



Ecclesia

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

Celebrating a new liturgical year:

The season of Advent prepares us for Christmas



By Jason Dedo

The name “Advent” comes from the Latin word Adventus, which means “the coming”. The first Sunday of Advent is the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year, in contrast to our secular calendar year. Advent is the Christian season of beginnings. The readings in the Lectionary also change at this time. This year we begin “Year A” of the Lectionary cycle in which most of the gospel readings come from Matthew.

Advent begins on the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, November 30, and

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Photo by Anton R. Casta

Across the Diocese of Pembroke, the lighting of the first candle on the Advent wreath marked the beginning of a new liturgical year. Top, Bishop Mulhall at St. Columbkille’s in Pembroke. Above, Fr. Patrick Dobec lights the wreath at St. John Chrysostom in Arnprior, and, right, Fr. Tomaz Jegierska at St. Hedwig’s in Barry’s Bay.

Advent - continued from page 1...

spans four Sundays. It includes four weeks of preparation before the Solemnity of Christmas on December 25.

Origins

It is difficult to determine when the celebration of Advent was first introduced into the Church. The Church year took form gradually, and even today it is not uniform everywhere. It may come as a surprise to learn that the date for the celebration of Christmas has not always been December 25. There was a time, for instance, when Christmas was celebrated on the sixth of January. In its earliest form, beginning in France during the fourth century, Advent was a period of preparation for the feast of the Epiphany. Advent preparation was very similar to Lent, with an emphasis on prayer and fasting that lasted three weeks and was later expanded to 40 days. The Church gradually formalized the celebration of Advent. Pope St. Gelasius I was the first to provide Advent liturgies for five Sundays in the fifth century. Pope St. Gregory VII later reduced the number of Sundays in Advent to four. Finally, about the ninth century, the Church designated the first Sunday of Advent as the beginning of the Church year.

Liturgical Colour of Violet or Purple

You will notice that during Advent the vestments and altar hangings change from the green of Ordinary Time to the colour violet or purple. The dark purple symbolizes royalty; it is the colour of penitence and fasting, and reminds us of the seriousness of the season calling us to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The purple of Advent is also the colour of suffering used during Lent. This points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and His death. The Nativity, the Incarnation, cannot be separated from the crucifixion. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, the "Word made flesh" and dwelling among us, is to reveal God and His grace to the world not only through Jesus' life and teaching, but also through his suffering, death, and resurrection. To reflect this emphasis, Advent was originally a time of penitence and fasting, much like Lent, and so it shared the purple of Lent. In the four weeks of Advent the third Sunday, also known as Gaudete Sunday, came to be a time of rejoicing that the fasting was almost over. The shift from the purple of the season to rose or pink for the third Sunday of Advent candle reflected this lessening emphasis on penitence as attention turned more to celebration of the season. The pink candle represents joy and is lit on the third Sunday of Advent to signify the quickly approaching Solemnity of Christmas.

The Meaning of Advent

The significance of this liturgical season remains a focus on the coming of our Lord. The Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights the threefold nature of this "coming". In reference 524, the Catechism states:

"When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming."

In Advent we talk about Three Comings. The first coming is referred to as Jesus coming in History.

This is when He was born in Bethlehem. So in Advent we remember this coming and how much God loved us to send us His Son, but we do not get ready for Jesus to come again as a baby in Bethlehem. The second coming is the way Jesus comes to us today. Because we can't see Him in a physical way we refer to this coming as Jesus coming in Mystery. This is the way we meet Jesus today. He comes to us in the Sacraments, in Scripture and in one another. The third coming is the one Advent warns us about in the readings for the First Sunday in Advent. This is when Jesus will come in Majesty at the end of time. For some of us, that end of time is closer than for others. Since we do not know the day or hour when we will die the Church reminds us to get ready now during Advent. The purpose of Advent then is to remember how much God loves us as He sent His only Son to become one of us. We use the ways we meet Jesus today... the sacraments, the reading of scripture, good works... to prepare ourselves to meet Christ when we die or when the world ends.

How can we take advantage of this season to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Saviour?

1. First and foremost, we have to be people of prayer. Perhaps we could take advantage of the extra opportunities to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent. We might pick up a copy of the December edition of *Living With Christ* and set time aside during our busy lives to pray and reflect on the readings of each day. Other prayer resources such as *The Word Among Us* or *Catholic Update* give us daily and weekly reflections on the lectionary readings for Advent. Maybe we could make the time to attend some weekday masses as well as our attendance on the Lord's Day.

2. Symbols really speak to us about our faith. The Catechism refers to our homes as the domestic Church and to our families as the original cell of social life. During Advent we could focus on decorating our homes with religious symbols such as Advent wreaths, a manger scene, bells, stars, candy canes, evergreens, a Jesse tree or an Advent calendar.

3. When we send out Christmas cards we could choose to buy Christmas cards and not holiday cards, cards that do not display the images of the secular holiday, but rather the real meaning of the season, with a hopeful and prayerful message inside.

4. We may want to pay attention to the calendar of saints during Advent and read and reflect on their stories – some of whom include St. Nicholas, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Saint Lucy, and St. John of the Cross.

5. Some families make a family prayer centre with an Advent wreath, candles, and a Bible, and gather around the wreath and read the Gospel for the day.

6. If we don't usually, maybe we could start saying grace before meals and light a candle or the candles of the Advent wreath during the meal to remind us of Jesus, the light of the world.

7. Children love to read and be read to. Reading them the story of the Nativity of Jesus or any of the Advent readings are a good prayerful reflection for all of us.

8. Remember people who are grieving, people who are alone and people who are sick. Take them out or invite them over for dinner. Ask them to help you with Christmas baking, decorating or take them to a Christmas concert.

9. Reflect on the meaning and message as you listen to Advent hymns and Christmas carols.

10. Do some Christmas crafts with your children or friends.

11. If you have a Nativity scene, put out the stable and the crib and on the first Sunday of Advent, place Mary in the stable, on the second Sunday, Joseph, on the third Sunday, the shepherds and on the fourth Sunday, the animals. On Christmas Eve or Day, place the Christ child in the crib – this will help us wait in "joyful expectation" of our Lord. On January 6, the Epiphany, place the Wise Men in the scene.

12. Since light is such a central Advent symbol, wait until the first Sunday of Advent to turn on your Christmas lights.

13. Donate to the food bank, support the Salvation Army in their food and toy drive, or ask your pastor how you might assist parishioners in need this Christmas.

14. When stuffing your children's stockings, consider putting a religious article in the stocking amongst the other goodies – a rosary, prayer card, holy card, medal, religious colouring book or a tiny nativity scene.

15. The Mary Candle – some families have the custom of decorating the Christ candle with a blue veil on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. On this great feast, others place a candle with a blue ribbon before a statue or picture of the Blessed Virgin whose "yes" to God enabled the Lord's coming at Christmas. The candle is lit during meal times to serve as a delightful reminder of Mary's eager expectation of the "Light of the World". It can also serve as a reminder to each family member to keep their own light of grace burning as a preparation for Christ's coming.

16. When you meet people on the street, wish them a "Merry Christmas", even if they greet you with "Happy Holidays!"

In our own small little ways, let us do whatever we can to remind ourselves and others as the catchphrase goes that, "Jesus is the reason for the season". During this time of Advent waiting, let us open wide our hearts to receive the light that dispels the fear and the darkness. Oh, how we long for the coming of the Prince of Peace...

Jason Dedo is Director of the Office of Faith Formation for the diocese, based in Pembroke.

A message from Bishop Mulhall

My dear Faithful of the Diocese of Pembroke:

This is the first letter that I am addressing to you since my ordination last September. My first thoughts are to express to all of you my sincere thanks for your prayers over the past summer and during these first months together. Your prayers have been keenly felt and I have no doubt that they have borne spiritual fruits personally and for the diocese.

I also wish to express my appreciation for your welcome to the Diocese of Pembroke. We all know very well that moving to a new location and beginning to work with new people within a new structure and organization always brings its own share of uncertainties and unknowns. The sincerity of the welcome that I have received – and I speak of a genuinely Catholic welcome – has been an experience for which I am thankful and which I will continue to remember.

My first letter to you corresponds to the beauties of the Advent and Christmas seasons. This is a precious season filled with so many wonderful memories of our

childhood that with each passing year imprint in our spiritual lives the overwhelming mystery of Christ's birth.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us". Each year as we celebrate the Christmas season these words from John's Gospel play an important role in our reflection. The Father's Word, His only begotten Son, has taken on created flesh and has humbled Himself in order to rest with us. This reality could furnish a lifetime's worth of prayer and meditation. In fact, year after year in our lives, the Church presents this reality to us for this very reason.

During the upcoming year of 2008, the Church will celebrate two important events which I ask all of us to keep in mind. Each relates to the mystery we mentioned



above. In June, the International Eucharistic Congress will take place in Quebec City. All over the world, Catholics are making spiritual preparations for the Congress both individually and in groups in order to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. I extend once again an invitation to all of our parishioners to attend the unique event in Canada.

In November, the Church will hold a Synod of Bishops which will reflect on the Word of God. We are invited, all of us, to join in prayer and study so as to deepen our appreciation of the power of God's Word.

Word and flesh – the Synod on the Word of God and the Eucharistic Congress: may these intentions remain in our hearts and our prayers.

To all of you, spread out into so many parishes in the diocese, I extend to you my prayers for a fruitful Advent of preparation and the blessing of the Christmas mystery.

† **Michael Mulhall**
Bishop of Pembroke

Wishing Father Legree a blessed retirement

When Father Joseph Legree moved into retirement this fall, he celebrated the completion of a 51-year ministry that touched more than 20 parishes in the diocese.



When he was ordained on June 3, 1956, in his home parish of Douglas, Father Legree embarked on a journey that would last more than five decades. In his first 13 years in the priesthood, he moved 19 times.

And now, Father Legree has come full-circle, settling into retirement in a rented house in his native village of Douglas.

He reports that he is enjoying the "hills of home", and takes the opportunity to say mass at St. Michael's when asked.

His retirement includes a weekly commitment to lead two masses each Sunday – at 9 a.m. in Esmond, and at 11 a.m. in Griffith. He does it because he knows the churches would close without his ongoing support.

"I just want to be a help," he says. "This is my plan."

He adds that he is confident of the Lord's presence in whatever the days ahead may bring.

"The Lord saw me through the difficult times," Father Legree notes. "You can't do these things alone, you have to have the Lord with you."

There are also many blessed times stored in his memories of the priesthood. He chuckles as he recalls his first major public speaking event shortly after his ordination. The main speaker was unable to attend the high school graduation in Campbell's Bay. The community turned to their young priest for help.

"I wasn't a great public speaker, but I managed to overcome the challenge," Father Legree recalls.

The event did feature a segment of the parish population that Father Legree favoured. His work with youth throughout the diocese remains a personal highlight for him. He points to the youth organization he helped develop in the Pontiac, where up to 150 teenagers from Campbell's Bay, Vinton, Otter Lake, Portage du Fort and beyond would gather once each month.

Other special memories include baptizing a whole family, including five children, with a community celebration at the local school. In Combermere, he had the privilege of performing six baptisms in a single Sunday, with all the families joining together to celebrate the event.

Father Legree's talents have also left a lasting legacy for the diocese. He authored "Lift Up Your Hearts", the history of the diocese published in 1988. It was the result of 12 years of part-time research and a three-month dedicated effort in 1984. Two typists helped him with the administrative aspects of the job.

The arrival of the delivery truck from Kingston carrying the first 400 copies of the book was a cause for celebration that has left another lifetime memory.

We wish Fr. Legree all the blessings of a long and happy retirement.



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Holy Days on the Liturgical Calendar for the Seasons of Advent and Christmas

December 3 – Memorial of St. Francis Xavier

Francis was born in Navarre, Spain, in 1506. He studied with St. Ignatius of Loyola at the University of Paris. Both were founding members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Francis was a missionary for 10 years in India, the East Indies and Japan, and was said to have baptized over 40,000 people. He died on December 2, 1552, at Sancian, China, from a fever contracted on a missionary journey. He was canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV and is patron of all foreign missions.

December 6 – Optional Memorial of St. Nicholas

Little factual information is known about Nicholas. Nicholas was made bishop of Myra, Lycia (Turkey), early in the fourth century. He became famous for his acts of charity and generosity to the poor. In the Middle Ages he became the focus of popular devotions and cults. He is the patron of the poor, sailors and children. He died in 346. In many parts of the world, he is warmly regarded as Santa Claus because of his generous nature.

December 7 – Memorial of St. Ambrose

Ambrose was born into an aristocratic family in Trier, Germany, about 340 AD. He eventually became governor of Milan, Italy. After the Bishop of Milan died, a dispute over who would be the next bishop ensued and Ambrose was called on to intervene to end the violence. He impressed everyone involved so much that he was elected bishop even though he was only a catechumen. At first, he hesitated, but was later baptized, ordained a priest and consecrated a bishop. He then gave all his wealth to the poor and the Church and encouraged others to serve the poor as well. Ambrose became an outstanding teacher and preacher, and as a result gained the title, "Honey-Tongued Doctor". This led to the use of beehives and bees in his iconography, symbols which also illustrate wisdom. His most famous student was St. Augustine of Hippo whom he baptized. Ambrose died in 397. Ambrose is a patron of bee keepers, candlemakers and students. In 1298 he was declared one of the four great doctors of the Church (with Jerome, Augustine and Gregory I).

December 8 – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

A feast to honour Mary's conception first appeared in the 7th century. By the 13th century, theologians such as St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas discussed whether Mary could have been born without original sin, if, as St. Paul says, all persons are born in sin (Romans 5:12). By the 19th century, the theological dilemma was resolved and on December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary as a dogma of faith.

December 12 – Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

This feast commemorates the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Tepeyac, Mexico, in 1531. Mary appeared to aboriginal convert Juan Diego with whom she left instructions to build a church and an imprint of her image on a cloak. This cloak is a sacred object of great veneration and is on display in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, which was built on the spot at which Our Lady

appeared to Juan Diego. In 1946, Pope Pius XII named her patroness of the Americas. She is also the patroness of the unborn.

December 25 – Solemnity of Christmas

The word, Christmas, comes from the Old English words *Christes Maesse*, or Christ's Mass. On this day, we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Our Lord. In the early Church, there was no such feast. The Nativity of Christ was celebrated with the Epiphany. The first mention of this solemnity surfaced around the year 200 AD. The Latin Church began to observe it on December 25 around the year 300 AD although there is no certainty that Our Lord was born on that day. December 25 was chosen to celebrate Christ's birth for symbolic reasons. Around December 21st, an event occurs which is called the winter solstice. It is the longest night and the shortest day of the year. After this event, days become a few seconds longer and nights a few seconds shorter each day. It was fitting, then, that this season of increasing light was chosen to celebrate the birth of Christ. Darkness for us is a symbol of sin, death and alienation from God. Into the world, Jesus, the Light of the World was born and because of His death and resurrection, was victorious over the darkness of our sin. Therefore we acknowledge this when we celebrate his birth on December 25.

December 26 – Feast of St. Stephen

This feast dates back to the fourth century. All we know of Stephen was recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Stephen is the first-named among the seven deacons chosen to minister to Greek-speaking Christians in Jerusalem in the first days of the early Church. While preaching the Gospel in the streets, an angry mob who believed Stephen to be blasphemous dragged him outside the city and stoned him to death. He is the first recorded martyr of the New Testament. It is noteworthy that one of the witnesses to his death was Saul, the future apostle, Paul.

December 27 – Feast of St. John the Apostle

Also known as John the Divine, John the apostle was a fisherman and the son of Zebedee and the brother of James. John is the "beloved disciple" referred to in the gospels. He was the only one of the 12 not to forsake the Saviour in the hour of his Passion. While dying on the cross, Jesus instructed John to take the Blessed Mother into his home and be her guardian. John is remembered for the Fourth Gospel, the three epistles which bear his name and for the Book of Revelation. It is believed that John died at Ephesus (modern Turkey) at an extremely old age.

December 28 – Feast of the Holy Innocents

On this day, the Church remembers the "Holy Infants" who were slaughtered by King Herod when he tried to kill the infant Jesus as recorded in Matthew's Gospel. This unique incident in Jesus' life is not recorded in any other known documents. This episode, along with the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, presents the ancient teaching of the early Church: Jesus as the "new Israel", persecuted and forced to flee, and the "new Moses", rescued from the slaughter of the Hebrew children. This feast also indicates Jesus as being the Messiah and

foreshadows the opposition Jesus will meet later, ending with His Passion.

December 30 – Feast of the Holy Family

This feast honours Jesus, Mary and Joseph as a family. During the Renaissance, devotion to the Holy Family flourished. The outstanding artists of the time such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt and others often portrayed the Holy Family in their work. This feast day was originally mandated in 1921 and was celebrated on the third Sunday after Christmas. At present, it is observed on the first Sunday following Christmas, unless Christmas itself falls on a Sunday, in which case Holy Family is celebrated on December 30.

January 1 – Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

This solemnity is a celebration of the motherhood of Mary, both divine and virginal. The title "Mother of God" comes from the Greek word, "theotokos", which means God-bearer. Because Mary is the mother of Jesus, fully human and fully God, she is also the Mother of God. This solemnity occurs at the conclusion of the octave of Christmas and is a reminder to Catholics that Mary's role is always to direct the believer to her son, Jesus.

January 3 – Optional Memorial

– Holy Name of Jesus

This memorial was extended to the entire church in 1721 by Pope Innocent XIII. It originates in Scripture, specifically in Paul's Letter to the Philippians 2:9-11, which states:

"Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

January 6 – Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

The word epiphany is from a Greek term meaning "appearance" or "manifestation". The Church celebrated three main feasts until the fourth century: Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost. In the Western Church, Epiphany emphasizes the visit of the Magi which symbolizes God's revealing of Himself to gentile nations. When travellers from the East arrive at King Herod's court seeking "the child who has been born King of the Jews", the prophecy was fulfilled from Isaiah that foreign countries would be called to the spiritual light of Jerusalem. The foreign visitors are referred to as "wise men" (the Greek word *magi* points to the intellectual elite of Babylon).

January 13 – Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

This feast is celebrated between January 7 and January 13, depending on the year and the method of calculation. It brings to an end the Season of Christmas and commemorates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. The feast is usually observed on the first Sunday after Epiphany. The day after the Baptism of the Lord marks the start of the first period of ordinary time.

Sources:

1. *Living With Christ*, January 2008, December 2007, Novalis.
2. Patron Saints Index - <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/indexsnt.htm>

Pilgrims prepare for the 49th International Eucharistic Congress

A week-long package was created for those over the age of 18 to attend the 49th International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City in June of 2008 with the Diocese of Pembroke. There are more than 60 individuals from the diocese who have signed up for this historic and spiritual event in history that will also coincide with the 400th anniversary of Quebec City. At this time, the diocesan package is full, however, individuals may still register for the Congress by going to the official website www.cei2008.ca. The cost for early registration is \$200 and the deadline has recently been extended to February 15, 2008, after which it goes up to \$230.00 per person. The fee includes entrance to all Congress celebrations, catechesis and activities, free public transportation within Quebec City and six lunches. There are a variety of accommodation options listed on the website, the least expensive being billeting with families. You may also attend the many public events without even registering for the Congress, and plan to stay for only a portion of the event.

Preparations

In order for the Eucharistic Congress to be fruitful, pilgrims are invited to take part in the spiritual preparation provided by the diocese. Each diocese is to provide catechetical sessions for all of the participants using a catechetical program prepared by the Pontifical Committee for the International Eucharistic Congresses. There are seven catechetical sessions which will be covered in five separate meetings, the first of which took place in October with Fr. M. Beachey as the facilitator. The second was held on November 17, led by Jason Dedo.

Everyone is welcome to attend the remaining catechetical sessions, even if they are not attending the Congress, so be sure to invite a friend or two. Light refreshments will be provided. Sessions will be given

in English. All sessions will be held at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke.

This is a great opportunity to receive catechesis on one of the many mysteries of our faith, the **Eucharist**. The remaining dates for the sessions are:

Saturday, January 19, from 10 a.m. to noon. Fr. Ryan Holly will discuss "The Eucharist: Builds up the church, people of the New Covenant"

Saturday, February 16, from 10 a.m. to noon. Bishop Michael Mulhall will discuss "The Eucharist: The life of Christ In our lives".

Saturday, April 5, from 10 a.m. to noon. The topic will be "Eucharist and the mission" and "Witnesses to the Eucharist in the world".

Copies of the foundational theological document, "The Eucharist - God's Gift for the Life of the World" are available to purchase at the Family, Life and Youth Ministry Office for \$7.00 each and are available in French or English.

Activities taking place at the Congress will include Eucharistic celebrations, ongoing adoration, catechesis, exhibitions, evening prayer, heritage and cultural activities, friendly meals, Marian prayer, concerts, and a Eucharistic procession through the streets of Old Quebec City. A closing mass on the Plains of Abraham will possibly be with the Holy Father (his attendance to be announced in the new year). Round tables, workshops and pilgrimages to historic spiritual sites will all be on the week's agenda.

Why should one consider going to the Congress?

To be inspired to deepen one's faith in the Eucharist, to meet other Catholics from around the world, to experience a huge intergenerational Church gathering, to build yourself up to be a witness for Christ, to reclaim and deepen our Christian heritage and to bear witness to the fact that the Church is alive and active.

What is available specifically for young adults at the Congress?

There will be a permanent youth space onsite, with music, conferences and sports (possibly even an international soccer tournament). Mission activities and a mega-prayer vigil on Saturday evening are also planned.

The Family, Life and Youth Ministry office is considering planning a shortened pilgrimage to the Congress for young adults age 18-35 depending on interest. This would include only the last four days of the Congress from June 19-22. Cost would depend on accommodation. If interested, or for more information on Congress details, see the website, www.cei2008.ca, or contact Yvette Bourque at (613) 732-7933, Ex. 208 or yvette.bourque@diocesepembroke.ca.

"GOOD OF THE ORDER"

**Knights of Columbus Council 1531
Pembroke**



Winter Program 2008

January 22, 7:00 p.m., K of C Hall

"Recruiting Medical Professionals – The Community Challenge" with Larry Schruder, member of the Upper Ottawa Valley Medical Recruitment Committee. Open to K of C families, churches and the community

February 26, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., K of C Hall

"Lenten Twilight Retreat – Meeting Our Loving God" with Fr. Howard Chabot. Open to K of C families and parishioners.

March 25, 7:00 p.m., K of C Hall

"Preparing For A Catholic Funeral" with a pastor and representatives from Murphy and Neville Funeral Homes. Open to K of C families and parishioners.

The Congress logo

The logo is composed of a cross dividing a circle into four quarters. The circle represents the Host, body of Christ, and bread broken and shared in the Eucharist.

The circle also symbolizes the Earth and its four compass points. As such, the logo evokes the life of the world invited to the universal gathering of the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress.

The logo as a whole pictures a ship, symbol of the universal Church, and of Peter's boat. A ship likewise appears on the coat of arms of the City of Quebec. Sailing up the majestic St. Lawrence River, the first missionaries and Monsignor de Laval set foot in Quebec to introduce faith in Jesus Christ.

The colour gold recalls the Eucharistic bread, and the colour red, the Eucharistic wine. The two colours merge to express the Gift of God. These were likewise the dominant colours in the coat of arms of François de Laval, first Bishop of North America.

The logo is inscribed with a cross that separates in four parts the circle symbolizing the Eucharistic Host, Corpus Christi. Thus, it signifies the broken bread of the shared Eucharist. We can find in this circle a reference to the Earth and its four cardinal points.



Fall CWL meeting held in Bryson, Quebec

By Suzanne Mullins

On Saturday, October 27, 2007, the women of the Diocesan Catholic Women's League met for their fall meeting in Bryson, Quebec. The president, Suzanne Mullins, called the meeting to order after the roll call, which included 26 of 33 councils in attendance.

Workshops were presented by each chairperson, with active and lively involvement by the participants. Highlights of the "community life" representative, Eleanor Foran, included child poverty, suicide prevention and addressing the needs of South-east Asia, the Middle East and Latin America through our financial support of Development and Peace. Pauline Hughes, under the topic of "organization", guided the members through the annual report system to make it more effective in reflecting how the women stepped forward in faith and action. Resources were a major focal point of the "spiritual development" chair, Helen Fitzpatrick. "Communication" chairperson, Dianne Kelly, provided a list of websites that would be beneficial in obtaining information and resources. During the "education and health" segment, Donna Provost covered palliative care and concerns about the protection of our elderly.

Under "legislation", June West brought members up-to-date on new laws and acts that have been introduced. Letter writing was encouraged, whether at the municipal, provincial or federal level. Careful scrutiny of past legislation was also encouraged to ensure that the government is following through with promises and action that should be taken. At this particular time, Bill C22, which deals with the Criminal Code (age of protection) will be reintroduced under a "Tackling Violent Crime" bill. It is essential to the well being of our young adults that we closely monitor this piece of legislation.

Joanna Nicholson encouraged the ladies to prepare resolutions, since it is the most effective means we have of addressing issues in our society. At the National Convention, new resolutions that will be acted upon include government funding of police checks for volunteers and global accountability for Canadian Registered Mining Companies. Joan Kelly, treasurer, outlined the preparation of budget forms to coincide with annual reports.

Father Pat Tait and Father Basil Tanguay both took the opportunity to address the women about prayer.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the provincial Catholic Women's League. Many of our women have served 60 years and therefore certificates to recognize their commitment to "God and Canada" will be presented by each President when they return to their own council.

Besides celebrating these many women, the members also congratulated Rita Hemmings on her production of the newsletter, "The Blue and Gold". Bernie Mortimer from Renfrew also shared a letter written about a Renfrew member, Mrs. Irene Rekowski, who was nominated for the Maple Leaf pin which is one of the highest honours we can pay to a member.

The afternoon speaker, Willa Wicha, brought the outline for a new initiative to begin a Catholic Girl's League. Young girls are encouraged to join, share and participate in the life of the church and their community. The girls will work under four areas including:

- Spiritual
- Activities
- Social
- Justice and Social Action

Each club will be sponsored by an existing Catholic Women's League council.

The 2008 Provincial Convention will be held in early July in Arnprior. The chairperson of the committee, Suzanne Mullins, outlined the process, with detailed arrangements and the foreseeable involvement of each Diocesan member.

Suzanne Mullins is the Pembroke Diocesan Catholic Women's League president.

The CWL Ontario Provincial Annual Convention

Love one another - Celebrate one another

Welcome to the Pembroke Diocese and to Arnprior!

It is with great anticipation that we await your arrival at the Ontario Provincial Convention in Arnprior, Ontario, from July 5 to July 9, 2008. As Catholic Women's League members, we want to celebrate the who, what and why of our existence.

Our theme, "Love One Another – Called to be "Living Stones" (1 Peter 2:5)" will be reflected in all our plans. Many activities and surprises are in the works which we believe will make our experience a memorable one.

Entertainment will be part of the package. If you remember the line from an old Marty Robbins song, "Once you told me long ago, to the prom with me you'd go," then you will want to take part in this opportunity to dust off those old party dresses and relive that era. Please plan to be at our P.R.O.M. (Past Reflections of Old Music) with tunes from the '50s, '60s and '70s. The gentlemen will require nothing special as they don their costumes of black and white and prepare to "twist and shout" the night away. Bring along your singing voices as you accompany and display your recollections of musical icons.

You will laugh and get involved with our second entertainer, Maria Hawkins, the "Blues Lady". Her enthusiasm and approach will have you up out of your seat and movin' about as you reflect and ponder your spirituality.

On Saturday and Sunday, buses will roll out along the Ottawa Valley tourist region.

Again you will experience our hospitality as you visit craft guilds, farmer's markets, an orchid tour, quaint villages and a magnificent herb garden, restaurants and more.

Other opportunities for you to "celebrate one another" will be offered through liturgy, prayer, reports, presentations, discussions and conversation over delicious meals. St. John Chrysostom Church is a beautiful setting for our masses and liturgy.

Business will take us into the realm of "resolutions", which is one very effective way of letting our government know that, as women, we have a voice, and that we take action as a result of our concern over issues in our world.

Our provincial president, Margaret Ann Jacobs, the executive and Most Rev. P.J. Hundt, the provincial spiritual advisor, will join us in extending to you a personal invitation to meet in Arnprior.

Please plan to join us any time during the period, July 5 to July 9, 2008. Book your rooms early. Further information will be available in the Spring Issue of the Ontario Trillium newsletter. Feel free to contact us at (613) 623-6006 or e-mail suzannessqn@aol.com. Come and enjoy! Love, Laugh and Learn Together!





Statue dedicated to St. Columbkille

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral of Saint Columbkille, a new statue honouring the patron saint of the diocese has been installed in our cathedral. The statue was commissioned at the beginning of 2007 and is an original design that was hand-carved in Plantagenet, Ontario. In one of his first acts as the new bishop of Pembroke, Bishop Mulhall blessed the statue at the end of September, photo at left.

Who is our diocesan patron saint? Saint Columbkille was born of royal bloodlines in County Donegal, Ireland in December 521. His proper name was Colum MacFehlin MacFergus. The name Colum means dove. As a young boy he spent much time in church and soon the suffix "cille," the Gaelic word for church, was added to his name. He was called "Colum-cille"—Dove of the Church. A dove can be seen at the bottom of the new statue. Well educated, he was a man of great faith who could have become a king but instead chose a life of service to God. After ordination, he worked among the poor in his native Ireland and was famous for his works of charity. He was a great preacher and a man of gigantic stature whose voice, it is said, was so loud and melodious that he could be heard a mile off. He is credited with taking Christianity to Scotland. The feast Saint Columbkille is celebrated on June 9.

Fr. Isaiah Rice

Rev. Isaiah W. Rice, a priest of the Diocese of Pembroke, died Sunday evening, June 17, 2007, at the Renfrew Victoria Hospital after a lengthy illness. Son of the late Raymond Rice and Mabel Duffy, Father Rice was born in Douglas, Ontario, on December 2, 1930. He pursued studies for the priesthood at St. Jerome's College, Kitchener, Ontario, and at St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario, and was ordained on June 5, 1958, in St. Michael's Church, Douglas, Ontario, by the Most Rev. William J. Smith, Bishop of Pembroke.

Following his ordination, Father Rice served as assistant at St. Martin's Parish, Whitney, St. John Chrysostom's Parish, Arnprior, St. James' Parish, Eganville, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Renfrew, and Holy Name Parish, Pembroke. He was parish priest of St. Elizabeth's Parish, Vinton, Holy Rosary Parish, Griffith, and St. Joseph's Mission, Esmond, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Pembroke, and Precious Blood Parish, Calabogie, from which he retired in 1991. He was Chaplain to the Eganville, Renfrew, and Pembroke Councils of the Knights of Columbus. Following his retirement Father Rice generously gave of his time and services to supply in many parishes throughout the diocese when the need arose.

Father Rice leaves to mourn his loss his sisters, Elizabeth Mathieu, Renfrew, Rita Crockford, Killaloe, Sister Mary Rice, C.S.J., Sister Teresa Rice, C.S.J., Sister Loretta Rice, C.S.J., Pembroke, and Eulalia (Dr. Joe Ryan), San Diego, California. He was predeceased by his brothers, Joseph, John Alvan and Michael.

Visitation was at the Goulet Funeral Home in Renfrew. The Very Rev. Patrick J. Tait, Diocesan Administrator of Pembroke, presided at the Funeral Mass of Christian Burial on Thursday, June 21, 2007 at St. Michael's Church, Douglas, Ontario, at 10:30 a.m. Burial was in the family plot in the parish cemetery.



Fr. Jack Quinn

Rev. John Joseph Quinn, retired priest of the Diocese of Pembroke, died Friday, November 2, 2007, at Pembroke Regional Hospital. Son of the late Thomas Quinn and Mary Helferty, Father Quinn was born in Eganville, Ontario, on January 21, 1934. He studied philosophy and theology at St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario, and was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 1961, in St. James the Less Church, Eganville, by the Most Rev. William J. Smith, Bishop of Pembroke.

Following his ordination, Father Quinn served as assistant at St. Columbkille's, Cathedral Parish, Pembroke, and at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Renfrew, until his appointment as pastor of St. Patrick's Parish, Mount St. Patrick, Ontario, in April of 1970. While at Mount St. Patrick, he was also appointed Diocesan Director of the P.T.A. In February of 1973, he was named pastor of St. Anthony's Parish, Chalk River, Ontario, where he remained until being appointed pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Deep River, Ontario, on October 17, 1978. In 1994, he was appointed to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Braeside, Ontario, where he remained until retirement on June 3, 2007. On August 27, 2003, while remaining in Braeside, Fr. Quinn was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Pembroke, Member of the College of Consultors and of the Council of Priests. Following his retirement, he resided at 544 Irving St., Pembroke, Ontario.

Father Quinn is survived by his sister Helen (Arnold) O'Grady of Eganville and his brother Raymond (Helen) of Ottawa as well as nieces Mary Lou, Claire, Colleen, Sheila, Maureen, Theresa, Shannon, Erin, Kelly and his nephew Tom. Father Quinn was also predeceased by his brother Leo (late Marilyn).

The body of the late Father Quinn lay in state at St. James the Less Church, Eganville, Ontario, on Sunday, November 4, 2007. The Funeral Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Most Reverend Michael Mulhall, Bishop of Pembroke. Burial was in the parish cemetery.



Fr. Terry Sirosky celebrates 25 years in the ordained priesthood

Fr. Terry Sirosky was ordained to the priesthood on October 9, 1982 at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, Renfrew, by the Most Reverend Joseph Raymond Windle, Bishop of Pembroke. On Sunday, October 14, 2007, Fr. Terry celebrated this very special occasion with a parish Mass in St. Michael's Church in Douglas. A luncheon was served in the gymnasium of St. Michael's School following the Mass and entertainment was provided by the Helferty Family.

Fr. Terry is the pastor of St. Michael's Parish, Douglas, St. Pius V Parish in Osceola and Sacred Heart Mission in Cobden. All three Catholic communities were invited to the celebration. The church was filled with friends and relatives of Fr. Terry, and many of his parishioners, past and present, for the joyous occasion.

After being ordained, Fr. Terry served as curate at St. John Chrysostom Parish in Arnprior. He then served as curate at St. James the Less Parish in Eganville, at St. Mary's Parish in Ottawa, and then was appointed administrator at St. John the Evangelist and St. Bridget parishes in Osgoode and Manotick Station Road. Fr. Terry then served as pastor at St. Andrew's Parish, Killaloe, Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Bancroft and since 2006 has been the pastor of the parishes of St. Michael's, Douglas, St. Pius V, Osceola, and Sacred Heart Mission in Cobden.

Fr. Sirosky was interviewed by **Ecclesia** on this very happy occasion. The questions and his answers appear below:

What drew you to a vocation to the priesthood?

It's not a "what", it's a "who" and the "Who" is the Lord, of course. I was brought up in a good,

solid Catholic family. Early participation in the life of the Church was also a factor. I was an altar server and later on was involved in the music ministry. This was during the challenging and exciting times of Vatican II and after. The good priests at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, my home parish, were also very influential. The role of Catholic schools was also important in my discernment, particularly Fr. Merlyn Ethier, who was chaplain of St. Joseph's Catholic High School when I was a student there.

What have been the greatest joys of your ministry?

The greatest joys for me have been the privilege of offering Holy Mass and of journeying with people in their life story – particularly in times of reconciliation and pain.

What have been the greatest challenges of your ministry?

It's a challenge to keep a positive focus when there's so much negativity in the Church and in the world – especially when it comes to religion.

Where do you get your support and energy to keep saying "yes" to your vocation?

My greatest support comes from prayer and good spiritual direction. Madonna House has played an important role in my life and it's a blessing to the diocese. The three forms of prayer which support me the most are the Office (Liturgy of the Hours), the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. The support of so many very good lay people as well as brother priests has also been encouraging.

What do you think the next 25 years will hold for the priesthood?

There are great challenges ahead with the declining number of priests. It is a great challenge for the



Fr. Sirosky cuts his anniversary cake at the celebration of 25 years in the priesthood held in his honour at St. Michael's church in Douglas in October.

diocese to maintain the number of priests that we need. Unless people come to a realization of their need for God in their lives, the Catholic Church will become smaller in the western world.

What advice would you give to a young person trying to discern a religious vocation?

The first thing they should do is speak to their pastor. They should get involved in the daily life of the Church and pray, pray, pray! The Holy Spirit will be their best guide.

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy featured in new guide

The 2007-2008 academic year at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy (OLSWA) in Barry's Bay, Ontario, is in full swing. Now in its eighth year, OLSWA has grown to a student body of 65 full-time students and 22 part-time students. Students from across Canada, five states, and one student from England are almost through their fall semester, and in the midst of their studies in Philosophy, Theology, History, Literature, Languages, the Fine Arts, and the Sciences.

In addition to the student body, faculty has also grown this year. OLSWA is happy to have four new faculty on board. Dr. Thaddeus Kozinski (Philosophy) and his wife Tami (Literature) and family have come from California, USA; Dr. Ryan Freeburn (History) and his family have come from New Hampshire, USA; and Mr. Colin Kerr (Theology), who is in the final stages of a doctorate

in Theology, has come with his family from Halifax, NS.

OLSWA offers one-, two-, and three-year programs in the liberal arts in the light of the teaching of the Catholic Church, and plans to become a degree-granting four-year college.

The quality of OLSWA's Catholic post-secondary education has recently been recognized by a new colleges and universities guide produced by the Cardinal Newman Society in Washington, DC. OLSWA is one of only 21 Catholic colleges, and the only one in Canada, to be listed in the soon-to-be-published "Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College: What to Look for and Where to Find It." According to guide editor Joseph Esposito, "Although our publication focuses on U.S. institutions, we were so impressed by Our Lady Seat of Wisdom that we felt compelled to include it as

well. The academy has accomplished much in a short period of time, and we look forward to it being an influential force in Catholic higher education. We are pleased to recommend Our Lady Seat of Wisdom to Canadian and American parents and students."

The fruit of much painstaking research, the guide presents Catholic parents and students with detailed information about a core group of colleges in the United States and Canada that are truly Catholic, according to the standards set out by Pope John Paul II's *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

OLSWA is proud to be recognized by the Newman Society as a post-secondary institution that faithfully imparts the teachings of the Church within a Catholic environment. The guide is endorsed by such eminent Catholics as Father Benedict Groeschel, Father John McCloskey, and Dr. Peter Kreeft.

Obtaining a “Decree of Nullity” The Pembroke Diocesan Marriage Tribunal

The Catholic Church teaches us that marriage is an intimate, exclusive and permanent partnership of a man and a woman, which exists for the good of the spouses and the procreation of children. The Catholic Church cannot ignore the reality of separation and divorce in our society. The Church must reach out to those who are struggling with the pain of a broken marriage. Hence, the Marriage Tribunal’s ministry plays an important part in the Church’s effort to offer healing and hope for the victims of broken marriages.

What is a Decree of Nullity?

A Decree of Nullity, also called an “Annulment”, is a declaration issued by the Catholic Church, through its Marriage Tribunal, that a given marriage is invalid (not binding) because some essential element of marriage was lacking at the time of the exchange of consent.

Annulments **are not** Catholic divorces. A Catholic Decree of Nullity states that, in the eyes of the Church, there was never a bond established. Since the Catholic Church recognizes all marriages (of Catholics and of others), with few exceptions, the Church’s nullity process is a way of helping persons come to peace in themselves, and with the community of the Church, after a marriage has broken down.

If I receive a Decree of Nullity, does that mean my children are illegitimate?

Definitely not! The Decree of Nullity does not affect in any manner the legitimacy of children, names, property, maintenance payments, inheritance rights or other matters dealt with in the civil courts.

Can a divorced Catholic receive communion?

Divorced Catholics lose none of their rights in the Church, except the right to enter into a new marriage until the Church declares them free to marry. All Catholics, divorced Catholics included, are free to receive the sacraments, provided they are not in a state of serious sin (i.e. have not remarried “outside the Church” or are not cohabiting with another partner). If they are in another marital (or cohabiting) union, they are not permitted to receive the sacraments. People in such a situation are encouraged to speak with their pastor.

What is the procedure?

- After submitting a summary of your situation, you will be interviewed, under oath, by a staff member of the Marriage Tribunal.
- Your former spouse will be notified by the Marriage Tribunal and interviewed if they choose to be involved.

- Witnesses will be interviewed.
- Experts may be consulted.
- The gathered testimonies will be reviewed by the Defender of the Bond.
- Three Judges will now study the Acts and give their decision.
- You and your former spouse will be sent notification of this decision.
- The case will be sent to the Canadian Appeal Tribunal in Ottawa for a second reading.
- You and your former spouse will be notified as soon as the case is returned by the Appeal Tribunal.

How long does the procedure take?

Each case is unique with its own degree of difficulty; therefore, some cases do take longer than others. It is not possible to guarantee a specific length of time because of various factors. *Please note that a date for marriage in the Church cannot be set until a Decree of Nullity has actually been granted and confirmed by the Appeal Tribunal in Ottawa.*

Does my former spouse have to be contacted?

Catholic Church law recognizes the right of the former spouse to be involved in the process. He/She may make a statement regarding the marriage and has

the right to introduce any witnesses he/she chooses. The Tribunal will contact the former spouse. You will not be required to have any direct contact with your former spouse.

What about remarriage in the Catholic Church?

If the marriage in question is declared invalid and there are no restrictions concerning a new marriage, the usual procedure of preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church may be started with the priest of your parish or the parish of the Catholic person you intend to marry.

Where do I begin?

Contact either your parish priest or the Marriage Tribunal at (613) 732-7933 to arrange a preliminary interview, during which a member of the Tribunal staff will explain the process and go over the preliminary forms with you. When you have completed and returned the forms an appointment for a formal interview will be made. This is when the case is officially begun. For more information, call (613) 732-7933 and ask to speak to a member of the Marriage Tribunal staff.

Is there a cost to process a decree?

The ability to make a contribution to the Tribunal has no bearing on the issuance of a Decree of Nullity. However, the costs involved in processing each case are considerable. The Diocese of Pembroke suggests that the Petitioner contribute a minimum of one-third toward the costs incurred. Financial considerations will be discussed individually with the Petitioner at his/her interview.

When should I call?

Please contact us if you have new evidence to support your case or if you have names of additional witnesses. Let us know if you have a change of address and/or phone number.

The Church as healer and reconciler

Christ the Lord calls upon the Church to be a community of healing and reconciliation. The legal proceedings of the Church’s Tribunals are based on the principle that our faith community cares about those who suffer from broken marriages. It is our hope that this article will have addressed some of the questions and concerns about marriage, decrees of nullity and the role of the Marriage Tribunal. Anyone wishing to apply for a Decree of Nullity, or wishing to inquire about their own marriage situation, is invited to speak with their parish priest or call the Marriage Tribunal at the number listed in this article.

Prayer For a Broken Marriage

Loving and eternal God, your Son Jesus Christ blessed the marriage at Cana of Galilee with His presence, miraculously turning water into wine.

In your mercy, bring healing to the wounds, suffering and pain of those couples experiencing broken marriage. May your guiding hand rest upon all those who harbour hatred, resentment and bitterness. Grace their hearts with a readiness to ask forgiveness as well as to forgive.

Surround them with your life-giving love. Restore their sense of confidence, faith and trust and enable them once more to love others without fear.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all people whose lives have been scarred by family break-up because of separation or divorce.

We ask all of this in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

Youth in the diocese

Family, Life and Youth Ministry Office (FLYMO)

By Yvette Bourque

It is hard to believe that it has now been one year since I began ministry at the diocesan office in Pembroke. I believe the year has gone so quickly because, in one's first year of anything, there is so much to do and learn. I have been travelling about the diocese to the parishes one by one meeting the clergy and getting to know their needs and understand their particular situations. I still have not yet completed the list but do intend to do so. With the preparations for the pilgrims with the upcoming International World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, next July and the preparations for the International Eucharistic Congress in June of next year also, it has been very busy, to say the least. I can't forget the wonderful spiritual experience of the Taizé weekend in Montreal with a busload of youth eager to experience the simplicity and peacefulness of the Taizé prayers, music and way of life. Then there was the Youth

Summit in Montreal, another great opportunity to build relationships and discover the heritage of our Catholic faith in Canada and prepare for the Congress. Fr. Réal Ouellette proved to be a worthy addition to both events with his French-speaking ability and his knowledge of direction and historic sites in and around Quebec.

The last year has been mostly a time of assessing the needs of the diocese in the areas of family, life and youth ministry. One thing that is very apparent from this assessment is the need for labourers in the vineyard. There is much labour but few labourers, it seems. Entering into the very mission of the Church is to be involved in the life of our parishes using the gifts

and talents that have been given to us by God. Somehow we must call the labourers into the vineyard. There is always a need for volunteers in youth and family ministry at the FLYMO to help with future workshops, training sessions, pilgrimages, marriage preparation courses, etc.

As I look back over the last year and take count of all that I have learned and observed, I also realize the need for a deep trust in the Lord to guide and equip us for the journey ahead as we work together in unity to bring the Kingdom of God to all. I look forward to the New Year with great anticipation under the direction of our new bishop, Michael Mulhall, and ask for all of your prayers.



The annual "Wash for Life" car wash held in September raised \$400.00 for the Renfrew County and Area Pregnancy Support Centre in Pembroke.

NAZARETH FAMILY SUMMER RETREATS

What families are saying after a week-long "Nazareth Family Retreat":

"Smartest thing our family has done in years." (father) • "Wonderful opportunity to connect as a family and strengthen our marriage." (mother)

"Fantastically fantabulous! I can be myself." (teen) • "Tons of fun... it was the best vacation we ever had." (child)

Each summer, Nazareth Family retreats are held at the Dominus Vobiscum Retreat Centre on the shores of Lac Maskinonge in the Laurentians, one hour north of Montreal. Through a unique blend of daily Mass, conferences, celebrations and recreation, all members of the family are challenged to grow in their faith and in their call as family. First established in 1982 in Combermere, Ontario by Don and Posie McPhee, the Nazareth Family Apostolate continues to run for three consecutive week-long sessions each summer, hosted by some core families from the Pembroke and Ottawa dioceses. Over the years, many families have benefited from this unique family retreat experience. Why not give your family and your marriage a real gift this summer!

The dates for summer 2008 are:

Week 1: July 20 - 26

Week 2: July 27 - Aug. 2

Week 3: Aug. 3 - 9

For more information go to

www.nazarethfamily.com

or contact Mark and

Joyce Reilander

at (613) 735-3894.



FLYMO News

This past September the FLYMO NEWS was launched. This is a periodic, public e-mail newsletter from the Family, Life and Youth Ministry Office created to efficiently keep more people in the Diocese of Pembroke updated on information and upcoming events throughout the diocese in the area of Family, Life and Youth Ministry. If you wish to receive this communication, e-mail Yvette Bourque at yvette.bourque@diocesepembroke.ca.

Diocesan Youth and Family Ministry leaders gathering

A diocesan gathering for all leaders, volunteers, and facilitators working in the area of youth and family ministry was held in November at Our Lady of Lourdes parish, Pembroke. The purpose of the gathering was to bring together all those in similar ministries to network, share resources, discuss the different types of youth and family ministry happening around the diocese, build community, network with each other and discuss the training and support needs of those in these particular ministries. The day proved to be very fruitful and recommendations from this group will be considered in future plans for developing training and support initiatives from the FLYMO office. A very big "thank you" to all who made it out.

World Youth Day 2008 – Sydney, Australia

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses". (Acts 1:8)

Preparation continues for the 37 pilgrims attending this international event. An overnight retreat was held at Camp Cana in Combermere as part of the preparations. Besides, fun, fellowship, adoration and reconciliation, the pilgrims spent time learning about the life and spirituality of Pope Benedict the XVI who was born on Holy Saturday in 1927 in Marktl am Inn,

Germany, and immediately baptized in the waters of the Easter vigil (a most incredible way to start life, I might add). His biography tells how his mother brought him, time and time again to pilgrimage sites where he developed faith in the Mother of God and was inspired by the simplicity and humility of the saints. The fact that "pilgrimages" were key in the development of the Holy Father's faith was confirmation that pilgrimages were and still are very important in the formation of faith of an individual. If you have ever been to an International World Youth Day (and survived, as they are physically gruelling at times) you might say it is the "ultimate" pilgrimage a young person can take.

In Vatican City on July 4, 2007, Pope Benedict encouraged young people to prepare well for World Youth Day. The Holy Father states "I want to encourage you to prepare well for this marvellous celebration of faith, which will be spent in the company of your bishops, priests, religious, youth leaders and one another. Enter fully into the life of your parishes and participate enthusiastically in diocesan events! In this way you will be equipped spiritually to experience new depths of understanding of all that we believe when we gather in Sydney next July."

Benedict XVI told the youth that the celebration is "much more than an event". He affirmed that it is a time of deep spiritual renewal, the fruits of which benefit the whole of society.

The Pope told the youth to bring their friends who are searching for truth. "Some of you have friends with little real purpose in their lives, perhaps caught up in a futile search for endless new experiences," he said. Bring them to World Youth Day, too! In fact, I have noticed that against the tide of secularism many young people are rediscovering the satisfying quest for authentic beauty, goodness and truth. Through your witness you help them in their search for the Spirit of God. Be courageous in that witness! Strive to

spread Christ's guiding light, which gives purpose to all life, making lasting joy and happiness possible for everyone."

Pope Benedict XVI encourages the youth to prepare for this incredible pilgrimage by keeping the following goals in mind:

- To recognize the Spirit's true identity, principally by listening to the Word of God in the Revelation of the Bible;
- To become clearly aware of his continuous, active presence in the life of the Church, especially as you rediscover that the Holy spirit is the SOUL, the vital breath of Christian life itself, through the sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist;
- To grow thereby, in an understanding of Jesus that becomes ever deeper and more joyful;
- To put the Gospel into practice at the dawn of the third millennium.

Ten "patrons" have been announced for WYD 2008. They are:

1. Pope John Paul II, who invented WYD itself;
2. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, student and athlete who worked with Catholic Action of Italy; Died at age 24 in 1925;
3. Blessed Mary McKillop, a native of Australia and first Australian to be canonized. The first to found a religious order "down under";
4. St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish woman who inspired John Paul II;
5. St. Peter Chanel
6. St. Therese of Lisieux
7. Blessed Peter To Rot, an Oceanian and lay catechist from Papua New Guinea. The son of a tribal chief, he was martyred in a Japanese concentration camp at the end of WWII.
8. St. Maria Goretti
9. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta
10. Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Help of Christians, protector of Australia.

For the complete message to the youth for World Youth Day 2008, go to www.vatican.va.

Anyone wishing to make a donation to the pilgrims to help with expenses can do so by sending a cheque made out to "Diocese of Pembroke" marked "WYD08 Donation" to: Diocese of Pembroke, P.O. Box 7, Pembroke, ON K8A 6X1. Any donations over \$10 will be issued a tax receipt. Your prayers are most welcome as well.

NET - National Evangelization Team of Canada

One of the ways youth are evangelized in the diocese is by a team of young adults who are trained, skilled and selected to work with and evangelize youth. These young people give up a year of their lives to travel across Canada to evangelize and serve by providing parishes and schools with youth retreats, confirmation retreats and family retreats (daytime or evening). NET has a French pilot team for the first time and has their own separate schedule. NET will be in the Diocese of Pembroke from February 20 to March 3, 2008. For more information or to book a retreat please call the FLYMO office or visit their website www.netcanad.ca.

Resources

Many resources are available at the FLYMO office with more to come in the future. Stop in and see what books, DVDs and programs there are.



On Friday, September 14, 2007, Fr. Réal Ouellette of St. Charles Parish in Otter Lake, organized a paintball activity for the youth of the Diocese of Pembroke. Participation was first offered to the youth who will participate in World Youth Day 2008 Sydney, Australia, and their friends. Fr. Ouellette says, "It was just a blast of fun. We were divided into two equal teams (equal in numbers), however, my team never won a match. I must say, that I even hit - unintentionally - some teammates on a few occasions. After three hours of fun, many of us gathered for supper at the local Pizza Hut."

Earthquake in Chincha Alta, Peru

By Sr. Pauline Coulterman

On August 15, 2007, an 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Peru, affecting greatly the village of Chincha Alta and many of the cities and towns south of Chincha. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Pembroke, at present have two Peruvian Sisters ministering to the people of the Chincha valley. Our congregation began our Peruvian Mission in 1964 in Chincha Alta. The Valley of Chincha located about 200 miles south of Lima, was one the hardest hit areas. An estimated 80,000 families lost their homes. For three months now aftershocks continue to rattle Peru and its citizens.

The Peruvian government declared a state of emergency across the affected regions, and officially requested international support. The only signs of government support in the Chincha area was the repair of the Pan-American Highway, and help with the restoration of water and hydro service to the area.

Our convent and the priest's house in the parish lost many windows, everything standing was knocked to the floor, some walls cracked and irons twisted, but most of the walls are still standing. The convent lost two of its' outer garden walls and the parish lost two meeting rooms. Both of the buildings remain sturdy and are considered safe to inhabit.

Many of the homes in Chincha are mud brick and could not withstand this quake. It is believed that approximately 75% of the homes have been destroyed or damaged. The streets, which were a cloud of dust for weeks, now look like vast open fields as people

clear away the debris of their homes. The stronger buildings with iron columns are standing but their walls are cracked, windows broken and iron twisted.

The school year was brought to an abrupt close with the majority of the schools damaged beyond use. The government of Peru promised to bring in portable classrooms to assure that the children would not lose their school year, but this was never realized. Thousands of children will have to repeat their year and probably not even be able to start classes in March when the new school year is to begin.

In Chincha the death toll is about 105, and there are more than 11,000 homeless sleeping outdoors in damp cold weather. The Mayor of Chincha has stated that the province needs at least 600 tents to shelter the victims who have lost everything. Some tents have arrived to the centre of Chincha, but many of our parishioners and scholarship families are living on the outskirts of Chincha or in the rural area, therefore they have not benefited from these. With donations coming in from different organizations, the Sisters have been able to distribute a number of blankets to these families, and also give them plastic or straw mats to lie on as the damp cold weather

is causing a number of cases of pneumonia.

The Red Cross has set up big white tents for a makeshift hospital since the regional hospital has been declared unfit for occupancy. A great number of people have been injured due to the falling of unstable walls. The earth is still shaking, but less and less, and the intensity is calming down. Many doctors and nurses are out of work because of the hospital situation.

Different groups of people connected to religious organizations have come from Lima to see for themselves the situation of the people and to get a sense of the needs. Some have stayed for short periods



A scene of some of the destruction caused by the earthquake of August 15.

Local students gear up for the Dominican Republic Experience 2008

By Peggy Dunne

This year's group of 19 students and staff from our two Catholic high schools, St Joseph's High School in Renfrew and Bishop Smith Catholic High in Pembroke, attended an overnight retreat to prepare for an exciting mission week in Yamasa, a town in the Dominican Republic. Ana De la Cruz Tineo, a member of the adult organizational team from the Dominican Republic, was there to teach us some handy Spanish phrases and to teach us a little about the history and culture of her people, photo at right.

The Dominican Republic Experience Team has been doing a lot of fund-raising in order to bring down much needed food aid and medical supplies to the clinic run by the Grey Sisters.

At the retreat the group learned about our association with Health Partners International, a group of medical professionals who sponsor kits of medicine and medical supplies to be distributed to doctors who work with the poor in developing

countries. These kits, containing thousands of dollars in top quality medication, are provided to doctors who use the medicine in free clinics in developing countries.

The members of the team will also personally deliver lifesaving Friendship Kits to families in need. These food kits will be purchased with the money that will be raised and through donations from the wider community.

Our Dominican Republic Experience groups meet all year long to prepare for this journey. The students selected for this trip must make it through a tough process and be very dedicated to helping the needy.

If anyone is interested in helping out with this very worthwhile mission, you can contact Peggy Dunne at Bishop Smith Catholic High School, (613) 735-5496, or Paula Legere at St. Joseph's High School (613) 432-5846.

Peggy Dunne is High School Chaplain and D. R. Experience Coordinator at Bishop Smith Catholic High School, Pembroke.



of time offering their service and helping where they can. This has been a great support for our sisters and for Fr. Santiago. There was hope among the Chinchá people that help would be a follow-up to the visit, and that has happened as Caritas Peru and other organizations were challenged by these visitors. Promises were made and I am happy to say a number of them have been realized and some are still continuing to help for short periods of time.

Both water and electricity have been restored to Chinchá thus relieving some of the strain.

Food had been arriving on a more or less regular basis, but with the wide spread of distribution the rations are limited. Nevertheless, food and water were available and parents are good to see that the children are the first to be fed. As time passes, the aid for the victims becomes less and less; they begin to feel forgotten. The work conditions have not changed much over these three months and therefore families have little or no income to provide food. 'Soup Kitchens' have been organized in 53 zones within the Fatima Parish, thus making distribution of all donations much easier. Our present aim is to construct a washroom in each of these 53 soup kitchens areas. This washroom would serve the 25 to 30 families living in the vicinity of the soup kitchen. The cost of construction of each washroom is estimated at \$480.00 to \$500.00.

I have been talking to Sisters María and Gloria, our

Peruvian Sisters working in this mission, about looking into the possibility of pre-fabricated wooden homes that would give the family some stability for the months and years ahead as they look at the reconstruction of their home.

This is something that promises to be very helpful to the victims of the earthquake. The cost of these homes are estimated at \$750.00 - \$800.00 at present, and with this estimate, the Parish of Fatima and the Sisters of St. Joseph have ordered 50 homes as a starting point. Some of these have arrived in the area.

Some families are beginning to look at rebuilding their home, but I am told that construction materials are being priced anywhere from 300-500% of their value, thus making reconstruction almost impossible for the time being.

The people of the Pembroke diocese have been very generous and solicitous regarding the situation in Chinchá. To date, we, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Pembroke, have received approximately \$75,000.00 in relief funds for the Valley of Chinchá. We have already sent 40% of these funds to cover the purchase of food supplements for the soup kitchens, as well as paying for the prefabricated houses and toilets that have arrived in Chinchá.

I pray that this interest and concern for the Peruvian people continues among our Canadian friends in the months ahead as we plunge ahead with fundraising

projects that will help us meet some of the needs of the Peruvian people. Often months after the tragedy is over, the victims are forgotten before they have a fighting chance to get back on their feet.

At the present time Pembroke diocese has a few fund-raising projects underway in which we hope many of you will be able to participate. The 43 pilgrims who travelled to Peru in 2006 to see first-hand the fruits of the diocesan funds that had already been sent to Peru, have put together a "calendar". This calendar is their way of sharing their personal experience while

giving to others a vivid picture of the Peruvian people and their culture. These 16-month calendars are being sold for \$15.00 at the Chancery office and through the pilgrims themselves. The funds raised through this sale will be directly used for projects related to the Pembroke-Peru twinning.

The first commitment we made to our Peruvian friends was "The Chorrillos Feeding Project". This program started in March of this year to help feed malnourished children in the Chorrillos Community, a suburb of Lima. As a contributor to this project, you are helping the children and their families to a better life. The children are fed two nutritious meals a day and their mothers are receiving information about nutrition and hygiene. We have received a detailed report on how this project is progressing and we are pleased to let you know that your support is greatly appreciated by the recipients. The pilgrims who traveled to Lima in November, 2006 had the opportunity to visit the kitchen and dining room where the children would be fed and they can attest to the anticipated success of this project and the benefit to many families.

We are starting our second year of fundraising for this project and are hoping that we can count on your continued support in sponsoring a child. Forms have been made available through your parish and should be forwarded with your donation to the Chancery Office as indicated on the form.

My hope is that together we can make something happen for the people of the Chinchá Valley as well as the families of Chorrillos.

I realize that Chinchá is only one of the many areas that have been affected by the earthquake, but each of the other towns and villages have missionaries struggling to raise a conscious concern among their supportive benefactors.

"Relief aid" for the Chinchá People can be sent to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Pembroke, 1127 Pembroke St. W., Pembroke ON K8A 5R3. A tax-exempt receipt will be issued.

Donations to the "The Chorrillos Feeding Project" can be made through the diocese. Please make cheques payable to "Diocese of Pembroke", and mail to the Chancery Office, Chorrillos Feeding Project, 188 Renfrew St., Pembroke, ON K8A 6X1. Thank you!



One of the new prefabricated wooden homes being erected in Peru.



Two tons and then some!

The St. Joseph's High School annual Vice Principal's Food Drive took place from October 1 to October 5. Hard work and dedication on the part of students and staff resulted in a record-setting collection of 5,161 pounds of canned and dried goods, shattering the previous record of 2,800 pounds.

SJHS Vice-Principal, Mary-Lise Rowat, notes, "I continue to be impressed with the commitment and leadership displayed by students of all grades."

Special mention goes to Ms. Carleton's grade 12 homeroom class, which donated a whopping 975 pounds! The food was delivered to the Food Bank on Friday, October 12, by Mr. Lunney's grade 10 religion class.

Pictured at left with some of the collected food are, from right to left: Taylor Popkie, Ryan Cuthill, Dylan Joy, Jordanne Irwin, Amanda Rae Lambert, Adrian Normandeau, Jessica McInnis, Amanda Schmidt, Sarah Bidgood, Lindsay Latendresse and Steven Ennett.

Christmas Food Drive Challenge in Renfrew County Catholic Schools

By Tony Cosentino

The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's Administration and Plant Department offices have issued a Christmas food drive challenge to Renfrew County's Catholic schools. Admin and Plant Department staff are inviting the board's Catholic school communities to beat their efforts to bring in canned goods and non-perishable food items for local food banks. The challenge began Monday November 5 and culminated with food weigh-ins on Monday December 3. As **Ecclesia** went to press, food drive totals were beginning to come in from schools throughout the county. For example, in the Pembroke area, Bishop Smith Catholic High School collected 1.4 tons and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School brought in 1271 lbs. Administration and Plant Department offices brought in 275 lbs, while Holy Name and Cathedral are just beginning their food drives. We hope to have a board-wide grand total by Christmas.

Mattawa students stock food bank shelves

Hundred of hands contributed to restocking the shelves of the Mattawa District Food Bank. Students of École Ste. Anne and École Secondaire F.J. McElligott organized a human food chain held on Friday, October 5.

It took them close to an hour to pass nearly 1,000 kilograms of nonperishable food items down the line of students from École Ste-Anne to the altar at Ste. Anne Church. Sister Carmelle Laframboise, who is in charge of the Mattawa District Food Bank said there's a big need right now. "Our shelves were very low. This will be most beneficial."

"We are grateful to the youth of our community and the teachers. It is a very heart-warming gesture that could not have come at a better time," said Lise Reid, the secretary-treasurer of the Mattawa District Food Bank.

She said the more than 2,750 nonperishable food items, collected by the Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord students, will supply its users for three months. Similar events took place across the region with more than 3,000 French catholic students and employees involved.



This year's Christmas Food Drive Challenge is one way in which the board is seeking to live out its 2007-2008 Catholic Community Focus: "Challenge the consumer culture with lives dedicated to the principles of social justice in the spirit of Gospel values."

The board has chosen the Gospel of Matthew's account of the last judgment as the scriptural basis for its activities within this focus for the school year. Here, the just are identified on the basis of how they reached out to Jesus in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and imprisoned. Director of Education Michele Arbour commented that, "by casting our social justice efforts in light of the Gospel's call to serve Christ in the poor, we are helping our students understand the importance of a faith that is witnessed in concrete acts of love."

The fruit of Christian Community Day

The Christmas food drive challenge is just one of the many fruits of our board's annual Christian Community Day, where board staff and diocesan clergy come together to celebrate our distinctive identity as a Catholic school system. We were privileged to begin this year's gathering on October 26 with Bishop Mulhall presiding at Eucharist, together with many of our local priests, at St. Columbkille Cathedral. Our new bishop's words of encouragement, thanks and support were warmly received by all present. The morning continued at Bishop Smith Catholic High School with outgoing Director of Education Lorne Keon's final address to board staff. Mr. Keon encouraged all to continue working together, honouring the histories, gifts and concerns that generations of staff and clergy bring to our marvellous call to educate in the light of our Catholic faith. Incoming Director Michele Arbour acknowledged the lasting impact of Mr. Keon's leadership and vision, and pledged as our new director to continue moving into the future with the same vision to serve the needs of students in our Catholic schools. Both Mr. Keon and Ms. Arbour's addresses were met with standing ovations from all present.

Integrating faith into all aspects of learning

Our Christian Community Day afternoon workshops saw board staffs reviewing their 2006-2007 community outreach and stewardship initiatives, and planning for their continuation in the coming year. Our Christmas food drive emerged as a result of this planning process. It is just one of the many ways our Catholic schools continue to foster a vision of life that integrates faith into all dimensions of learning. We teach knowledge and skills while leading students in prayer and sacrament throughout the liturgical year. At the same time, we encourage one another to reach out to Christ in the poor and less fortunate. Some of our activities include breakfast clubs, food collections at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter; snowsuit campaigns, Christmas shoe box campaigns and fundraising to build schools in the developing world. We continue to support the Sisters of St. Joseph's missions in Peru, the Grey Sisters' Missions in the Dominican Republic, the Holy Childhood Association, our Diocesan Peru Partnership, and other groups with an international outreach to improve the lives of the poor.

Participants in the Church's mission

Catholic schools seek to provide an education whose distinctiveness comes from sharing in the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel. Our Christmas food drive challenge is just one of many projects our schools undertake within this distinctive mission. The education and formation students receive in our schools encourages them to embrace their Catholic faith and bring hope to the world.

Tony Cosentino is a religious and education family life resource teacher with the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board.

Students raised \$2,500 for Terry Fox Foundation

The students at St. Victor School in Mattawa recently donated the \$2,500 they raised in this year's Terry Fox National School Run Day held Friday, September 28, 2007. The cheque for that amount was presented to Mrs. Monique Bangs, the local Terry Fox Run chairperson, at their weekly assembly. The cheque was presented by Gilles Dupuis, who organized the event, and several of the top fund-raisers.

When Dupuis began the fund-raiser this year, he issued a challenge to any student who could raise \$150 or more. "The incentive was that they would be able to pie the most hated teacher in the school (me) during an assembly. As you can see from one of the photos there were several successful pledge collectors," he said.

He was very proud of the effort put forth by the student body. They were able to surpass the school record of \$1,477 set two years ago. Mrs. Houston, principal of St. Victor School, congratulated the students. She said, "You made the community proud with the display of unselfish effort to raise money for the Terry Fox Foundation. Remember, however, that our students couldn't have achieved these results without the grand support of our Mattawa community. We are most grateful. Mattawa is a little town with a whole lot of heart."

Below, Joey Dull, who alone raised \$705 in pledges, pies his teacher, Mr. Dupuis, to the delight of students and Mrs. Houston.



A P O L O G E T I C S 1 0 1

What is truth and why do we care anyway?

By Andrew Baklinski

In this series, the author lays out a common sense approach to understanding and defending the Catholic faith.

(A short preamble to clarify our terms – the term apologetics does not mean an apology in the modern understanding of the word. I am not saying I am sorry for something. What I am doing is giving a defence for something – this is an original meaning of the word ‘apologetics’)

I often like to begin my religion courses by asking the simple question: “what is the meaning of life?” I get a variety of interesting responses from my students – some say sex, some say money, some say career, family, faith, happiness, and some are just not sure as they have never thought much about such a deep question! As a class we discuss the answers given and try to get at the heart of them, try to find some common ground. Beneath the above such answers - and many more - is the idea that we are looking for happiness in life, for meaning. The question can be posed: “what will bring us that happiness, this meaning that we seek?” The answer is “Truth!” As human beings we are built to live in accord with truth. If we do, we will find happiness. If we do not, we will find emptiness.

But what is truth exactly? The famous philosopher (a word meaning a lover of truth) Aristotle gave us a good definition. According to him truth is simply saying of “what is” that it is, and of “what is not” that it is not. In other words, truth is what corresponds to reality. This type of truth is ‘objective’ in that it is independent of the knower and his consciousness. A good example here of what I mean by objective truth is the mathematical statement: $2+2=4$. This is a statement that is true regardless of what I think about it. It always has been true and always will be true. Now, all this might seem so self-evident that to even talk about it seems a waste of time. But it is important to clarify our words because the majority of attacks against Christianity come down in the end to the simple question: “Can we know objective truth?” When pushed into a corner a non-believer will often appeal to the lines: “We can know nothing with certainty” or “you have your beliefs and I have mine...it may be true for you, but not for me...”

The former response is called skepticism and it is immediately self-contradictory. In claiming that one can know nothing with certainty, one is claiming to know one thing at least - this one thing! Skepticism does not get us very far. The latter response is called

subjectivism or relativism and this theory holds that truth is dependent on the knower. Something is true because you believe it to be true. “Different strokes for different folks” is a saying that sums up this belief. Now it is true that while not many subjectivists would hold that the sum of $2+2$ could be anything other than 4, the big problem lies in the realm of morality and religion. Remember that if truth is what we say it to be, then we are not bound by laws like the 10 Commandments or Church teaching – we get to make up our own morality and do what feels right for us. In the case of religious belief, a relativist would say that a religion is true because you feel it to be true. This makes all religions basically equal – you just pick and choose what you want because in the end they are all made up anyway. That understanding truth in these ways is devastating for Catholicism is apparent but the good news is that like skepticism, subjectivism can be easily argued against.

Moral subjectivists argue for their position in claiming that many cultures have differed in what they valued and therefore that values are subjective. Although it is true that cultures have differed about what they value, no culture ever had a complete different set of values – things like honesty, courage and self-control have always been prized and their opposites shunned. This is a strong clue to there being objective moral laws, things that are true across the board morally speaking. Further, it is possible to say that cultures can be mistaken about values. No one in their right mind could ever defend the atrocities that occurred in Nazi Germany. Just because Nazis thought it right to murder Jews, Catholics and others, did not make it right!

Other arguments brought forth by the subjectivist camp include ideas that morality is just an evolutionary survival device, that a subjective view of morality makes for tolerance and that life is too complicated for there to be universal moral laws. The belief that morality is simply an instinct that has evolved with us to stop us from killing each other does not match up with our own moral understanding that experiences morality as something that tells us what to do with our instincts – not just an instinct itself! The idea that people who believe in subjective truth are more tolerant than those who hold to there being objective truth is also flawed in that it is often the subjectivist who is being intolerant by forcing his own subjective opinions on others. Saying that the situations that present themselves in our life are too complex to allow for objective moral laws (“we can all imagine situations where it would be alright to...”) does not in any way deny the existence of these laws. It only serves

to underscore the point that these objective norms must be applied in different situations.

Religious subjectivism is a very popular stance in this day and age that equates religious truth with feeling. Whatever you feel to be true in the realm of religion is true. If your God is Jesus, great! If God is the tree next door, or a rock, go for it! If you feel in your heart that God is this way or that way, how could I tell you that you are wrong? The interesting thing however, is that a religion like Christianity deals with more than just feelings. It also deals with objective facts. Facts like “God exists”, or “Christ is risen.” These facts can be clearly looked at from a reasonable point of view. Do they square up with reality, with what makes sense or not? Is the claim logical? Is it contradictory and so forth? This is where clear thinking can come to the defence of faith and a large part of successfully doing Apologetics is found in this appeal to reason.

In conclusion, any argument that can be brought up against objective truth can be soundly refuted leaving us in the end with the understanding that truth does exist. As Christians, we need to care deeply about the truth because, as mentioned, the majority of attacks against our faith come from the idea that we cannot know truth. The Catholic faith firmly holds to there being objective truth – not truth as some abstract thing, but truth as a person. Jesus Christ Himself said “I am the way, the truth and the life.” (Jn14:6) The Church, echoing Christ’s statement has taught from the beginning that Christ is the true light that enlightens everyone!

How marvelous it is that God in His wisdom has made us for Himself and has inspired within us a zeal, a hungering for truth and happiness. I like to tell my students that we have a God-sized hole in us and that it can only be filled up by God and nothing else! As St. Augustine says in his Confessions: “You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” May the God of truth inspire us all to a deeper understanding and love for the truth!

Next issue: “Can you ‘prove’ God exists?”

Andrew Baklinski teaches high-school religion classes and is also a Pastoral Animator at Madawaska Valley District High School in Barry’s Bay. He has an undergraduate degree from Franciscan University of Steubenville with majors in theology, philosophy and history. He has taken graduate courses from the International Theological Institute and D’Youville College.