

## Monday Musings on Heroes

Who have you considered a hero during your lifetime? For some of us it might have been a comic book character like Superman, a young girl like Anne Frank, a sports figure like Gordie Howe or Wayne Gretzky, or a decorated, indigenous soldier like Thomas Prince.

The mother of one of my close friends, while living in Germany, considered Hitler a hero because he made the trains run on time! For her that was an outstanding achievement...which is part of the New Oxford American Dictionary definition of a hero; a person who is admired or idealized for courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. In a recent survey, Canadians selected Terry Fox as their most admired Canadian hero. He certainly was courageous and, even after his death, he continues to inspire us and raise awareness and money for cancer research through the annual Terry Fox Run.

Choosing a hero to admire is a very personal matter and is largely dependent on what is happening in society and in the world at the time. Recently, young people, who are passionate about world problems, have become important role models...or heroes...for many. Two activists that come to mind are Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg. Malala was shot by the Taliban in Pakistan for attempting to go to school. She is now an advocate for the right of women to be educated. Greta from Sweden is challenging world leaders to take immediate action against climate change.

With modern day communication networks, these heroes have become celebrities. However, it's important to realize that achieving celebrity status is not what makes a hero. People can be heroes without being famous or even known by name.

We mostly choose our heroes based on what we value as a people. With Terry Fox, we value personal courage and trying to find a cure for cancer. With Malala, we value the right of girls to have an education. With Greta, we value protecting our planet.

During the past year, what have you and I been valuing each and every day? I think you'd agree a top priority has been our health and safety during this Covid-19 pandemic. That has resulted in our newly recognized heroes...doctors, nurses, first responders, hospital custodians, long-term care employees, people who are putting their lives on the line, making huge personal sacrifices, to heal the sick and protect as many as possible from contracting Covid. We don't always know their names, but they are everyday heroes who are taking a huge risk to do the right thing, even when the world isn't watching. Other everyday heroes who make it possible for us to survive and function during this time of crisis include our grocery store workers, truck drivers, teachers, mail carriers, utility workers, pharmacists...and the list goes on.

You might remember the actor, Christopher Reeve, who played Superman in the movies in the late 70's and 80's. In 1995 he had a riding accident which left him

paralyzed from the shoulders down. During the next nine years, he devoted his life to supporting research to better understand and treat spinal cord injuries.

Who did this one-time “Superman” consider a hero? He said, “I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure, in spite of overwhelming obstacles.” (From [christopherreeve.org](http://christopherreeve.org))

May we offer thanks to God each day for all our everyday heroes who are keeping us safe and supplying us with basic necessities.

May we offer thanks to God each day for giving us hope and the strength to persevere during these difficult times.

May we offer thanks to God each day for all the ordinary people, our neighbours, friends, and family members, who encourage us, who lift us up, who are “the wind beneath our wings.”

Bernadette