

Cana – a time for couples (and children)

“The prayer surrounding our Cana session made it feel like a safe place to discuss issues we were normally too tired or had no time to talk about.” -a husband

“We had quality time together that we don’t usually get during our vacations.” -a wife

“This was the best Catholic hotel ever!” -a boy, age 9

These are just a few reactions of families who have attended a Cana session at the St. Charles Retreat Centre on the banks of the Assiniboine River in the west end of Winnipeg. This is an annual week-long session for couples to strengthen their marriage and deepen their spiritual life. It includes talks, prayer, time together as a couple, relaxation and times of celebration. Children have their own program and are looked after by a team of volunteers who organize spiritual formation and recreation. It’s an “all inclusive” holiday in Winnipeg!



Ted and Nancy Wood, originally from the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, learned about the Cana program when they joined the Chemin Neuf Community in England. It was developed by Chemin Neuf in France and has since spread to over 50 countries on every continent. The Woods moved back to Winnipeg in 2010 at the invitation of the Archbishop of St. Boniface to establish the Chemin Neuf Community and were given the St. Charles Retreat Centre by the Missionary Oblate Sisters. The first Cana session was held in 2012, followed by another in 2013. Both had five couples and a team of volunteers.

One participant said, “You think you are different or your problems are different, when really everyone has the same issues and it is very heartening to talk about these things with other people. And it’s about bringing God into the everyday and just making it a wondrous thing.”

Cana takes its name from the miracle in the gospel of John about Jesus’ turning water into the wine of a wedding feast. At Cana, we bring the water of our marriage and let God turn it into wine!

The next Cana session will take place July 5-11, 2015. For more information, call Ted & Nancy Wood, 204-885-2260, stcharlesretreat@hotmail.com

Nancy Wood



I often think of the wedding feast of Cana. The first wine is very fine: this is falling in love. But it does not last until the end: a second wine has to come later, it has to ferment and grow, to mature. . .

Pope Benedict XVI