

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

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Meanderings... | Parish Bulletin – April 4 & 5, 2009

BY REV. ROY ROBERTS

Easter in the Missions

ONE of the draw backs of being a mission church of a larger parish is that most of the time, the big church celebrations are hosted at the main parish, and anyone from the mission parish must travel to participate.

When I was in Victoria Harbour, Mount St. Louis was the mission church. It had been years, if not decades since any major Triduum celebration was held there.

So during my second year on the sunny, and snowy shores of Georgian Bay, I decided to celebrate the Triduum at the mission. The choir was truly excited because it was a chance to do something new. Most any recollections of past celebrations were hazy and distant, so everyone was equally unaware of the structures. It was the choir which was most excited, but there were many people very fearful of what was going to unfold. Some didn't take kindly to being exposed to the post-Vatican II Sacred Three Days.

Well, many parishioners were utterly shocked when feet were actually washed after the Gospel. On Good Friday, the Veneration of the Cross made sense to them, so there were few naysayers. The Vigil however, was an utter mystery.

First of all, it was starting outside in the fresh, dark nighttime. Though most were well acquainted with bonfires, usually they were accompanied by marshmallows, hot dogs, Molson Canadians, and guitars, banjos, and lots of singing. It didn't register as part of a church service. Since there are no town lights, unless there is a full moon, the darkness can be so thick that you can walk past your car without even seeing it, which I did one night. Then, all those readings, and more readings.

Finally the lights came on. There was an adult who was baptized, but this communal laying on of hands left many people very uncomfortable. When everyone was invited to the font to renew their baptism, there was great consternation. Then real bread for Communion. They were on sacramental overload.

Some felt like they had been to super church, and some thought they had been abandoned by all that they held sacred and true. None had ever experienced such a three days. When all was said and done, they politely thanked me for my creativity.

I had a hard time convincing them that I didn't create anything, that this was how the Church intended it to be celebrated. To this day, they still don't believe me. It wasn't church as they knew it. Happy Triduum!

- SR