



LIVE-IN HISTORY

...getting to know Jesus

A MID-SUMMER NIGHT DREAM

(Origin of the Live-In History Book Project)

Lord, your love reaches to heaven, your fidelity to the clouds. Ps. 36

In the summer of 2003, during time spent in the chapel at night praying for the success of the first Live-In to be held in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Sister Bernadette Bezaire (Sr. B.), a Grey



Sister Bernadette Bezaire

Nun residing in Edmonton and a fervent advocate of the Live-In Retreat Movement, was overcome with gratitude for the many blessings received through this wonderful ministry. So many lives had been transformed by the Spirit of Jesus through teachings, prayers, insights, and interactions with others who had, themselves, gotten to know Jesus better during their retreat weekends. Then came the insight - it was important that these blessings be proclaimed, both as a gesture of gratitude to Jesus and as an opportunity for evangelization.

She reflected on the fact that the Live-In Society had been in existence for over 30 years and that the founding members of the original societies were consequently advancing in age. She felt that it was becoming imperative, therefore, to record the history of this beautiful ministry while the memories could still be captured - to make known the Good News, and to ensure that the "founding spirit" was preserved. Sr. B. was appointed to coordinate the project. She obtained assistance from other members, and together they produced a first draft of this history.

Since that time, the project has been modified to include a précis of the history of each Live-In centre, based on the materials diligently collected by Sr. B and her original committee.

Thus, through the contributions of many members, the mid-summer night dream of July 2003 has become a reality, and our 'condensed' history is now yours to enjoy. May it convey profound gratitude to our gracious God, joy to the Live-In family, a renewal of their zeal for His glory, and an inspiration to those who will read this story.

Excerpts from Fr. Clair's recent reflections

Re: his path to the priesthood/religious life:



My theme song is "Amazing Grace". I was the least likely of all to be a priest. . . . However, my parents enrolled me in a Basilian School in grade nine, and at the tender age of fourteen I decided to become a Basilian. My motives were not the best to start with. I thought the Basilians were 'cool'. Father Lawrence "Axe" Moran played football with us. Father Dan Burns played table tennis with me - and usually won.

So I said to myself: I could do that! I could teach, coach, and play sports with my students. It seems like fun. Also, I would be with good companions so I would stay out of sin, and get to heaven.

What more could I want? I didn't have a very good grasp of the spiritual, but I had a very deep desire to stay out of sin, not to go to hell, and make it to heaven. This seemed like a good way - become a Basilian. On my journey toward the priesthood, I realized that the priesthood was not only for my salvation but also for others - so I prayed for the right motive, and God, in his mercy, gave me a heart for others.

. . . I have always had the amazing grace, through the mercy of God, to love and enjoy whatever I did. . . . Through His amazing grace my health is excellent and, after a long childhood and youth, I am almost to the adult level now. However, I still play table tennis with the young people in my parish as if I were their age. (Sometimes I even let them win!!)

I thank God every day for His great mercy - His amazing grace - in calling me to the priesthood and religious life. I pray that I may one day come to complete maturity in his Kingdom, with the many Basilians who have gone before me.

Reverend Father Clarence Ervin Watrin, CSB

August 29, 1932, born in High River, Alberta; second of three children of Clarence ('Slim') and Nina Watrin

1952 Professed Religious Vows
Congregation of St. Basil (CSB) – Basilian Fathers

1959 Ordained to the Roman Catholic Priesthood

Post-Secondary Education

1955 BA (University of Toronto)
Teaching Certificate (University of Toronto)

1959 STB (University of Toronto)
MA in Psychology/Counseling (University of Detroit)

Teaching/Guidance Counseling/Chaplaincies

1950's St. Michael's College School, Toronto

1959-60 Sudbury

1960-61 St. Paul's High School, Saskatoon

1961-80 Catholic Central, Lethbridge /
University Chaplain, University of Lethbridge

1981-82 Catholic Chaplain, Word of God Covenant
Christian Community (Ann Arbor, MI)

1982-84 Catholic Chaplain, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied
Science and Technology (Saskatoon)

1984 & on Sessional Teacher at John Paul II Bible School,
Radway, Alberta

Parish Work

1980-81 Assistant to Parish Priest, Assumption Parish,
Windsor, Ontario

1984-92 Parish Priest, Our Lady of Lourdes,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

1992 & on Parish Priest, St. Benedict's Parish,
St. Lucia, West Indies

Outreach Programs

1969 Brought Search (weekend experience for youth) from the
USA to Canada (Lethbridge)

1972 Began Live-In Retreat weekends (Lethbridge)

1984 Consultant in the foundation/inception of John Paul II
Bible School (Radway)

1988+ Chaplain/Advisor in the beginning years of Catholic
Christian Outreach - CCO (Saskatoon)

DEDICATION

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Our story is an expression of gratitude offered to our Beloved Jesus for this life-giving way of getting to know Him, and in appreciation of Father Clair Watrin, CSB, our spiritual father, of all those who have so zealously promoted this ministry over the years, and of those who will embrace it in the years to come.



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MILESTONES

IN THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

(In progress!)

“THE BEGINNINGS”

Fr. Clair Watrin, CSB

In the 1960's, I was working in Lethbridge with a group of young people of college age, and formed a youth group. I created a number of weekend retreat experiences for them. One we called a “communi-cor”! Some of the weekend retreats were fairly successful, others somewhat less successful. Gary Hudak was my main assistant in all of these endeavours.

Then I was invited to take some youth to Montana for a ‘Search’ youth retreat. I was very impressed with the results, and got the Montana group to help me to start ‘Search’ in Lethbridge. (Later, we started ‘Search’ in Calgary. This was the beginning of ‘Search’ in Canada.) It proved to be very popular, and seemed to have quite an impact on the youth. The grace of the Lord was at work in dramatic ways.

In the early 70's, the youth were asking me to ‘put one on’ for their parents. I recall clearly telling the youth that I could not see their parents sitting on the floor back to back and doing the youth encounter activities they did. “I will have to come up with a little different program,” I told them. So, I made a number of changes to the ‘Search’ program. I found the candlelight service in a magazine, and made some other appropriate additions.

The first weekend attempt nearly failed for lack of interest on the part of the adults who were invited, but by the grace of God we proceeded with a very small number of adults, primarily parents of the youth. I remember deciding that it would be great to have both youth and adults making the same retreat.

The name Live-In was already around, as a description of retreats in which the participants stayed overnight; since that is what we were doing, we took this name. I distinctly remember wanting to find a name which would not be used to identify retreatants by putting ‘er’ on the end - I could not foresee ANYONE being called a ‘Live-Inner’! God had other plans.

I was not aware of the Lord guiding me at the time - but I *could* see His grace at work in the hearts of the retreatants. Only later did I realize it was ALL His work, and He used me and gave me a part to play.

This is how the Live-In came to be born. It was inspired by God putting into my heart a desire to lead others to Jesus. He gave me the human talent needed, and many beautiful young men and women who worked with me with generous hearts. To God be the glory!

LIVE-IN TRADITION MISSION STATEMENT

The Live-In exists for the purpose of evangelization: firstly, to bring people to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ; and to develop, in those who already have this knowledge, a deeper, vibrant faith in Jesus Christ.

Our roots are Catholic Christian, and are founded on faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

There are a number of distinctive characteristics of Live-Ins, namely:

- a) reliance on the power of prayer,
- b) work together as a serving community,
- c) the witness of the lives of the faith community,
- d) the proclamation of God’s Word,
- e) experience of the love of Jesus Christ through the love of others, and
- f) joyful worship in prayer and praise.

The Live-In is an experience of God’s love through Jesus, through an experience of the Live In faith community.

The Live-In is committed to serve all people who wish to attend – whether Catholic, Protestant, from another Christian fellowship, or from no Christian background whatever.

The Live-In is willing to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever God sends us.

**Lord Jesus,
may this book be
for the glory of Your name.**

**We wish to acknowledge
that the healings, the graces,
and the blessings of the Live-In
all come from You
and are a gift of Your mercy.**

**We thank You
for the privilege of labouring with You
to bring souls to salvation.**

**This is our mission:
to lead everyone we can
to know You and to love You, Jesus,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and to the glory of God the Father.**

**Jesus,
help us in our mission
to spread Your love
wherever we are called.**

Fr. Clair Watrin , csb

FOREWORD

*Tell God's glory among the nations,
among all peoples, God's marvelous deeds.
(Ps. 96:3)*

During our childhood, how we enjoyed hearing tales beginning with the words "ONCE UPON A TIME ..." and how eager we were to hear about incidents that stirred our imagination and thrilled us with exciting stories!

The story we offer you today is not one to appeal merely to your imagination. Rather, it is one that has resulted in a change of heart for a great number of people who have attended a Live-In weekend retreat. It relates true occurrences that have brought peace to the minds of many – to those who have learned to know and love the Lord Jesus in a more meaningful way. It has helped people to forgive those who had caused deep hurts, to reconcile broken relationships, to develop wholesome and lasting relationships, and to be inspired by life-changing insights of those who had surrendered to God's unconditional love.

The history of the Live-In draws its beginnings from the actions of a faith-filled priest, Father Clair Watrin, C.S.B., who was its human founder. His recollection of "THE BEGINNINGS" is found in the following pages. Other zealous persons emerged to foster the Live-In way of GETTING TO KNOW JESUS, mainly in centres within the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. At the time of publication of this history, there are 13 centres conducting the program several times each year. Existing centres are Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton-Strathcona, Lakeland, Hinton, and Fort McMurray in Alberta; Kelowna in British Columbia; Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert in Saskatchewan; Yarmouth in Nova Scotia; and Saint Lucia in the West Indies.

We are thankful to the Spirit of Jesus for drawing people to Himself in such a tender way. This history, and the testimonies contained within it, are an expression of that gratitude.