



NEWSLETTER

MSC Lay Associates Irish Province



Edition 6 January 2011

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Welcome to the sixth edition of our newsletter for the MSC Lay Associates of the Irish Province.

The articles from all of you make this newsletter work. A sense of community inspires all of us. Expanding our spirituality of the heart is so much easier as part of a group that shares, supports and helps one another. Despite the distance that separates us, this newsletter is intended to be a community endeavor. I always look forward to learning from each of you.

This newsletter is published from Harker Heights, TX, but it belongs to every Lay Associate, no matter where you are in the world. It is successful only when everyone contributes and shares his love with all.

"We have come to recognize and believe the love God has for us. God is love and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him." 1 John 4:16

Fr. Chevalier saw the human heart of Jesus as a manifestation of God's love for all of us. That love is the source of our Spirituality of the Heart. As MSC Lay Associates, we have a mission to grow in our love of God, love of ourselves and love of our neighbors in all aspects of our lives.

We have readers in many places around the world. Send us names of others and we add them to our distribution list. Please share the newsletter with associates who do not have email access.

Please submit questions, comments, and articles to Carol Allred: carolallred@hotmail.com or to Frank Cooney: FTCooney1@aol.com.

Check the Irish Province at: <http://www.misireland.org>.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere known and loved.

Questions:

Who can send in an article?

Anyone can and we hope everyone will contribute.

Who gets the Newsletter?

Our list started with the Laity attending the Provincial Conference in Ireland in April, 2008. Since then, we have added other names & email addresses shared with us. Please print out the newsletter and share it with others.

Requests:

Please pray for our Chevalier Family around the world.

Please pray for the Irish Province Chapter in May.

Please pray for our priests and Lay Associates around the world.

Please pray for our laity in Russia as they continue to establish an MSC Lay Associate group.

Please pray for the MSC Lay Associates in South Africa as they continue meeting, praying and working on formation.

Please pray for the Harker Heights Group as they continue to grow in their Spirituality of the Heart.

Please pray for the San Antonio group as formation for new members continues.

What Being an MSC Lay Associate Means to Me

No More Heroes

Maybe you think sixty-three is a little old to be dumping your heroes, but doing just that came to mind yesterday when Carol Allred asked me to write on what it means to me to be an MSC lay associate.

Over the past several years, as I and a small band of parishioners met monthly to be formed in MSC traditions and spirituality, and as we mingled with our local MSC priests and lay associates from other parishes in conferences and retreats, we became a family, sharing in the MSC mission to be the heart of Christ. We want to bring that love to others as we interact in our ministries, in our families, in our communities.

I don't think Jesus wants to be our hero, nor does he want us to be heroes, but to simply embrace our responsibility, follow his example, and experience the joy of serving our Father in loving our brothers and sisters. I feel integrated to the mission of the Church.

*Patrick Purdy
San Antonio, TX*

Jean Metzner from the San Antonio MSC Lay Associate group shares an article with us about the good things happening in their group.

The San Antonio MSC Lay associates will begin a formation class for about ten interested people. They have been to our Lay meetings and are interested in Jules Chevalier Spirituality of the Heart. There will seven sessions, with Father M. O'Brien leading two of the sessions, and lay members facilitation the other sessions. This way, when the lay associates recommit in September, they too will have the opportunity to commit if they so desire. We are looking forward another year of Spirituality of the Heart. Please keep us in your prayers.

Requests: (Continued)

Please pray for the Hill Country group as illness strikes several of their members, especially Lenny, Jan, Dorothy and Louis.

Please pray for formation of MSC Lay Associates in England and Ireland.

Please pray for our MSC Lay Associate Groups in Venezuela that they will grow toward formation.

Please pray for contributions of articles by our Chevalier family, especially the professed, to aid our growth as MSC Lay Associates.



A Prayer for the Provincial Chapter, 9 – 20 May, 2011

Searching for What God Wants of Us in These Changing Times

God, our loving Father
You are always with us as we
travel into the future
You call us to new ventures,
new ways to minister to your
people,
New ways to touch the hearts
of all.

When we are fearful of what
the future might hold, give us
courage.

Chapter Prayer (Continued)

When we worry that we are not up to the task,
Remind us that you would not have called us if you did not
Believe in us, remind us of the power
Entrusted to us in the pierced Heart of your Son.

As our Chapter approaches, let us hear once again in
The depth of our own hearts
Our call to be Missionaries of the Heart of your Son.

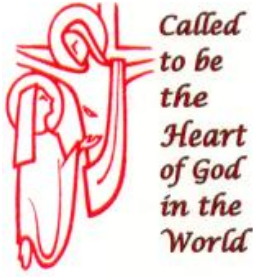
As we give thanks for the many ways your creative
Spirit has worked through us.
Inspire us to search together with confidence for what you are
Asking of us now in these changing times.
Show us how we can continue to reach out in your name,
Giving witness to the wonder of your love and mercy to all.

**May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved.
Forever.
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.
Pray for us**

The Harker Heights Group continues our spiritual journey this year. We begin and end our meetings with a prayer and special prayer requests. A reading from Father Chevalier's Daily Readings, along with a scripture reading, keeps us grounded.

Our group studies an article about MSC Spirituality, Charism and/or other aspects of our growth as MSC Lay Associates. As we discuss and share ideas from the article at our meetings we help one another grow. We meet every month and try to schedule a retreat each year. Of course, we know how blessed we are to have the guidance and spirituality of our MSC priests.

During this past year, our group became the Vocations Committee for our parish. We're learning and developing plans toward that end with guidance from our own Father Richard O'Rourke. We recently discussed the wonderful article Father Dave Nixon wrote for this newsletter (*Vocation: God's Call and Our Response*, October, 2009) and found it to be very pertinent. As each of us, as Lay Associates, listen for God's call to us and respond as members of the Chevalier family, we pray and strive to create a culture for vocations in our parish...



*(Reprinted from the Missionary Sisters of
the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
Reading, PA)*

A MSC Lay Associate Commitment Statement

*I believe that I have been called by
God to share the spirituality and
mission of the Missionaries of the
Sacred Heart as a Lay Associate.*

*I believe I am called as an MSC Lay
Associate to be on fire with a
deepening realization of God's
personal love for me and every
person....to be a visible sign of God's
love and compassion to His people
everywhere....*

*To be a powerful and authentic
Christ-like influence in loving with a
human heart.... without limits....*

*To care for the body of Christ by
sharing my gifts....*

*And opening myself to the giftedness
of others....*

*To accompany the Missionaries of the
Sacred Heart in the spirit of Father
Jules Chevalier....*

*And to live this calling with God's
grace*

*And the help of Mary, Our Lady of
the sacred Heart and St. Joseph.*

***May we be God's Heart in the
world in all that we are
and all that we do.***

Michael Screene, MSC has kindly agreed to do a series of articles for our newsletter. This is the second article in a series of articles on the theme: "**A Chevalier Heart for the 21st Century**". They will basically explore the theme that the world will belong to those who love it most.

Fr. Chevalier approached our spirituality in two ways, from the scriptures, texts, history etc. He also often started his road to insight from where he met our world.

The "Mal Moderne", the evils of his day provoked reaction in love. We do the same today. We get all those beautiful texts from Fr. General and all kinds of gurus. But, there is another approach: to let our world in all its richness and ambiguity be our guru and our starting point, and to read it with "heart-eyes", finding ways of Christ there and introducing Christ to its hungers and hopes.

HUMANITY'S TRUE HOME IS THE HEART OF GOD

Our world is charged with the grandeur of God. Ever since its first days, it is expanding and growing. With time, human life emerged and the ability to read our story and understand more about our world and ourselves. But we really understood very little until God began to speak through his messengers about himself and about us.

Finally, He sent his Son, to share totally in our human family and to become our teacher by his word and his life. His human journey and ours become one, become the way and the program of the Father's love. The Word has become Flesh.

The whole world is the dream or word of God come into existence, full of promise. Its richness, power, variety, energy and beauty reveal something of the beauty and love of God. Everything in nature is already Good News. Even more, everything in people is revelation. Gathered in our Scriptures, the word of God continues to whisper to us of His love and presence. They tell us how the promises of the ages finally became a Child. In all he says and does, Jesus became the word of God for the world. That Word has to be opened up each generation to become life-giving.

The last Synod of Bishops in Rome had as its theme the place of the Word of God in the life and liturgy of the Church. The church knows well how deeply we need to grow in

Michael Screene, MSC (Continued)

awareness of all God is doing for us, to be truly open to the power of the word. That word must become our light, our guide, our hope and energy. The world hungers for that word. It may not always know where to look and may often seem to turn away from the divine invitation. But we need to carry that word with joy and hope so that the good news is not only verbal but vital, a word from the heart of God to the heart of the world.



As part of our world, we, people of heart, must come with immense compassion and empathy to our world in its darkness and questions. It is the divine milieu. We must open our eyes to its beauty and power. “Every common bush is afire with God”. Even more, every person is so mysterious, so magnificent. But our world is much unfinished. It can be glorious. It can also be destructive and hurtful – almost diabolical. We need to listen to its pain and possibilities. As the Synod of Bishops said: “We Christians must be the hearing-aids of the church”, to hear the presence of God and to notice the empty spaces where our world “stands on tiptoe longing for the redemption”. (Rom.8)

As Christians, we are “Easter People with an Alleluia Song”. Our task is to create a culture of resurrection. What God does is resurrection, bringing the whole world of creation into the final glory he has planned for us all. Our baptism invites and empowers us all to be part of that redemption. We are energised with the Word of God, with the flesh of Christ, with companions on the journey. We are not alone as the Spirit of God is active in us, making us co-creators with God in new life.

Fr. Chevalier had a deep sense of the pain of the world and its people. He talked about the “Mal Moderne”, the forces that diminished and impoverished people in his day. But his heart was with the “Bon Moderne” – the positive and beautiful world we could become. For that reason he wanted his followers to look to solutions rather than problems, to look to what we can do rather than moan about so much that is wrong or negative.

As Easter people, we have “the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work in us”. At this moment of history, we have a special call to listen to the word of God and let it take root in our hearts. “That word is the power of God for salvation for everyone who has faith”. (Rom.1.1)

Michael Screene, MSC (Continued)

In Pope Benedict's recent letter, "Verbum Dei", "The Word of God", he concludes his introduction with words that are at the very heart of our Chevalier spirituality:

Jesus is the wisdom of God incarnate, he is his eternal Word who became a mortal man. May John, "who saw and believed", (Cfr. John 13.25) also help us to lean on the breast of Christ, the source of the blood and water which are symbols of the church's sacraments.

Following the example of the apostle John and other inspired authors, may we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit to an ever greater love of the word of God".



Keiran MacCárthaigh, MSC, Provincial Leader from 1993-2005, was enthusiastic, zealous, encouraging and persistent in promoting mutual collaboration of laity and MSCs in the various ministries throughout the Province. He has contributed another wonderful article for us.

SELFLESSNESS

"Who do people say that I am"? or *"How do I appear to others"?* These are questions that many people ask, but especially those in the public eye. Jesus did not ask this question for his own sake but for the sake of the apostles. Jesus was sure of who he was. He was able to face adulation and hostility equally, and he did not turn away his face from suffering and sacrifice even though he did not want it. He knew that he had a God given destiny to fulfil and would not be deflected from it. Likewise, he calls on each of us to be selfless and committed.

Keiran MacCárthaigh, MSC (Continued)

Nowadays, it is the fashion to consider oneself first. Our career, our interests, our personal ambitions are presented as priority number one. We find sacrifice occasionally presented as a sign of weakness. Yet sacrifice remains central to human evolution and indeed to any progress or achievement, personal or communal. The consequences of sacrifice – that is, acting selflessly upon the dictates of what is highest within us – are immense for us as individuals. No matter where we are or what we are doing, we have the choice whether we will dedicate our efforts to helping others or exalting ourselves only. As usual, a story might help to illustrate what I am saying about real sacrifice for the good of another in our lives.

Back in the 13th century in a tiny village near Nuremberg, lived a family with 18 children. In order to keep food on the table, the father, a goldsmith by profession, worked almost 18 hours a day at his trade and any other paying chores that he could find. Despite their seemingly hopeless condition, the two eldest sons of Albrecht Durer had a dream. They wanted to pursue their talent for art, but they knew full well that their father would never be financially able to send either of them to Nuremberg to study at the academy. After many long discussions at night in their crowded bed, the two boys finally worked out a pact. They would toss a coin. The loser would go down into the nearby mines and, with his earning, support his brother while he attended the academy. Then when the brother completed his studies in four years, he would support the other brother at the academy, either with sales of his work, or if necessary by labouring in the mines. They tossed a coin on a Sunday morning after church. Albrecht Durer won the toss and went off to Nuremberg.

Albert went down into the dangerous mines and, for the next 4 years, financed his brother, whose work at the academy was almost an immediate sensation. Albrecht's etching, his woodcuts and his oils were far better than those of his professors, and, by the time he graduated, he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his commissioned works.

When the young artist returned to his village, the Durer family held a festive dinner to celebrate Albrecht's triumphant homecoming. After a long and memorable meal, Albrecht rose from his honoured position at the head of the table to drink a toast to his beloved brother for the years of sacrifice that had enabled him to fulfil his ambition. His closing words were: *"And now Albert, it is your turn to go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you"*. All heads turned in expectation to the far end of the table where Albert sat, tears streaming down his face, shaking his lowered head from side to side, while he sobbed and repeated over and over. *"No...no...no"*. Finally, Albert rose and wiped the tears from his cheeks. He glanced down the long table at the faces he loved, and then holding his hands close to his cheeks he said softly. *"No, brother, I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look what 4 years in the mines have done to my hands. The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once. Lately, I have been suffering from arthritis so badly in my right hand, that I cannot hold a glass to return your toast, much less make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a pen or a brush. No brother, for me it is too late"*.

Keiran MacCárthaigh, MSC (Continued)

More than 450 years have passed. By now Albrecht Durer's hundreds of masterful portraits, pen and silver point sketches, water-colours, charcoals, woodcuts and copper engravings hang in every great museum in the world. You may have a reproduction hanging in your home or office... maybe without even knowing it.

One day, to pay homage to Albert for all that he had sacrificed, Albrecht Durer painstakingly drew his brother's abused hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward. He called his powerful drawing simply, "***Hands***", but the entire world almost immediately opened their hearts to the great masterpiece and renamed his tribute of love "***The Praying Hands***".

The next time that you see a copy of that touching creation, **take a second look**. Let it be your reminder, if you still need one, that **no one ever makes it alone**. We need others. We need God.

