



CSCO Christmas Newsletter

Dec. 21st, 2017

LUKE 2. 1 - 20

Gospel Peacemaking

by Kathleen Ware

Kathleen is a chaplaincy leader with the DPCDSB

One of the highlights of the semester were my grade 12 retreats entitled Gospel Peacemaking. Fr. Bob Holmes and Daisy Radigan and their team did an absolutely beautiful job of explaining First Nations land treaties and the issues surrounding these treaties with a Blanket Activity. The students came into a room where the floor was covered in blankets and were asked to go stand on a blanket. As issues arose with the First Nations people or the government of Canada or a resource company the treaty lands shrunk until very small parcels of land were left in isolation from one another. Daisy and her team did a great job of explaining the different causes of the break down of the treaties and how this has had such a large impact on our First Nations people. The students were completely engaged in

the activity and came away with a new perspective and understanding of treaty breakdown.

CHAPLAINS' HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017



Kathleen Ware is the Chaplaincy Leader at St. Augustine Catholic Secondary School in Brampton, Ontario.



Retirement

by Deacon Brad Lewis

Deacon Brad is a retired chaplain with the LCDSB

Retirement means I am missing my colleagues in high school ministry, but it does not mean I am absent from school life. My ministry as a permanent deacon now has me visiting two Catholic elementary schools in St. Thomas, Ontario. A teacher at one of the schools died suddenly in November. I had just been in her class the week before. The day after her death, I was back in the school and spent part of my

day in her Grade 1/2 classroom. I took with me pony beads and pipe cleaners, and sat with each student and showed them how to make a cross. They were told the crosses were not theirs to keep, but their gift to their teacher's family. (*Attached is a photo of the students hands, holding the crosses they made*) The teacher's parents were so moved by this gesture of love. But there was more! I had time to make each student a cross of their own, and when they were finished I returned to the home of the teacher's parents. I told them these crosses were for their daughter's students, and they

held the crosses while I blessed them. The next day, as the crosses were handed out, the classroom was filled with smiles.

May God continue to bless the work you do in your schools as you bring joy and peace to those you serve.

Merry Christmas!
Deacon Brad Lewis

Deacon Brad served as a Chaplaincy Leader with the London Catholic District School Board for many years. We wish him well in his retirement! Many blessings!





ALL4HAITI

by Linda Izzo (Chaplaincy Leader of Marshall McLuhan C.S.S. in Toronto)

I have the great honour and privilege of being the Chaplaincy Leader at Marshall McLuhan Catholic Secondary School in Toronto, a vibrant community that tries to "live out" the cross each and every day. An exciting part of my rewarding work is to coordinate charity projects that not only raise awareness on a variety of issues, but also funds and goods for those in our "global village" (to quote our school's patron) who are in desperate need of our activism and compassion. This Advent, our Peer Ministry Team has been very busy with our school-wide charitable campaign called ALL4HAITI, where we supported The Missionaries of The Poor's outreach to the most impoverished country in the Western hemisphere: Haiti. The Missionaries, a Catholic non-profit charity of brothers and sisters, serves the neediest worldwide, including those living in absolute poverty in Haiti. In our collection of non-perishable food items, we heeded Christ's call to give, as articulated by St. Mother Teresa: *"When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because*

God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed." We are completely moved by our community's generosity and the many ways that students and staff opened up their kitchen cupboards, wallets and hearts to give to this campaign. Many students laboured to carry in bags of rice that weighed almost as much as they did! On December 20, hundreds of boxes containing 5, 019 items were loaded onto a truck, which will now make their way onto a container sailing for Haiti. The chapel became a sea of boxes-- living proof that we dared to care about our Haitian brothers and sisters facing enormous struggles. As those boxes were filled, we thought of how our Saviour was born into poverty and our hearts were moved to help. Students will often ask the school's "resident prayer lady" how we get into Heaven? I respond, one can, one bag of rice at a time!



Christmas/Advent Reflections

Catherine Cavanagh

The Gift of the Blind

Mary reflects; she ponders. Even as a child they branded her the quiet one, the introvert. But this is only because they couldn't see the power of the images inside her, or hear those voices, or taste that sweetness. She works hard too, even in the torturous noonday sun, bowing under the weight of the water pails, wrestling with the laundry, pounding the grain, not just for her family, but for the children, the neighbours, the sick, the weak and the blind.

The Holy Ones command, "Stay away from them! Stay back. Stay pure. They will infect you with their sin, inseminate you with their horror, ravage you with their hopelessness."

But Mary rejects purity. She peers instead at the dust-encrusted face of the blind man by the well and is shocked by the pain etched across every wrinkle of that not-so-old brow, the loneliness on each sun-blotched cheek, the fear in each unseeing eye. His name is Bartimaeus, and she spies on him, reaching into his eyes with her own. She finds her village there, her family, herself. Her fingers brush the ragged arm of this outcast man, and as he trembles, she feels his pulse, senses his warmth, unveils his humanity. If she leaves him untended, then

she abandons not only him, but every friend, every enemy, every person she has ever known.

Every day, she draws water first for Bartimaeus, and waits as he drinks. He sips carefully, making sure that none of the life-giving liquid is wasted, and when he is finished, she wipes his face with a damp cloth. Their conversation is ragged at first. It smooths with time. Mary describes to him the landscape of their world, and he describes to her his life of solitude in plain view. If he has owned anything, it is time and thought, and these he shares eagerly with her.

The villagers shake their heads, and keep their distance at the well. Only Joseph understands, pausing in his work on the hottest days to mop his brow and join in a drink of cool refreshing water. Bartimaeus smiles, grows quiet and listens as Mary and Joseph converse. He knows. He has heard it before.

Joseph and Mary only speak with each other at the well but their eyes meet repeatedly through the rest of their day. He nods at Mary across the sweltering market as he selects the finest wood, humble at that, and builds a shelter not for her but for the gnarled, sightless one. Bartimaeus shall have a home.

The shavings rise from Joseph's workshop, swirl towards Mary, gather her to him. Mary reflects: there is a

greater vision that does not require eyes, an understanding that forfeits ears, a wisdom that overflows the heart. And so they are betrothed, promised to each other, perfect one for the other in thought, in deed, and in love.

And now? Perhaps this would signal the end, the 'happy ever after', the grand finale, but there are no secrets in heaven. This love commands attention. This moment has come.

The universe rustles with hope, angels pause, the Spirit hovers.

Sacred night. Betrothed but not yet married, Mary sleeps. Suddenly the darkness shatters, all peace destroyed. She bolts upright on her sleeping mat. Listens. Gasps breathless before the Angel. How can this be? His call breaks through the night, explodes in her heart, shakes her to the soul.

A question lies veiled behind his words, but how do you answer a question such as this? What kind of a person can accept such a challenge? What kind of a God would ask this of her?

What kind of a woman would say yes?

Only one that is blind, deaf and mute. And Mary is all that: blind to social status, deaf to idle chatter, and mute before material possession. She ponders this in her heart; that blindness is nothing but inward

sight, that deafness is just the potential to hear the possible, that silence is necessary to grasp the sublime.

And so, Mary stretches out towards the Presence, offers herself as sacrifice, trusts God and wraps herself around the Innocence that burgeons within her.

She will give her life for this Child that He may give His life for others. She will raise Him blind to hate. She will raise Him deaf to wealth. She will raise Him mute to insult and slander.

And she will give him the vision, the sound, and the Word of a world that belongs to God.

(Originally published in *DisciplesWorld*, November 2007)

Cathy is the Chaplaincy Leader at St. Mary Catholic High School in Brockville, Ontario. She is currently off on sick leave. May God bless her and bring her

back to full strength soon.

Third Annual Cake Auction

by Paige Forsyth

Paige is a chaplaincy leader with the SMCDSB

It's been called the worst humanitarian disaster in all of Asia's history. 1.2 million Rohingya people are displaced in Myanmar and Bangladesh and in need of food and water. On Thursday November 24, 2017, St. Dominic came together for our Third Annual Cake Auction. It was phenomenal and the 15 cakes made by staff and students were incredible. The spirit was palpable and we raised \$665.00 for Development and Peace. This will be matched by our Canadian government to become \$1330.00 for this very worthy cause.



Thank you to the students and families for all your support over these past few months with our social justice projects: our 3rd Annual Cake Auction support displaced Rohingya Muslims; homeroom classes donating items for the Muskoka Shoebox Project and women in crisis; along with various food drives and our Red and Black Day in support of Remembrance Day to recognize those serving and veteran members of the military.



Paige is the Chaplaincy Leader at St. Dominic Catholic Secondary School in Bracebridge, Ontario.

Katherine and Jared's Wedding

Katherine Mustachi and Jared Wilson (Grade 4 teacher at DDSB) were married on July 28th 2017 in Ajax with their family and friends!

Congratulations on a beautiful marriage made in Heaven!

Katherine is the Chaplaincy Leader at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Ajax, Ontario.



Thank you Katherine, Paige, Cathy, Linda, Deacon Brad and Kathleen for contributing to the Christmas edition of the CSCO newsletter.

The next one will be issued for Easter 2018.

If you would like to contribute one of your highlights, a prayer, reflection or a poem, please send it to Lorenzo Campanelli at cscovp@gmail.com. Photos are always welcome, too.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Advent, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!
Hope, peace, joy and love to you!