

# THE UPPER ROOM HOME OF PRAYER MINISTRY

## HOME OF PRAYER



1984 - 1998 at 58 Primrose Avenue



On-going Spiritual Direction visits



1998 - 2016... at 68 Centrepointe Drive

In 1984, Sister Rosemary O'Toole, a Sister of St. Joseph (Peterborough) returned from Lebh Shomea House of Prayer in Sarita, Texas where she had spent three years living with this contemplative-eremitical community. In response to her request to return home to Canada and start a contemplative House of Prayer, her congregational leadership team assigned her to live on the third floor of one of their convent homes at 58 Primrose Avenue, Ottawa. Here Rosemary set up the first Upper Room Home of Prayer. She named it a 'Home of Prayer' to reflect the welcoming hospitality and familiarity that comes with visiting and revisiting. In the spirit of the early Church it was truly to be an UPPER ROOM - a place of prayer in silence and solitude in the heart of the city of Ottawa inviting all searching pilgrims to come and pray and seek direction. In 1990 Sister Evelyn McGovern, CSJ (Peterborough) joined the ministry and they have been the core community for the past 32+ years. In July 1998, they moved to a smaller new townhome at 68 Centrepointe Drive in Ottawa (Nepean neighbourhood). Over time, the Spirit life grew abundantly in the men and women who came often to the Home of Prayer for spiritual direction, contemplative retreats and programs of spirituality.

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

**Emmaus Programs:** In 1989 Sr. Rosemary created and facilitated a two year formation program in Spiritual Direction called The Emmaus Program. This 2 year course was offered nine times over a period of several years. There have been some 70 graduates prepared for this ministry. Gratefully, some spiritual directors opened spaces in their own homes for spiritual direction visits; others were welcomed to minister part-time at Stillpoint House of Prayer and Galilee Retreat Centre and three deacons visit the prisons offering spiritual direction.



**Medaille Spirituality and the Online Course:** One of the core programs of The Upper Room has been the creation and teaching of several courses on the Spirituality of Jean-Pierre Medaille. Moving from large groups in local Parishes, to smaller groups at The Upper Room, these lessons have now been uploaded to a free ONLINE COURSE that is posted at their website. Some 1,350 members registered and participated. There are resources available that they created for sale: MAXIMS OF LOVE floral cards, spiral books of the complete set of MAXIMS and 'The Earth Charter as Seen through the Lens of Medaillan Spirituality' booklets etc. Several hundred of these resources have been distributed around the world.



**CD Ministry:** Two benefactors – *Tom Dewar of Dewar Audio and Judy Faulkner of Faulkner Real Estate* - came forward after hearing Sr. Rosemary lead these Evenings of Reflection at their Parish Churches. They offered to pay for the complete production costs of these two CD'S:



- ✓ The Spirituality of the Paschal Mystery
- ✓ Infinitely more... Reflections on the Dark Night and Contemplation

Since 2004 there have been over 5,000 CD's sold. Sr. Rosemary and The Upper Room spiritual directors have facilitated approx. 15 Day Retreats in different Parishes around the area with these two themes.

To fully explore all that is offered at **The Upper Room** check out their website. [www.theupperroomhomeofprayer.org](http://www.theupperroomhomeofprayer.org)

**Outreach to Parishes, Lay School of Theology and Religious Communities:** From the beginning years at Primrose to the present day, Sr. Rosemary has been invited to teach 5-10 week courses on some area of Spirituality. Popular courses were The Spiritual Life; The Spiritual Journey; The Beatitudes; The Parables; Bonding with our Spiritual Mothers and Spiritual Fathers; Embodied Spirituality. Various Parishes around the city of Ottawa as well as those in nearby Arnprior, Renfrew, Cornwall and Gatineau asked for Evenings or Days of Reflection or to guide the Parish Missions in Lent. A few religious congregations have asked Sr. Rosemary to assist with leadership discernment workshops and/or healing facilitation.

**Future Full of Hope: self- publishing a booklet series of core spiritual teachings.** The current project of



The Upper Room Emmaus Community is the creation and self-publication of this series of 12-15 booklets based on the core teachings that have formed the spiritual legacy of their research and lived experience. Passing on these solid teachings in a simple, easily readable 50 page booklet is their 'pay it forward' gift to the People of God. As of December 2015, there are three booklets circulating – Discernment, Divine Indwelling and Dying Well (400-600 of each). Over the next three years, they will work towards completing the series. Using them also for small group weekly sharings at The Upper Room.

## COMMUNITY OF PRAYER

**The Upper Room Community:** consists now of some 80 men and women who have spent several years loosely attached to the life and ministry of The Upper Room. We live in our own homes and continue daily in the rhythm of contemplation and service to the dear neighbour... each one according to the Spirit-gifts that have been given us. In gentleness, peace and joy, we celebrate God's life within us and amongst us.



**The Little Design Community:** Some of the women and married couples within The Upper Room community (60 persons) have also felt called to embrace the way of life of The Little Design. At present there are 13 'Little Design' small communities around the Ottawa area. They meet regularly in each other's homes. A new binder of materials on *The Eucharistic Letter* and a new Little Design Communities website were prepared in 2012.



Sisters Evelyn McGovern and Rosemary O'Toole (Peterborough)