

JESUS HAS NO BACK-UP PLAN...



Betty Anne Brown
National Chairperson of Communications

Years ago, Father Mark Link, SJ wrote this reflection in *Vision 2000*:

“Legend says that when Jesus ascended into Heaven, the people in Heaven were shocked to see His terrible wounds – signs of how much He had suffered. Gabriel said to him, ‘Lord, do all the people on earth know how much You suffered for them and how much You love them?’

“To which, Jesus replied, ‘Oh no, only a tiny handful in Palestine, but they’ll tell the rest.’

“Gabriel looked confused. He knew how fickle people were. He knew how forgetful they were. He knew how prone to doubt they were. So he turned to Jesus and said, ‘But Lord, what if these people begin to doubt You? What if they get so involved in living their own lives that they forget to tell others? Or if the people they tell, forget or have doubts? What then? Don’t you have a **back-up plan**, just in case?’

“Jesus answered, ‘I thought about these things, but decided against a **back-up plan**. This is my only plan; I’m counting on my friends.’

“Twenty centuries later, Jesus still has no **back-up plan**. He’s counting on His friends not to let Him down.”

Jesus has no **back-up plan**; what are we going to do about it?

He is relying on His friends! He told us that we were His friends at the Last Supper in John 15:14. Just before that passage in John’s gospel, Jesus told us that He loved us, that He would send us His Spirit, that He would be in us and we would be in Him, and He promised that He would not leave us orphaned (John 14:15-18).

Do guarantees come any better than that? Because we were baptized and confirmed, we have been accepted into God’s “inner circle”. American Express used to say, “Membership has its privileges.” So too, as members of God’s “inner circle,” do we have special assurances, privileges and gifts, but we also have responsibilities.

We cannot begin to share the Good News until we have come to believe it with every fiber of our being. It is important to take time and reflect, “Has God been there for me? He promised not to leave me orphaned. Was that true as I look back on the experiences of my life?”

I am sure that you can quickly come up with five to 10 “God with me” stories. So, our touchstone is that we know God is with us on every step of our life’s journey.

Now, let’s go back to the **back-up plan**. We can’t really talk

about God or Jesus unless we know Him. How do we do that? We spend time with Him in quiet prayer and the sacraments.

How’s the best way to get to know Him? On our knees – literally and figuratively. I have a vineyard. Do you realize how bruised your knees can get from crawling along rows of rocks? I figure every bottle of wine should cost at least \$100.00! It is tough work out there under the sky, just me and the birds and the breeze...and God. What a fantastic way for me to think about the stories Jesus told about the farmer and vineyard workers. He and I spend time, hours out there together...and He talks to me.



Life will throw us lemons, they knock us down and who do we call for help? God! Mary! “Just a minute,” she says, “I’ll get my Son, and He knows how to handle these things.” Huh? What does Jesus know about this, that or the other horrible thing?

He lived among us, knows how it feels, made it all worthwhile for us, loves us, and gave His life for us and, believe me, He will help us. Gradually the tangled mess gets straightened out and once again we can stand up, brush ourselves off and start all over again!

How do we get to know God better during the quiet times, between battles, so to speak? Every morning after the children have gone to school and the coffee has been brewed, I sit down by my kitchen window and I say my prayers. I put myself in the presence of God and I let Him lead the way. What works for you?

- evening, after your children are in bed, the dishes are done and you’ve read the newspaper?

- lunch time, away from the madding crowd in the classroom?
- out for your walk?

The odd thing is, during prayer time, ideas will dawn and a twinkle will go off in your head. Then afterwards, as you go on with your day, that idea might come back to you. Inspiration is to have the breath of God in you. And what do you know? Yes, this was that creative solution to excite people, solve a problem and deal with a challenge.

Back to the **back-up plan** – we also need some good companions. “You are who your friends are,” my mother used to say. These are gifts for our heart, soul and body; they give us courage. I have found most of my good companions

- in the League, lifelong friends who understand the spiritual journey and its twists and turns
- in my neighbourhood and in my parish (birds of a feather, flock together)
- in a good book

Good companions help you to become the best version of yourself, as Matthew Kelly would say. They help us to grow in ways that we never dreamed possible!

Jesus has no **back-up plan**, what are we going to do about it? What's next? Lift off! Out we go! Mother bird nudges us out into the world; what do we do? Start by reaching out and helping someone.

- “How can I make your life a bit better?”
- “Do you need someone to listen?”
- “Do you need a place to live? Come.”
- “What about food or clothes, can I help?”
- “Can I babysit or relieve you from your family responsibilities so you can have a break?”
- “Can we learn something together; I will go, if you go.”

Jesus said, “. . . just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).

Thus, Jesus has begun to use us to help to spread His kingdom. The difference will be that we are touching people with His hand; He will work through us to bring about the change needed. Gradually, we will become His disciples, His hands, heart and feet in the world. We are His **back-up plan**, maybe not using words, but by our actions! Remember, actions speak louder than words.

No one of us is alike. I will never meet the people that you will meet. Each of us walks a different path, but ultimately, we are all heading in the same direction. Maybe that's why God needs so many of us! There is so much to do and so many people to touch; He just has to use everything He can get.

Jesus has no **back-up plan**; He is depending on His friends. What are we going to do about it? †

INTRODUCING



Agnes Kenney
Newfoundland and Labrador
Provincial President

Agnes grew up in Conche, Newfoundland and Labrador, the oldest girl of nine children. Her community was known for the importance of the practice of one's faith, an emphasis on pursuing

a good education, working hard, and giving back to society. This was much appreciated by Agnes when she later moved on and continued her career in other parts of the province. Her heart was set on being a nurse; however, she taught for three years in her parish and then decided to enter the Presentation Order, known for excellent teaching. She received her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, followed by a Masters in Education with a major in high school English at the University of Maine in Orono.

Twenty-five years later, when the role of the laity received more prominence in the church, Agnes left the religious order. She continued to attend daily mass and use some of her spare time in reaching out to others in need. She is also an important part of her nieces and nephews lives – all 18 of them and, now, her grand nieces and nephews – 19 of them and more to come! She has been a volunteer at one of the city hospitals for 21 years, 15 of these spent in palliative care, and finds this work very meaningful.

In her parish she has been chairperson of the parish council, served on the hospitality committee, bereavement team and catechetical team, as choir member, lector, Eucharistic minister, has ministered to the sick, prepares for and attends the liturgy in her parish nursing home and leads the rosary before daily mass.

In 2000, Agnes joined the League and was elected that year to her parish council executive. After six years with her parish council, she was approached to take the position of chairperson of a standing committee with the provincial executive and served two years as chairperson of Christian family life. She was next approached to take on the responsibility of president-elect/organization which she did after prayer and deliberation!

Agnes looks forward to the next two years as provincial president. She knows that she has many friends in the League who are only too eager to help with advice and suggestions as a result of their love for the League and its future. Agnes is always ready to ask and to listen, and, where applicable, to implement, with the support and help of her executive, and life member liaison, what is determined to be in the best interest of the League. †



For God and Canada