

Winnipeg Area of Prairie Region Celebrates John English Memorial

Our Annual End-of-Year Review, Party and Summer Launch!

By chance, it again happens, as it did a couple of years ago, that it falls to Prairie Region to contribute to *Update* just as Winnipeg members consider ourselves at “year-end.” On the prairies we still live fundamentally on the educational calendar as a legacy of the agricultural calendar, and so the summer ‘holi-day’ remains sacred and relatively inviolate—a time separate and apart from the rest of the year. Our year

has a spring ending, a new fall beginning, and in between, as a First Nations legend allegedly has it, we live so close to paradise that mosquitoes are necessary to keep us from thinking we’ve already achieved it.



And so in early June, at the end of the year, we come together to celebrate the life and legacy of CLC-Canada founder and former Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. John English; to review our past year of life and growth in CLC; and to launch ourselves joyfully into Manitoba’s annual ‘Summer Sabbatical,’ a seasonal tradition of rejoicing in relaxation, the great outdoors and community life that reaches into almost every aspect of life in Manitoba. That’s a lot for us in CLC to celebrate and it happens in the greater Winnipeg area at our annual “John English Memorial Celebration.”



This year’s celebration was at once a celebration of our CLC roots, as encapsulated in the idea of celebrating beloved friend and founder John English at the anniversary of his death, but also a celebration of the future, and the gifts that arrive with new members and new generations. This year’s celebration was hosted by *Kenosis* on Sunday, June 7, at the home of Janice and Jeff LeSage, in Lorette, a small rural town about twenty minutes’ drive east of Winnipeg. *Kenosis* is one of Prairie Region’s newest groups, and is comprised of young couples—but young couples who have naturally flourished over the last several years

into young families. Changes to our ‘usual’ way of proceeding for the celebration were in keeping with the inclusion—especially poignant and meaningful during our year of considering the family and youth—of a houseful of young children and babies! Unlike in many previous years, we gathered on a weekend, earlier than usual in the afternoon, and in a child-proofed and -equipped house. We tweaked program scheduling here and there to accommodate young appetites and attentions. In the event, we all proceeded to marvel at both the patience of quiet, curious children in the midst of ceremony, but also at the occasional very humbling reminder of the visceral



strength and surge of life and its fundamental priorities, when quiet was now and then (angelically!) broken.



Once again this year we were joined by our Regional Ecclesial Assistant, Fr. Charles Pottie-Paté, who travelled to us from Calgary, and opened our afternoon by celebrating the Eucharist with us. On the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, Fr. Charles made the connection between the Old Testament Covenant of God with his People, the New Covenant proclaimed by Christ, and our own acts of commitment to Christ, including our Commitments to CLC. As a finale to the brief homily, members were encouraged to share about what their Commitment to CLC has meant to them in the past year. The sharing was remarkably rich and honest, deepening community and resonating with the presence of Christ among us. We ended by renewing Permanent and Temporary Commitments to CLC. Nature provided counterpoint and perhaps even commentary to our celebration, as a typical prairie thunderstorm accompanied our service with punctuation and emphasis of sound and light.

As always after our spiritual, eucharistic meal with each other, we also savoured together a very corporeal meal, with delicious main dishes provided by the host group, and salads, vegetables and desserts contributed by other groups. Just before dessert, members paid tribute in speech and gifts to long-time member Mariette Ternowski, and her husband Arnold, who are moving to B.C. to be closer to their children and grandchildren, and revel in their commitments and connections to family. Mariette's many

years of relationship and service in CLC and the Ignatian family were noted: years as a friend, as a group guide, as a spiritual director, as our Regional Rep on General Council, as our most recent Regional Treasurer, and so much more. Arnold was also honoured for his role as helpmeet to Mariette and friend to the region, but most specifically for his role as co-treasurer with Mariette



in the past years. Arnold is a professional accountant, and his volunteer role as accounting expert in support of Mariette's *de jure* role of Regional Treasurer has led to the region's becoming much stronger financially and our gradually moving towards members having a much better

understanding of our financial position and responsibilities. In fact, this collaboration has been so successful, that we will be repeating this model with our incoming Regional Treasurer ‘team’, made up of *Koinonia* member Chris Butterill; and Monica Storozuk, daughter of *Joshua Tree* member Geri Albanese. Like Arnold, Monica has generously volunteered, as an associate, to give her expert accountancy support to CLC. We are grateful to Monica and Chris for volunteering to pursue this kind of collaborative position, and of course to Arnold and Mariette for pioneering it.

As we ate and further celebrated last Sunday, the outside storm was clearing, and magnificent sideways evening light cut under the storm clouds and stretched dramatically across the endlessly wide spring-green fields behind Janice and Jeff’s home, seeming to lay out routes to freshness and renewal. An invitation to a new, untried road and new voices for CLC, perhaps? An invitation to step out and embrace our Summer Sabbatical, and return in September renewed and refreshed? A welcome for Mariette and Arnold to the new path of their life? All of this and more!



**The light of the prairies is so sharp and so clear, we all can imagine it pointing us to our road:
Come; follow me. Be not afraid.**