment in his faith. "It was awesome getting to know the other people in the youth group. We were able to form very deep friendships and share about our relationship with God. Everyone was really serious about responding to the call to be faithful and to love God."

When Ken began facilitating weekend youth retreats many of the youth from his youth groups attended, including Fr. Colin. Reflecting on the Face to Face retreats, Fr. Colin remembered how "joyful" they were and the profound teaching on the sacraments. It was through these retreats and the youth group that, he says, his faith "really came alive."

At times, other kids at school would question his commitment to the youth group and his retreat attendance, but Fr. Colin recalled that his experience of these things was so "wonderful" that a bit of teasing could not deter his commitment.

Throughout high school he continued to be very involved with the youth group and began helping occasionally with music at the retreats. In Grade 12 he attended a FacetoFace Retreat in Albertville. During the retreat, Ken invited anyone who might be feeling called to the priesthood or religious life to come forward to receive a blessing.



"I felt the Holy Spirit moving within me, stirring something inside my heart, but I wasn't open and I remained in my seat. I remember feeling really tense. There was an inner conflict."

After the retreat, Fr. Colin tried to push away the experience. "I kept being reminded of the experience in prayer, or in conversations I would have with others. It was very strong, but I just kept putting it on the back burner. I spent a lot of time wrestling with God."

The wrestling with God would continue as Fr. Colin moved to Saskatoon to pursue an Education degree after graduation from high school. During his years in University he continued to keep in touch with all of his friends from Face to Face and God continued to "form his heart." Fr. Colin says he felt "drawn to mass and to the chapel at St. Thomas More College to

pray. I see now that God was inviting me to place my trust in Him."

Besides his involvement with Face to Face, Fr. Colin was involved with Catholic Christian Outreach and a few other ministries. He also began dating a young woman quite seriously. Through all of his studies and involvement, however, the priesthood remained in the back of his mind. His dating relationship got to a point where he knew he couldn't ask her to marry him until he had very seriously discerned the priesthood. The decision to end the relationship, he says, was incredibly difficult (more wrestling with God), but when they finally made the decision it brought him great freedom.

Remembering this time in his life vividly, Fr. Colin said: **"I was no longer satisfied playing the game of avoiding God's will.** Early on when I felt the call I would push it away, but now I could really see how I was fighting with God. I was trying to be faithful, yet I was living a contradiction. I finally just got tired of the wrestling."

At this point Fr. Colin began to take concrete steps in his discernment. He found a spiritual director and attended several discernment retreats and Come and See weekends with Fr. Gerard Dewan. Receiving constant nourishment from the Sacraments, prayer and adoration was essential to Fr. Colin's discernment.

At the end of his degree, Fr. Colin met with Bishop Albert Legat and knew that "he just needed to go to the seminary." Fr. Colin and a few other friends had all been se-

riously discerning the priesthood. His friend, now Fr. Daniel Yasinski, made the first step in deciding to go to the seminary. After several meetings with the Bishop, Fr. Colin was also accepted to go.

I asked Fr. Colin what it felt like when he knew for sure that he would be attending the seminary in the fall. His response was immediate, "It felt awesome!"

As he prepared to leave for the seminary it was a time of excitement, but also of mourning and trepidation. He had to begin to let go of his plans, and all the things he thought he was going to do with his life. Fr. Colin says he was nervous about telling his parents and at first they were nervous too. They weren't sure how this was going to work out, but Fr. Colin says, "they could see how serious I was and so they gave me their support even though they didn't fully understand the idea of being 'called.'"

Reflecting on this initial decision, Fr. Colin remembers how much freedom he felt. "It felt amazing to be taking a step in God's will." This step began a 6 year journey to his ordination.

Throughout the 6 years there were up's and downs. His first year, however, really laid a foundation for the rest of his journey toward priesthood. "I was growing in my relationship with God during this year. It wasn't what I expected, but my call wasn't questioned. I felt like a sponge just soaking up the presence of God. We did a Holy Hour

every morning. I experienced so much peace and grace. That first year was essential for building a foundation in my prayer life."

Besides prayer and spiritual direction, Fr. Colin says good friends to journey with were a huge asset in his discernment. Having a support system was crucial.

His time in the seminary, Fr. Colin says, was a time of moving from discernment to decision, "that's what it's all about." He remembers during some of those 'down' times, where the doubts began to creep in, having to really "just trust in God." One time in particular, after returning to the seminary after Christmas break he was having a lot of doubts. He went into the chapel and very deliberately and honestly said to God, "not my will but yours." Fr. Colin remembers being flooded with peace.

That peace continued to permeate him despite doubts or challenges, especially as he approached his diaconal ordination. Fr. Colin says, "I knew that this was the decision I needed to make." A year after being ordained deacon Fr. Colin was ordained a priest.

"There was a deep sense that God was going to do the work. I could trust in Him. His love was being poured into me. During the ordination I was able to really just enter into the liturgy. ... **After we were vested and the Bishop turned us around to present us, and seeing the Cathedral so full, I had a deep sense of gratitude knowing that it**

was their prayers that had given me my vocation. I could literally count my blessings in front of me."

As with any vocation, Fr. Colin says it has been experiencing all the firsts that have brought him great joy in his first priestly year. One of his firsts was travelling with the Saskatoon diocese to Rio for World Youth Day where he concelebrated mass with the new Pope, not such a shabby gig! He's been surprised by moments of being called to priestly action in unexpected places. He's prayed with people on downtown city streets, and listened to one man's story outside of St. Paul's late one night after being called to the hospital. Fr. Colin says, "it is amazing the opportunities you are presented with that visible sign of the priesthood around your neck."

To anyone who is discerning their vocation, Fr. Colin says: "Do not be afraid.' Our lives are a gift from God to be given. The very gift of our being is a gift from God. He has a plan and purpose for the life he has gifted us: to give life in abundance. Don't be afraid to answer the call because that is where you will be the happiest and the most alive."

And he adds, "Get a spiritual director!"

Fr. Colin is currently the associate Pastor at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. We wish Fr. Colin every grace and blessing in his priesthood. May the Joy of the Gospel always animate your priestly ministry.



GOING DEEPER

GOSSIP: SPEAK NO EVIL

BY MATTHEW NELSON

After his re-version to Catholicism in 2010, Matt has developed a strong passion for explaining and defending the Catholic faith. He has appeared as a guest on Salt and Light TV's Perspectives. He resides in Shaunavon, SK with his wife and daughter.



Gossip, a sin described by the saints as “horrible,” “deplorable” and “abominable,” has been a topic of focus for Pope Francis in past months. To the Holy Father as to the saints, gossip is not just another sin but one which he describes as “poisonous,” likening it to a kind of murder.

Let's look at the effects of gossip from a Christian perspective. Our supreme duty is to obey God (1 Jn 5:3) and love one another as He loves us (Jn 13:34). To gossip is to disobey God who holds us responsible for every careless word we speak. “By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned,” says Jesus (Mt 12:36-37). Our words, then, have eternal consequences.

St. Paul writes that “if one member [of the Church] suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together” (1 Cor 12:26). So whether we speak good or bad of another person, the effects resonate to the ends of the earth like the ripples from a pebble dropped in a pond - a “pay it forward” effect resonating through one's entire lifetime and beyond. How then can we overcome this terrible sin?

First, we must realize the purpose for our existence. God has created us to be saints - unconditional lovers of God whose every action radiates the joy (Jn 15:11) and light of Christ Himself (1 Jn 1:5). We must allow Jesus to live in us and act through us, just as St. Paul did (Gal 2:20). We must become, in the words of C.S Lewis, a “little Christ” to others and nothing less. As St. Therese of Lisieux says, “You cannot be half a saint, you must be a whole saint or no saint at all.”

Second, we must listen to the experts. St. John Vianney teaches that “if something uncharitable is said in your presence, either speak in favor of the absent, or withdraw, or if possible, stop the conversation.” If the victim of gossip is truly guilty, St. Francis de Sales recommends that we “apologize for the accused on

account of his intentions.”

One morning my wife and her girlfriends were visiting over breakfast when one of the ladies began a sentence with “I really like (insert name) but...” Immediately one of the others interrupted with a gentle “hey now” and playfully made a scissoring motion over her friend's mouth with two fingers, as if to cut up the words as they came out. The result of the playful gesture was laughter and an immediate shift in conversation. This is a light-hearted, creative example of how we can act with Christian love in such situations. But,

of course, we must discern what is most appropriate for the particular situation.

What does Pope Francis recommend? Pray! Keep first things first. St. Josemaria Escriva wrote, “Action is worthless without prayer.” Therefore I propose

that since “the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects” (Jas 5:16) we turn to the angels and saints.

So look up! Call on the saints and angels. They are prisms that make our praises and petitions even more beautiful before God as they offer our prayers with incense before Him and His throne (Rev 5:8;8:3-4). We have all of heaven on our side. Our Pope's words reveal great hope for his flock; “I am convinced that if each one of us would purposely avoid gossip, at the end, we would become a saint! It's a beautiful path! Do we want to become saints? Yes or no?”

“I am convinced that if each one of us would purposely avoid gossip, at the end, we would become a saint! It's a beautiful path! Do we want to become saints? Yes or no?”
- Pope Francis



FIRST-TIMER INCREDIBLY IMPRESSED

BY DARCIE GRAVEL, FIRST TIME FACE TO FACE PARTICIPANT

Early in the New Year I saw an ad for the FacetoFace United Conference being held in Saskatoon. I never had an opportunity to participate in a FacetoFace event before, so I registered on my own. Even though I did not know anyone else attending the conference, as a mom, I felt like I really needed this time away from my daily responsibilities to truly focus and grow in my faith.

I immediately felt welcomed and at home at the conference. All of the details were so meticulously taken care of and I could just relax and enjoy the conference!

Each presenter's message was clear, profound, and spoke directly to my heart. One of the many highlights of the weekend was the Saturday evening talk offered by Christy Dupuis. She so beautifully lead us into musical adoration with Ken Yasinski. Musical adoration was like nothing I have ever ex-

perienced before. Being in the true presence of Jesus, praying with this room full of people, being lead deeper into prayer, and being challenged in new ways was incredibly powerful and moving.

Ken's talk on the Holy Spirit probably had the most profound effect on me. I was moved to tears. I felt like I was hearing about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a way that I had never experienced before. The message that Ken had for us that



morning was exactly what I needed to hear. When we were invited to pray over one another I definitely hesitated, but having that individual prayer was very powerful. **This was truly a beautiful display of the Holy Spirit pouring his love upon each of us.**

At the end of the conference we were challenged to continue to pursue the Lord and go deeper in our faith. The MC challenged us to "not just leave everything we have experienced at the conference and ignore its impact on us, but to take this experience and allow it to launch us deeper." This challenge remains in my heart.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped support the United Conference, through prayer, financial contributions, volunteering their time, and to those who served on the FacetoFace team. I was so incredibly impressed with everything!

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