



## **Ted Schmidt: Teacher Witness to Faith**



### **TED SCHMIDT**

**is the the former editor of the Catholic New Times. As well he is the author of *Shabbes Goy: a Catholic Boyhood on a Jewish street in a Protestant City* (2001) and *Journeys to the Heart of Catholicism* 2008 and *Never Neutral: A Teaching Life* (2012)**

He attended St Peter's elementary school, St Michael's College High School and the St Michael's College, University of Toronto majoring in Classics and English. He studied scripture at Corpus Christi College under Fr Hubert Richards. Ted was a lifelong high school teacher in both the public and Catholic system. He spent 18 years teaching religion at Neil McNeil High school and 10 years at Bishop Marrocco-Thomas Merton.

In a lifetime of teaching he has been honoured by religion teachers and colleagues at large. In 1991 he received the Ontario English Teachers' Award of Merit, the highest distinction the association grants. In 1998 he received the Glorvya Nanne award for his writing on Catholic education. In 2002 he received the Social Justice Award from the Toronto Secondary Catholic Teachers Association. In 2006 the Ontario Teachers' Federation honoured him with the Greer Memorial Award for his "outstanding commitment to publicly funded education."

A pioneer in Holocaust studies, he was the first teacher in Canada to systematically teach the Holocaust (1968) and has done several workshops for the Holocaust Remembrance committee. In 1993 he co-authored the Ministry of Education OAC course on Philosophy. For 30 years Ted has taught OECTA courses on scripture, social ethics and the sacraments as well as doing several series on biblical themes in parishes. He has spoken across Canada on the themes of biblical justice, culture and youth ministry.

Ted Schmidt has appeared on Metro Morning, Canada A.M., Sunday Morning and Sunday Report (CBC), The Current, the Tom Harpur Show, Studio 2. In 2005, he was Global TV's commentator on the Papal funeral and regularly comments on Catholic issues for the CBC and

CTV. An award winning columnist for the Catholic New Times where he wrote a regular column for 20 years, he started writing publicly for the Catholic Register in 1971.

Ted Schmidt has written as well for several newspapers including the Globe, the Star, the Edmonton Journal and NOW Magazine. He is married to Joan, and they have three grown daughters and 5 grandchildren.

I have little expertise in resume writing for Catholic or any institutions. I would only say that I am a lifelong Catholic struggling to be a Christian. The Catholic Church with its sacramental emphasis and biblically-based social justice tradition has provided me with all the direction necessary for a meaningful life.

I was a middle-class white male, a privileged teacher who tried to warn students of the perils of living risk-free lives of comfort and non-engagement. It's true. I was "Never Neutral" simply because my greatest teachers made me aware that, to be at all real and faithful to our tradition, I had to appropriate "the dangerous and liberating" memory of Jesus which often meant endless trouble!

I was born into a blessed Catholic family, anointed by St Joseph sisters, Paulist and Basilian priests, holy fools and prophets who encouraged my every step in my non-career. Among these were Fr. Tom Melady and Ed Nelligan, religious resource person former Director of the TCDSB. Others miraculously appeared in my life, Catholic and secular saints who showed me the way. These were my "pillars of fire" – humble resisters who refused the safe trip back to Pharaoh's court with all of its privileges. They abandoned all titles, careers, advancement and status. Many were non-believers but many were deep believers who accepted the Galilean's invitation to walk with him to Jerusalem

### **What kind of difference do you hope to make in living a life based on Jesus' teachings?**

Simply, to give students permission to challenge the false idols of the culture, to stand for justice both in the culture and in the Church. To remind them that Baptism not Holy Orders is the essential sacrament

### **What advice do you have for a young Catholic finding ways to express their faith?**

Jesus identified with the victims. Join him at their side .Help remove them impaled on the Cross of history. One of the biggest victims today is our precious Mother Earth. Climate change is the most serious moral issue facing us today. Find a group which is challenging global warming and get involved.

Do not let people in power intimidate you. God's Holy Spirit is always with you when you challenge injustice anywhere. Seek out fellow justice-seekers who share your values and commitments. The struggle is always worth it. There is no hope for resurrection until you die to the false values around you. When you do this your life will change from black and white to technicolour. Pray in gratitude for the beauty of the cosmos, the warmth of your friendships. When you do this, you will laugh with pure joy and as Jesus said:" A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over shall be put in your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you give back. "(Luke 6:38)