

## ***Igniting Curiosity for Ignatian Spirituality in New Frontiers***

In July of 2015, my husband Arnold and I moved from Winnipeg, Manitoba to the city of Vernon, which is situated in the Okanagan region of the southern interior of British Columbia. I didn't know anyone here. Even though my daughter and her family have a lake house here, they are only here in the summer. I was eager to meet the people of this city, both those in the church and in the community. My first contact began while I was still in Winnipeg when an acquaintance gave me the name of someone she knew in Vernon. When I arrived, I made connection with this woman and she then invited me to walk with her and a few other women. Besides their friendship, these women helped me get acquainted to the area.

I also began searching for volunteer opportunities at the Vernon Hospice. There, I was introduced to another volunteer, who told me she belongs to the Alliance Church. She invited me to join her at their Prayer Shawl Ministry. It was one of my desires to pick up knitting again so I joined the group, giving me more opportunities to form new friendships. Another source of meeting people has been the Vernon Community Singers where I sing and have met new friends and even some who speak French. My latest adventure is hiking with the Vernon Outdoors group and this again provides opportunities to develop new friendships as I explore the countryside.

After Easter, I joined a group of parishioners from the church we now attend, St James Roman Catholic Church, in 10-week retreat called "Consoling the Heart of Jesus". The material for the retreat comes from a book written by Michael E. Gaitley, who is a priest in the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. According to the author, the material in the book is inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. The group gathers once a week and we discuss what we have read the previous week. While this retreat and this book are not explicitly Ignatian, Fr Gaitley attempts to bring in some elements of the Spiritual Exercises. Having done the Spiritual Exercises and having been a spiritual director gives me the advantage of being able to listen more closely to the others as we share how we are being affected by the readings. By being in this group, I see that there is an interest for knowing more about the Spiritual Exercises.

This past weekend, May 6- 8, 2016, Fr. Charles came to visit Arnold and I in Vernon. Before he left for Vernon, he asked me if I could gather some people for an informal chat so he could share what is Ignatian spirituality. Since it was a very short notice, I was only able to call or email a few friends from the various groups that I belong to. Providentially, Fr. Charles was here for daily Mass on Friday morning and thus he was able to invite parishioners himself for the informal chat that very evening. Three parishioners came to the presentation. A few others were also interested but had other commitments and thus could not attend. Those who came were very receptive to what Fr. Charles said and this really sparked their curiosity and opened up their horizons. They asked questions about Ignatian spirituality and also about Christian Life Community.

I don't know if there will be a next step. In the meantime, I am making new friendships. Some parishioners heard the presentation on Ignatian spirituality on Friday evening. Some parishioners heard Fr. Charles' announcement at the Friday morning Mass and others met him as he celebrated the Sunday morning

Mass. New seeds have been planted and I trust that the Holy Spirit is leading us into new territory.

Mariette Ternowski  
Rockies Region "in the diaspora".