

# THE NEW WINE

bringing Our Lord's personal love to people, *one person at a time*



## Give God Permission

Fr. Bob Bedard, CC

*In our journeys to the Companions of the Cross foundations, we've brought along this homily given by Fr. Bob Bedard.*

*We are not meant  
to be in charge.  
Rather, He is to be in  
charge of our lives.  
This is what He wants.*

Permission. You see, our merciful Father knows us very well, doesn't he? He knows you better than you know yourself. He loves you better than you love yourself. In fact, that's probably one of our problems. Deep down inside we don't love ourselves, and we're saying to ourselves "If they really knew what was in here, or what I was really like, they wouldn't like me", which is a lie, of course. It doesn't come from God.

But you see, our heavenly Father who is merciful and loving wants to minister to us; He wants to do good things for us continually. And He recognizes our weaknesses. One of the biggest weaknesses we have sometimes, we think of as a strength. And that is our desire to control things and to control other people. In the eyes of the world, that usually comes across as strength.

Somebody that can call the shots. Somebody that can lay out the agenda for other people. Somebody that seems to know what he's doing, or what she's doing, somebody who has got it all together. Don't we admire people like that? "Wow, doesn't so-and-so look as though he's got it all together? What a together person she is!" Fantastic.

You see we all have the desire to control things, but what the Lord wants us to know is that that isn't a strength at all, that's a weakness. Because we are not meant to control things. We are not meant to be in charge. Rather, He is to be in charge of our lives. This is what He wants. Somehow, we have a kind of need to get into control. That happens even after we make some kind of thoroughly serious response to the gospel. It even comes after we hand things over to the



back, day after day. That's the kind of thing you've got to fight against.

Then the key question is, are you willing to let Him? Are you willing to let Him change the things that you can't change but He can? Are you willing to do that? Look, God is tired of being a spectator in your lives. He wants to be a participant. God is not happy in retirement, the retirement that we have forced him into. He's too young to retire. He's still got lots of zip left, you know? He doesn't like being retired. The Holy Spirit is not tired. He's got lots of oomph left."

The Lord is telling me, and I'm still learning, and I'm trying to convey it to you, that He wants our permission. Every day, in your life and in mine, so that He can do the things that He wants to do. We have to get used to doing fewer things for God and letting Him do what He wants to do so we can see it and support it. One of the strategies for today's Church I'm convinced is to see what God is doing and to do it with Him. To let Him take the initiative, and follow along after Him. Permission. Lord, if you're teaching us this tonight, we want to respond. We want to tell you Lord, we want You to go ahead and do as You will. We give You permission oh Lord, to move in our lives, the lives of our families, the life of our Church.



Lord. "Lord, you take over." Even after I surrender everything to God 'I give you my all, my Lord', even then, we continually (I speak for myself) tend to continue to control things and keep things in charge. To take charge once we get tested by the grace of God, then we get involved in His business, don't we?

Can you testify to some time in your life when your priorities changed? When you made a big surrender to God, when your interests got all shaken up, when God's interest became first in your life; can you testify to something like that? I think probably most of you, maybe all of you can.

But then you see what happens is we want to take charge of His business. We want to control what He's doing. Or take charge of the church, for example. That kind of thing. It's like we begin to manage the Church in the absence of God as it were.

This applies to your family, to your own individual lives, to your jobs, and to everything: His desire, His capacity to involve Himself in our affairs. It is something that He wants to convey to us continually. It is the whole wisdom thing. If we want it, if we seek it, if we tell the Lord we'll

do it no matter what it is, He will get across to us what He wants us to do.

We'll get it wrong from time to time; we mustn't take ourselves too seriously in this whole business. We've got to take God seriously, but ourselves not so seriously. We can make mistakes. Can you testify to that? Have you made mistakes in your lives? *So have I.* Have you made mistakes trying to figure out what God wants in your lives? *So have I.* Have you been discouraged and upset when you've done that? *So have I!* Have you got a little annoyed at the Lord sometimes about all that? *So have I.*

But He still wants to convey His word to us, and He will. He will lead us if we let Him do it. If we invite Him, He will lead us. Do we believe that? Let's say we believe that We tell Him we believe! We tell Him we surrender! But if you're like me, then you take it back and proceed as though everything was the same. That's what I've been through. That's what I continually struggle with. I tell Him I believe He wants to be in charge, I tell him He can be in charge, and then I go on being in charge. I don't really let Him, in other words. I continue to take it

# APP'S Top 3

*We asked our applicants to give us their top 3 ways that they gave God permission to move in their lives this year. As you read their thoughts, please keep them in prayer.*

**Penelope:** First, being in the Great White North, I often ask God to be my strength and health. And I am amazed that I haven't got sick since I entered the community especially when going for walks in -20°C (-4°F) weather.

Second, I beg God to infuse His love in me so I can joyfully do house chores and be ready to serve others.

And thirdly, one day, as Melissa was teaching me to skate and holding my hand, I still fell many times. I thought, "Lord, after each fall, I just need to get up, smile, and continue to go – knowing that you are here to guide and protect me."



**Melissa:** This year I have given God permission by allowing Him to shown me wounds from my childhood and adolescence and instead of running from them, I gave Him permission to bring healing and peace to my heart.

Secondly, after a very difficult death took place in my family, I had to accept that I could not be physically present to my family for as long as I desired; I had to return to community and entrust the hearts of my family members and their healing to the Lord.

Lastly, I have never been a morning person, but at the beginning of the year I prayed, "God, if You want me to be a morning person, I'm not ready for it, but I'm willing." 5 a.m. doesn't come as early as it used to anymore!

**Carmen:** Since being with the community, I have given God permission, first by allowing Him to direct my intellectual studies and community life formation through my formator and superior.

Second, I give Him permission for all that will make me a better empathetic listener.

And third, I give Him permission to detach me from some monastic customs I've learned in the past that could hinder my improvement as an evangelizer. Charismatics and monastics have definite differences! I must add, that I'm really loving the way our community and our brother Companions worship the Lord.



† SERVANTS OF THE CROSS  
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*We invite you to send your special intentions  
and we will join you in prayer.*

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# His Word at the BEACH

By: Sr. Anna Chan, SC

You can only imagine what it might feel like for a Filipina who, has adapted to cooler temperatures and enjoys hard-working, goal-oriented days, goes to the beach, exposes herself to the sun and lounges for a WHOLE day. You'd expect ... boredom. But God is good. There really couldn't have been a better day.

Galveston was a balmy 20°C (68°F) and the thought that I'd be wasting my time changed when I felt on my heart that God wanted me to see that spending the day at the beach had its purpose. It happened when Fr. Mark Goring and I were standing looking out into the ocean watching a young lady paddleboarding (It's an offshoot of surfing combined with kayaking or canoeing. The person stands upright and the board is wider for easier balance.). Fr. Mark said, "Do you know that Dr. Peter Kreeft (a Catholic apologist and prolific writer) wrote several books on the topic of surfing? One of his books is called *I Surf, Therefore I am – A Philosophy of Surfing*." I was a little shocked to hear that the great Peter Kreeft was an avid surfer. But I began to look deeper at what I felt the Lord wanted me to hear. Here is what I heard Him say in my heart:

*Look out into the ocean. You are the one on the paddleboard. Look at how*



**Commit your life to the Lord,  
trust in Him and He will act.**  
~ Psalm 37:5

*vast the ocean is. The ocean is my embrace for you and my people. See how wide, how grand, how immense my love is for you. Just you. I want you to know how important our relationship is. I want you to learn to trust me. These waves are like my Holy Spirit. You have no control over the waves. They are unpredictable. But, I want you to surrender to the 'uncertainty' of my Spirit. I want you to give Me permission to move in your life. Ride with the waves because if you go against them you'll find yourself more exhausted, more discouraged. Trust then in my Spirit. Follow the Spirit's lead. As you learn to ride with my Spirit, take courage and persevere through the fear, the doubt, the anxiety. I want you to trust in my love for you.*



I was in awe of God's love. I felt a deep peace. It was like being caressed on the cheek by God's personal love. But the vast ocean, gentle breeze, sound of the waves, and warm sun wasn't all the Lord wanted me to hear.

The Sisters were very attracted to these canopied, bright coloured surreys (4 person bike) and with big puppy eyes swayed me to rent the bikes! They were excited for an adventure. And I was willing to hear what the Lord wanted to say to my heart. Here is what I heard:

*Not only do I want you to see my 'vertical' relationship with you, I want you to see how my relationship with you is to unfold through your*



***"Although we are to be a body committed to the active ministry of the Church, we believe that we will be defined, not so much by the ministry we undertake, but rather by the quality of the life that we will live together. Before we will be able to do anything worthwhile for the Lord together, we will have to be something good together."***

**(Fr. Bob, 1994)**

*'horizontal' relationships. I want to remind you of your commitment to community. Together, you will work to bring my people back to me. You will walk with them, pray with them, bring them into a personal encounter with me. But your work will come through the JOY of your love for one another and through my love for you. Intercede that hearts may see the depth of my love as I died on the Cross. I thirst for you and I thirst for you to love one another as I love you.*



Who would have thought that the Lord would speak volumes at the BEACH! In fact, His words have left a very strong impression on my heart that I wanted to share it with you all. The Lord wants to reveal himself to us everyday, no matter the circumstance, whether it's in the church pew or at the beach.

# Giving God PERMISSION: Experience the JOY of the Gospel



From November 2014 to April 2015 Srs. Anna and Monique travelled with Fr. Scott, Fr. Mark Goring, and Mary Lauzon to facilitate the 'Give God Permission' retreats in the CC foundations outside of Ottawa. At our last retreat in Halifax, Ann Burton (Regional LA coordinator) expected to receive only 1 new member. People's hearts were so touched that 8 other people decided to give God permission and Fr. Rob Arsenault received their promises as Lay Associates. What a blessing to see God on the move!



1. MC: Mary Lauzon | 2. *Technical:* Sr. Monique | 3. *Toronto:* Sr. Anna speaks about the response of the Rich Young Man | 4. *Toronto:* Each retreat included time for adoration | 5. *Houston:* Fr. Mark Goring speaks on surrender through Unbound (see Alison's article 'Nothing to Fear') | 6. *Houston:* Lunch break! | 7. *Detroit:* The team prays over Anita Houghton before she shares her testimony | 8. *Detroit:* Starting the day with Mass | 8. *Halifax:* Greeting the newly professed Lay Associates | 9. *Halifax:* Sr. Anna made some young friends



# Nothing to Fear

This is a letter that was written to us after our Give God Permission retreat in Houston, TX. We share it with you today because Alison Weber was able to give an honest, personal, and tangible testimony of the day to day challenges of giving God permission



Fr. David, Alison, Fr. Francis

## *Dear Servants of the Cross,*

Thank you for a wonderful retreat. It seems it was made just for me. For the past 4 years since I started attending the Catholic Charismatic Center, I have heard "Give God Permission" many, many times. I have also said those words, "God, I give you permission" many times, but I realize now those have just been words. They were never said from the heart, as much as I wanted them to be. One thing I learned over the past 4 years is that I live a life bound by many fears: the fear of rejection

being the top one. It is like I take the courage to step out of the boat and sink the first time, climb back in the boat and am afraid to try again. I can see it is Our Lord telling me that the first try wasn't at the right spot. I need to keep trying until I can find the spot and walk. For instance, I had a one-on-one discussion with a Sister in Houston and she gave me a list of three people to call to ask for spiritual direction. The first phone call was a 'NO'. Now, I am having a hard time getting the courage to contact the other two.

In my mind, it goes along with what has happened two years in a row now at Chick-fil-A, during our retreat lunch. I am given the task of helping to save tables, and people sit everywhere else but at mine. I convince myself of the lies in my head that I am meant to be alone. I tell you and everyone else I am fine being alone and I give lame excuses, like having more space to spread out, when inside my heart is breaking. The voice in my head is telling me, "You were here first. If they

really wanted you to sit with them, they would have sat with you." I don't move because I don't want people to feel sorry for me as I do enough of that myself.

Then to have Fr. Mark speak in his talk on being bound by lies, I realize through the list of lies he read, that the Chick-fil-A happenings are God's way of showing me what I am supposed to be working on. I obviously didn't get the picture last year, so the same thing had to happen again this year.

Now during this time of vocational discernment there has been a lot of inner struggle. Age has been a

big one. The director of vocations of the diocese tells me I am getting too old, yet I also heard from a Vocations Director that because of my education, I am not that old and there is still hope. Then what happens? I meet Carmen [an Applicant of the Servants]. She tells me about her story, a woman who is 9 years older than me, and who is just beginning in her journey with the Servants. That is what prompted me to ask each of you what it was like when you were discerning.

Am I called to be a sister? I don't know. I do know things changed when I met you for the first time two years ago. Up until that point I was afraid of being around Sisters. In the time I was able to get to know you between the retreat and then that come-and-see dinner, I realized there was nothing to fear. Since that time I have had no problems speaking with Sisters from different communities. I also find that when I am among Sisters, and even priests, there is a peace that fills me inside. It is a calm in the storm of life as I figure out where and who I am supposed to be.

All of this is what I took from the retreat - the things I need to work on. Sr. Melinda asked me before we parted ways if courage is what I needed. As you can see by this letter, it is. A whole bunch of it!

Thank you for coming down to Texas. Unless by some miracle I make it to Canada, I guess this is goodbye until next year.

I hope you have a safe trip home. Pray for me as I will continue to pray for you!

*Peace and blessings,*  
*Alison*

# Radiate the Love of Christ



*For vocation inquiries*  
Contact Sr. Anna: 613.729.8710  
[www.servantsofthecross.ca](http://www.servantsofthecross.ca)

A poster for a retreat featuring a scenic view of a lake at sunset. The text is overlaid on a yellow sunburst graphic.

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Someone asked,  
“what is the  
weight limit?”  
just before we  
took the elevator  
#ElevatorSelfie

*11 people in an  
elevator (12 people if  
you can see behind  
Fr. Pierre)  
March 2015, Detroit*



Home for the Summer. Please pray for us!

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