



We are the Community. We are the Church.

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*Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the First Mass
at Sacred Heart Church at Nelthorpe Street
on September 5, 2015*

March 21-22, 2015



Reminders:

- ✓ *Invite relatives and friends to attend the Lenten mission, with Fr. Roger Keeler, on Sunday, March 28, and Monday, March 29, at 7 p.m., particularly those who are no longer a member of our faith community but who received the three initiation sacraments at Sacred Heart Church on Nelthorpe Street since 1965. Their names are posted on the bulletin board inside the church.*
- ✓ *Help raise funds for Christian charities by making the Spring Used Clothing and Attic Treasures Sale on Saturday, April 18, a huge success. You can donate used clothing and attic treasures and/or help in sorting, pricing, fielding phone calls, preparing and distributing posters, advertising and setting up and dismantling the event. To volunteer or for more information contact Rita Kelly at 250-598-9558 or e-mail her at: ritak@telus.net*
- ✓ *Select your photos for the 'Fond Memories on the Vine Project. Drop them off in the box in the church foyer.*
- ✓ *Join the Sacred Heart Hymn Writing Contest [see Bulletin #5]. Deadline is Friday, 25 April 2015.*

Anawim House:

A refuge and a source of hope for street people

In '87, Dr. Lawrence Pazder, his wife, Michelle Smith, and a few others formed the Anawim Companions Society and registered it as a non-profit charitable organization.

Anawim, a Hebrew word, means, "the poor who depend on the Lord for deliverance." The word is used frequently in the Bible, especially the Psalms. It is the basis for Jesus' statement "Blessed are the poor.

In '91, a meeting was called to discuss the plight of the poor. It was held in St. Andrew's Cathedral's basement.

Those who attended listened to the homeless describe their powerlessness and inability to break out of their burden of hopelessness and the poverty cycle. The street people asked if and how they could do more to help themselves.

The interested people, from all ecumenical faith groups, saw the need for a new support model that recognized that the poor were cycling through the few services offered while remaining locked in homelessness and addictions. How could they help them break out of this cycle?

The answer was a house for the "anawim," God's precious poor.

It was the dream; lack of money was a reality.

The society developed a plan to create a space where the poor and volunteers could work in partnership to end the cycle of the street people. Two fund-raising drives [\$100-a-plate dinners]

were very successful. The society received the support and generosity of churches, service clubs, local businesses, and many individuals. They provided the seed money to purchase a small starter house at Vancouver and Caledonia streets in '91. It was to be a refuge from their life on the street, a meeting place and a source of hope for many of Victoria's street community.

Anawim House was bursting at the seams in just two years. While the basic needs were being met at the house — within an alcohol and drug-free environment — the greater challenge of assisting the poor to cure the wounds that had put them out on the street. The wounds — abuse, betrayal, addictions and emotional and mental illness — needed to be addressed.

If the poor were to function again in mainstream society, they would need to heal within a loving family, learn life skills in preparation for employment, upgrade their education, or return to school to learn a new trade.

In June '94, with community support, the society expanded Anawim House to make it a seven-bed-residential and day-

program facility with a multi-functional space. The expansion allowed the society to offer more services to meet the underlying causes of poverty.

Now it has a family-size kitchen, dining area, a large living room and entertainment centre, shower and laundry facilities, a library/board room, offices, an arts and crafts studio,



50th Anniversary bulletins can be viewed at: <http://www.sacredheartvictoria.com/anniversary>

computer work stations, a well-equipped workshop, cold storage and ample space for food and clothing supplies.

Today, Anawim provides: more than 13,500 meals; about 35,000 cups of coffee; at least 1,800 showers; and, more than 1,800 loads of laundry.

Mark and **Sue Lemay** and **Roy** and **Mary Bennett** from Sacred Heart Parish have been with the society since before the purchase of the initial house in '91. **Mark** has served on the board of directors since '91 and as board president since '10. **Sue** has also been a society member since '91 and continues to serve as a volunteer. **Roy** and **Mary** have been volunteers since '91 while **Roy** has also served a term on the board of directors. Roy has been in charge of Anawim House maintenance for many years. Parishioner **Claire Holmes** has been involved since '96 recording donations and contacting churches for Christmas fundraising campaign. She served on the board from [08 to '13].

Fr. Sigismond Lajoie, OFM, pastor of Sacred Heart from '84 to '04. encouraged support for Anawim House and many parishioners became society members. Many became volunteers

and/or regular sponsors through financial donations at Christmas or through monthly pledges (PAD) and provided food, clothing and dry goods.

For example: **Kathleen Stokes** baked and assisted in the kitchen; **Bernice Smith** became known at the House as the "toilet paper lady"; **Dini** and **Richard Bogaert** volunteered on the grocery-run; **Rudy** and **Miep van Lierop** keep the house supplied with rice; **Gudrun Willie** provides lunch supplies; **Terry dePaoli** gives used clothing [blue jeans] her family has outgrown.

Over the past 24 years, nearly 100 families from Sacred Heart Parish became companions with the poor in various ways.

The workers of the parish's Christian Charities made Anawim House one of their yearly recipient charities and the parish's funeral receptions committee often takes left-over food trays to Anawim House to feed the poor.

Through Anawim House, Sacred Heart is living the Gospel, bringing Good News to the Poor!



Focus on Europe

About 26 per cent of the world's Catholic population lives in Europe. The largest religion in Europe since the 1st century is Christianity. According to a Pew Research Center survey, 75 per cent of Europeans consider themselves Christians, with Catholics as the largest Christian group at more than 48 per cent of European Christians, the Orthodox at 32 per cent and Protestants at 19 per cent.

Today, the 48 per cent of European Christians, who are Catholics, total about 286 million, or about 38 per cent of Europe's total population.

The European countries with the largest Catholic populations and representing more than 50 per cent of their populations are:

- **France:** 58 million [88 per cent];
- **Italy:** 52 million [85 per cent];
- **Spain:** 42 million [92 per cent];
- **Poland:** 33 million [87 per cent]
- **Portugal:** 9 million [84 per cent];
- **Belgium:** 7.8 million [75 per cent];
- **Austria:** 5.3 million [62 per cent];
- **Ireland:** 4.6 million [72 per cent];
- **Croatia:** 3.8 million [85 per cent];
- **Slovakia:** 3.4 million [62 per cent]
- **Lithuania:** 2 million [79 per cent];
- **Slovenia:** 1.2 million [56 per cent].

Some European countries have more than a million Catholics, but they are less than 50 per cent of their countries' population:

- **Germany:** 7.7 million [30 per cent];
- **Hungary:** 3.82 million [39 per cent];
- **Switzerland:** 3 million [38.2 per cent];
- **Belarus:** 1.4 million [15 per cent].

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Fr. Guy Merveille

Fr. Guy with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in '87.

Whether Fr. Guy was still a principal organizer of the Congress on World Unity, when it was held in Philadelphia as part of the '76 Bicentennial



Commemoration, cannot be verified. An item in the *Gettysburg Times* on 25 November '75 stated the Pennsylvania government had pulled funding from the event in the spring because Fr. Guy had spent "close to a quarter million dollars" in state funds "travelling the globe in search of humanists and on other preparations for a world unity conference that may never be held." The newspaper stated: "The Congress on World Unity is set for May 21-24 of 1976. Merveille is emphatic that it's still on despite the state's defection."

Fr. Guy's elder brother, Dr. Octave Merveille, in Kansas, who with his wife and daughter assisted the Congress, says there was a "lot of politics and malevolent interferences from different factions."

In June '76, Fr. Guy returned to his abbey in Belgium where he received permission to be pastor, at the request of Bishop Remi de Roo, to be pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

In '79 he was assigned to Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Gold River.

He left the Victoria diocese in '80 to join the Saint Patrick Parish in Seattle, Washington State.

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