

Archdiocese of Montreal
2000 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, QC H3H 1G4

Spring 2013

The Department for Family Life

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In our life there is a single color, as an artist's palette, which provides the meaning of life and art. It is the color of love.

Marc Chagall





Letter from the Coordinator

*People of our time,
 anguished about so many problems,
 deprived of hope,
 seeking paradise on this earth:
 Seek it not here,
 seek it in Christ arisen.
 Let us find in him relief for our afflictions,
 for our worries,
 for our anguish;
 and in him let us place our hopes.*

-Oscar Romero

**Wishing you and your families the hope,
 joy and blessings of the Easter Season!**

Sonia

The Poor in Spirit

Henri Nouwen

For a long time, I sought safety and security among the wise and clever, hardly aware that the things of the Kingdom were revealed to "little children"; that God has chosen, "those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise." But when I experienced the warm, unpretentious reception of those who have nothing to boast about, and experienced a loving embrace from people who didn't ask any questions, I began to discover that a true spiritual homecoming means a return to the poor in spirit to whom the Kingdom of Heaven belongs. The embrace of the Father became real to me in the embraces of the mentally poor.



Source: "The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Henri Nouwen

WISDOM FROM AN ARTIST

In ten short years, Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) produced some of modern art's most influential and famous paintings. Yet during his lifetime he received virtually no recognition, battled severe bouts of depression, and remained desperately poor. Two things sustained him: his faith and his brother Theo, who never stopped believing in his genius.

An impassioned preacher who was dismissed for taking Christian teaching too literally (he gave away all his worldly goods), van Gogh's torments ended in suicide. But his words betray the deep insights so often born of suffering. Moreover, they distill them in such a way that they leave you feeling chastened and renewed, rather than depressed.

Exerpts from letters, sermons, and diary notes follow:

I tell you, if you want to be active, you must not be afraid of failures, and you must not be afraid of making mistakes. People think they will become good by doing no harm, but that's a lie. Such a frame of mind leads to stagnation and mediocrity. - undated

For those who believe in Jesus Christ, there is no death or sorrow that is not mixed with hope—no despair. There is only a constant being born again, a constantly going from darkness to light.

- November 5, 1876

Jesus Christ is the Master who can comfort and strengthen a man, a laborer and working man whose life is hard—because he is the Great Man of Sorrows who knows our ills, who was called a carpenter's son, though he was the Son of God, who worked for thirty years, in a carpenter's shop to fulfill God's will. And God wills that in imitation of Christ man should live humbly and go through life not reaching for the sky, but adapting himself to the earth below, learning from the Gospel to be meek and simple of heart. - December 26, 1878

Many people seem to think it foolish, even superstitious, to believe that the world could still change for the better. And it is true that in winter it is sometimes so biting cold that one is tempted to say, "What do I care if there is a summer; its warmth is no help to me now." Yes, evil often seems to surpass good. But then, in spite of us, and without our permission, there comes at last an end to the bitter frosts. One morning the wind turns, and there is a thaw. And so I still must have hope. - undated

Do you know what makes the prison of loneliness and suspicion disappear? Every deep, genuine affection. Being friends, being brothers, loving, that is what opens the prison, with supreme power, by some magic force. Without these one stays dead. But wherever affection is revived, there life revives. - July 1880

Easter Food

The hot cross bun is another English culinary icon for Lent. The English word “bun” comes from the old French bugne, meaning “swelling,” a reference to the sweet’s bulging



shape, according to *The Oxford Companion to Food*. Made from buttery dough seasoned with allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, or cloves, hot cross buns get their name from the mark that’s scored on them before they’re baked or squiggled on them with fondant icing once they come out of the oven.

In the United States, bakers start selling hot cross buns on Ash Wednesday. In England they’ve traditionally been served on Good Friday ever since 1361, when the monks of St. Albans Cathedral in Hertfordshire, north of London, began sharing them with the poor in commemoration of that holy day. Some hold that the dried fruit enfolded in the yeast-based dough represents the nails of the Crucifixion.

Although the cross atop the bun is typically construed as a Christian symbol, it has pagan roots, an early reference to the moon and its four quarters. Some historians believe the buns descended from ancient pagan sacramental cakes eaten by Anglo-Saxons in honor of Eostre, the goddess of spring and fertility, whose name gave us our “Easter.” Other ancient cultures offered up similarly marked small cakes to various deities as well. Rather than get potential converts to give up their luscious buns, early Christian preachers encouraged their use in commemorating the Lenten season. Others maintain that the buns “derive from the cross-marked Communion wafers consecrated on Good Friday, which Anglo-Saxon priests are known to have kept as medicine for the sick,” wrote Charles Kightly in *The Customs and Ceremonies of Britain: An Encyclopaedia of Living Traditions*.

English lore maintains that bread baked on Good Friday will never go moldy, and the bittersweet tradition of the widow’s son allegedly proves this. According to legend, when a widow baker’s son left the East End of London to go off to sea in the 1800s, the

mother vowed to bake her son a hot cross bun each Good Friday to eat on his return. She kept her word, hanging them in the window of her bakery. But her son never came back, and she eventually died. In honor of her devotion, every year at midday on Good Friday, a sailor from the British Royal Navy brings a freshly baked hot cross bun to the Widow’s Son, a pub that now stands in place of the widow’s bake shop, and hangs it with the others, still intact, placed there by sailors every year for over a century.

A New Twist for Lent



“It sounds surprising, but the pretzel has a deep spiritual meaning for Lent. In fact, it was the ancient Christian Lenten bread as far back as the fifth century,” wrote Francis X. Weiser, a Jesuit priest, in *Religious Customs in the Family*, a book originally published in 1956 and republished in 1998 by Tan Books and Publishers of Rockford, Illinois.

“In the old Roman Empire, the faithful kept a very strict fast all through Lent: no milk, no butter, no cheese, no eggs, no cream and, of course, no meat. So they made small breads of water, flour, and salt,” wrote Father Weiser. “To remind themselves that Lent was a time of prayer, they shaped these breads in the form of arms crossed in prayer (in those days they crossed their arms over the breast while praying). Therefore, they called the breads ‘little arms’ (braccellae).” From this Latin word came the German word “bretzel,” which ultimately became our “pretzel.” Father Weiser added that the earliest picture and description of a pretzel, from the fifth century, can be found in codex no. 3867 in the Vatican Library.

An alternate account of the pretzel’s hallowed history, published by the Snack Food Association in Alexandria, Virginia, contends that it was developed by a 7th-century monk in Southern France or Northern Italy, who gave the treat to children as a reward for learning their prayers. According to the SFA, he called it a “pretiola,” which later became bretzel and pretzel.

Easter Fun

HOW MANY WORDS CAN YOU MAKE FROM: RESURRECTION?

(The coordinator found 70 - not counting plurals.)



Web Sites

Christian symbols coloring pictures and interactive online religious Christian Easter coloring book pages, Easter stories and prayers for kids: <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/easter-religious/index.html>

For a selection of Easter stories and Resurrection articles visit: <http://www.joyfulheart.com/easter/>



Celebrate Family!

International Day of the Family

In 1993, the United Nations decided that, beginning in 1994, the 15th of May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families. In 1989 the U.N. had proclaimed 1994 the International year of the Family, to increase awareness of family issues and improve the institutional capability of nations to tackle serious family-related problems with compre-

A Woman's Role in the Family

—Pope John Paul II from *Lessons for Living*

It is a disservice not only to children but also to women and society itself when a woman is made to feel guilty for wanting to remain in the home and nurture and care for her children. It is also necessary to counter the misconception that the role of motherhood is oppressive to women and that a commitment to her family, particularly to her children, prevents a woman from reaching personal fulfillment and from having an influence in society. No response to women's issues can ignore a woman's role in the family or take lightly the fact that every new life is entrusted to the protection and care of the woman carrying it in her womb.

Prayers by and for Mothers

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Mothers/>

Parish Activities to Support and Nurture Families

Here is a list of ideas that parishes can sponsor for families. This list can be used as a beginning point for your own brainstorming. Feel free to pick, choose, adapt and add as fits the needs of your parish...be creative.

- ◆ Sponsor a parish family spaghetti dinner.
- ◆ Sponsor a family activity night that can focus on recreation programs, prayer services, educational sessions or serving families in need.
- ◆ Have children of the parish create family posters or banners to be used as decorations for parish dinners or other family gatherings at your parish.
- ◆ Ask families to prepare and write out general intercessions that can be used for Sunday liturgies.
- ◆ Develop a parish family library of DVDs and books.
- ◆ Highlight new families or family celebrations (births, baptisms, engagements, anniversaries, etc.) in the parish bulletin.

May provides valuable occasions to cherish and celebrate family. **Mother's day** - May 8, **International Day of the Family** - May 15, **Semaine Québécoise des familles** - May 9 to 15

visit: <http://www.quebecfamille.org/>

How Parents and Teachers Can Enhance Children's Self-Esteem

1. **Enable children to feel accepted**—understand and attend to their needs; be warm; accept their individuality; talk to them and listen to them.
2. **Enable children to be autonomous**—provide opportunities for them to do things themselves; give them choices; encourage curiosity; encourage pride in achievements; provide challenges.
3. **Enable children to be successful**—be an appropriate model; set clear limits; praise accomplishments and efforts; explain consequences and how to learn from mistakes.
4. **Enable children to interact with others positively**—provide opportunities to cooperate with others; enable them to work out differences dealing with feelings and others' perspectives.
5. **Enable children to be responsible**—encourage participation; provide opportunities for them to care for belongings, help with chores, and help others.

Excerpted from: *Child, Family, School, Community - Socialization and Support* by Roberta M. Berns





BENEFITS OF COUPLE PRAYER

Research is discovering what people of faith everywhere have known for some time: married couples receive strength from prayer. But how does prayer strengthen marriages? According to research, prayer has the following effects on marriage relationships:

- ∞ Couples draw closer to God. Once a person understands their relationship with God, prayer becomes natural. Many people view God as a loving figure who is there to help them succeed. He is often seen as a source of help and answers. Due to this relationship, people trust in Him and allow Him to enter their marriage. Thus, he becomes an integral part of their marriage. When this relationship is established, couples are able to see themselves, and each other, in a different light. God is their divine standard. Through prayer, they can gauge their behaviour to see if they are acting like Him.
- ∞ Angry feelings are softened. As couples draw nearer to God and decide to pray, feelings are softened. Many spouses report they don't want to pray when they are angry because anger is not compatible with God's desires. In fact, they often claim it is impossible to pray while holding onto bad feelings. Prayer, or the decision to pray, has a calming effect. It soothes emotions and helps angry partners treat their spouse differently.
- ∞ Relationships are remembered. Something interesting happens when couples pray. They start to forget about their own feelings and start to think more about the other person. People usually think of themselves when fighting because they want to be heard. Prayer, however, helps them remember their relationship as a couple. Once angry feelings are softened, a person can begin to understand his or her spouse. This happens because they stop focusing on what their spouse needs to change and how they can change. Fewer stalemate strategies are used, and they no longer insist on being right. Instead, they want what is best for the relationship. The more often you pray, the more likely you are to treat others like you would like to be treated.
- ∞ Instructions are received. When couples use prayer to solve conflict they do not receive complete answers. Instead, they experience step-by-step coaching that tells them what to say or do to improve their situation. Thus, they receive the necessary help, but the problem is not removed. Rather than making everything better, prayer leaves the couple with the responsibility to create their own solution.
- ∞ Health benefits follow. Some studies have shown that prayer, and prayer offered in others behalf, helps people relax, increases their brain activity, and improves heartbeat rate. In short, prayer promotes health.

—Written by Andrew S. Brimhall



Hello Again

Rediscovering your spouse after the nest empties out

The most important thing you can do for your marriage at the empty-nest stage is to redefine your relationship. As you do this, you need to set new goals and share new hopes and expectations with each other. Strike a balance between individual, couple and social time that works for both of you. But most of all, learn to enjoy the time you now have together.

If you find yourselves struggling to reconnect, here are a few other things you can do:

1. **Fill the hole.** This should include filling both the physical space and the time space that your kids occupied. Talk about how you would each like to fill those spaces, then start doing it.
2. **Enjoy the chance to be spontaneous again.** You have finally reached the stage where you get to do what you want to do, when you want to do it. Go have some fun at the drop of a hat.
3. **Let go of the past.** You have a bright new future ahead – focus on that. Be sure to resolve and forgive any past hurts that have occurred so you can move into your future together refreshed and renewed.
4. **Renew your romance and enjoy new-found sexual freedom.** There are no more distractions, interruptions or excuses – just freedom to enjoy each other. As you do this, be sure to talk about changes in your needs and desires that have occurred over the years.
5. **Focus on the positives.** Take time to notice all the wonderful little things about your spouse, and dwell on these. Consider writing your spouse a love note.
6. **Validate each other's feelings.** No two people experience this stage of marriage in exactly the same way. Talk about how you feel, and be patient with each other as you adjust to the empty nest.
7. **Focus on your spiritual growth.** Consider starting a Bible study together, join a small group or pray together daily.



Earth Day - April 22, 2013



Every year on April 22, Earth Day is celebrated in over 170 countries. More than six million Canadians join in the largest, most celebrated environmental event worldwide.

The earth has been entrusted to humanity, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, to till it and keep it" (Genesis 2:25). Earth Day reminds each and every one of us of the responsibility for having an appropriate attitude toward the environment. Because we love our children, what environment do we wish to bequeath to them?

Eco-Friendly Tips

Be aware of your eco-footprint and your consumption.

By the age of only six months, the average Canadian baby has consumed as many resources as the average person in the developing world in his or her lifetime. Lighten your footprint.

There is a saying, "I'm not rich enough to buy cheap things."

Buying more of cheaper, lesser-quality products doesn't help the environment, and in the end it may actually cost you more.

"For wealth without greed, take only what you need!"

Follow this motto and limit unnecessary purchases to reduce your eco-footprint and your waste.

Eat what you buy and buy what you need.

Twenty-seven percent of all food purchases in North America is wasted. Don't be shy to doggy-bag that half of the plate you didn't eat.

Hunting For An Eco Easter?

Visit:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&nav=1EF75C25-1>

Stewards of Creation

Excerpted from Pope John Paul II's *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*. The full text can be found online.

"Respect for life and for the dignity of the human person also extends to the rest of creation, which is called to join man in praising God."

"We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations."

"It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence. Today, the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent to which greed and selfishness – both individual and collective – are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence."

"Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few."

<http://conservation.catholic.org>

From "Letter from the Bishops," in *Let the Earth Bless the Lord: A Catholic Approach to the Environment*. "In following Jesus, the Church seeks to live a consistent ethic of life fully reflective of his example of an all-embracing love, particularly for those who are most in need . . . The Church recognizes that the web of life and the promotion of human dignity are linked to the protection and care of God's creation. It is this integral approach that marks our effort as a distinctly Catholic vision of environmental responsibility."

"He who would be a friend of God," Gandhi once said, "must either remain alone or make the whole world his friend."

Indeed, we are connected. "You don't live in a world alone," Albert Schweitzer said, "your brothers and sisters are here, too." And Pope John Paul II has stated, "A human being lives, works, creates, suffers, fights, loves, hates, doubts, falls and recovers in fellowship with others."

We must recognize that we have no right to divest the Creator of His creation; we are but stewards of His creation. And we must see that God has given us the power, through Jesus, the first-born of all creation, to effect a change for the better.

Author-scientist James Lovelock said: "To see and feel the earth this way and to think of it as a living organism gives substance to the Christian concept of stewardship and turns our hearts and minds towards what should be our prime environmental concern, the care and protection of earth itself."

Adapted from The Christophers

We are one, after all, you and I; together we suffer, together exist, and forever will we recreate each other.

- Teilhard de Chardin



The Department for Family Life

Why Become Aware of Feelings?

Why is it worthwhile getting in touch with feelings? Here are a few reasons given by other people:

1. Because what blocks me are such feelings as fear, guilt, embarrassment, shame, depression, and self-criticalness. Usually, I'm not even aware that what's blocking me are these feelings. I just know that life seems dull and uninteresting. But if I can get in touch with these feelings and deal with them, I find that my life becomes more satisfying and fulfilling.
2. Because feelings are the key to insight and self-understanding. Discovering my feelings helps me understand what's going on in my inner world.
3. Because I can understand other people better and empathize with them if I can get in touch with and respond from my own feelings.
4. Because it's easier to make decisions if I know what I feel. I don't have to operate from the level of "shoulds" and "oughts"; I can operate from the level of what I really want.
5. The more I'm aware of my feelings, the more grounded and centered I feel. I feel stronger and better able to stand my ground in the face of pressures, attacks, and challenges.
6. If I can become aware of my feelings, I can learn that just because I have a feeling doesn't mean I have to act on it. I can think about my feelings and consciously decide what to do about them instead of just blindly reacting, like a machine.
7. If I tune in to myself and what I want, I no longer have to be compulsively tuned in to other people's expectations and demands.
8. If I'm aware of my feelings, and I'm able to express them, I find I can learn to give and accept genuine love and warmth.
9. If I'm aware of my feelings, I can find out how my relationships and communications get tangled up, and I can begin to disentangle them so everything is straight.
10. If I can live on a feeling level, I find that life becomes more exciting, joyful, and zestful.

© Explorations Institute, 1976

Myths of Singleness

Single adults are lonely - It is true that some single adults are lonely, but it certainly does not take being single to be lonely. Perhaps the loneliest person you know is not a single adult, but a married adult in a troubled marriage.

Single adults want to get married - Some single adults do want to marry; others choose to remain single.

Single men are irresponsible - Some are; then again, some married men are also! It does not take being single to be irresponsible.

Single adults are sexually frustrated - Some adults who are single again due to death of a spouse or death of a marriage are now learning to live a celibate life. The statement is true. We are all one heartbeat away from singleness. What is the Church doing to help these people adjust?

Single adults have fewer problems than married adults - Not really! Just different problems. Singleness and marriage both have their sets of problems. The single adult does not have a partner to share them with, though.

Single adults must be afraid of making a commitment - This is an ignorant, general attitude with the intention of explaining why many people have not married yet. It is basically untrue.

Single adults have more time than married adults - Again, untrue! Single adults have to cook meals, clean the house, etc., take care of children (single parents) with no spouse to help them!

Single adults are not complete until they are married - Because of the emphasis on "marriage and family" in most churches, single adults may feel that they don't belong at times! Phrases such as, "I want you to meet my better half," and questions and attitudes like, "Why isn't an attractive woman like you married yet?" do little to help a single adult feel complete. "We are complete in Him!" (Colossians 2:10)

Single adults have more money than married adults - There are some single adults who make good money and may have more than married adults. Generally, it is untrue, though! Young single adults are not into their income producing years yet; divorced single women almost always take a huge cut in their income; 60% of single-parent females make less than the poverty level; most widowed adults live on a low, fixed income.

Prayer for Single Parents

Eternal Father, bless and protect all single parents. Fill their hearts with peace, wisdom, strength, courage, and faith. Instill in them the *Fruits of the Holy Spirit* and may they always bear in mind that YOU are always with them and are never far from reach.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NEWS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

“From This Day Forward” Diocesan Marriage Preparation

This faith-based marriage preparation program is offered in a non-threatening group environment. Topics include Readiness, Communication, Sexuality, Time/Money, Parenthood, Natural Family Planning, and Marriage as Sacrament.

When: April 12-13-14, 2013; May 3-4-5, 2013; June 7-8-9, 2013, August 23-24-25, 2013, October 4-5-6, 2013, November 22-23-24, 2013, January 17-18-19, 2014, March 7-8-9, 2014, April 4-5-6, 2014, May 2-3-4, 2014, June 13-14-15, 2014.

Cost: \$225/couple (lunch and materials included)
(No couples refused because of lack of funds)

Where: Archdiocese of Montreal, 2000 Sherbrooke St. West

Contact: (514) 925-4300 ext. 219

Engaged Encounter

Engaged Encounter focuses on the marriage itself and leaves aside the immediate preparation of the wedding day. This weekend deals with marriage as a sacrament providing couples with the opportunity to dialogue honestly and to listen to one another lovingly in preparation for life together.

When: March 22-23-24, 2013

Where: Villa St. Martin, 9451 Gouin Blvd., Pierrefonds

Cost per couple: \$335.00 (No couples refused because of lack of funds)

Contact: Paul and Linda Evans (514) 697-9805

www.engagedencountermontreal.org

Natural Family Planning - “Billings Ovulation Method”

Modern natural family planning is a **way of life** in which couples recognize their fertility and infertility that allows them to space or limit pregnancies naturally, simply, and reliably. It is a cost-free alternative to other methods of family planning based on artificial conception. The “Billings Method” is in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and is acceptable to all cultures and creeds.

Free Instruction offered by appointment in the West Island and at the Archdiocese of Montreal (as needed).

Contact: Sonia Kesik-Mitchell (514) 925-4300 ext 343

The National March for Life 2013—End Female Gendercide

The sixteenth annual *March for Life* events, organized by Campaign Life Coalition, will be held in Ottawa from Wednesday, May 8th to Friday May 10th. For more information:

1-800-730-5358 or **<http://www.campaignlifecoalition.com>**

Counselling Referral Service

The counseling referral service, which emphasizes a pastoral approach, is an initiative of the Office for English Pastoral Services, Archdiocese of Montreal, and is coordinated by the Department for Family Life. The counsellors are accredited professionals with many years experience in various therapy approaches. They provide individual, couple and family therapy on a sliding-fee scale in various areas of the city and on the West Island.

Contact: Sonia Kesik-Mitchell at (514) 925-4343 or **smitchell@diocesemontreal.org**

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

The simple objective behind Marriage Encounter is to make the good marriage better. Its success does not lie in group dynamics, but in couple dynamics. The Marriage Encounter goal is seeking to strengthen the couple's relationship through offering a technique of loving communication, which they can use for the rest of their lives. Three couples and a priest present the weekend in the Roman Catholic understanding and tradition.

When and Where: Horeb St. Jacques

A weekend will be scheduled based on interest.

Contact: Mary and Len Silvestri (450) 622-1070 or **marycasale@sympatico.ca**

Cost per couple: A non-refundable fee to ensure your reservation. At end of weekend, couples are requested to make a donation.
(No couples refused because of lack of funds)

Separated and Divorced Catholics

A support group meets monthly at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Laval. For information contact Sara: (450) 967-1768 or **sararedavinci@msn.com** or Giuseppe: (450) 967-1768 or **giuseppe.margiotta@mcgill.ca**

Family Life, Development and Culture

Practical parenting courses using the Harvard Case Study Method are offered, as well as a course on *Matrimonial Love*.

For more information on courses, events, and resources visit:

www.familymtl.com or call Julie and Paul Waters at

(514) 483-3709.

Good Grief Workshops

Age-specific groups led by a team of trained volunteers will provide a group format to help children understand and express grief. On the same day a concurrent *Parent Discussion Group* is offered. This free workshop is for children and adolescents 4-15 years old.

When: Saturday, April 13, 2013, 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Where: Selwyn House School, 101 Côte St. Antoine

Contact and registration: Dawn Cruchet, BN, MEd, CT
(514) 279-7358

A Pilgrim's Journey

A fellow pilgrim shares his call to further deepen his awareness of and relationship with Jesus. Relive with him the trials, pains and challenges as well as the joys, beauty and growth of his physical and spiritual journey that began in 2005, and continues after his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, in the summer of 2012.

Facilitator: Mr. Michael Johnston

When: Friday, April 26, from 7:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Where: St. Monica's Church Hall or Rectory, 6405 Terrebonne

Babysitting: Free babysitting upon request

Registration: At least one week prior to event

Contact: Anna Diodati, (514) 481-0267 or **annadiodati@hotmail.ca**

