

## WHY I AM A CATHOLIC

[Over the next few bulletins I would like to share different reasons for why I am and continue to be a Roman Catholic. This is part 1.]

"Why?" is perhaps the most futile as well as the only question that shouldn't be asked in the face of death but a most important question when it comes to life. It is the word children so often weary their parents with as they try to piece the world together. Asking "why" addresses the questions of existence, being and the reasoning behind all things. One could ask the general question as to why a person would consider choosing to become a Catholic, but a question well worth asking ourselves who are Catholic as to why we stay, what it is that attracts us to remain in the Church and why we would choose it in the first place. The personal question "Why I am a Catholic?" is the one I should like to address here and, of course, I have many reasons, one of which is Apostolic Succession.

### APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

Apostolic Succession is the line of popes beginning with St. Peter (who received his mandate as chief shepherd from Christ Himself) through to and including our present pope, Benedict XVI by the laying on of hands. The total number of popes in this 2000 year period is 265. For me, this unbroken line, which goes directly back to Christ Himself, is the self-evident proof that what Christ intended and had begun in Peter has survived the test of time. God Himself is the Founder of the Church through His Son, Jesus Christ and Christ's last words to His apostles before He ascended were filled with promise and commission: "Go" throughout the world and baptize and with the promise that He would be with them to the end, "And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time." *Mt. 28:20*

Weak, sinful human beings could have simply become lazy, corrupt and self-serving bringing the plans of God to an early halt, but that would suggest that purely human forces are at work in Christ's plan. No, the promise of Christ to be "with" His Church no matter what obstacles or forces may be present in any and every age is a promise that tells us God knows how the story of salvation is to end and no human machinations or circumstances or sin can change one iota of the plans of God.

Today in the world there are over 33,000 different Christian denominations. Catholics are listed as having 242 denominations but these all consist of the various Rites within the Catholic Church (Eg. Melkite, Romanian, Greek, etc.) yet all of these 242 denominations are one in the Catholic Church because they all recognize the pope as the head of the Church and are in union with him. 98% of the Catholic Church throughout the world is Latin Rite

(which is what we are at St. Leo and in the Archdiocese of Toronto - which totals 976 million members) and the remainder of Catholics of different rites numbering 18 million are of rites other than the Latin Rite.

Just as family names show a lineage with the people that have come before them, so Apostolic Succession draws the line that goes back to the Founder Himself. Throughout the 2000 year history of Christianity groups have chosen to break off with that line, but within Roman Catholicism itself that line continues in an unbroken manner. In spite of the sin that has always plagued the hearts of men and women throughout the ages who were called to live in holiness and love, Christ is still faithful when we are not; Christ who promised He would be with us.

We live at a time in history when religion is getting a bad name (or is given one). The sins of some in a secular world only serve to fuel the fire which burns hot against those who choose to live by faith. Pope Benedict XVI predicts that we are becoming a smaller Church not only by shrinking numbers caused by people who no longer live the faith but by a more authentic living of Catholic Faith by those who choose to be faithful to what Christ has begun.

St. Augustine wrote in the 4th century: "[T]here are many other things which most properly can keep me in [the Catholic Church's] bosom. The unanimity of peoples and nations keeps me here. Her authority, inaugurated in miracles, nourished by hope, augmented by love, and confirmed by her age, keeps me here. The succession of priests, from the very see of the apostle Peter, to whom the Lord, after his resurrection, gave the charge of feeding his sheep [John 21:15-17], up to the present episcopate, keeps me here. And last, the very name Catholic, which, not without reason, belongs to this Church alone, in the face of so many heretics, so much so that, although all heretics want to be called 'Catholic,' when a stranger inquires where the Catholic Church meets, none of the heretics would dare to point out his own basilica or house" (*Against the Letter of Mani Called "The Foundation" 4:5 [A.D. 397]*).



**MANDATORY FIRST COMMUNION CLASSES**

Class #1 – Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011 from 1 to 3 pm.

Class #2 – Saturday, Mar. 5, 2011 from 1 to 3 p.m.

**IN THE PARISH THIS WEEK:**

*Baptism Instruction Class on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.*

*Coffee Sunday on Sunday, Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> after the 9 & 11 am masses.*

**MASS INTENTIONS**

Tuesday, Feb. 22 – 8:30 a.m. -

Wednesday, Feb. 23 – 7:00 p.m. – For the intentions of  
Marian & Aniela Litwin

Thursday, Feb. 24 – 8:30 a.m. -

Friday, Feb. 25 – 8:30 a.m. -

Saturday, Feb. 26 - 5:00 p.m. – Tommy Longo+ &  
Mrs. Konieczny+

Sunday, Feb. 27 - 9:00 a.m. – For the intentions of the  
children being baptized on March 13, 2010  
-11:00 a.m. - Ivan Horvat+

Thank you to all the families who participated in “International Night”. All the dishes were interesting and delicious. It was a wonderful opportunity to get-together with our children and families to enjoy one another’s company.

THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE is planning a Spring Dinner Dance Auction for Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup> in the Parish hall. Cocktails at 6 pm followed by Dinner at 7 pm and an evening of Dancing and Auction. Tickets at \$40 each are available in the church vestibule. Group seating of 8 or 10 is available on request.

We would also like your help in obtaining items for the auction. Any new items valued at \$50 or more would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Barbara at (905) 404-2694 or the Parish Office at (905) 655-3286 Ext. 101.

We look forward to seeing you for an enjoyable evening.

**QUEEN OF APOSTLES RENEWAL CENTRE**

Alone Again is a marriage enrichment weekend for couples married 25 years or more. This unique weekend is designed to help married couples look at the rest of their lives once children have left, or planning for their retirement, or continuing their personal growth once retired. This special weekend is being held Feb. 25-27<sup>th</sup> at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre, Mississauga. For information call: 905-278-8879 or 416-694-1742 or register at Queen of Apostles, 905-278-5229.

St. Leo’s Choir sings at the 11 am Sunday Mass and is always open to new members. Please note that there will be NO rehearsals on Monday, Feb. 21 and 28. The next rehearsal is March 7.

**CONFIRMATION AND FIRST COMMUNION CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM MEMBERS OF THE C.W.L.**

On February 22, 2010 the Board of Trustees approved the expansion of our Grade 4 Extended French Program as well as the introduction of a Grade 1 French Immersion program with the Durham Catholic District School Board. Parents/Guardians, who are considering enrolling their child/children in the Grade 1 French Immersion and/or the Grade 4 Extended French program commencing September 2011, are invited to attend an Information and application/Registration Meeting.

Parents/Guardians from the following schools – St. Leo Catholic School and St. Bridget Catholic School, Brooklin; St. Joseph Catholic School, Uxbridge; Holy Family Catholic School, Beaverton; Good Shepherd Catholic School and Immaculate Conception Catholic School, Port Perry are invited to attend a meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Leo Catholic School, 120 Watford Street, Brooklin. Principal Ms. Betty McDonald – phone (905) 655-3852. The application process will begin prior to the information meeting at 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions about the French Immersion and Extended French Programs. Please contact Ms. McDonald.

**Worldwide Marriage Encounter**

Married couples: You deserve a weekend to celebrate being together; to rediscover each other and focus on ways to make your relationship even better. A worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend offers this opportunity. Consider giving each other or another couple that you know the gift of a weekend away from daily pressures; time to be with each other and with God on a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Upcoming Weekend Date: March 25-27, 2011. For further information or registration please contact: Cora & Mike Bryce (905) 896-2958 or cora-mikebryce@sympatico.ca.

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

World Day of Prayer will be held here at St. Leo the Great Church on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. St. Thomas Anglican and Brooklin United Churches will be participating in the service. Refreshments will be served following the service. All are welcome.

Theology of the Body Study Group - Will be studying Katrina Zeno's The Body Reveals God: A Guided Study of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body - Katrina examines how is it that we are made in the image and likeness of a Trinitarian God. Her ability to explain John Paul II's difficult concepts in simple language using helpful analogies will deepen your understanding of the Catholic faith and profoundly impact your life. Please join us starting Feb. 28 at St. Bernadette's Parish Hall 21 Bayly St. E., Ajax on Monday mornings from 9:30 - 11:30 as we explore this relevant book. Contact: gsministry@gmail.com for more information.

St. Leo’s Knights of Columbus are hosting a St. Patrick’s Day Dance on Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Cocktails 6 pm, Dinner 6:30 pm. Dancing till Midnight. St. Leo’s Parish Hall. Live Celtic Entertainment with Cape Ceol - Dancing and Prizes. Tickets \$20 and Cash Bar. Tickets are available by calling Allan Frank (905) 655-4212 or David Czuczman (905) 655-5503. Bring a roll of loonies for our great raffle draws!