

We are the Community. We are the Church.

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

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April 25-26, 2015

How do we face our eventual demise?

One of the most difficult things to deal with in life is the certainty and finality of our eventual death.

But deal with it we should.

Yet statistics show that 81.65 per cent of us do not plan for this inevitable end of our earthly life.

The 18.35 per cent who do so say their main reasons are to eliminate the emotional burden placed on their children or other supporting family members, and, they see it as their responsibility to do so.

The majority of those that do plan for their death — 73.24 per cent — pre-fund their funeral arrangements to alleviate any financial burden on their survivors. They realize that death can come at any time. There is no specified age. There is no time frame.

How do we prepare ourselves to face a terminal illness, death or bereavement?

Those bereaved have been deprived of something valued, generally someone dear particularly through death.

Frequently, a terminal illness so overwhelms people that they do not think about what needs to be done to prepare for death and what to do when death occurs.

They make choices under a lot of stress and excessive emotion. This causes friction with family members, particularly if there is nothing in writing.

The bereavement ministry offers parishioners means to avoid such situations.

Sacred Heart Parish's bereavement ministry, dedicatedly guided over the last 15 years only by **Claire Holmes** and **John Tomczak**, provided guidance and spiritual, practical and emotional support to those who sought or needed their services. However, because of their own health reasons, they recently stepped down from this ministry and the parish is hoping for some parishioners to pick up the torch.

Fr. Sigismond Lajoie, OFM, established the bereavement ministry in 2000 after a "fair" in the church hall of all the parish ministries. Here parishioners learned about the ministries and had their questions answered.



The fair prompted those interested in visiting the sick and in a bereavement ministry to meet.

Some realized that dealing with bereavement was not for them.

The bereavement ministry provides help during terminal illness or after a death without intruding in someone's privacy.

Also, many find it difficult to accept help no matter how well meant it may be.

Spiritual support:

The ministry lets the family or friend know, in a gentle manner, the importance of informing the parish pastor as soon as

possible when someone is terminally ill or deceased.

The ministry informs the pastor about the situation and requests parishioners' prayers at weekend masses because obituaries do not always appear in the local newspaper before a funeral. The ministry provides the family with the necessary information on choice of readings and hymns for the memorial liturgy, if this was not done ahead of time. Ministry members attend the funeral liturgy.

Practical support:

The parish bulletin listed the bereavement ministry contacts who were available after weekend masses if parishioners needed to seek their help. When parishioners step forward to serve in this ministry, hopefully, their names will be listed as the new contacts. The ministry offers brief workshops on how to prepare a funeral liturgy and provides a list of data required by funeral homes, government agencies and others, as well as practical information before and after a death.

The ministry also encourages parishioners to prepare a 'Living Will', a copy of which should be kept in the person's medical file and one readily accessible by the family or caregiver.

We are fortunate that we have Victoria Hospice to provide palliative care and the bereavement ministry encourages patients or their family members, when the treating physician informs them of the seriousness of the patient's medical state, to enquire about palliative care and how to access it.

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Those who register early with Victoria Hospice get care when needed and caregivers get help for respite and/or counselling. The sooner this is set in place, the easier it is for everyone.

Emotional support:

This does not mean giving advice. Rather, it is a support of the spirit by acknowledging the life and work of a loved one through simple words and tender actions, such as the touch of a hand, a gentle hug, a phone call, or an offer to spend time with a terminally ill patient to give the caregiver a break.

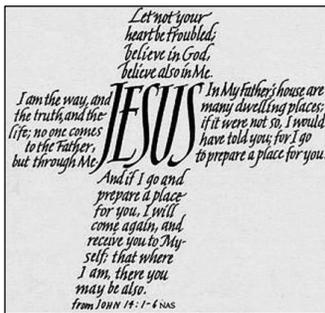
Bereavement starts the day someone is declared to be "terminally ill". At times, this may require periods of close attention, to sit quietly and listen, or sometimes just to be there to reassure the patient of the presence of someone at her or his side.

Often, a terminally ill patient and the family can be in denial. They will not take the proper measures to get assistance in preparation for death. It is proven that those who seek assistance early in the process can better cope with death when it occurs.

After the death of a loved one, there is much to do. Sometimes, even the task of disposing the clothing of the deceased can be a trying experience for the bereaved.

The bereavement ministry emphasizes the importance of connecting with the parish, if the deceased is a Catholic, or if from other faiths, the ministry helps in facilitating necessary connections.

It is common today to see "no service by request" in obituaries. Those making such a decision should consider that a liturgical or



memorial service helps those left behind, family or friends, to cope with the loss. "Nothing", compared with a service, gives them a chance to express their feelings and to get closure.

Funeral reception committee:

The Catholic Women's League started the funeral reception committee many years ago but many of its members found it too difficult to continue.

Hence, in 2011, **Fr. Bill MacDonald**, pastor, commissioned **Sue Lemay, Joan Carmichael** and **Elizabeth Olcen** to run this ministry.

While the monies from the parish's charges for the funeral receptions originally went to the CWL for its charity, it was moved to the 'kitchen fund' when work began on the new kitchen.

The set-up and take-down group for the reception includes **Roy Bennett, Chuck Blaikie, Jim Haffey, Mark Lemay, Marcel Nolin**, and **Walt Ryan**, while the ladies most regularly involved are **Roz Blaikie, Joan Carmichael, Suzanne Davies, Maureen Dietrich, Sue Lemay, Elizabeth Olcen, Terry Ovie, Theresa Reichelt, Pat Tonkin, Marilyn Turner** and **Evelyn Vincent**.

Those who "retired" from the work are **Maureen Clifford, Margaret Drummond, Laverne Knapik, Maria Lee, Shelagh Miller, Peggy Spilsbury, Mary Szatmary, Bernie Thompson, Louise Whitley** and **Mary Wilson**.

The committee welcomes men and women — newly retired, new to the parish or simply have some available time — to help in this ministry. If you are interested, please call: **Elizabeth Olcen @ 250-477-8115** or **Sue Lemay @ 250-386-4950**.



Catholicism in the continents

Focus on Europe

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Before Constantine the Great became emperor of Rome, the first rural churches emerged in 280 A.D., in northern Italy and Christianity became no longer exclusively in urban areas. And 54 years after Constantine was baptized in 327 A.D., shortly before his death, Roman Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the official state religion in 381 A.D.

Much earlier, though, some of the 72 disciples [Luke 10:1-4] appointed by Jesus and others dispersed through Europe and some became the first bishops of the areas where they preached:

- St. Joseph of Arimathea arrived in Glastonbury, England, in 35 A.D. after his boat landed in Marseilles, France, from the Holy Land. It is claimed he built the world's first Christian church in Glastonbury. He died in 82 A.D. Benedictine monk and historian Cressy has stated the saint's tombstone had this written in Latin: "After I buried the Christ, I came to the Isles of the West; I taught; I entered into my rest."
- St. Aristobulus [Romans 16:10] arrived in Britain about the time the Romans invaded Britain in 43 A.D. and subdued the island's southern portion. Ordained by St. Paul, he was the first bishop of Britain. He died — Christian tradition says he was martyred — in 99 A.D. in Glastonbury.

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Fr. Harold Stewart Heard, C.S.Sp.

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After his ordination, Fr. Heard went to Africa: Serabu in Sierra Leone's Bo District in the south. It is one of the most under-developed areas of the country. Since this area is a tropical rain forest, it is rife with diseases such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, diarrhea, and recently, ebola.

Without medical care, the chance of survival is minimal. It was called the 'White Man's Grave' because many missionaries died in 1859 due to yellow fever. Because of this, the Holy Ghost Fathers [Spiritans] were the only religious congregation that willingly volunteered to work in Sierra Leone. They have now been in there since 1864, and have contributed to the education and the overall establishment of the church in Sierra Leone. They began evangelization of Serabu in 1904.

When Fr. Heard arrived in Serabu, he realized it needed a small nine-bed maternity home. He, along with Fr. Joe Jackson, who were good fund raisers in England, built the home. Fr. Heard also built the Sacred Heart Church and the Sacred Heart Elementary School in Serabu. During the 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone, all of them were destroyed.

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