

SERVANTS OF THE CROSS †

THE NEW WINE

SPRING/SUMMER 2011 NEWSLETTER

COST: A SMILE

IS GOD REAL?

Sr. Anna Chan

How many of you believe God is real? The question is not the same as asking, *Do you believe God exists?* When I ask if you believe God is real, I mean, do you believe you can have a relationship with God that is personal? Think of your closest friend with whom you share all the little details of your life; your aches, pains, and trials; your joys, triumphs, and accomplishments.

This intimacy you find in close relationships is the 'real' I speak of that God longs to have with you. That's right. Jesus tells us himself that He really wants to be in relationship with each of us personally. He longs to love and be loved by you. Evidence of His love is enfleshed throughout Sacred Scripture. And there is one passage that touches my heart. It's simple. It's deliberate. It's convincing. It speaks of His personal love for you and for me. On the cross as He is dying, Jesus reaches out to each of us, one more time, and says, "I thirst". (John 19:28) There is no mistaking what it means to thirst, literally. It is not hard to imagine. Jesus wants us to know of His deep longing, His unquenched thirst, His yearning to love and be loved by each of us.

I've spoken to a number of young adults, in their twenties and thirties (and even in their fifties) about this word, "I thirst". Some are convinced that these two words are real and are able to embrace the love that is waiting for each of them. But some aren't. Often I hear that they don't believe God could thirst personally for them because they don't believe they are worthy; that they feel a deep sense of shame. (Shame says I'm no good whereas guilt says my behaviour is no good.) Hearing this is quite alarming because shame, unlike guilt, hits

right at the core of every person's identity and hence, at the core of their relationship with God. Shame allows people to believe that God can't love them in their brokenness; that God can't meet them where they are at; that they can't believe what God wants most from them are their sins. They feel unworthy to be loved. And these are your regular middle class God-fearing adults; only to say that shame has no prejudice.



This is why I started this article with the question, *Do you believe God is real?* The media, the secular world, pounds into the hearts of men and women that they are not enough, that they are not beautiful enough, and that they need to be this way or that way to be who they ought to be. No wonder feeling shame is so rampant. No wonder they have a hard time trusting in God's love for them.

These are real issues I see consistently. But, I wouldn't be writing any of this if I wasn't assured of some hope. If given the time and the awareness, I've seen people begin to recognize what is vastly available to them. I've seen that, as you feed them the truth about His love, His thirst for each of them, the walls start coming down and a real connection in their relationship with God begins to thrive.

"I thirst". These two words are extremely powerful. Even Blessed Mother Teresa, when she heard these words on her heart, could not deny their power. They became the fulcrum of the community the Lord built through her.

Meditate on these two words, "I thirst". I invite you. And then, in your heart, talk to Him, look at Him on the cross, and ask Him, do you really love me? If you are real God, show me!

WHAT IS A VOCATION?

Sr. Vicki Wright

What is a Vocation?

A vocation is a call from God, an invitation into a state in life. In this state, it “ultimately leads to fulfillment and happiness, because it leads us to God, to sharing in God’s own life.” (Blessed Pope John Paul II, Philippines, 1996). The two vocation types are marriage or celibacy (through priesthood, consecrated life, or single life). Our vocation, no matter in which state, “touches the very roots of the human soul. It is an interior calling of God directed to the person: to the unique and irreplaceable person.” (Blessed Pope John Paul II, Ecuador, 1985).



A Vocation or a Profession?

People often use the words vocation and profession interchangeably, but they are very different things. A profession indicates a career, a way in which we earn a livelihood and

contribute to the good of society. When we use the word vocation in terms of the Church, we are indicating the call that God has for our lives; the purpose for which He created us.

How are we to be good stewards in our vocation?

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that: “The Lord has His plan for each of us, He calls each one of us by name. Our task is to be listeners, capable of perceiving His call, to be courageous and faithful, so that we may follow him, and in the end, be found as trustworthy servants who have used well the gifts entrusted to us.” (Marian Vespers with the Religious and Seminarians of Bavaria, 2006).

A VOCATION VACATIONER’S TESTIMONY

Ashley Flynn

I first met the Servants of the Cross at their Vocation? Vacation! I had recently become open to the consecrated life and was open to exploring the possibilities. Growing up, I remember counting on one hand the number of times I encountered sisters in my daily life, none of whom I ever spoke with.

I quickly gathered that the Servants had a unique way of life in comparison to what I had pictured as the consecrated life. I saw their uniqueness in their relationship with each other and with Christ. The retreat was also different in its approach to discernment but it really encompassed the spirituality of the sisters. It was a hands-on day with activities that helped us become more aware of our identity in Christ; an integral part to discerning my vocational call. We also had mass, we sang praise and worship, we had prayer

time, and adoration; which is important in strengthening my relationship with Christ in order to hear His will. There were personal testimonies from the sisters about their own vocation and I was intrigued by each one’s journey. The Vacationers had time to share their own stories, hopes, and concerns. But, perhaps my favourite part of the day was a field trip to the Jeanne d’Arc sisters. Visiting these sisters gave us all a chance to see the beauty of a community growing old

together. The Jeanne d’Arc sisters really take care of each other with love and there is no doubt in my mind that they are truly happy.

The Servants gave a wholesome approach to their retreat day, and really put forth a lot of effort to show me who they are. Now I recommend the Servants to my girlfriends who are opening their hearts to the consecrated life because it will allow them to see sisters in a whole new way.



Ashley and Sr. Monique displaying their collages about their identity as daughters of God during the Vocation? Vacation!

Note:

This past fall we have opened our home to young women who are beginning to discern their vocation and would like to spend the day with us. (**Fun Fact:** The name ‘Vocation? Vacation!’ was coined first by our brother-priest, Fr. Mark Goring, CC.)

Considering a Vocation? Come on a Vacation!

Our next date will be November 12th, 2011.

A SISTER IN THE MAKING

Sr. Melinda Schenher

Coming from a family of six children, I remember my Mom having one of my brothers pegged as 'the priest' of the family. It never occurred to me that I would do anything other than get married and have babies. Yet God had His plans for me!

In my first year of university, I was feeling overwhelmed as I tried to make my way through midterm exams. In the midst of my struggles, I was invited on a weekend retreat that brought me face to face with Jesus' personal love for me, and gave me an opportunity to commit my whole life to Him. As I moved out of the way, and invited the Lord to be in control, I was filled with



peace. Inside of me was a deep desire to love Him and serve Him for the rest of my life.



Fast forward about ten years, and I found myself serving the Lord in ministry at John Paul II Bible School in Radway, Alberta. During a couple of Thursday night prayer meetings (about a month apart), I heard the testimonies of Fr. Scott McCaig and Fr. Terry Donahue from the Companions of the Cross, and how they have given up everything to serve God in their vocation. I was both excited and fearful as I considered that I perhaps had a vocation to the consecrated life. It was foreign to me to think this way because I was still living in the assumption that I would get married one day. However, I was drawn to Ottawa as I answered the call on my heart to check out a sisterhood that shared the Companions of the Cross spirituality.



During my week-long discernment retreat with the Servants of the Cross, I had the task one day of journaling about the best and worst scenario I could conjure up of married, single, and consecrated life. Thinking about consecrated life, I considered many women sharing few bathrooms, and I wrote, "eek!", but I also had the sense that this was the road that Jesus was calling me to walk down. I didn't know what would be at the end, but I was willing to give Him my wholehearted 'Yes'. I had a tremendous amount of peace as I applied and was accepted to the Servants of the Cross.



What I've found with the Servants of the Cross are women who love God unconditionally, are willing to journey with one another in joy and sorrow, and who give their lives out of love for Jesus Christ, his Cross, and the world.

I am filled with joy to know that 'I know that I know' deep down in my heart that this is where the Lord has called me. And I believe that as

I continue to journey with this community, the Lord will continue to reveal His love for me, just as He did so many years ago. On September 15th, 2010, I made my first promises to the community.



CONSIDERING A VOCATION? COME ON A VACATION!

"If there's anything I'm going to take from this day, it will be to give God permission"
- Sarah (participant)

Saturday November 12, 2011
9 am to 10 pm

Please contact Sr. Anna Chan at 613-729-8710 to join us!



TALAGA?

(Filipino for "Oh Really? Did you know?")

Monstrance on the move...

In 2004, Pope John Paul II blessed six monstrances set to travel the six continents for the purpose of praying for vocations worldwide. Would you consider having the vocation monstrance in your parish or asking your parish priest to offer a Eucharistic Adoration night for vocations?

(<http://www.serracanada.com/Clubs/programs.php>)

Treasure in Heaven

Are you discerning your vocation? Fr. Mark Goring of the Companions of the Cross has composed a prayer booklet that we would like to offer you, free! The booklet is called Treasure in Heaven. It is scripture based and life-giving. And it will encourage you in your personal prayer time with the Lord. Call us and we'll be happy to provide you with a copy.

(http://www.companionscross.org/promotions/TreasureinHeaven_promotion.html)

Fill it to the Brim Our Wish List



You can help us in filling our needs to the brim through:

+ Gift Cards for:

- Real Canadian Superstore
- Food Basics
- Costco
- Staples
- Petro Canada

+ Items such as:

- Postage Stamps
- Printer Paper
- 1 TB External Hard Drive
- Facial Tissue
- Dehumidifier

Thank you to all those who have helped in filling our wish list to the brim!

For more details, please call or email us at info@servantsofthecross.ca

Mission Statement

We are a community of consecrated women called to spread the message of the Gospel through a dynamic evangelization. Akin in spirituality to the Companions of the Cross, we live this message in our everyday life as Fr. Bob Bedard, our Spiritual Father envisions. We stand on four pillars: being faithful to the Eucharist, being open to the Holy Spirit, being devoted to Our Lady, and being loyal to the Church's Magisterium.

Contact Info

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