

# THE KOLPING SOCIETY OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

Christmas 2015

## Message from the National Praeses

Christmas Kolping Greetings!

The Incarnation is one of the fundamental truths of our Christian faith. We believe that God so loves humankind that God's only Son took on human flesh in order to dwell in our midst. God, who is so infinitely beyond our human concepts or knowledge, wants us to know that we are loved, that God is close to us, and that our tiny lives in this vast universe are of infinite worth to our God.

More and more I realize how often a person's image of God controls how they think God works. Most of us consider God as a kind of big human being, thinking and acting and feeling (perhaps) as we do. Consider for a moment, however, that God knows every single human being—all six or seven billion of us!—personally and intimately. Consider that God knows every nook and cranny of our unbounded universe. The stunning question would then be, "Why would God have any concern at all for us puny creatures on the face of the earth?"

Well, as we read in the first letter of John, God is Love. It is a humble, self-effacing love that bows before the creature because love can do no other. And the proof of this great love is not that God crushed the earth and started over in the face of human sin. No, God sent his only begotten Son, one like us in all things but sin, to show us what a relationship of faith with Our Father in heaven can be. Jesus then went even further, facing suffering and death on a Cross to confront and overthrow our two great enemies, sin and death.

We celebrate the manifestation of God's Love in the Nativity, in the birth of a small child who will call the world to conversion, one heart at a time. With the angels we will sing God's praises and stand in awe before the crib in the stable. With Mary we will ponder all these mysteries in the depths of our hearts. And perhaps we will be just that little bit better in the coming year because we can ourselves become more like our God through our union with Jesus—in Word, in Eucharist, in Sacraments, in community, in our Church.

For God in Jesus, Immanuel, is with us!

Fr. Mark Miller, C.Ss.R.

## Message from the National President

The Kolping International Secretary, Dr. Mark Demele, wrote:

This is a time when we are normally looking forward to Advent with joyful hope. However, these days, terrorists in Europe are tearing the lives and dreams of many

people apart. Thousands of refugees are trying to escape these terrorists and are fleeing from the Near and Middle East to Europe; and even those with the greatest trust in God might lose courage when they see the evening news on television.

At Kolping, we can not correct the mistakes of world politics. We cannot manage to give people their economic, cultural and social rights overnight. But we can start courageously, all of us, to improve our neighbourhoods and help our neighbours. Fr. Kolping spread a climate of courage and hope and thereby launched our international association. All over the world people who have taken him as a role model do not give in to despair, but, rather, to work courageously toward a more just world, in spite of the great challenges. Heartfelt thanks to all these people in Kolping everywhere!

Please do not forget the 150th anniversary of Fr. Kolping's death on Dec. 4th. A High Mass will be sent at 14:00 UTC/CMT+1. The Celebrants will be the Archbishop of Cologne, Rainer Cardinal Woelke, the Protector of the International Kolping Society, and the the General Praeses, Msgr. Ottmar Dillenburg. This will take place in the Minoritenkirche. [www.domradio.de](http://www.domradio.de)

It is time to thank to all who work for Kolping in Canada:  
Fr. Frank Miller, Regina Knoll, Inge Baumstark, Sibylle Ganguin, and all those on the local level - the presidents and executive officers.

The list of Kolping members who have passed is getting longer and longer each year. However, we are determined to carry on as long as we can. May the Christmas season bring us new hope for the coming years.  
Treu Kolping! Steve Salb

#### Message from Kolping Edmonton

Hello from Edmonton. Mid November and still no snow here. Fabulous, as driving in the dark and on slippery streets has become a challenge for many members. Yet we continue to have good attendance at our meetings.

We adjourned for the summer after the June meeting but had the annual mountain "hike" in the same month. Then many enjoyed a pot luck and sing along at the lakeside cottage in August before reconvening in September.

In October, Anita Hochdorfer, our president, visited her home town of Ettlingen, Germany and travelled to Belgium with the Kolping group to celebrate their 40 year partnership. She says Kolping is still very active there and has many young members, unlike here in Canada.

This month we celebrated World Day of Prayer with a mass and were delighted to have Bishop G. Bittman with us. A nice lunch was served afterward.

We will hold our Advent meeting next month and have an Advent program in which we all take part. Thanks to Fr Neumann who prepares the program every year. And what would a special evening be without good food? So of course a pot-luck will be enjoyed by all.

With the many horrors and hardships happening in the world, we are so very thankful for our peaceful, prosperous and democratic country and will strive to maintain our charitable and understanding ways. As Christmas draws close we will pray for our world, and to you our Kolping family we wish you health and contentment.

Treu Kolping, Donna Novak

#### Message from Kolping Hamilton

Since our last meeting in 2014, we had only one more meeting on June 6th, when we learned that our St. Boniface Parish and Church would be closed effectively Oct. 10/15 due to dwindling membership. And to make matters worse, it is with great sadness that we have to announce the passing of one of our long-time and most dedicated Kolping member and friend, namely Robert Vert, on Oct. 16. - may his soul rest in peace.

Our next meeting took place on Nov. 25. where we decided to dissolve our Kolping Family as our membership is steadily declining. Therefore, this will be our last newsletter.

In closing we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and God's Blessing in the future.

Treu Kolping,  
Win Klaas

#### Message from Kolping Toronto

After a wonderful summer and a beautiful fall, we are still enjoying double-digit temperatures one month before Christmas. Unfortunately, we know it can't last much longer but winter will bring its own delightful activities.

Before Kolping began its usual summer break, we held our annual picnic in June. This year it was at Inge and Werner Wuebbolt's rural residence in Campbellville. Years ago they used to host our winter outings there and we were very happy to be invited back. It was a very enjoyable day with good friends and delicious food but the gentle drizzle kept our afternoon stroll rather brief. However, that didn't hinder us from developing an appetite for the coffee and cakes brought by the ladies. Again, our amateur baker, Wilmar, unintentionally put us women to shame with his beautiful cake topped with an icing replica of the Kolping flag. A culinary work of art!

In the past few months we've had to bid farewell to two of our members. Fred Rick died in August - just four days after his 86th birthday, after a long struggle with Alzheimer's. It's nice to see his wife, Gisela, more often now, since she has some free time. Bernie Joisten, previous long-time publisher of the Kolping Messenger, died in October - one month before his 83rd birthday. Despite various ailments, Bernie and his wife, Barbara, regularly attended our functions and Bernie was always eager to share his ideas. He truly loved Kolping and we loved him as witnessed by the 300 people who attended his funeral. Last May he and Barbara celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary and

Barbara said she hadn't seen him so happy in a long time. Kolping remembers you all in our prayers.

This fall we've had our usual Kolping activities - Communion Breakfasts, World Day of Prayer Celebration and senior outings to various parks. The breakfasts are always well attended; the outings not so much, for obvious reasons.

Our members fully got behind St. Patrick Parish's Annual Bazaar on Nov. 18th. The proceeds go to the Redemptorist Africa/Madagascar Mission. Our Society gave a generous financial donation and our members donated raffle prizes and items for the various tables - knitting baking and gently used clothing, toys, china, décor items, etc. Others spent the whole day selling and then cleaned up at the end. The missions will benefit to the tune of more than \$9500.00.

May your Christmastime be filled with much love and blessings and consideration for your fellow man.

Treu Kolping, Ann Salb

## NEWS FROM KOLPING VANCOUVER

While the last leaves are falling and the first night frosts are glazing our roofs, we are approaching the end of another year. After an extremely dry, hot summer, Mother Nature has more than made up for the critical water shortage and amply refilled our water reservoirs.

With our sharply reduced activities, we have only two events to report on. After celebrating the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 3 with Mass, followed by a luncheon, we were in for a special treat. Dr. Marie-Luise Ermisch gave us a lecture about her pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago-- "Jakobsweg" in German--from Salamanca to Santiago, Spain. The Camino is a network of trails in Europe, considered one of the most important Christian pilgrimage routes of the Middle Ages. To this day, it attracts thousands of hikers, cyclists and horseback riders each year. In the summer of 2013, Dr. Ermisch walked 479 km alone through Spain. Her vivid presentation took us through her day-to-day experiences and trials—blisters, bruises, bedbugs, fatigue, breakdown of her immune system resulting in an infection, not to mention intense heat and periodic utter loneliness. Everyone who walks the Camino has his or her own story and reason to take the pilgrimage: burnout, a crisis or a quest for inspiration, and at the end there is a rejuvenating lesson to be learnt about our lives in a hectic world.

Our Annual Picnic never ceases to draw an impressive crowd, including family and visitors of members. We are so grateful and fortunate to have had the use of Dagmar and Frank Paar's charming hilltop cabin and property for a number of years. As always, the Bratwurst, salads and pastries were delicious, and the customary sing-along with musicians Karl and Matthias was a pleasant finale to wrap up the afternoon. We owe a big thank-you to Inge Haenle and Erika Fahrman for their hard work and all the organizing; they have been doing this for quite a few years and have become very efficient at it.

Our next function will be our Kolping Memorial Day celebration on December 6, at which time we will observe the 150th anniversary of the death of our founder. This will

also be an occasion for honouring Dieter Howald and Raimund Tessmann for 60 years of membership.

On April 22nd Günther Vetter passed away suddenly, ten days before his 80th birthday. He had come to Canada in 1952 at the age of 17 years and was one of the founding members of the Kolping Society of Winnipeg, where he formed lasting friendships. He would have celebrated 60 years as a Kolping member this December. We also lost our oldest member, Elisabeth Schipitzky at the age of 91 years, on August 8. Liesl, always with a sunny smile on her face, will be missed by us all, but most notably by her friends in the "Handarbeitsgruppe" (handicraft group).

Our El Salvador project is progressing slowly but surely. Since 2008, we have financially supported the community of young people of Jucuaran, headed by Father Montoya and his assistant, Douglas. They have recently purchased three new computers and some video games for the youth. They are also providing English classes in order to help prepare the young people in their search for employment. In an effort to help facilitate the founding of a Kolping Society there, our president, Horst Zimmerman, has for some time been acting as intermediary between the people in Jucuaran and Kolping International in Cologne; also, our member, Delmy Jimenéz, has recently been appointed as liaison between Kolping Vancouver and Father Montoya and Douglas. All that remains to be done now is to fine-tune some of the details of their new constitution, before they can finally establish the first Kolping Society in their country, and we are quite excited at the prospect!

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all Kolping friends across Canada for your kind expressions of sympathy, your prayers and support on the passing of my husband, Günther.

On behalf of Kolping Vancouver, I wish you the peace and the blessings of the Christ Child at Christmas and throughout the coming New Year!

Treu Kolping,  
Rose Vetter

## NEWS FROM KOLPING WINNIPEG

Christmas is in the air! Parties, concerts, shopping, baking, and stressing - it's all in the game. It's about families coming together, about happy memories and, especially, it's about the children.

We celebrate the birth of Jesus, who taught mankind that compassion, understanding and forgiveness was what we are meant to practice in our daily lives. This Christmas, let's all be thankful for His coming, and let's stay optimistic that His message will, eventually, trickle down to those who still live in darkness where hatred and just plain ignorance still dominate

Our year here in Kolping Winnipeg has been pretty slow, except, sadly, for four funerals. We lost Joe Bommersbach, Helen Fahnenschmidt, Rudi Sing and, in October, Tony Meier. ( And last week we heard that our former member Katie Mueller passed away in Penticton.) All were members for a very long time; Rudi was around at the very beginning. We will miss them all.

In May we got together to mark Kolping Winnipeg's 60th anniversary, and we were happy to have Father George Neumann here to celebrate with us. Father is such a good speaker and of course very knowledgeable not just about Kolping but the world in general. It was a very enjoyable, if busy, couple of days. Father stayed with Margret Littau, an old friend. She and Victor visited Father in Edmonton many times over many years, and she was more than happy to wine and dine him here for a change.

We had to cancel our scheduled picnic in early August because of the unpleasant start to our summer - weekly torrential downpours which always cause a big mess at our place in Hnaua (a foot of water in places, which takes a couple of days to drain away). Of course, and predictably, as soon as everyone had been phoned, the weather became beautiful, with sunshine and perfect temperatures, and it stayed that way well into November. We finally have a light coating of snow, but another gorgeous weekend is apparently ahead of us.

We've just had our Kolping Memorial Communion Breakfast, and are looking forward to by our Christmas Party this coming Sunday.

Christmas is great in Winnipeg, lots of parties, parades, celebrations, concerts, etc. etc. Just one highlight is the German Canadian Congress' Christkindlmarkt; very fine entertainment and beautiful things to buy, not to mention the Gluehwein, Kaffee und Kuchen.

We wish everyone a blessed Christmas, with happy, loving celebrations with your families and friends.

Treu Kolping! rk

Note to our reporters: Easter will be especially early this coming year - on March 27th, so there is no chance that our next Newsletter will come out before then because we will be away until April 1st. Let's try to get it out within the following week; I will send you a reminder. Thank you for your hard work, I know how hard it is sometimes because I did it myself for a long time.

I know you agree that we should all be thankful for Steve and Ann Salb, who keep everything going. We wish them both, and their family, all the best for Christmas and for the coming year. We also send our regrets to Kolping Hamilton; we'll stay in touch. r