



The Catholic  
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Joy in Christ  
**100** Jubilee  
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## Jubilee 100 Biography Project

### Biography of Cecilia Winton

Submitted by St. Alphonsus Parish, Edmonton



Cecilia Winton has been a parishioner at St. Alphonsus for her whole life, with the exception of two years when she was teaching in Manning, Alberta. She was baptized at the parish, received all her sacraments of initiation and was married at St. Alphonsus in 1962. Cecilia has been involved in many ministries and functions at St. Alphonsus over the years. Among them include singing in the choir as a child, a youth and an adult, the RCIA ministry, arts and environment, the liturgy committee and in parish bingos and bazaars. Her involvement with the liturgy committee has lasted over 20 years; she was among the first lectors and Eucharistic ministers. Cecilia was the first leader of the lectors and wrote the prayers of the faithful each week. She became chairperson of the liturgy committee, a position she stills holds today.

Cecilia has many friends at St. Alphonsus but two are lifelong friends: Binnie (Audrey) Engley and Anna Holland (nee McNally). They are involved with Cecilia on the liturgy committee. Binnie is secretary and Anna is head of the Arts and Environment, and all belong to the CWL.

In her own words she tells us about the “old” Church:

The ‘old’ church was a small white building that over its life had been a school and a library before becoming St. Alphonsus Church under the direction of the Redemptorist Fathers and the Sisters of Charity from Saint John, New Brunswick. This little church in the middle of vast empty field had a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Everyone who entered St. Al's remarked on the calm and peace they experienced in the church. St. Alphonsus was known citywide for devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. People came from all over the city to attend devotions. The walls of the church displayed canes and crutches etc. as a result of the miracles attributed to Our Lady. As children, we marched from St. Alphonsus School to the church every Wednesday for devotions. We marched in twos along 118th Avenue with a Sister at the head and one at the back of each group.

Because we had such devotion to Mary we had numerous processions in her honour, especially in May when we crowned her statue with flowers. Everyone wanted to be the chosen to crown our Blessed Mother. The dear Sisters had a cupboard of white chiffon dresses with blue sashes. The girls got to wear these dresses during all processions.

The basement of this small church was our “Parish Hall” and the centre of parish life. It was home to bingos, card games like Bridge and Whist, to wonderful parish suppers and elegant teas with real china teacups, to mother and daughter and father and son feasts, to Bean Suppers and to CWL, the Men’s Club and the Knights of Columbus. As youngsters we were often called on to help set up tables for meetings, special suppers or card games. These evenings were always followed by a lunch. Large sheet cakes were usually in the kitchen for these activities and after we had set up the tables Father Beregan would take us into the kitchen and cut each of us a large piece of cake. I don’t know if the ladies ever figured out who had eaten the cake.

The parish suppers and teas were wonderful events called Harvest Suppers or Lilac Teas or St. Patrick’s Dinners. Concerts put on by the parishioners and the young people were frequent, especially for St. Patrick’s Day.

First Communion and Confirmation were at these early times the duty of the school. The Sisters prepared us for both in a competent but happy way. I can remember being up with my class on the shady side of the church waiting for our grand entrance. All the girls wore white dresses and veils on their heads and boys wore usually black pants and white shirts. At this time a hat was mandatory for all women.

When the new church was being built, I was teaching in Manning, Alberta. When after two years I returned to Edmonton to teach, the new church was already open. We all thought we had the most beautiful church in Edmonton.

To help pay for the church the Men’s Club put on weekly bingos which were very well attended by the whole 118th Avenue community. I worked in the bingo office for a number of years until the city Knights of Columbus decided they should control all bingos.”

Cecilia says her years at St. Alphonsus have been filled with happy times and some strange happenings. She gave an example of one such time: “One Christmas Eve I was a minister of the Eucharist with the chalice. One gentleman drank from the chalice and then flicked a dime into the cup. I did not know what I should do. I did not want anyone to choke on the dime so I reached in and took it out. Later Father told me I had done the right thing.”

Over the years Cecilia has seen many changes at St. Alphonsus regarding the Mass and also to the community. One change that is significant for her is the change in the neighbourhood; St. Alphonsus used to be in a middle class neighbourhood but now is considered part of the inner city. Another change that stands out for her is when the Redemptorists left the parish and it became diocesan and has now become a Basilian parish. Cecilia is very thankful for all the priests who have served St. Alphonsus over the years.