



Networks

National Evangelization Teams of Canada

Winter
2005

IRELAND TEAM IN ACTION:

A change of heart

Being a NET team member has its good days and difficult days, but never a day that is not fruitful.

Dan Beaulac, age 23, of Charlottetown, PEI, was having one of those difficult days. Dan and his NET team were leading a retreat in County Donegal, Ireland, at an all-boys high school. Among his small group members were five grade 11 students who were determined to argue just about everything Dan said. One young man in particular was very aggressive in his insults against the Catholic Church.

“His arguments weren’t what you’d normally hear from a typical 15-year-old,” says Dan. “It seemed like he had researched

possible arguments and knew exactly what to say. He was definitely the ringleader in the group. I just kept trying to patiently answer his comments and pray for him in my mind the whole time. I was pleased with how I was responding to his challenges, but he just never gave up. He only had negative things to say about God and the Catholic faith.”

Even after small group was over, the student came up to Dan to further challenge him. The retreat went on, and Dan continued to pray for a change in the student’s heart. At the end of the retreat, the team led their small groups over to the church to end with a time of prayer. But Dan couldn’t find his troubled student.

See “From drugs to Christ”, page 2

NET Canada’s team in front of Kilkenny Castle, Ireland, in

December. *From L to R, back: Dan Beaulac, Charlottetown, PEI; Laura Herauf, Regina, SK; Dave Dobbelsteyn, St. John, NB; Charity Andrzejewski, Herscher, Illinois; Cameron Maeder (towards the rear), the Woodlands, Texas; Sheila Trainor (towards the front), Summerside, PEI; Matthew Fradd, Port Pirie, Australia; Mike King, Dartmouth, NS; Lydia Cristini, Edmonton, AB. Front: Lita Erglis, Victoria, BC; J.P. de Fleuriot, Langley, BC; Todd Marr, Calgary, AB.*



The Gospel proclaimed on both sides of Atlantic

Since last October, the NET teams have been busy working in parishes and schools across Canada and beyond, proclaiming the Gospel to Catholic teens and their families. One team, our first ever to be dispatched to Ireland, finished their three-month mission in December. It was a great success!

The other five NET teams enjoyed a short Christmas break with their families, and then returned to their mission of proclaiming the Gospel. Two of the five NET teams resumed their travel schedule (see back page for itinerary), leading evangelization retreats from coast to coast, while the other three NET teams are continuing their work in three parish communities, building youth programs that will last for years to come.

So far, the teams have proclaimed the Gospel to 8778 young people and their families since October, 2004. The teams have led 82 retreats and 30 Lifenights and traveled thousands of miles through some nasty weather and with sometimes-uncooperative van engines.

As friends and supporters of NET, we hope the stories and letters in this newsletter bring you warmth of heart during these long winter months. God is good!

Cont'd from page 1: From drugs to Christ

"Immediately I assumed he had snuck out of the retreat and taken off. I couldn't see him anywhere. I was so disappointed."

Once inside the church, Dan couldn't believe his eyes: there was the missing student, coming out of a confessional. He wasn't with the group because he went to Confession with the priest on the retreat!

After the retreat, the student came up to Dan and thanked him for the retreat. They parted ways, but that was not the last he would see of his new friend.

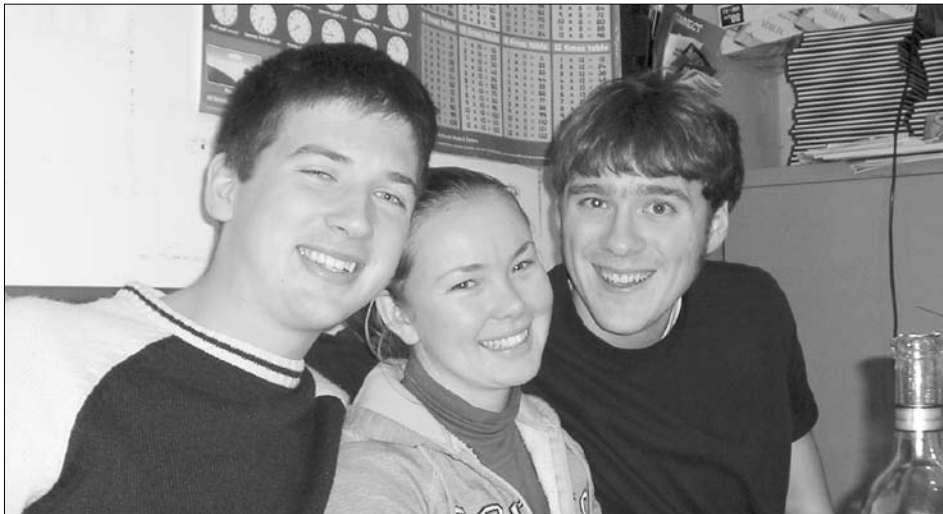
A week later, Dan decided to spend some free time taking in the sights by walking around downtown. While walking down the street, Dan and the student met each other on the sidewalk! "What a huge grace to just happen to run into him on the street. We talked for almost two hours on the sidewalk. He said he had decided

to reform his life and stop drinking and doing drugs. He said, 'I'm on day seven of my walk with Jesus!'" Dan could barely believe his ears.

The two young men spent the next two hours talking together about their lives. The student shared that his upbringing was tumultuous, and that ever since he was a young child, he had heard nothing but hatred toward the Catholic Church from his family.

They prayed together and parted ways. "Of all my retreat experiences," says Dan, "this one definitely tops the list. To think of the obstacles he had to overcome in his heart in order to allow Jesus into his heart... it baffles me. I thought even if nothing else happens this year, that'll be enough. He's probably the one retreatant I feel most compelled to continue to pray for. The experience was awesome."

NET team member Dan Beaulac, at right, with team mates Lita Erglis & Dave Dobbelsteyn



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NET Canada sends out Catholic young adult teams who share their faith with over 20,000 youth in dioceses across Canada each year. We are a non-profit organization and rely on your donations to help us bring Christ to young Canadians. Come partner with us!

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Canadian teens write

Look for feedback from students in Eastern and Central Canada in the next newsletter, when the teams cover those parts of the country in the coming months.

On the retreat, my faith did grow. I learned a lot from the testimony about the guy and girl relationships, like now I know I need to have Jesus in a relationship first.

— Sarkis, age 15, Whitehorse, Yukon

I learned that friends come and go, but Jesus will always be with you. Jesus will always forgive you no matter what you do. I feel that the retreat touched me. The team members were all so very nice to me. I was worried and afraid of a lot but now I am looking at the positive perspective. I love Jesus and I think that I will think about what I am doing and what I say to people. Thank you, all.

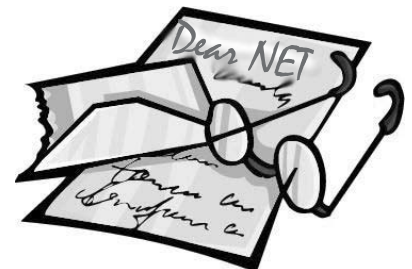
— Kendra, age 12, Medicine Hat, AB

The retreat really did change the way I looked at things. Right after the retreat, I went on a sports trip. I made different choices than I would have before and I had a really great trip. I don't think I would have if I hadn't gone on the retreat. Thank you so much.

— Emily, age 15, Whitehorse, Yukon

I think that the NET team made each of us feel comfortable and more open to express our thoughts and feelings. I got out of the retreat a better, more solid relationship with the Lord Almighty. I felt that in the church I actually felt God's presence and warmth. The team made me feel assured and more secure about my faith and that God is indeed our Saviour.

— Sibin, age 13, Edmonton, AB



NET goes to Ireland to “return an old favour”

This past autumn, NET Canada sent its first-ever mission team to Ireland at the invitation of the dioceses of Raphoe and Dublin. Considering that much of North America has been evangelized by Irish missionaries and immigrant families, we at NET considered this venture to be a gesture of gratitude!

The team led 51 retreats between September and December for over 3500 of Irish Catholic youth.

Many hearts touched

Father Rory Brady, from Stranorlor, was one of the many priests who spent time with the team and students on retreat. “The feedback from the students and principal at St. Columba’s High School is that this was the best retreat the school has ever had. And each year, the students in every grade get a retreat, so they have much to compare it to.”

Retreat organizer Sister Stephanie Flaherty, from Ballyshannon, echoed this comment, and said “The NET retreat is one of the best events to ever come to our parish.

“I saw big tough guys in Confession, crying, tears dripping down their faces.”

— Fr. Declan McCarron, Letterkenny, Ireland

One of the most noticeable things about the team is their prayerfulness – it’s not put on. It’s genuine. It was impressive and inspiring. I had the pleasure of sitting in at some of the presentations, witnessing the prayer sessions on retreat. The most profound thing I saw was the way the team members pray with each young person individually. My heart’s desire is that, by their example, we as adults will be set free to pray for others as the team did!”

Peer ministry works

Father Brady was particularly impressed with how effective NET’s style of peer ministry is. “The young people loved how the team took the time to be with them during breaks, and to pray with them,” says Fr. Brady. “That was *big*. There was silliness and prayer and Jesus in everything the team did on retreat. The team could get the message across without having a heavy, long face.”

Father Declan McCarron, from Letterkenny, said that he was amazed at the team’s “ability to very subtly and effectively introduce religion into every topic. My experience is that to evangelize youth, you only need to let them encounter Jesus personally – that’s all it takes. Our young people were able to encounter Him personally that day on our NET retreat. To use your Canadian word,” Fr. Declan said with a smile, “it was ‘awesome!’”

Reconciliation on retreat

The team was amazed that the Sacrament of Reconciliation became a major focus of many of the retreats, without their intending it to be so. At many retreats, the young people lined up for Confession during the prayer time. During some retreats, almost all of the students went to confession, most for the first time since they were children.

Father Brady noted, “At our retreats, students were coming to confession for the first time in years, and were very willing to make changes in their lives.” Father Declan agrees. “I saw tough guys in confession, crying, tears dripping down their faces. Personally, we’ve been looking for something to evangelize the young people in Ireland, and I think we found it. It’s NET.”

Effect on adults as well

The reaction of the young people and the work of the team touched the hearts of many adults as well. One priest told the team that he was beginning to feel the Sacrament of Reconciliation was a ‘dead’ sacrament since it was so underused.

But seeing the young people’s response to the Sacrament after hearing about 30 confessions during one retreat changed his heart. “It has restored my faith in the sacrament,” he said.

“NET [helped our priests] realize that the Catholic faith can still be brought to our young, in all its fullness and authenticity.”

— Fr. Rory Brady, Stranorlor, Ireland

Sister Susan Evangelist, from the Diocese of Raphoe, was able to spend some time with the team and said, “They are focused on the Lord, and I am delighted to see how devoted they are to the Sacramental life. More and more people, some of whom weren’t sure of NET at first, have come around after seeing the team in action.”

Father Brady adds, “NET inspired not just the young people, or even the host families, but significantly, the priests who encountered them, helping them to realize that the Catholic faith can still be brought to the young, in all its fullness and authenticity. Simply, the NET team proclaimed the Truth with love. May Jesus and Mary bless you all.”

The mission was so successful that our Irish contacts have requested another team for next fall. As well, some of the original Ireland team were invited to return to spend the spring and summer doing youth ministry in various parishes. (Many thanks to Charity Andrzejewski, from the Ireland team, for her first-hand account which made this article possible.)

HOST FAMILIES WRITE...

"We all just love the team so much. Our family can't wait to host them again. The team guests provide personal opportunities to pray and share with our two boys, aged 11 and 14. It is so important to evangelize like this, one on one. A true grace from God. Its a shame that the two weeks wasn't longer."

— *Diana & Mike Froh, Manotick, ON*

"The team members we hosted were wonderful girls. They were a blessing to have in our home. They were wonderful with my children. They were so respectful, kind, clean, polite, I can go on and on. Their display of worshipping Jesus by praying before every meal and praying before bedtime touched my whole family's hearts. May God pour down a double portion of His blessing on the whole NET team and LIFETEEN ministry."

— *Paula, Tony, Sarah & Jessica Pisciverni, Manotick, ON*

"We've just had the pleasure of hosting team 2 in Okotoks and High River, AB. Hosting the team is like having a mini-retreat for yourself! It's an experience in which you feel blessed and grow deeper in your own faith. These are young, Christ-centered men and

women who really proclaim the Gospel and do what we are called to do — love and serve one another. God bless the team and NET Ministries."

— *Michelle MacKinnon, Okotoks, AB*

"I am very happy that I was able to put up the NET team for an evening. They were an absolutely wonderful team. I have told many people of my experience. I would have no hesitation in hosting NET team members again. It is truly a joy to see and hear young people express their love of God. We often hear so many negative things about youth that having this team shows everyone that there is another side to the picture."

— *Costanza Romano, Sault Ste. Marie, ON*

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

To date we've received \$333,000 in donations. Thank you! This year we must raise \$440,000 to cover the costs of sending our six NET teams out to proclaim the Good News. Perhaps you can help! We have monthly automatic deduction from your credit card or bank account available for your convenience. We especially need help this year in replacing our two 15-passenger vans, which are becoming increasingly costly to maintain. Call Jean at the NET office at (613) 521-4426.

WINTER/SPRING SCHEDULE 2005

Team 1:

Jan. 13-20 Saskatoon, SK
 Jan. 20-27 Regina, SK
 Jan. 29- Mar. 11 Sault Ste. Marie, ON
 Mar. 12-20 TBA
 Mar. 20-Apr. 7 Thunder Bay, ON
 Apr. 8-27 Toronto, ON
 Apr. 27-May 3 Peterborough, ON
 May 3-24 Ottawa, ON
 May 24-28 Pembroke, ON

Team 2:

Jan. 10-Feb. 12 Toronto, ON
 Feb. 12-Mar. 1 Hamilton, ON
 Mar. 1-8 Cornwall, ON
 Mar. 8-11 Edmunston, NB
 Mar. 11-18 Saint John, NB
 Mar. 18-Apr. 6 Charlottetown, PEI
 Apr. 6-20 Halifax, NS
 Apr. 20-23 Yarmouth, NS
 Apr. 23-29 Antigonish, NS
 Apr. 30-May 9 Garnd Falls, NL
 May 9-14 St. George's, NL
 May 16-22 Montreal, PQ
 May 22-28 Kingston, ON

Team 3:

St. Leonard's Parish, Manotick, ON

Team 4: Diocese of North Bay, ON

Team 5: Diocese of Cornwall, ON

Team 6: Have completed their ministry in Ireland for 2004-2005



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- my chequing account:** (Please include a voided cheque)
- my credit card:** Visa MasterCard Other _____

Card number _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ Exp. Date _____ / _____

I hereby authorize NET Ministries of Canada to make a monthly deduction from my bank chequing account or credit card for the amount indicated above.

Signature _____ Date _____

(all preauthorized donations are processed on the 15th of the month)

<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. & Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Name _____ Address _____ City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone (____) _____

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