

Gratitude News

**Basilica of Our Lady
Immaculate**

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Christmas 2015

Reading About Mary: Hail Holy Queen and The Song of Bernadette

Two Book Reviews by Graham Winter

When I accepted the request to review a book on Mary, I was confronted with a problem.

Many books have been written about Mary, some by saints. Somewhat arbitrarily, I chose two.

The first is Scott Hahn's "Hail Holy Queen." As is well known, Hahn is a convert from Protestantism and a skilled theologian and biblical scholar. Though not a devotional book, thoughtful reading of it should deepen our understanding of Mary's role in our salvation, and so our devotion. Hahn starts with the divine motherhood of Mary and the unbreakable unity between a mother and Son.

As Jesus is our brother by the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8), so Mary is our mother.

Hahn shows how deeply grounded in scripture and tradition Catholic teaching on Mary is: she is the New Eve, the Ark of the Covenant, the Queen Mother. The last title is interesting and may be unfamiliar. It seems that in the ancient Jewish monarchy, the authority of the queen mother was very great. Our Lady now fulfils this role through her intercessions in the kingdom of her divine son, also humanly descended from the line of David, Israel's greatest king. The book closes with reflection on our position as children in the Family of God, and on Mary as "type" or "model" of the church. Highly recommended.

Truly classic is my next offering: "The Song of Bernadette" by Franz Werfel, a Czech Jew, who, in fleeing the Nazis, found himself in Lourdes, France. He promised Our Lady that if he

escaped he would write a book about her. He did, and this is the book. Although a novel, it is not fictional. It is a creative retelling of the facts of Our Lady's appearances to Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in 1858. The characters are vividly developed—especially the complex relationship between Bernadette and her sceptical priest, Fr. Peyramale—against a setting of harsh and soul-destroying poverty. For those who do not know the story of St. Bernadette, there is no better way to learn about it than this book, chronicling the appearances to Bernadette and starting of the healing "spring". It excellently conveys the spirit of 19th century French Catholicism, a spirit that has influenced our own church in Canada. For me, it

is a cautionary warning to see that the conflicts of our own times between the spirit of faith and the spirit of scepticism were well established in Europe 150 years ago. A few framing dates tell the story: 1854 definition of the Immaculate Conception; 1858 the appearances of Our Lady at Lourdes; 1859 Darwin, Origin of Species; 1867 Marx DasCapital; 1870 Vatican Council I. We see also the ongoing tension between the institutional and charismatic spirit in the church.



Finally, the story of Bernadette raises the issue of suffering and happiness. The "Lady" tells Bernadette, "I cannot promise you happiness in this life," and Bernadette, too, did not avail herself of the healing waters at Lourdes ("the spring is not for me") suffering a painful bone tumour in her knee, but dying in great joy.

Well those are my books about Mary; maybe you have your own favourites. Happy Reading.

Graham Winter is long-time parishioner, and leader for the RCIA program.

RECENT EVENTS

DON'T MISS THE PASTA SUPPER on FEB 7TH! DETAILS COMING SOON!!

1st ANNUAL HARVEST ROAST BEEF DINNER

On Sunday, October 18, 2015 our parish held its' 1st Annual Harvest Roast Beef Dinner, in our parish hall. Parishioners were served a delicious roast beef dinner catered by Nick Finoro and family. Parishioners enjoyed a wonderful evening of fellowship with family and friends. All proceeds from this event went to the Building Fund. Our young and enthusiastic volunteers (pictured below) gave generously of their time to serve and clean-up and did so with smiles. We look forward to planning the 2nd Annual Dinner in the fall of 2016.

Madeleine Hughes and Angie Hunt



Gratitude News is published three times per year by the Stewardship Committee at The Basilica of Our Lady. It is designed to highlight the many activities occurring in our parish and keep parishioners informed.

ADVENT DONATIONS

"Truly, I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least of my brothers, you did it for me." Matthew 25:40

In the spirit of giving during the Advent season, the children of The Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate generously donated money following each mass for the four Sundays of Advent, in support of Chalice, a children's charity. Our parish community also collected goods for the Drop In Centre and Michael House Pregnancy Centre for distribution before Christmas.



RESTORATION WORK RECEIVES AWARDS

This fall, the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate was recognized for the restoration of our church. The Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals awarded their 2015 Award of Excellence to our church. This is the largest respected collective of heritage professionals involved in the preservation of our national heritage properties. In November, we received the Peter Stokes Award by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.

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SUPPORTING REFUGEES

Our Parish along with Holy Rosary Parish are in the planning stages to welcome a refugee family. There are a variety of issues involved in such a project and we will need volunteers to help the family make a smooth transition. It is a response to the call of the Gospel to welcome the stranger and to provide a strong support system as they adapt to a new culture and way of life. More information will be available in the new year and we are confident of your generosity of time, talent and treasure.

THE REWARDS OF VOLUNTEERING

On April 28th, our Volunteer Appreciation Night was held in our newly renovated Parish hall. Approximately 130 Parish volunteers attended this special event which was held to recognize and thank all volunteers for their faithful and generous service to our Parish. The evening included a beautiful para liturgy, guest speakers and a wonderful reception organized by the Parish staff and Agnese Nagy, the Kitchen Coordinator.

As part of the Appreciation Night evening, there were presentations by seven Parish volunteers who highlighted with joy the importance of volunteering in our Parish. The Parish guest speakers were Rob Davies, Brian Edit, Paul Jeffs, Angie Hunt, Monique Porcellato, Kelly Raftis, Adrienne Tedesco and Graham Winter. Each presentation affirmed the importance of sharing one's gifts and talents for the good of the Parish. Here are just a few comments from their presentations.

“Volunteering allows you to connect with people and to grow at a personal and spiritual level.”

“It is a great privilege to pass on the faith to others.”

“I volunteer in the parish because it helps me to keep my faith strong.”

“We are a Parish family and when a person dies I feel it is important... to support the family...I assist our Priests at the Vigils.”

“It is our children that will carry our faith into the future. Knowing this we must celebrate and share our faith with them.”

“I am a person who craves closeness and connections. I believe... that God put this desire in my heart, as a way to keep seeking Him, through serving.”

Our Volunteer Appreciation Night was a wonderful evening and we are most grateful for our dedicated and faith-filled volunteers.

MASS OF THANKSGIVING

On Sunday November 1st Bishop Crosby invited all the religious priests, sisters and brothers to gather for a Mass of Thanksgiving at our Basilica to mark the closing of the Year of Religious Life proclaimed by Pope Francis in 2014.

