

# THE NEW WINE

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

## LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS CCY WOMEN'S SESSIONS

BY SR. MONIQUE BISSON

In the 4 years we've been leading the women's sessions at Catholic Chaplaincy at York University (CCY), this year's sessions have been our biggest turnouts. The topics may have something to do with the draw: modesty, chastity, dating, sex, living together before marriage, same-sex attractions. We are still working our way through these topics but we want to share with you a little bit of our experience.



Took out CCY staff in gratitude for all they do!



Sam sharing her testimony during our session

### MODESTY = DECENCY

To start us off, Sr. Anna tackled the topic of modesty. She shared a few words from a former supermodel, Leah Darrow, who is internationally sought out to speak on topics like chastity. Leah connects with young women and encourages them to see that it is totally possible to be modest and fashionable at the same time. **She tells them that they can be fashionistas but to always remember that when expressing themselves that they use their clothes to make a statement, not their bodies.** In fact, women, and men, who are seeking to live out their Christian faith must see themselves as walking billboards for Christ. The way they dress and wear their makeup shows how they value themselves. It tells people, **"I matter, I belong to Jesus"**. The ladies were given this new perspective on modesty, countering the prior conception that modesty is simply a list of what one can wear and not wear.

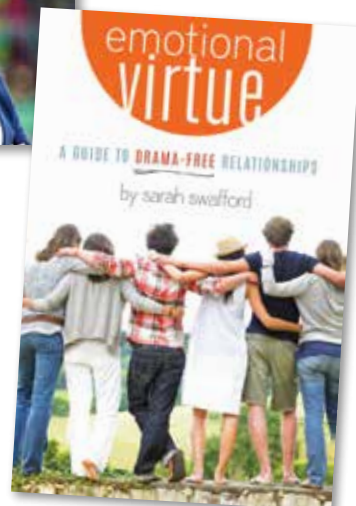
### CHASTITY

We assured the ladies that chastity is not a rule that cuts them off from 'living' life to the fullest. Chastity is a lifestyle, a mindset that dignifies and affirms a person's worth and respects others.

Sr. Anna shared an example of the virtue of chastity. "One fall day, you are walking across campus, heading to your next class and see this young man coming towards you. You think to yourself, 'Oh my!! ... that is one good-looking man ... !'" Sr.



Anna paused as the ladies whooped, laughed, and squirmed in their seats. Their reactions showed that they were relating to the example. Then Sr. Anna went on to explain how we need to capture our thoughts and to be careful in objectifying a man by his looks. That we can lose sight of the dignity and respect due to the young man. The thought can be turned around to affirm his worth and give thanks to God. "Thank you Lord for creating this very good-looking son of yours! Bless him and protect his mind and heart this day. And give me the graces to be pure in mind and heart." This new perspective took the ladies by surprise. Some had never realized the effect of these thoughts upon men but they were edified in learning a new and healthier approach to this situation.



## DATING AND LIVING TOGETHER BEFORE MARRIAGE

The quick answer to the purpose of dating would be to find a mate and get married. I'm sure the ladies at CCY were hoping for an easy solution to find their spouse. No easy solution came their way during our sessions. I shared with them an alternative to our culture's plan of *Meet, Date, and Move in Together*. The alternate being the natural progression of a relationship: *Acquaintances, True Friends, Date, Court, Engagement, Marriage*. These steps are a process, a time of building a relationship with a potential spouse within the setting of friendship. And it calls forth the support of family and friends. A well-known speaker to university students, Sarah Swafford, highly recommends gathering a group of like-minded (same gender) friends, with the same values, into what she calls a 'posse'. The CCY ladies liked this idea of having a group of reliable, trustworthy girlfriends. They started making plans right then and there! We encouraged them to take on the Virtue Challenge together as a posse. (You too, can take the challenge. We've added it for your own virtue challenge. You don't necessarily need to be looking for a spouse. It's simply a neat way to grow in holiness.) Growing in virtue and striving to be the person God is calling them to be was a tall order but they were up for the challenge!

We look forward to our upcoming sessions with these beautiful women of God. It has been a delightful and heart-warming experience. It is so wonderful to see their attentiveness and their desire to grow in virtue. Please pray for them as they seek the Lord's truth in their identity as God's beloved daughters and to give Him permission to work in their hearts, minds, and souls.



*Sr. Monique posing with her posse!*

# TAKE THE VIRTUE CHALLENGE

<http://www.emotionalvirtue.com/home/take-the-virtue-challenge-2/>

"What traits and characteristics are the most attractive in a person?" As Sarah Swafford, founder of Emotional Virtue Ministries, asked university-aged men and women, she compiled a list of these traits. And two things were very clear: (1) these characteristics are based on the fruit of living out the virtues (such as prudence, justice, courage, and temperance); (2) the lists looked very different from the world's checklists and its idea of "perfect." These lists were centered on the interior character of a person, not a person's exterior qualities.

Although these lists are definitely not exhaustive they are a great place to start for your **Virtue Challenge**. To begin the Virtue Challenge, gather your posse (a group of like-minded friends), and share the virtue you have chosen to work on for the week. Share with your posse 3 practical and realistic ways you will grow in this virtue. In a week's time you and your posse share the progress and encourage one another in the struggles and triumphs. You may keep the same virtue or choose a new one to work on for the following week. Over time, with hard work and perseverance, you will be amazed by how far you've come!

A summary of the list of traits that attracts men and women looks like this:

### THE SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE VIRTUOUS WOMAN:

Feminine  
Gentle & kind  
Graceful & sincere  
Patient & flexible  
Doesn't gossip, isn't rude  
Tries to eliminate drama, not create it  
Poised & modest  
Open to the needs of others  
Nurturing & welcoming

### THE SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE VIRTUOUS MAN:

Masculine  
Leader  
Provider  
Protector  
Initiator  
Chivalrous  
Brave & courageous  
Gentle & respectful  
Intuitive & patient

# As a Sister, I Go...

BY SR. PENELOPE NGUYEN



From Dec 28th to Jan 1st, Sr. Melinda and I went to CCO RiseUp - Montreal. It was a great time meeting people and learning what my role is in our ministry. I mentally prepared myself remembering that wherever I am sent to do ministry, I represent the Servants of the Cross. Before my First Promises, I had a lot of reasons to stay behind the scenes or to be just an observer. One of them is obvious because I was in formation: Applicants needed to learn 'to be' and not always 'do'. But to me, there were many other reasons. One of the reasons was that I wanted to grow in my relationship with the Lord. I have seen priests who totally rely on God's power and wisdom and allow the Lord to work wonders in people's heart. I have understood that if God does not help me, I cannot do anything. Being aware that I can only be an instrument, I surrender and the rest of the results are in God's holy will.

“

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”

As a Sister, I went. I had an amazing time witnessing the thirst for God from young people and as well as the beautiful vision and wise guidance of CCO's founders. We heard great talks from dynamic speakers – themes such as knowing that Jesus is the face of the merciful Father (by Andre Regnier), knowing that our dignity lies in our choosing courageously for living a chaste life (by Leah Darrow), and knowing that we are called to be holy and to take part in building a vibrant Church (by Michael Dopp). In addition, Sr. Melinda facilitated the Vocational Workshop for women. There were about 120 women plus Sisters from 11 religious communities. I was edified to see people searching for more and responding to God's invitation. I am grateful that CCO made available these sessions for young adults to understand and learn more about the vocation to consecrated life and priesthood.

I am proud of these young people who have such courage to embrace the truth of God's infinite love. The Lord is gathering and bringing many into His Kingdom. There is nothing more beautiful than walking with Him and allowing His power to permeate through each individual.

In God I have confidence. In His mercy I trust. And I have asked God to convert hearts through my prayer, heal people through my presence and inspire vocations through my ministry. I know that the Lord honors my sincere desires and will bless my effort in whatever I am called to do.



*Celebrating the New Year with Mariana, CCO Missionary*



*At St Joseph's Oratory with Rachana and Angela*



*Hanging with friends from Toronto: Angela and AJ*



*Sr. Melinda facilitating the Women's Vocational Workshop*

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# A Total Gift of Self

BY KELLY AALBERS ~ 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR APPLICANT,  
COMPANIONS OF THE CROSS



In collaboration with the Archdiocese, we invited, speaker Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV to come and speak to the young adults of Ottawa, the truths of discerning God's will. From the feedback we received, everyone was grateful and walked away with much insight. Here is a note we received from one of our brother-seminarians, Kelly Aalbers who attended the retreat. Not only is it a testament of Fr. Gallagher's works but of the vocation to consecrated life.

With all my heart, I thank you for the retreat day and I want share my experience. Being from Saskatchewan you never know when it's going to rain, snow, or freeze. You never know if the highway will be smooth, or if it will rain at all in the year ahead. Growing up in this atmosphere I learned how to doubt, naturally inclined they may say, I have always seemed to do it. This led to a certain amount of doubt about my vocational discernment (it took me 5 years to get here) but things have changed.

At the retreat, I was struck with what Fr. Gallagher said about knowing your vocation clearly, knowing without any doubt. I doubted what he said, but then I started pondering, and realized that these doubts were human, emotional, or rather outlandish fears. I realized that they revolved around the sacrifice of offering my life to the Lord. I realize that I can trust fully in the Lord's wisdom and power as He leads me to my vocation.

The second element to my doubts was the total self-gift required of the priesthood. I have known some great priests/religious, some who were good priests/religious, and some who by virtue of ordination/vocation were priests/religious. After certain negative encounters with the latter, I carried a certain amount of fear regarding the priesthood/consecrated life. I saw in the lives



Kelly Aalbers right of Fr. Terry Donahue, CC

Fr. Gallagher speaking to the 100+ crowd

of these priests and religious how the total gift of self was not happening, and how they were left sad, empty, depressed, addicted, and angry. I think about how these things have affected my discernment and of so many other young people. I feel that the only way to overcome these bad examples is through incredible, holy, and pure witness to the truth of the Lord's calling.

**During the retreat I witnessed, in my heart the maternal love felt by all those who attended. This motherly tenderness came through the total gift of self in your service and care for those present. The number of young women in attendance spoke of the attractiveness of your apostolic life.**



Sr. Melinda enjoying some time with friends

The other grace I received was the confirmation of my calling. I was able to reject and pray through those human and emotional hold-ups, and abandon the lies and fears. This was a simple process and I believe the grace came through the love you Sisters gave freely during that day. Not without a dull moment you were serving, talking one-on-one, smiling, being a MC, ensuring everything looked proper, encouraging, and praying. (These things didn't go unnoticed and they were such a gift in my life.) I was able to see in a new way that total self-giving can be very fulfilling! Indeed it can be everything I ever hoped it to be.

I would encourage others to attend a retreat such as this, by virtue of the maternal love I experienced. It allowed us to be in 'Mary's womb' right beside Jesus, where he could whisper to us the sweet and beautiful truths of our identity and our calling. After having been 'born' into this seminary formation, I see more clearly and understand the language that your vocation speaks, and how you Sisters are really spiritual mothers.

# Mercy Retreat in Toronto



Mary and Sisters getting ready for a great retreat



Sr Penelope and the newest CC priest, Fr. Ken Lao



Sr Monique leading us in the Divine Mercy

# Fun Time 'Puzzling' Together! Great Sisterly bonding. ☺



Spiritual Gifts Interview Training in Holland Michigan with Mary Martin from St. Catherine of Siena Institute. It was a great opportunity to learn and grow in understanding our gifts and charisms.



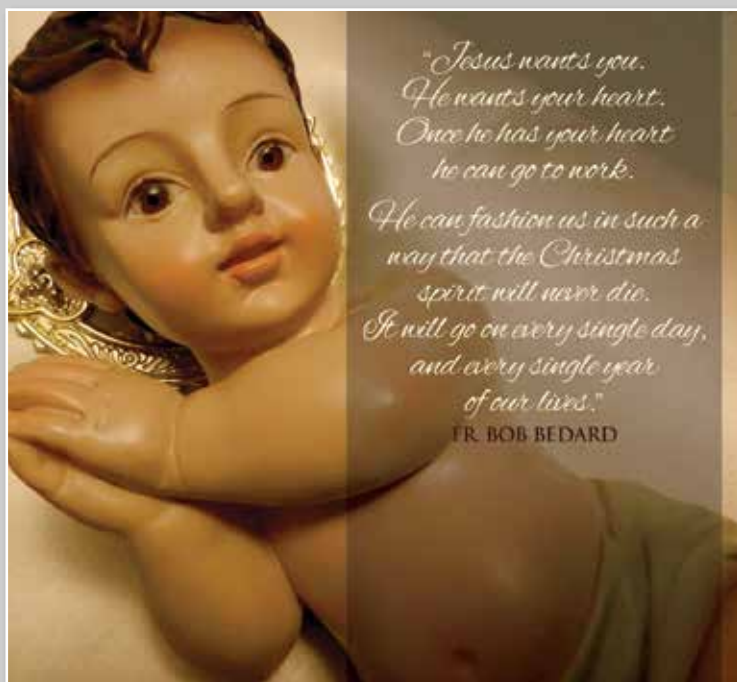
Hanging out with brothers in Galveston



Sr. Anna being prayed over by Fr. David



The Houston Team!



# Sisterly Wisdom

BY SR. MELINDA SCHENHER

This year, we've received a beautiful gift. Sr. Yvette Papillon and Sr. Denise Montpetit of Les Sœurs de l'Institut Jeanne d'Arc, who have faithfully lived their consecrated vocation for many years, have been giving us formation talks. And we've been blessed to learn from them.

One idea that captured me from our first session about 'charism' was something that Sr. Yvette related back to her article published in our Winter 2015 Edition. The French phrase is "de saveur d'Évangile." The translation means that we are to be for each person "the flavour of the Gospel" for today – to be like an accent of salt that is added to bring out the taste in food. This idea inspires me to live our mission of evangelization wholeheartedly, asking the Holy Spirit to guide every encounter with those that I meet, whether at work, on the street, or in a grocery store. Every day I have the opportunity to 'flavour' the lives of those around me.

Another idea that caught my attention during our time together is that "if you are kind, you liberate kindness in the other." My interactions with those around me are for their benefit, *and* for my benefit. Isn't this great? As the body of Christ, the love we share with those around us, even with a stranger, sets the other person free to love a little bit more. It's important to remember the source – Jesus Christ who is Love. He loves me, and I can better love those around me.

Who I am and who he has called me to be, is my gift to those I meet today. With great expectation, I pray that these lessons bring me more freedom, take root in my life, and transform my heart to love as I am called in my vocation as a Sister and as I am called to serve each person I meet.



Sisterly Wisdom with S. Denise, S. Yvette, Les Sœurs de L'Institut Jeanne d'Arc.

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**Pope Francis**

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