

## *Mission to Canada*



### Mission to Canada

On Friday, May 12, 2006, we began our journey to Markham, Canada (just outside Toronto) to participate in a mission with Fr. Bill McCarthy, MSA from My Father's House Retreat Center in Moodus, CT. This was also the maiden voyage of our new truck, the Sierra 1500. We retired out Chevy S-10 with 265,000 miles to local driving.

Fr. Bill brought with him 3 lay evangelists, Mary Alice Rossini and Bob and Evelyn Olson, to minister in whatever capacity was necessary. Ria Music Ministry provided the music for the week of events. Besides Maria and Gloria, Scott Bellini (flute) and Diana Habeeb (trumpet) were able to begin this trip.



After a long ride that included torrential rains and flooding as we left the greater New York metropolitan area to beautiful spring weather, we arrived in time to set up for the healing Mass sponsored by the St. Patrick's prayer group. Fr. Bill said the Mass and prayed over people with his team. We provided music for healing and reflection.



After Mass, members of the prayer group opened their homes and hosted us. So off we went, two by two (like the disciples) to various homes. We were privileged to stay at the home of Patrick and Kay Booker who are charming. Diana & Scott stayed at Jimmy and Corinna's home; Fr. Bill and Mary Alice stayed with Lila and Winston; Bob and Evelyn stayed with Mirna and her husband. Their hospitality and graciousness cannot be underscored. It was a time of sharing our faith and love of Our Lord, His Mother, the Saints and the Church at the family level.

On Saturday, we met at the Church for a day of recollection, healing and talks by Father. The thrust of his message this day: We all need a personal relationship with Jesus to be able to live the Catholic life in this world. Talks reflected the core elements of our faith through the Sacraments, meditation and prayer integrating Scripture, the Catechism, Sacramental life, the Rosary and the pastoral plan of the third millennium by Pope John Paul II. After this day we attended the regularly scheduled Mass at St. Patrick's and then went for dinner with the prayer group.



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On Sunday, Mother's day, we gathered at Church and attended two Masses to listen to the excellent music this parish has. We, Scott and Diana proceeded to Marianne's home where we prayed the Rosary together and indulged in Sri Lankan appetizers. In the late afternoon, we went to Patrick and Kay's home where we celebrated Mother's day with her mother and their family. After a scrumptious dinner we sang some of our songs for the family before everyone went home. What an enjoyable day!



On Monday, we were free during the day and proceeded to the Toronto's Cathedral, St. Michael's. Kay was our chauffeur. Upon entering the Cathedral, we venerated the relics of the North American Martyrs (St. John Brebeuf, St. Gabriel Lalemant and others). (There is a shrine to the Martyrs about 2 hours away but it had not opened at this time.) We attended the Mass and Rosary. The Cathedral is beautiful with the words above the altar "in hoc signo vincis" (in this sign you are victorious).

The Blessed Sacrament was exposed and we were able to pray and meditate before the Lord.

After lunch, we prepared for the home Mass at Lila and Winston's home. We traveled through heavy rains, to their home. About 40 people attended. Father spoke eloquently on the Mass and how the Mass fulfills the Old Testament. (It's our favorite sermon!) After Mass, a feast was served and the fellowship was wonderful.

St. Patrick's prayer group is truly multicultural with people from Canada, India, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Jamaica, the Philippines and many other countries but all united to the One Lord through one faith and baptism.



On Tuesday after morning Mass, Kay took us on the Toronto subway. This subway is much quieter than our New York subways. We just went in and out and had a marvelous time chatting.

At night, we were invited to the Epiphany prayer group. We provided the music as Father spoke again. He was "on fire" with the Holy Spirit again speaking about our faith and living the Catholic life in this world. Many people attended. Father and his team prayed over people for their intentions.

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On Wednesday, we set out early. Father was to be the main celebrant (we provided the music) at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Youngstown, NY. After a gorgeous morning at Niagara Falls, we arrived at this lovely shrine. (We hope to go back in the future.) There are so many devotions to the saints, beautiful chapels – Eucharistic and Marian. Inside the Eucharistic Chapel, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed during the day. Twelve chairs surround the Monstrance and the Tabernacle. Reminded us of chairs for the twelve Apostles. We stayed at a bed and breakfast.

On Thursday we set out early on our way to the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Buffalo. What a magnificent edifice to our Blessed Mother. There are 2000 angels in this church, some life size. The sculptures are beautiful – large and small. ( Each Station of the Cross was carved from one piece of marble – simply outstanding.) We have to go back there! We sang at the 7 AM Mass. We stayed for a short time and then proceed to the Abbey of the Genessee, a Trappist (Benedictine) monastery. After a time of prayer, we proceeded to the National Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville, NY. Here Fr. Isaac Jogues, Rene Goupil and John LaLande gave their lives for the faith. Blessed Kateri Teckackwitha, the “Lily of the Mohawks,” was born here.

In Auriesville, we met up with the Jesuit fathers, old friends of ours, Fr. Bob McGuire and Fr. Peter Murray. Betty, Janet and Gale (from our ministry) drove up from Long Island and joined us. Fr. Bob and Fr. Bill concelebrated Mass. We have worked for both priests in their particular apostolate.

After Mass, we celebrated Fr. Bill’s birthday. Janet baked a cake for all to share. We all sang “Happy Birthday” and Fr. Bill heartily blew out his candles. We departed, Fr. Bill and his team back to My Father’s House, we to Betty’s brother’s house in Leeds, NY.

After a restful sleep, we departed for the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, MA where we spent a prayerful day together at Mass and said the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3 PM. We departed about 6 PM for the 4-hour ride home. We arrived safely about 10 PM.

We thank God for the many graces and blessings we received from Our Lord on this mission. We thank Blessed Mother, the Saints and the Angels for their prayers for us. We will continue to pray for our new family in Markham, Ontario – St. Patrick’s Prayer Group.