



## A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH BRIGITTE BÉDARD

“All those who seek truth, seek God.” These words spoken by the Carmelite nun Edith Stein find resonance in Brigitte Bédard’s life, and perfectly summarize her personal quest. “I had been wandering for a long time,” says the woman who, after having fallen into drugs, sex and lies, found her life suddenly turned around at age 33. “Christ set me free...” A sudden and radical conversion that could easily have been nothing more than a flash in the pan. It’s been almost twenty years now that this woman has been renewing, at each daybreak, with her joy of being rekindled by the Holy Spirit. Those who, like her, are early risers, can see and hear her regularly on the TV show *La Victoire de l’Amour*.

**By Nathalie Dumas**

Photo: Sylvie-Ann Paré

# Truly, she says to you

"The television segments I've been doing for the past five years, the articles I write and the radio shows I take part in are all moments when I am speaking to someone. What's special about *La Victoire de l'Amour* is that we're on a large public channel, where we reach 250,000 people each Sunday. That makes for a lot of sharing of the Good News!" says the journalist who has total control over the content of her segment.

Whether it's through the daily show or the magazine, the popular broadcast hosted by Sylvain Charron is centred around the testimony of faith of the guests and collaborators, supported by a commentary on the word of God.

"What we want to say to people, and especially during this pandemic, is something that they're not hearing anywhere else. We want to avoid messages of fear and falling into sensationalism. The promotion of human values is wonderful—doing good works, thinking of others—but we need to go beyond that," she says passionately. "There's something more profound that we must achieve, and that's our life in Jesus. If, as Christians, we're unable to make the message relevant to the current situation then we're simply repeating what all the other shows are saying."

Brigitte Bédard speaks with confidence and conviction. She adds that the time is right for daring to reflect on death and eternal life, and for "reconnecting with our true faith."

## It's time to go inward

"I think that the message the Lord is sending us at this time is for us to work on our spiritual lives. What's most important is not for us to start demonstrating against the restrictions imposed by the 'big, bad government.'" She admits that some of the measures are not always easy to integrate into daily life, but she chooses to see the purpose behind them.

In light of the rising number of violent acts around the world during the fall, she stresses the need for prayer. "Right now, prayer is important. And this is the perfect time for it because we can't do anything else—we're all locked down! The Lord is speaking to us; He's obliging us to go inward, to go into our rooms and pray in secret," she says, inspired by the words of the Gospel of Saint Matthew.

Her statements are almost always a reflection of her faith. The communicator is at ease assuming the convinced and convincing tone of an evangelist. She has no hesitation

in calling herself an "RC" or a "Jesus freak." She is proud and totally comfortable in asserting it.

With her faith and outspokenness, she expresses herself through various forums. Sincere and natural. Joyful and passionate. "I'm just a woman who dares, in Quebec, to bear witness that Jesus is alive and is engaged in the here and now. I do it on TV, on the radio, through writing, at conferences and in a book—in whatever way the Lord allows me to," she says, summarizing her current mission.

---

Right now,  
prayer is  
important.  
And this is the  
perfect time for  
it because we  
can't do anything  
else—we're all  
locked down!

---

---

## My soul was deeply troubled and combative. The Lord was truly working hard on me!

---

If she had come to know Jesus earlier in her life, Brigitte Bédard thinks she would have chosen to go to the Carmel to become a mystic like the great women saints she admires. "But the Lord wanted me in the world." Off camera, she continues being active on social media and, every day, replies to dozens of messages from people who confide in her or ask for her advice.

### Anonymously yours

Before finding herself in the public sphere preaching about her conversion and the goodness of the Lord, Brigitte Bédard had been anonymous. Anonymous for a long time. In fact, very anonymous. She had been a member of Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous and Co Dependants Anonymous. Wounded, Brigitte had sought healing in all of them. The 12-Step Recovery Program proposed by all these movements became the barometer for her release from her various addictions and the rocky path toward her spiritual awakening.

These movements guided Brigitte toward sobriety. She stopped taking drugs and non-prescription medication. And no more cigarettes either. "Nicotine is as damaging as pot," she says. "It insidiously cuts us off from our emotions." As she attended

more and more of the group meetings, her life began to take a new turn. She became engaged in that community that fostered sharing, friendship and the desire to become better people.

But her battle with love and self-esteem was still being waged. The thaw that Brigitte experienced physically and psychologically opened her to an emotional void and bottomless abyss. "I was unable to love," she says. And it was this honest admission that she would use years later as the title for her book in which she candidly speaks about her life.

For Brigitte Bédard, the spiritual awakening promoted by the 12-Step Recovery Program took on all sorts of names, except that of God. She sought answers to her thirst for love through various therapeutic and self-awareness approaches. "I was drawn to everything that had to do with spirituality, and that was unconfined, personal and free of the shackles of religion. Basically, anything that was New Age or esoteric," she says.

"My greatest suffering occurred in my relationships," confides Brigitte like a big open book. Rejections, betrayals, dashed hopes, many one-night stands. "I wanted nothing more than to find love!"

### Tears of release

And Brigitte did find love, just not exactly as she had imagined it. "He looked at me lovingly," she says, speaking about the monk at Saint-Benoît-du-Lac Abbey toward whom she bluntly hurled all of her suffering: a 40 page minutely detailed inventory of her moral and sexual life! (To meet the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> steps of the recovery program, which consist of a general admission to yourself, to God and to another human being of your wrongs.) It lasted for three days. "I said everything, and spared nothing or no one. And at the end of our last hour-long meeting, I broke down in tears." Later, she asked the Benedictine monk what he had been thinking about

Brigitte Bédard recounts her out of the ordinary life journey in her first book "J'étais incapable d'aimer" published by Novalis, 2019.





Bright eyes; happy faces. Brigitte Bédard and Hugues with Eva-Marie and Joseph-Olivier, the two youngest of their large family of six children. — Photo: Sylvie-Ann Paré

while she was screaming at him. He replied: “I was praying.”

Having herself been saved through the power of prayer, she changed Brigitte gave great importance to the practice. “I was getting up at 4 a.m. each morning to pray for an hour and a half, even as a single mother,” she says. Brigitte Bédard admits: “I’m excessive!” Her discovery of the Bible enriched her prayers, and then she began studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church. “And that’s when I fell in love with my faith. I read through it twice, including all the footnotes!”

She attended prayer groups and activities with new communities; meetings with believers from various communities. Her close circle, however, was limited to three key people: a nun, a friend and a monk.

She says that they were the only ones who “could truly understand her fervour.”

And about her spiritual adviser, she writes in her book that her monk knew how to navigate her moments of madness, her periods of exuberance and her surges of love. He was fully aware that all those emotions would balance out with time, but that it was also important not to extinguish that joy. That joy was to become the foundation of her life. The tears of the repentant Magdalen were dried. Brigitte found her balance and became radiant.

## Love by design

But Brigitte Bédard’s heart yearned for love. And it wasn’t long in coming. It appeared on an October

evening. A modern scenario: it was an online dating site that served as the backdrop for the beginnings of a love story that has now lasted for 14 years. Hugues, “Mr. Right,” described himself as a man of hope and faith, who was grounded in life and looking for true and authentic love. As for Brigitte, her profile said she was seeking a practising Catholic man who loved the Church and had already dealt with any trifling issues he may have had with the Church and with himself.

“When I felt the Holy Spirit descend on my head, it was a revelation to me. I knew it was Jesus. When I met Hugues, it was the same revelation,” she says emphatically. “I knew he was the one Jesus had chosen for me. There was no doubt. It was obvious. I saw in Hugues a man of God, a man who loved God deeply.”

Brigitte and Hugues founded a family with their four children from previous unions, to which were added, not long after, Eva-Marie and Joseph-Olivier. The holy family was complete and happy.

And now, in what season of her life does Brigitte Bédard find herself? She answers calmly: “Autumn. It’s the period when you’re no longer searching for yourself. I know who I am. Increasingly, I have the feeling that it’s the Lord who is living within me, and less and less Brigitte ... and that brings with it so many wonderful things. There are fewer internal struggles, fewer shadows and more confidence and peace.” ✨