

CALLED AWAY TO A MOUNTAIN TOP!!

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How does one describe the experience of being called away to the mountain top for an entire weekend?

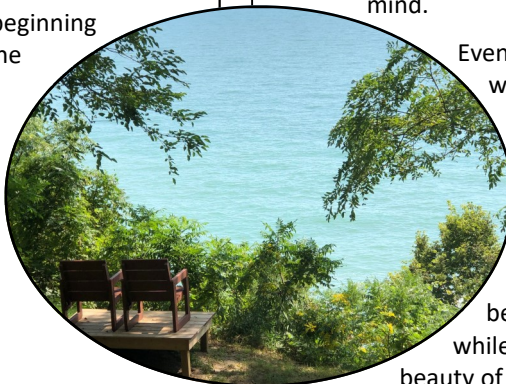
When I first saw the date of this Faithcation in Oxley I

immediately thought that I could not possibly go. I had family coming from Victoria the following Wednesday, R.C.I.A. beginning on the Tuesday, and the list went on and on. I had lists of things to do as long as your arm. How could I just pick up and go away to this retreat? There was just too much to do. Enter Martha of Bethany!

But an interesting thing happened in the midst of my running around. Every time I saw the ad for this retreat I began to wonder - should I? Eventually I just couldn't ignore the desire to go away and sit at the Master's feet along with other members of our parish community. Enter Mary of Bethany. I can't begin to express how happy I am that I listened to this

gentle call of the Lord to go away with Him.

I had been on two retreats before, both of them being silent retreats. This one was quite interactive. I'll be honest and say that chatting with different people in our community was at first a bit challenging for me. But that was quickly replaced with the joy of getting to know people in our parish that I didn't know very well or not at all. Throughout the weekend, I began to feel such a strong sense of how deeply we are all connected. A gradual discovery of just how varied our backgrounds and stories are began to emerge. But the one thing that we all have in common is our love of Christ. A beautiful image of being a part of His Mystical Body has remained in my mind.



Even though this was an interactive retreat, there was time when we had the opportunity to be still and quiet while taking in the beauty of these sacred

grounds. This period of silence was perfectly balanced with presentations, music, the sharing of stories, the Rosary, a Holy hour, Reconciliation, and the ultimate mountain-top moment, celebrating Sunday Mass together. I began to realize through all of this that I needed to let go of

certain fears and anxiety and begin to entrust Jesus with every aspect of my life.

Another take away from this retreat occurred during the Holy hour. I felt very

deeply the call to keep my eyes always focused on the Lord. During Benediction, I experienced a sense of "My grace is sufficient" being shared with me. When we were sharing at our tables our favourite scripture passages, right out of the blue and front and centre in my mind came this - "For you were not given a spirit of fear, but rather a spirit of love, power and self-discipline." Wow, what a wake up call!

So we are back to reality following this mountain-top experience, but I'm sure most of us are looking at our individual realities a bit differently. Even though our experiences were probably quite different, the one thing that I'm sure can be said is that we encountered Christ in an unexpected way. Fr. John said that we go away on retreat in order to return and begin to live this renewed sense of the Holy Spirit in our parish, families and the greater community.

Many thanks to the amazing retreat team that put this all together. I can say that this "Martha" has a different view of



things.

