



Ecclesia

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

Showing our appreciation – the CWL and Knights of Columbus co-sponsor a Year For Priests appreciation dinner

In response to Pope Benedict XVI's declaration of a "Year For Priests", the Pembroke Diocesan Councils of the Catholic Women's League and of the Knights of Columbus are jointly sponsoring an appreciation dinner for the priests of the diocese. The historic event, the first joint effort sponsored by both groups, is planned for Friday, April 23 and will be held in Pembroke.

The appreciation dinner is a collective effort on the part of the laity to honour and affirm the priesthood in the diocese. All priests of the diocese have been invited as guests. In announcing the Year for Priests, the Holy Father said, "it must be, in a very special way, a year of prayer by priests, with priests and for priests, a year for the renewal of the spirituality of the presbyterate and of each priest." The special year is intended to "encourage priests in their striving for spiritual perfection on which, above all, the effectiveness of their ministry depends."

To contribute to these purposes, it is the hope and prayer of the two sponsoring groups that many people from across the diocese will participate.

The guest speaker for the dinner is Bishop Noël Simard, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Sault Ste-Marie.

Bishop Simard says that the Year for Priests is an opportunity for the clergy. "It is a call for the lay people, but also to priests, to commit themselves to spiritual renewal," he said. He continued, "We must develop a deeper personal experience of Christ. How can we give what we do not have? The priest must be a friend of God," he said, "according to the Heart of God."

He also emphasized the need for connection to the laity. "We need to be close to people, it is no more time for rules, it is time for proximity to people."

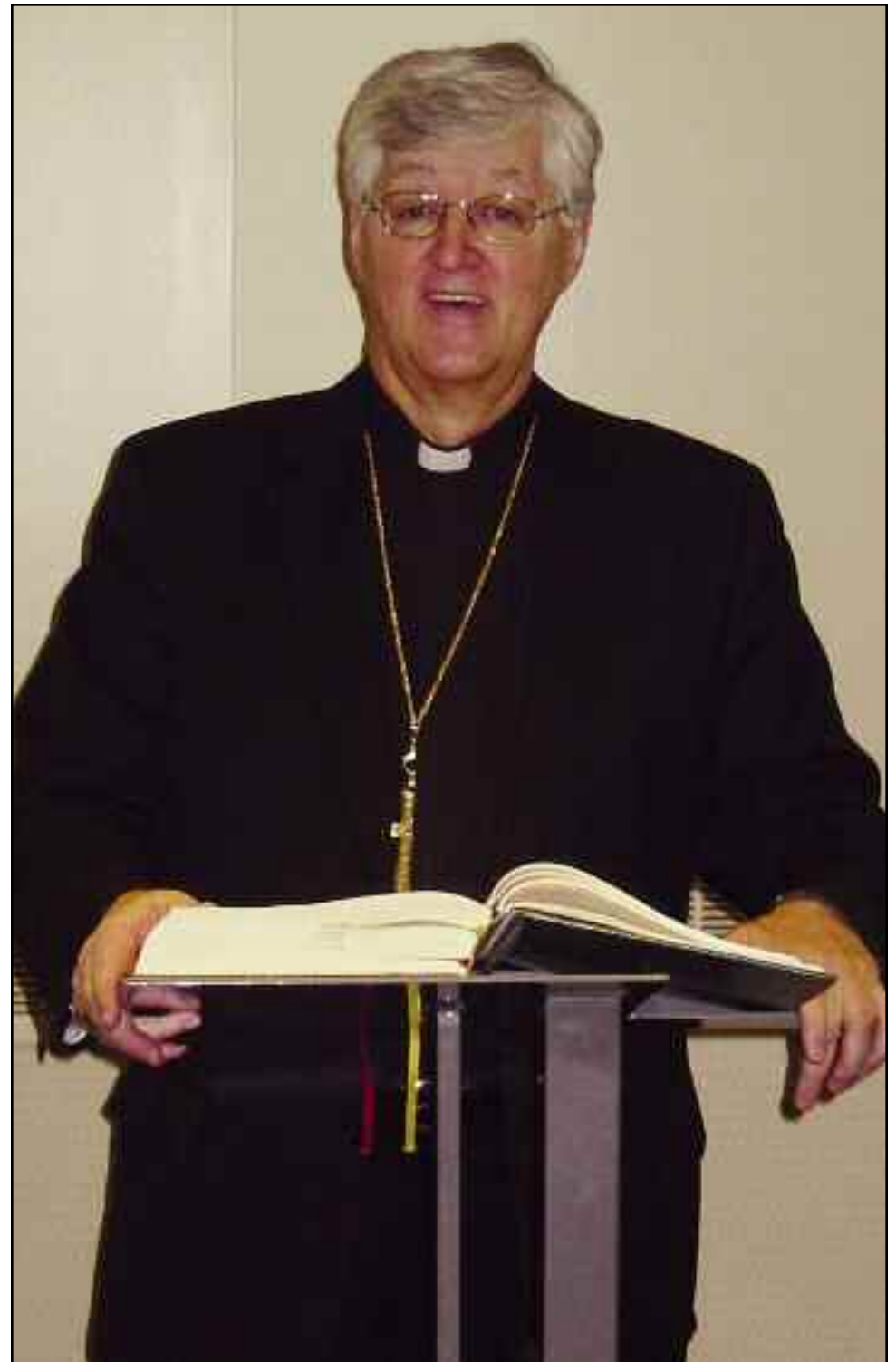
He also credits the important role the laity must play. "If we want priests to become holy people, the lay people must support and pray for them."

Part of that support has to be the support for vocations, "We must express God's call to young people today."

Bishop Simard describes the three main roles of priests as spiritual leaders in the Church: preacher of the Word, shepherd of souls, and celebrant of the sacraments.

Bishop Simard says that the Year for Priests offers a valuable opportunity to present a positive image of the priesthood, an image sometimes challenged by negative media commentary in the past few years.

Bishop Simard was appointed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Sault Ste-Marie in July 2008 and ordained bishop on October 2008.



Bishop Noël Simard, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Sault Ste-Marie, will be guest speaker at a dinner honouring priests sponsored by the CWL and Knights of Columbus of the diocese. The dinner will be held April 23 in Pembroke.

As of July 2009, he became State Chaplain of Ontario Council of the Knights of Columbus.

In June 2009 he became the French representative of the Canadian Catholic Bishops on the Board of Directors of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family. He is also a member of an ad hoc committee of the Canadian Catholic Health Association and a member of many committees of the French office of Catholic Education of Ontario.

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Joys, Challenges, and Hopes in the Year for Priests

by Fr. Michael Smith

The greatest joy for me as a priest today is the realization that God has called me to be a missionary. In this part of the world, being a priest, and indeed being called to any kind of ministry, means proclaiming the Good News to people who have not heard it.



Fr. Michael Smith is parish priest of St. Theresa Parish, Témiscaming, Quebec.

Our situation is similar in many respects to that of the early Christians, who spent their lives introducing Jesus to people who had never heard of him. We are facing this reality again, particularly among the young. The biggest temptation would be to spend one's energies lamenting the loss of the Church that once was. Instead, I am energized by the realization that I am helping to plant the seeds of a future for the Church, a future that I may not live to see.

The greatest challenge is the flip side of the greatest joy: the realization that we are currently in a society where unbelief, whether outright or de facto, is fashionable. This lack of faith takes on many forms: seeing this world as the only one (or the only one that matters), seeing quality of life as more important than life itself, treating other people as commodities.

What makes the unbelief of today different from that of previous generations is that hardly anyone is promising an earthly paradise anymore. In this environment, Jesus appears more and more as the Good News whom people are looking for. In many cases, though, this Good News will be embraced only when other things have been tried and found wanting.

My greatest hope as a priest in 2010 is in the power of the Holy Spirit to bless my poor efforts and those of others. We have Jesus' promise that he will be with us always. Through his Spirit, his risen presence is with us now, in these difficult times. The challenges that the Church faces in the present will lead to Resurrection. This hope and this promise give me assurance that our labours will bear fruit.

Clergy in the Diocese of Pembroke

The ever-present concern of bishops today is to serve the pastoral needs of their dioceses in the best way possible considering the decreasing number of priests. Here are some facts relating to the Diocese of Pembroke and its clergy.

At present, the presbyterate of the diocese consists of 51 priests plus our bishop, Bishop Michael Mulhall. Of this total:

- two priests belong to religious orders (one Polish Oblate of Mary Immaculate and one 'Père du Saint-Sacrement')
- one priest is on loan from the Diocese of St. John's, Newfoundland and is involved in part-time parish ministry
- 13 priests are retired from full-time parish ministry; however, most of these retired priests are involved in replacement ministry where they are needed
- seven priests are either exercising various types of ministry outside the diocese or are not able to accept a pastoral charge
- 28 diocesan priests are in parishes at present.

Not included in these numbers are 11 priests who are incardinated in the diocese and are members of Madonna House Apostolate.

The average age of diocesan priests is 63 years while the average age of the diocesan priests at present involved in parish ministry is 60. The age

range of the 28 active Pembroke diocesan priests is as follows:

- three are between 70 and 80 years of age
- 10 are between 60 and 70
- eight are between 50 and 60
- five are between 40 and 50
- two are between 30 and 40 years of age.

Our diocese is divided into five pastoral zones, or deaneries, in which there are a total of 48 parishes and eight missions:

- 13 parishes + one mission in the Pontiac zone
- 11 parishes + three missions in the Renfrew zone
- 11 parishes + two missions in the Barry's Bay zone
- eight parishes + one mission in the Pembroke zone
- five parishes + one mission in the Mattawa zone.

Thirty priests serve the needs of these 48 parishes, but as mentioned previously, they must count on the assistance of many retired priests. At present, we are very fortunate to have five seminarians studying for the priesthood who are at various stages of formation. One is in a pastoral internship program and could be eligible for ordination within the next couple of years, two are in their second year of formation and two are in their first year of formation.



Dinner to honour priests, continued from page one...

He was born in Charlevoix, Quebec and studied theology at Laval University. From 1971 to 1976, he was chaplain for elementary schools and pastor at St-Félix de Cap Rouge,

near Quebec City. From 1980 to 1984, Bishop Simard continued his studies at the Gregoriana University in Rome where he was granted a Doctorate in Moral Theology. He has been professor of Religious Studies and Ethics at the University of Sudbury and professor of Ethics and Moral Theology at the Faculty of Theology of Saint Paul University, Ottawa.

Bishop Michael Mulhall will host the evening and introduce Bishop Simard. The dinner will be held at

the Germania Club on Bennett Street in Pembroke. Everyone is invited and tickets must be purchased in advance from members of the CWL or the K of C. The cost per ticket is \$30.

For more information on the event, please contact the Knights of Columbus chaplain, Fr. Murray Tardiff, (613) 732-1814.

A message from Bishop Mulhall: The Year for Priests and our Challenges for the Future

My dear Faithful of the Diocese of Pembroke:

Before long the Year for Priests, inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI, will come to an end. On the feast of the Sacred Heart, June 19, 2009, the Holy Father asked priests in particular and the entire Church in general, to reflect and pray more intensely about the mystery and gift of the priesthood until the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 11, 2010. In his letter to priests throughout the world, Pope Benedict highlighted the sanctity and example of St. Jean-Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars and patron saint of parish priests:

“The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus, the saintly Curé of Ars would often say. This touching reflection makes us reflect, first of all, with heartfelt gratitude, the immense gift which priests represent, not only for the Church but for humanity itself. I think of those priests who quietly present Christ’s words and actions each day...How can I not pay tribute to their apostolic labours, their tireless and hidden service...How can I not praise the courageous fidelity of so many priests who, even amid difficulties and incomprehension, remain faithful to their vocations as “friends of Christ”.”

“The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus”. I am sure that this simple and profound phrase has strengthened the hearts of many priests to persevere in the daily renewal of our vocation during these past months and I pray that this year of spiritual growth will mark a moment of grace for the rest of our lives. This Year for Priests has prompted me to deepen my appreciation of the gift that Christ has given to me personally and to cherish even more those who, in the past, have assisted me in my priestly formation. As I have come to know the history of the Diocese of Pembroke and the priests who serve the diocese today, I have offered to the Lord on many occasions a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of the priesthood past and present.

Though this letter is addressed also to the priests of the diocese, it is especially addressed to the faithful. You are the people whom the Lord has introduced to us in our pastoral work; you are the faithful whom the Lord has given to us to love with his heart. Many times we have fallen short in our responsibilities but with each year of our priesthood our love for you grows deeper. In

addressing this letter to you, I express my fervent hope that this Year for Priests has also been a fruitful time of reflection for you and that the remaining months will not be without significant moments of grace.

This Year for Priests has also prompted me to keep in mind the present and future reality of the number of priests serving the diocese and the pastoral demands which the Lord presents to us at this moment. I wish to take this opportunity to make several remarks to the lay faithful of the diocese regarding the challenges that await us in the near future. I make these comments now but I appreciate that they will need to be made again in the future as the reality of a reduced number of priests affects each parish community and family personally.

As my brother priests know, and as many of you already well know, the average age of our pastors has been increasing to a point that in the not too distant future, the diocese will suffer a significant decrease in the number of active priests. Regardless of the reasons for this dynamic, the reality of the situation is a matter for all of us to address together. In the future, our priests will still need to live a balanced and joyful life which will allow time for the prayer and rest which will be the source of their priestly generosity. A decreased number of priests in the future will not create more pastoral work for the remaining pastors, but rather will limit the pastoral care which they will be able to provide to the faithful of the diocese and require a more discriminating prudence as to how to expend their time and service. One significant area of challenge will be the need to distinguish between essential and non-essential (though important) areas of pastoral care. This challenge will be constantly present and will require care and prudence as well as the understanding, cooperation and participation of the faithful in the life of their parish.

The diocese has been blessed with a large number of faithful priests in the past and I trust and am confident that the Lord will provide for the number of priests necessary for our care in the future. However, the changes and upsets which seem inevitable will require patience, and flexibility from all of us. We have been greatly blessed to have a number of young men from our diocese studying for the priesthood. However, a number of years will pass before these men and others are ordained and are fully prepared to serve

as pastors in the diocese. The simple reality is that arrangements will need to be made so that the faithful of the diocese can be served with a smaller number of priests.

For all of us the challenges will be significant. It is one thing to speak of them now but it is quite another reality to experience these situations. When the day arrives that Sunday Mass is not offered in our parish each week, the challenge for us can seem overwhelming and heartbreaking, especially when our parish is situated in a rural area and the history of our family is intimately connected to the building and growth of the parish. Some parishes are already without a regular Sunday Mass and have experienced this sense of loss.

Our future is in the hands of the Lord as it has always been. Without doubt, we are passing from a period in the history of the diocese (and the Church in North America in general) which saw great growth in the number of churches, missions and schools, and the clergy and religious working in our increasing number of parishes. We are certainly in a period of institutional decline which will correspond to a smaller number of priests and Sunday Masses. However, it would be a mistake for us to equate this institutional decline with a decline in the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and especially in the lives of young people. Their uncompromising thirst for the truth has deeply impressed me in these past years and will remain for me an enduring sign of God’s work in each generation.

Without going on at length, I wish to express these sentiments to you at this time and to keep open a topic and concern which will require our continued care, diligence and prayer. And I wish above all to leave with you a sense of vocation. The Lord is calling us to serve today in the place that we live, in the realities of the present in the diocese of Pembroke. In the past, the Lord called the people of the diocese in the same way to address their own unique concerns. As in the past, He will never fail to provide the grace, leadership, sacrifice and Catholic joy necessary for us to pass on the faith in its integrity to the next generation so that they in turn may answer the Lord’s call to serve Him and the Church in their own time and circumstances.

My dear people, please know of my prayers for a Blessed Easter.

† Michael Mulhall
Bishop of Pembroke



Articles, letters and photos are welcome. All items will be considered. Direct correspondence to Pappin Communications, 84 Isabella St., Pembroke, ON, K8A 5S5, or call Bruce Pappin at (613) 735-0952; fax (613) 735-7983, or e-mail bruce@pappin.com.

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Who is St. Jean-Marie Vianney?

By Jason Dedo

On June 19, 2009, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the Year for Priests. The Year for Priests was established to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney, the Curé d'Ars (pastor of the parish of Ars, France). At the same time, Pope Benedict named St. Jean Vianney as the patron saint of all priests.

In a letter to priests last June, the Holy Father shared the following reflection: "...the teaching and example of Saint Jean-Marie Vianney can serve as a significant point of reference to us all. The Curé of Ars was very humble, yet as a priest he was conscious of being an immense gift to his people".

St. Jean Vianney was born on May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, near Lyons, France into a poor peasant family. As a child growing up at the time of the French Revolution, he would have experienced the great challenges of being formed in the faith. Many Catholics in France were being rounded up, imprisoned or killed because of their faith. The young Jean Vianney, like many Catholics in France at that time, participated in the Eucharist, received his catechesis and made his sacraments in secret, usually in homes behind closed doors, to avoid detection by the authorities. Apparently, from a young age, he knew he was called to be a priest.

Jean Vianney was ordained to the priesthood on August 13, 1815 in the chapel of the Seminary at Grenoble. He began his priestly ministry as a vicar in Ecully, France.



In 1818, Fr. Vianney was sent by his bishop to be the pastor of the mission church in Ars, France – a village of about 230 people. In his Letter to Priests, Pope Benedict shares that Fr. Vianney's bishop warned him that he would find religious practice severely lacking in this community: "There is little love of

God in that parish; you will be the one to put it there". Fr. Vianney's response was to devote his ministry to the conversion of his new faith community.

Very quickly, Fr. Vianney became known as a gifted homilist, trusted confessor and a priest who had a strong devotion to prayer. His first biographer, A. Monnin, noted that Fr. Vianney made the church his home, entered it before dawn and did not leave until the evening Angelus.

According to the Holy Father, St. Jean Vianney was not only very pious but was very active within his own community: "...he regularly visited the sick and families, organized popular missions and patronal feasts, collected and managed funds for charitable and missionary works, embellished and furnished his parish church, cared for the orphans and teachers of the "Providence" (an institute he founded); provided for the education of children; founded confraternities and enlisted lay persons to work at his side". The witness of his life was the main teaching method Fr. Vianney used to help transform his parishioners.

Based on St. Jean Vianney's example, Pope Benedict XVI outlines the importance of cooperation between priests and the lay faithful: "Priests and laity together make up the one priestly people and in virtue of their ministry priests live in the midst of the lay faithful, 'that they may lead everyone to the unity of charity, loving one another with mutual affection and outdoing one another in sharing honour'". The Holy Father continues: "Here we ought to recall the Second Vatican Council's hearty encouragement to priests 'to be sincere in their appreciation and promotion of the dignity of the laity and of the special role they have to play in the Church's mission... They should be willing to listen to lay people, give brotherly consideration to their wishes, and acknowledge their experience and competence in the different fields of human activity. In this way they will be able together with them to discern the signs of the times'".

Over time, Fr. Vianney was successful in transforming the hearts of many, and as a result, people from Ars and beyond began filling the church. In 1823, the Bishop raised the mission of Ars to the rank of parish. It is said that in his humbleness, Fr.

Vianney felt unworthy of being a parish priest. For 30 years, thousands of pilgrims would seek him out annually to have their confessions heard and to seek guidance from the Curé d'Ars. He was often known to say, "The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus". In his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, he would explain to his parishioners, "One need not say much to Jesus to pray well. We know that Jesus is in the tabernacle: let us open our hearts to him, let us rejoice in his sacred presence. That is the best prayer".

St. Jean Vianney died on August 4, 1859. In 1925, St. Jean Vianney was canonized by Pope Pius XI and the same Pope declared him Patron of the world's parish priests in 1929.

The Holy Father concluded his letter with the following address to the priests of the world: "Dear priests, Christ is counting on you. In the footsteps of the Curé of Ars, let yourselves be enthralled by him. In this way you too will be, for the world in our time, heralds of hope, reconciliation and peace!"

St. Jean Vianney,
patron of all priests,
pray for us!



The Diocesan Adult Faith Formation Program Expands

By Jason Dedo

The new diocesan adult faith formation program, Cultivating Seeds of Faith, which began last year, is ongoing in several diocesan zones this year. Last year, the program was piloted in the Mattawa and Renfrew zones of the diocese.

The program consists of presentations given on a weeknight over the course of six weeks. The six topics are Introduction to Scripture, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Mass, the Liturgical Year, the Year of the Priest and Catholic Devotions. Presenters consist of members of the clergy, religious and laypeople.

This year, the program was offered during the autumn season in the Pontiac and Barry's Bay zones

of the Diocese. In the Pontiac Zone, the program was offered in both English and French. Sessions were held at St. Peter Parish in Fort-Coulonge with about 20 participants each evening.

Sheila Ward Kelly of Fort-Coulonge, commented, "You could consciously feel the passion that each presenter had for their topic and that enthusiasm and passion was so contagious that it spread easily to each member present.." She continued, "It was a great opportunity to get any questions answered regarding our Roman Catholic faith by knowledgeable people, and always being encouraged to participate and discuss the material and our own experiences lead to greatly animated get-togethers."

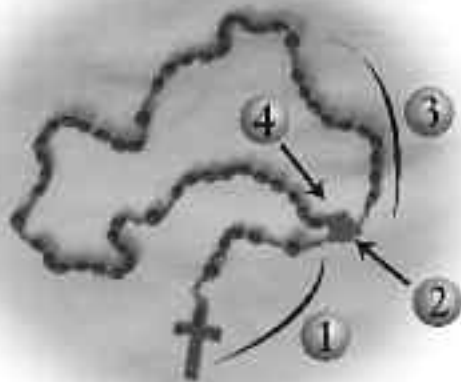
The Barry's Bay Zone sessions unfolded at a

different parish each evening. On average, over 40 participants were in attendance at each session. So far, the program has been very successful and has been well received by participants. This initiative is very much a team effort and in particular, our parish priests are to be commended for their support of and efforts toward this new venture.

The program will be offered in the Pembroke Zone in different parishes during the Easter Season this spring. Information will be provided to parishes and can always be obtained from the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation by calling 613-732-7933, ext. 206 or by email: jasondedo@pembroke-diocese.com.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet

1. Begin with the Sign of the Cross, one "Our Father", one "Hail Mary" and "The Apostles Creed".
 2. Then on the "Our Father" beads say the following: "Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world."
 3. On the 10 "Hail Mary" beads say the following: "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world."
- (Repeat step two and three for all five decades).
4. Conclude with (three times): "Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world."



Celebrations of Divine Mercy Sunday in the Diocese of Pembroke

On the morning of Saturday, April 10, St. Mary parish in Wilno will welcome nine or ten busloads of pilgrims drawn from the Polish communities of Eastern Ontario who come to Wilno to celebrate the devotion of The Divine Mercy. Organized in conjunction with the Polish Priests Conference of Eastern Canada, the pilgrimage, which has been occurring for about a decade now, will be attended this year by the Bishop of Drohiczyń, Antoni Dydych, as guest speaker. The pilgrims will pray the rosary, celebrate mass and join in a devotion to the Divine Mercy. Afterwards they will share a meal prepared by the parish Rosary Society.

The parish priest of St. Mary Church, Fr. Mirosław Olszewski, OMI, says that the celebration centres on a painting which was brought to Wilno in 1997. The image of the Divine Mercy came from Wilno, Lithuania where it was painted, from the constraints of a wheelchair, by Anna Krepsztul, a respected Polish-Lithuanian folk artist.

The image was blessed by Bishop Brendan O'Brien in a ceremony held on October 26, 1997, dedicating the shrine to the Divine Mercy. The shrine has become a centre of devotion, with the faithful coming to Wilno throughout the year to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet in front of the picture and light candles for special intentions.

Fr. Olszewski said that the devotion to Divine Mercy is deeply rooted in the gospels. "There is hope for all of us just to turn to God, even if we are sinners," he said, "there is always hope."

The devotion on Saturday, which will be held in Polish, falls on the final day of the Divine Mercy Novena which begins on Good Friday. On Sunday at 3 p.m. a devotion will be held in English for the local community.

The Feast of the Divine Mercy, or Divine Mercy Sunday, falls on the Octave of Easter (the Sunday immediately following Easter). It is dedicated to the devotion to the Divine Mercy promoted by St. Faustina, and is based upon an entry in St. Faustina's diary stating that anyone who participates in the Mass and receives the sacraments of confession and Eucharist on this day is assured by Jesus of full remission of sins.

St. Faustina was a Polish nun who died at the young age of 33 on October 5, 1938. In 1931 she experienced a vision in which Jesus, according to the notebooks of Saint Faustina, made the following statements about this day: "On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flows are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity."

On April 30, 2000 (Divine Mercy Sunday of that year), Pope John Paul II canonized St. Faustina and designated the Sunday after Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday in the General Roman Calendar, with effect from the following year. He also decreed a plenary indulgence associated with this devotion. Pope John Paul II said he felt a closeness to St. Faustina when he was writing *Dives in misericordia*. He died during the vigil of the Divine Mercy Sunday, 2005.

Clare Mungham of Pembroke had been participating in Divine Mercy devotions elsewhere for several years, and three years ago the celebration was introduced at Holy Name Parish in Pembroke. The service will open at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 11, with a hymn, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a reflection by Fr. Steve Ballard, followed by the Divine Mercy chaplet at 3 p.m.. "It's a very powerful experience," says Clare. Music for the service will be provided by Leo Rochon, organist and choir director of St. Columbkille Cathedral.

In Eganville, Fr. John Lacey introduced a celebration of the Divine Mercy last year and has found it well received. He was introduced to the devotion by parishioners in his former parish of Haliburton, who asked him to institute the devotional celebration about five years ago. He found himself quite drawn to the devotion. "It's a really prayerful experience," he said, concentrating on the "tremendous gift of Jesus' mercy." He continued, "the whole key to the Divine Mercy devotion is focusing on that forgiveness."

Left: The original picture of the Divine Mercy was painted by Eugeniusz Kazimierowski in 1937 in Wilno, Lithuania, on the request of St. Sr. Faustina and her spiritual director, blessed Fr. Michal Sopocho. The copy at St. Mary's in Wilno, Ontario was painted by constantly suffering Anna Krepsztul during her contemplation of the mysteries of Lent. It took her many months of waiting for inspiration and strength to overcome weakness and obstacles mounting every day. In her little room a large canvas (115 cm by 225 cm) was installed in such a way that she could paint while sitting in her wheelchair. The real work started on Monday of Holy Week and continued through the mystery of the Passion, Death & Resurrection of the Lord, ending on Saturday before the Sunday of the Divine Mercy.

Holy Week – The Climax of the Church Year

By Jason Dedo

Holy Week begins with Palm (Passion) Sunday and ends with Holy Saturday. It includes the last days of the Lenten season and is the most important week in the Church's liturgical calendar. Palm Sunday commemorates the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

The liturgy begins with the blessing and distribution of palms and a procession which recalls the crowds who waved palm branches and lay them down before Jesus as he entered the Holy City. This year, we hear Luke's version of this event in which the crowd greets Jesus with the words, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

Palm Sunday is one of the few times in the Church year in which we see the liturgical colour of red used. Red symbolizes blood, martyrdom, sacrifice, passion, love and the Holy Spirit. As on Good Friday, the red vestments worn on Palm Sunday remind us of the blood Christ shed for us – the greatest sacrifice the world has ever known.

The Passion Narrative is the focus of the gospel for both Palm Sunday and Good Friday and tells the story of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial, suffering and death.

The Mass of Chrism is always celebrated early during Holy Week to celebrate the gift of the priesthood and the union of priests with their bishop. It is in this context that the holy oils are blessed by the bishop for use in parishes in the coming year (see article on the Mass of Chrism). White, the colour of baptism, purity and new life, is the liturgical colour used at the Mass of Chrism.

The Easter Triduum (Great three days) celebrates the heart of the Christian faith – Jesus' redemptive death and resurrection.

Through his Paschal Mystery, the Lord Jesus redeemed the human race and gave perfect glory to the Father. By dying, Christ destroyed our death; by rising, he restored our life. For this reason, the Easter Triduum, when we celebrate the suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord, is the high point of the liturgical year. The Easter solemnity is to the year what Sunday is to the week (Ordo – Liturgical Calendar 2009-2010, CCCB).

The Triduum begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and ends with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

At the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, The Washing of the Feet (John 13:1-15) is proclaimed from the Gospel of John. After the Mass has been celebrated, the Blessed Sacrament is brought in procession to a place of repose for adoration. The altar and sanctuary are then stripped (linens, candles, vessels, books, etc. are removed) and holy water is removed from the fonts to prepare for Good Friday. The stripping of the altar symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the humiliation of Jesus at the hands of the Roman soldiers as He was stripped of His garments.

Good Friday is the only day in the Church Year when the Eucharist is not celebrated. Good Friday's service is known as the Celebration of the Lord's Passion and is held on the Friday before Easter because Friday was the day of the week on which Jesus died. The service begins and ends in silence. The celebrant prostrates himself before the altar as a sign of deep humility and respect for the suffering and death of Christ.

As on Palm Sunday, the red vestments remind us of Christ's suffering and death and God's great love for us in the sacrifice of His only Son. Normally, the service begins around 3 p.m., the hour at which Jesus died. Consecrated hosts from the Mass of the Lord's Supper may be given to the faithful during this service.

During the celebration, members of the congregation are invited to venerate a cross individually. We venerate (to honour and show respect for) the cross to show our love and respect for Christ and his ultimate sacrifice. Good Friday is a universal day of fasting and abstinence from meat.

From Good Friday sunset until Holy Saturday sunset, it is the Paschal Sabbath, the day of rest. In burial, the Lord rested and we are to rest in him – even from the liturgy:

On Holy Saturday, the people of God remain in recollection at the tomb of the Lord, meditating on his

sufferings and death, refraining from celebrating the Eucharist until the night (Ordo – Liturgical Calendar 2009-2010, CCCB).

The Easter Vigil is the holiest night of the year and the first official celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. The Mass begins after dark with a service of light and the blessing of the new Easter fire by the celebrant. Then, the Paschal (Easter) candle is lit from the new fire and processed into the church which has been in darkness. All the faithful then light tapers from the Paschal candle. The nine readings at the Easter Vigil tell the story of our salvation history.

For the first time since the beginning of Lent, the Alleluia is sung for the Gospel Acclamation, announcing Christ's Resurrection. White is the liturgical colour for the Easter celebrations. During this Mass, the baptismal water is blessed.

At the Easter Vigil, the elect – those who have been preparing to be received into the Church are baptized and receive the other sacraments of initiation (confirmation and Eucharist). Candidates for full communion (baptized but not confirmed or having received First Eucharist in the Catholic Church) may be received during the Vigil; they make a profession of faith, are confirmed and given the Eucharist.

On Easter Sunday, the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord continues. As at the Easter Vigil, the faithful are invited to renew their baptismal promises, which replaces the Creed.

"The Easter triduum celebrates the heart of the Christian faith"



PEMBROKE ONTARIO DIOCESE PRESENTS...



The world-renowned Oberammergau Passion Play began in 1634 when residents from the town were seeking reprieve from the Bubonic Plague. The inhabitants of the village vowed that if God were to spare them from the Plague, they would perform a play every ten years depicting the life and death of Jesus. Not a single person fell victim to the Plague after the villagers' promise. That first performance sparked a heartfelt tradition that lives on today...

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Left: The Springtown church, St. Gabriel, was built in 1853 on a picturesque site overlooking the Madawaska River. Closed in 1952, the church is a unique example of the Catholic pioneer heritage of the Ottawa Valley. The interior decoration is over 100 years old, including carpets, paint and furnishings.

Assembling a committee to preserve the Springtown church

Over the past decade the diocese of Pembroke has been facing the challenge of dealing with church buildings which are no longer being used for active worship. As reported in *Ecclesia* in past issues, some of these buildings have been demolished, and some have been sold for other purposes, depending on local circumstances and the wishes of the remaining parish communities.

This spring a new approach will be tried in the Calabogie area. St. Gabriel church is located in Springtown, a former population centre located midway between Calabogie and Burnstown. It was built in 1853, and consecrated on January 20, 1854 by Bishop Guigues, the first Bishop of Bytown. St. Gabriel was closed in 1952 and the remaining worshippers transferred to nearby Calabogie.

Because the church has been shuttered for over half a century it is a unique piece of Catholic heritage. It was never renovated to conform to the new ritual introduced by Vatican II and has its original altar and communion rail. The church has never had electricity, central heat, or running water. Although it has suffered a few break-ins, damage to the structure has fortunately been minimal. The nineteenth century lithographed Stations of the Cross still hang in their gilt frames.

Much of the interior of the small stone church was covered in pressed tin during a renovation in 1906 and retains its original paint. Even the carpets are over a century old, and remain in remarkably good condition for their age.

Although deconsecrated, the church remains a powerful symbol of the area's Catholic heritage and the faith of the pioneers that built it. "Buildings like St. Gabriel almost seem to consecrate the landscape, a lasting expression of prayer," said Bishop Michael Mulhall.

Strong interest in preserving the church has been shown by the local community, both from within the faith community, and from heritage advocates.

Surrounded by a pioneer graveyard, the church and its surrounding property are significant to many local residents whose roots run deep in the Springtown area. Among those who have indicated interest in working to preserve the building include descendants of the McCrea family, who donated the land for the building in 1853. The first Mass in the community was said in the home of Edward McCrea in 1838.

A public meeting will be held in Calabogie in April to discuss options for the preservation of the property. The structure will need stabilization and ongoing maintenance if it is to remain viable and safe. Anyone interested in further information can contact Bruce Pappin, a member of the Diocesan Property Committee who is working on the project, by e-mail, bruce@pappin.com, or telephone (613) 635-3353. They can also speak with Fr. Pat Blake, the parish priest at Calabogie.

The Mass of Chrism

By Jason Dedo

The Chrism Mass is celebrated once a year in every Catholic diocese, usually at the diocesan cathedral during Holy Week. The cathedral is the chief church of the diocese where the bishop has his throne (called a cathedra, Greek for "seat") and is considered the bishop's parish.

The Mass of Chrism is concelebrated by the bishop and the priests of the diocese. The Chrism Mass is a sign of unity and communion of the priests with their Bishop. The theology of this focus for the Chrism Mass is presented beautifully in the preface to the Eucharistic Prayer for this Mass:

"Father all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks. By your Holy Spirit you anointed your only Son High Priest of the new and eternal covenant. With wisdom and love you have planned that this one priesthood should continue in the Church. Christ gives the dignity of a royal priesthood to the people he has made his own. From these, with a brother's love, he chooses men to share his sacred ministry by the laying on of hands. He appoints them to renew in his name the sacrifice of our redemption as they set before your family his paschal meal. He calls them to lead your holy people in love, nourish them by your word, and strengthen them through sacraments. Father, they give their lives in your service and for the salvation of your people as they strive to grow in the likeness of Christ, and honor you by their courageous witness of faith and love." (Sacramentary, CCCB, 1983, p. 464)

After the homily, the bishop addresses the priests and asks them to renew the promises of their priestly ordination.

It is in this context of the unity and the gift of the priesthood that all of the faithful of the Diocese are called to gather around the bishop who blesses the holy oils for use in the coming year. Bishops have blessed oil ever since the early Church. The bishop is the only one authorized to

consecrate sacred chrism. At the offertory, the oils are carried up to the sanctuary with the gifts of the bread and wine.

The bishop will then bless three oils: the oil of catechumens, the oil of the sick, and the oil of chrism. The oil of catechumens (those preparing for initiation in the Church) is used at the sacrament of baptism to strengthen the candidate. The one about to be baptized is anointed with the oil before baptism with water. The oil of the sick is used in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. Sacred chrism is a mix of olive oil and balsam, a perfume.



The chrism is used at baptisms for the anointing of the head, for the anointing of confirmation candidates, for anointing at the ordinations of bishops and priests and for the consecration of an altar at the dedication of a church. When the chrism is blessed, the Bishop breathes over the vessel that contains it. This symbolizes the Holy Spirit and the risen Christ who appeared to his disciples and breathed on them saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).

Anointing with oil has its roots in the Old Testament where priests and kings were anointed to symbolize God's favour for them. The word "Messiah" comes from Hebrew and is the biblical word for "anointed one". Translated into Greek, it becomes "Christos", or Christ. Jesus was the anointed one, the Messiah, chosen by God to bring the Good News of salvation to God's people.

At the end of the Mass of Chrism, the pastors take the newly blessed oils back to their parishes for use in the coming year. Some parishes keep the oils in a special clear glass cabinet called an ambry where they can be viewed by all the faithful. The ambry is usually located close to the baptismal font.

The Mass of Chrism for this year will be celebrated at St. Columbkille Cathedral Parish in Pembroke on Tuesday, March 30 at 7 p.m. All are welcome to attend!

Mattawa's Leanne Brayshaw Returns From Peru

Leanne Brayshaw, 16, has just returned from Peru. Leanne, a grade 11 student at F.J. McElligott Secondary School, in Mattawa, went to Chincha, Peru earlier this month to volunteer in a Peruvian mission sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Pembroke Diocese. Her grandmother, June Brayshaw, and seven other volunteers from the diocese also took part in this recent mission.

"It was an eye opening experience for me," said Leanne. "Sometimes we think we have it bad, but going there makes you realize how good we really have it here."

She explained that Chincha was greatly effected by the earthquake that took place in August of 2007. One third of the homes were destroyed and half of the remaining ones are greatly damaged. Many of the families that are effected are very poor and live in small rural towns spread over the area.

"During our visit we visited homes and schools and helped them with what they needed – mostly food and beds," said Leanne. "We also bought material to help them rebuild their homes."

She explained that the homes were built out of bamboo, tarps, cardboard and whatever materials they could find.

"We had long days and worked hard," said June Brayshaw, "But it was a very rewarding experience for us."

The volunteers paid most of the travel expenses out of pocket. However, Leanne says she is grateful to family and friends who gave her money to defray her costs. She is also grateful to an anonymous donor, St. Victor School, and F.J. McElligott Secondary School for donations they made to the mission.

She said it was something that she always wanted to do and enjoyed the experience.

During her visit to Chincha, Leanne Brayshaw met members of the Cueva family and just naturally bonded with two-month-old Ana Raquel. "When I got to their home, she was just crying in her crib. I picked her up and she stopped crying," she said.

Ana is the youngest member of the Cueva Family. The 21 members of the family all live in three small huts cramped on one lot in Chincha, Peru.

The most memorable part of her trip was meeting the people. "They are so friendly," she said.

During her time in Peru, Leanne, and the other volunteers stayed at Our Lady of Fatima Convent. She was the youngest in the group of volunteers but she said that she got along well with the group and that they seemed to enjoy having her along.

During their stay at the convent, it was all Peruvian food, which consisted mainly of rice and chicken. "I don't want to see rice or chicken for a while," she said.

She admits that she really liked picarones. Picarones are a fried dough made from pumpkin and

sweet potato. They are served warm and dripping with syrup and have a spicy sweet flavour.

Although much of the trip was spent working, the volunteers did have time for some swimming and sightseeing. "We visited Lima, the capital and largest city in Peru," she said. "The city is very busy and the people there are crazy drivers."

At Pisco, the attraction was "El Candelabro", a giant lamp drawing dug in the rough sand in the method used by the creators of the Nazca lines. The origins of this cryptic line drawing are not known.

At El Carmen they visited the church of the Holy Virgin of Carmen and a historical site where contingents of slaves were brought from Africa by the Spaniards. These slaves were destined for the mining and agriculture sectors. The Africans were unable to adapt to the cold of the Andes, and were concentrated

in the coastal haciendas of Ica, Chincha, and Piura. The black presence in these areas remains strong today.

If her finances allow it, Leanne would definitely like to go back once she graduates from F.J. McElligott Secondary School in Mattawa. She says it was a good experience and recommends it to any student who wants to travel and help make a difference in our world.



Karen Houston, Principal of St. Victor School in Mattawa, presented Leanne Brayshaw with a cheque to help fund her mission in Peru. "St. Victor students' fundraisers are not only to assist with school projects, but also to share with those less fortunate," said Mrs. Houston. Leanne, a former St. Victor student, went to Peru in February. She received the donation on the last day of a co-op placement in the kindergarten classroom.



Bishop Mulhall shared some ice time with young adults and youth in Barry's Bay last November.

Parish Profile

LaPasse and Westmeath - Changing Communities With Deep Roots

Defined by the mighty Ottawa River, both Our Lady of Mount Carmel, LaPasse, and its mission church, Our Lady of Grace, in Westmeath, can trace their history back to the 1820s. Both communities were important crossroads, with a river crossing at LaPasse and one just a few miles down the Rapid Road from Westmeath.

Fr. Tom Fitzpatrick, who has served the parish for five years, said that, until recently, the parish was very rural, mostly farm-based. Recently, however, he's noticed a strong presence of military families from Base Petawawa, looking for inexpensive housing. In an area where family histories have often been measured in centuries, this brings a relatively transitive nature to the community. "I think some of the houses have revolving doors on them," quipped Fr. Fitzpatrick, "I've seen four or five families through them." What really drove the message home to Fr. Fitzpatrick was a recent Remembrance Day service. "I thought there was a delegation from Petawawa," he said. They turned out to be all local residents.

Involvement in church life, although not unknown, is rare for these temporary residents.

Change is nothing new to the area, however. From the time of the founding of the parish, most families were Francophone. Names like "Gervais", "Ethier", and "Lacroix" are still common in the parish, but after WWI, especially in Westmeath, these families largely became Anglophone. This trend can be confirmed by a quick look at the list of parish priests serving the communities. From the founding of the parish, priests were uniformly Francophone until the death of Fr. John Bourke in 1940. From that time on, the priests were all English.

As a result of all these factors, the backbone of the church community in both villages is made up of families with very deep roots in the community. A summertime family reunion can easily double the size of the congregation. Because the communities are located on the water, summertime seasonal residents swell the size of the congregations by about 20%.

Although each community has a strong local identity, they have much in common. Both have strong CWL programs which are very active in the community.

Although the popular Fall supper in LaPasse was recently cancelled, a victim of aging volunteers and working young people, LaPasse still maintains strong community activities centred around the sharing of food. Once a month they have a soup and sandwich at the parish hall. The program has been operating for five years and attracts around 100 people on the first Wednesday of each month.

Recently, the CWL hosted an Irish evening, with an Irish stew supper, the proceeds going to relief work in Haiti. They have also supported the aid work of Richard and Susan Schmaltz, recently reported in *Ecclesia*. Evelyn Giroux, a former CWL president said the community is very close. "There are only a few people," she said, "and everyone knows each other." She has noticed the changes, however, as young people are forced to move away in search of

employment. "It used to be that when you were born in the village, you died in the village," she said, "but that's changing."

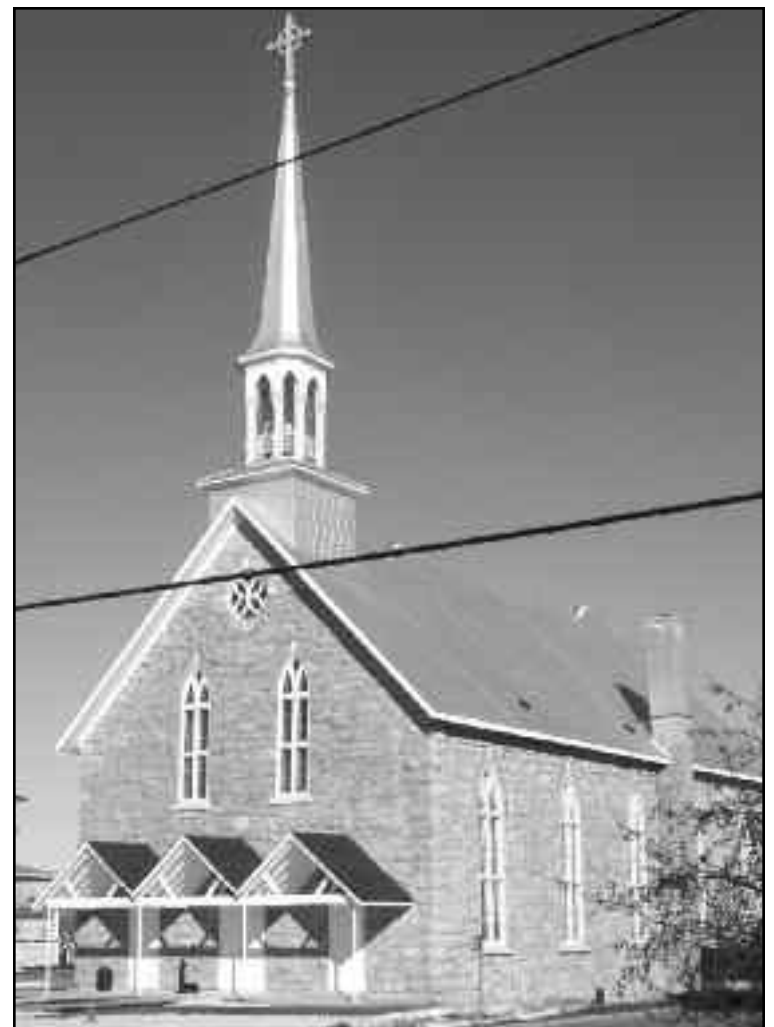
Another important activity in LaPasse is the tradition of working with other faiths in the area in sponsoring ecumenical services. They are active with other churches in the Whitewater Region, including Beachburg and Cobden.

In Westmeath the CWL is also a backbone of the community. CWL member Lynn Dupuis says the CWL prepares lunches for first communions and confirmations, and they are still managing to put on the labour-intensive Fall supper. She says that, even with younger people having to leave the community, they still come back to pull together and help put on the annual supper.

Although the two villages maintain their own strong identities, they share some activities, such as Easter and Christmas services, and they maintain a joint choir, enjoying a vibrant faith life as they approach the last quarter of their second century.



Left, Our Lady of Grace, Westmeath, right, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, LaPasse.



Discussing Pope Benedict's position on social justice

Those hoping to receive a clear set of directions from Pope Benedict on how to resolve the big issues of our times may have been disappointed as they left Fr. Bill Ryan's presentation on the latest papal encyclical.

But those who attended the session at Renfrew's St. Francis Xavier Parish in March looking for a faith-based perspective on global issues were rewarded with plenty of food for thought and a hopeful call for action.

"The pope sees that every person has a vocation to pursue integral human development for themselves and all others in their relationships," says Fr. Ryan.

In Catholic social teaching, integral human development is people-centred. We are motivated by charity and love and guided by faith and reason to seek good for others as well as ourselves. We seek to follow the model of Jesus Christ and share his witness to charity and truth as the driving forces that lead us to courageous engagement.

"Pope Benedict has brought the strands of pro-life, social justice, ecology and much more into a single spiritual and theological summa – a holistic framework and transcendent vision driven by the extraordinary dynamism of divine love that penetrates all relations and interrelationships in creation including humans," Fr. Ryan says of *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), the papal encyclical published in 2009.

"It is really more to be contemplated than intellectually analyzed," he concludes.

And there is a lot to contemplate. *Caritas in Veritate* is a 50-page encyclical, a deep and complex overview of our responsibilities to ourselves, the world around us, and to God.

Fr. Ryan, a Jesuit priest based in Ottawa, spent two hours painting the overall picture in big strokes in a public lecture on the encyclical. He spent the following evening engaged in round-table discussion with 12 members of the St. Francis Xavier parish. Their goal was to identify steps the congregation could take to put *Caritas in Veritate* in practice.

Fr. Ryan began by identifying Pope Benedict's two central ideas: the first being a vision of faith based on the understanding that divine love, God, is present in and sustaining all creation; the second main tenet of the document refers to the essential role of "giftedness" or self-giving (the polar opposite of selfishness).

"This is our human response to divine love," explains Fr. Ryan.

Pope Benedict declares that the neglect of this genuine readiness to give for the good of others is a root cause of the current economic crisis.

"He is harsh on financial greed and selfishness," says Fr. Ryan.

In the encyclical, Pope Benedict proposes the importance of alternative markets such as non-profit organizations and cooperatives, and he espouses the balancing power of labour unions, social safety nets and market regulations.

But *Caritas in Veritate* is far richer than an economic treatise. It speaks to the need for a holistic approach that values life, where every person is welcomed and valued, and a caring society where nature, the environment and the needs of others are carefully considered and respected.

"We are made of the same stuff as nature," says Fr. Ryan. "That bond is so strong... and now it is broken and we have to put it back together."

The critical need for political, social and economic change lies at the heart of this document. The first logical question is: Where do we begin?

Fr. Ryan offers a good starting point: "It will require deep faith, conviction and enthusiasm... it will

require careful study, spiritual and intellectual formation."

Not surprisingly, while Pope Benedict's encyclical speaks to an audience beyond the church, there is a direct call for action for the church.

"I suggest that a small-group approach be adopted at every level of the church and that these groups begin by learning to become trusting friends," continues Fr. Ryan.

Small beginnings can lead to global changes, and Fr. Ryan ends his message with a vision of hope that fittingly transcends past and future and encompasses a global, metaphysical view. He quotes Teilhard de Chardin, who wrote almost a century ago:

"The day will come when after mastering the wind, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And then, for the second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire."



Fr. Bill Ryan, above at right, is a Jesuit priest and a respected economist. A Renfrew native, he recently discussed Pope Benedict's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Renfrew.



Fr. Jack Lau, OMI, brings an Indian sensibility of prayerful contemplation to Arnprior's Galilee Centre

It's a long way from Atlanta, Georgia to Arnprior, especially by way of India, but that is the route taken by Fr. Jack Lau, OMI, spiritual director of the Galilee Centre.

Fr. Lau was working at the Marriott Hotel in Atlanta, after taking a culinary arts degree at the CIA (Culinary Arts Institute of America), and volunteering at a downtown soup kitchen when he found himself drawn to the religious life.

His parish priest suggested that he look into community life and mentioned the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. "It felt like I was home," said Fr. Lau. The Oblates are a missionary order founded in France in 1816. They now have over 4,400 members and a presence in 70 countries. Fr. Lau, who grew up in the Hudson River Valley of New York State, took his first vows in 1983 and was ordained as a priest in 1991.

Following his ordination, Fr. Lau worked at Christ the King Retreat Centre in Buffalo, Minnesota. In 2007 he was given the opportunity to go to India, to the Oblates' Aanmodaya Ashram. "It was very much where I needed to be," he said.

At the ashram Fr. Lau said he was introduced to "Christianity infused with the Indian experience." He continued, "Scripture speaks to you in a different way." One of his most important influences in India was Fr. Bede Griffiths, an Oxford-educated Englishman and a student friend of C.S. Lewis. Fr. Griffiths first went to India in 1955 and was profoundly influenced by the experience, publishing *Christ in India: Essays Towards a Hindu-Christian Dialogue*, in 1966. Fr. Lau found the Indian tradition of contemplative prayer very meaningful, an approach being utilized at the Galilee Centre's contemplative Eucharistic celebrations,

where periods of contemplative silence are incorporated into the Mass.

Following his return from India, Fr. Lau wished to work in a retreat centre and the possibility of coming to the Oblates' centre in Arnprior was presented to him. He arrived last June.

Fr. Lau is committed to working with the local community and taking a leadership role in spirituality. "I'm here for the well-being of the community," he says.

The next major event at the Galilee Centre will be a clergy retreat led by Fr. James Clarke, PhD, Director of Spiritual Formation and Chairman of the Spiritual Theology Dept. at St. John's Seminary, Camarillo California. Fr. Clarke will be leading a three-day retreat for priests on April 27-29, followed by a three-day retreat, which will be open to the general public.

The title of the retreat is *Story & Ritual: Transformation or Repetition?* Story and ritual are two traditional hallmarks of all cultures. These human expressions can be used to transform people or to keep them imprisoned in the past. The retreat will focus on ways and means to liberate oneself and others from past scenarios as well as offer a tangible experience of healing.

Fr. James Clarke has an extensive academic background in the fields of spirituality, adult education, counselling, ritual and depth psychology, currently serves as Chair of the Spirituality Commission of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and is an Associate Spiritual Director at the Cardinal Manning House of Prayer for Priests.

To register, contact Debbie Fougere, (613) 623-4242 x 21, or e-mail info@galileecentre.com.

One of the more unusual tasks done by Fr. Lau since his arrival at Galilee was a blessing of the animals held last fall on the feast of St. Francis.

Meet new seminarians of the Pembroke diocese

This year the Pembroke Diocese is fortunate to have two new seminarians studying at St. Philip Neri Seminary in Toronto. Michael Lund of Killaloe and Justin Bertrand of Île-du-Grand-Calumet are both in the second semester of their first year of study.

Father Bill Kenney of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Pembroke is the English vocation director for the diocese and says it is heartening and inspiring to see these candidates search out their calling.

Father Kenney emphasizes the importance of careful and prayerful contemplation in determining the authenticity of their call to the priesthood.

"It is the Church's responsibility as much as it is their responsibility to discern that call," he explains. "The Church must be confident that they are truly called by God."

Father Kenney encourages any young man who feels he might be a candidate for service to the Church to search out the truth.

"Go and talk with the Bishop. Talk to your parish priest, and feel free to talk to your vocation director," he says.

Justin Bertrand

I was raised on Île-du-Grand-Calumet in Quebec and my home parish is Saint Anne on Calumet Island. At present I am 18 and in my



first year of seminary studies at the seminary of Saint Phillip Neri in Toronto.

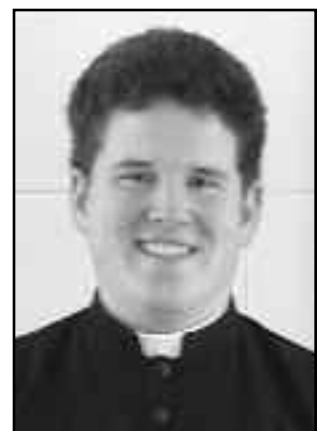
I grew up on my parents' beef farm, with my two younger sisters, Alisa, and Laura. All three of us were home-schooled from the age of seven. I grew up Catholic, and have lived my Catholic faith as long as I can remember. Going to mass every Sunday, saying the rosary with my family before bedtime on a regular basis, and going to monthly adoration, were all normal things for me growing up. I remember when my mother was teaching me how to read, when I was eight or so, we would take turns reading Bible stories to each other to practise reading out loud.

Since the age of eight I felt God calling me to serve him in the priesthood. I just knew that God wanted me to serve and give my life completely to him, and becoming a priest just made perfect sense to me. My calling to join the seminary happened last year, while I was taking a year of vocational discernment with "La Famille Marie Jeunesse". It was that year of my life that gave me the formation and faith that I needed to say yes to God's call. This call, which I now hear every day, is to follow and love Christ with all my heart, with all my strength, and with all my soul, so that one day I will be ready to serve and love Christ in his priesthood.

Michael Lund

I was born into a military family, and I am the third of seven children. I came to reside in Killaloe in 2003 at the age of 13. I first started to hear the call to the priesthood when I became an altar server at around the age of eight. The liturgy always fascinated me, and that drew me even closer. I have been blessed with wonderful pastors at all the parishes I have attended, and I am sure that they helped to nurture my calling through their example.

After high school, I attended a faith formation program at St. Therese School of Faith and Mission located in Bruno, Saskatchewan. There the foundation for a good spiritual life as a Christian was imparted to me through the wonderful staff and my fellow students. Following my time at St. Therese I applied to the seminary for the Diocese of Pembroke. I am currently in my second semester of my first year of philosophy studies. The diocese has been most supportive towards myself and my fellow Pembroke seminarians.



Youth

Choosing God in the Diocese of Pembroke

By Keanan Hunt

Diocesan Youth Ministry Team member

How often do we really think about choosing God? God challenges us to choose Him every day, but it's not always easy to say Yes to Him, especially if you're a teenager.

To start the New Year, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team elected to give teenagers in the diocese a chance to renew their commitment to being Catholic. Youth were invited to take time to refresh their spirits, learn what it means to choose God in their daily lives, and to spend time together as a community, worshipping our Lord and Saviour.

From January 29 to January 31, 2010, between exams and the start of a new semester, over 40 high school age youth from several areas of the diocese attended a Diocesan sponsored retreat held at Bishop Smith Catholic High School. The retreat, titled "In the Flesh" from the popular LIFE TEEN youth ministry program, focussed on completely opening our hearts to God so that we could become living witnesses, just like Him, "In the Flesh".

Participants listened to insights on making choices, forgiveness of the Father, grace imparted through the Sacraments, fear of surrendering control to our Lord, unconditional love of God and importance of community. They heard powerful supporting

testimonies about how life can change completely in choosing God, about how going to confession can open your heart and mind to the presence of our Lord, and about how fulfilling life is when Christ is evident in our thoughts and actions every day.

Fun activities and comic relief helped to bring the youth together as a community. The students really had an opportunity to get to know each other throughout the weekend, participating in everything from basket ball and icebreakers, to board games and floor hockey. Comedic skits and lively music opened the retreat sessions, introducing themes and engaging the audience with practised talent. Spirits were nourished during the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, while the Celebration of the Eucharist on both Saturday and Sunday brought everyone together in communion with God.

As one participant remarked, "participating in this retreat made me feel something I have never felt before which is difficult to put into words. Some have

found a new connection with God that they may never have had. Some have found God, and others have made a closer relationship with him. This retreat has allowed us to meet unforgettable people who have each made a difference in our lives. "In The Flesh" has allowed us to find peace within ourselves, to better understand, and to keep our spiritual faith alive. I truly enjoyed meeting new people, creating friendships and working with the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team. I look forward to our next retreat!" (Kelsey Graveline, 17, Bishop Smith Catholic High School)

We are so thankful for what was accomplished with this retreat. None of it would have been possible without the 30 plus volunteers and young adults who so generously donated their time and talents to organize and facilitate this event. A special thank you goes to Fr. Réal Ouellette for taking a large part in the entire weekend, celebrating Mass, giving talks, appearing in dramas and preparing us all for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Thank you also to Fr. R. Holly, Fr. M. Tardiff, and Fr. B. Kenney who took time

to be available to hear confessions. Many thanks to Bishop Mulhall for celebrating the closing Mass on Sunday morning. We are extremely grateful for all of the support we received from our clergy. Finally, thank you so much to all of the engaging youth participants – you gave us purpose and inspiration and we pray we did the same for you.

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you," Mt 7:7. We prayed for blessings on this retreat and the Lord provided more than we ever could have imagined. Amen.

Pembroke Young Adult Ministry

Jennifer Austen, Young Adult Ministry

As the heart pumps life-blood through the body, the Pembroke Young Adult Ministry (YAM) meets monthly for an evening that functions spiritually just like that essential organ.

We all have to feed our bodies with food and rest, but these gatherings offer refreshing nourishment of a spiritual nature. Young adults gather at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke to exercise their brains with bible study (Did YOU know that Melchizidek and Noah's son Shem may be the same person?) and then turn to basking in the presence of God with praise and worship, meditation, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. After a week of work and life's daily anxieties, it's nice to let profane concerns be suspended for a little while on a Friday evening. It's nice to let the Holy Spirit fill you instead, and that's what turns out to really satisfy that body of yours. Of course, the potluck treats for social time after Adoration are pretty good, too. Check the diocesan website for upcoming dates www.pembrokediocese.com or call (613) 732-7933 x 208.



Above: Fun and faith was on the agenda at the high school retreat held in January. Below, over 40 students attended the retreat.





Last year's Journey to the Father Conference featured a concert in the ruins of the historic St. Raphael Church.

Journey to the Father 2010 Catholic Youth Conference

Are you entering grades 9–12 this coming fall and are wondering what you might do this summer to spice up your life? Think about signing up for a memorable weekend with many other young people from around the diocese of Pembroke who will travel to St. Raphael's near Cornwall, Ontario for another amazing Summer Youth Conference. With 500 youth participants, you will be sure to have an energetic, lively, and spirit-filled weekend. Why not discover a whole new and exciting way of life?... life as a Catholic teenager. Meet many other young people striving to live the call of the Gospels and be renewed by the transforming power of Christ. We all need to be renewed. Don't miss the opportunity.

The cost is \$175 and this includes meals, lodging, transportation and all conference activities. **The deadline to register is May 31, 2010.**

The conference will be held July 16-18. For more information check out their website, www.journeytothefather.ca. To register with the diocesan group contact Yvette Bourque (613) 732-7933 x 208 or yvettebourque@pembrokedioecese.com. Registration and waiver forms are available at parishes and High School Chaplaincy Departments. Please return all forms to the Family Life and Youth Ministry Office (FLYMO), 188 Renfrew St., P.O. Box 7, Pembroke ON, K8A 6X1.

World Youth Day – Madrid, Spain

“Rooted and Built up in Jesus Christ,
Firm in the faith” (Col 2:7)

August 9 – 23, 2011

If you will be between the ages of 18 and 35 in August 2011, you may want to consider partaking in the pilgrimage of all pilgrimages. YES... International World Youth Day.

This 15-day pilgrimage will be like no other. You must be able to out-pray, out-pack and out-walk many other participants. Seriously, this is an experience of a lifetime and it is not actually about competing with pilgrims around the world like we see in the Olympics. Rather, this event UNITES and joins the body of Christ as pilgrims come from all ends of the world to Madrid at the invitation of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI.

Youth respond to this call to encounter the world-wide church, to celebrate and to pray together at the largest Eucharistic meal in the world and to be empowered to go forth and be living witnesses of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. Your youth is a special time to take note of your faith and make concrete decisions about how you will choose to live it. Perhaps you are in need of renewal, building up or just need some time to focus on Christ and His will for your life. Whatever your needs are... COME, SAY YES and experience the joy of journeying with other young adults and experiencing the Catholic Church in a whole new way.

The pilgrimage includes site visits to Fatima, Portugal, Viana do Castelo, Compostella, where St. James the apostle is believed to be buried, and Avila, where St. Teresa lived for 20 years before starting her reforms.

There are only 45 places available for this pilgrimage with the Diocese of Pembroke. Application forms can be picked up at parishes or by contacting Yvette Bourque at (613) 732-7933 x 208 or yvettebourque@pembrokedioecese.com.



**WYD 2011
MADRID**

Youth Summit (grade 12–35 years of age)

May 21-24

Ottawa, Ontario

www.youthsummit.ca

The Youth Summit began six years ago as an annual event to build interest in the 2008 Eucharistic Congress. The weekend gathering has a Eucharistic and a missionary focus: components include keynote speakers, adoration, a Christian music concert with Matt Mahar, workshops and a Eucharistic procession through the streets of downtown Ottawa, stopping in front of Parliament Hill. The Ark of the New Covenant, which was developed from this event, will be displayed and processed as well. Be part of the action! Youth Summit will gather young adults from all around the country under the theme: “SENT! Are YOU ready to be SENT?”

- Cost: \$150 includes most meals, accommodation (billeting), entrance to all activities OR \$125 without accommodation.

The Family Life and Youth Ministry Office is gathering a group from the diocese to attend this event in the long weekend of May. For those interested, please contact Yvette Bourque (613) 732-7933 x 208 or yvettebourque@pembrokedioecese.com.

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

Jesus: The Real Deal!

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

By Andrew Baklinski

Jesus: The Real Deal!

Have you ever noticed that you can bring up a variety of topics on almost any subject in the course of public discussion and get little response? But, when the topic of Jesus comes up, the lines become immediately polarized. Why is this? Why the controversy? Why is it that almost nothing is taboo in modern culture except this one topic? The answer is simple: Jesus claims to be the real deal. He claims to be God, to be “The” way, “The” truth, “The” life. The evidence for this claim is strikingly clear when examined carefully.

Reviewing the Evidence

This series on basic apologetics began by arguing that objective truth exists. Next, the relationship between faith and reason was examined showing how they work together. After this, a number of arguments for God were set forth including Aquinas’ arguments, C.S. Lewis’ argument, the argument from experience, historical arguments and finally Pascal’s wager, which argues that it makes sense to bet on God. It is evident, in light of what has been accomplished in previous articles, that God does indeed exist. The question can be asked, “who is this God?” To answer objectively, we look squarely at the only founder of a major world religion who ever claimed to be God: Jesus Christ.

Who is This Jesus?

In looking at the Gospel accounts to answer this question, it becomes immediately evident that Jesus was not your average Jewish carpenter out to earn a decent wage so that he could retire in comfort! He claimed to be sinless and to forgive sins. He claimed to be the only begotten Son of God, sent from the Father, to feed us with his flesh and blood, giving us eternal life. And last, but not least, he claimed to be God and asked that we worship him, performing many signs and wonders to back up everything he said.

The question, “who is Jesus?” is crucially important, for on the answer to this question hangs the very essence of Christianity itself. Even the very name Christian denotes a worshipper of Christ. Much of Christianity is only comprehensible in light of an answer to the above question. The question is also of utmost importance for us, for if Jesus is God, then he is alive here and now and has the ability to transform our whole lives.

Clues:

There are a number of clues that point the way for us in finding an answer to the question of who Jesus is. C.S. Lewis noticed how many ancient cultures had myths of God coming down and taking on some physical form or another to do their work. Lewis saw in these, a kind of foreshadowing on the epic stage of world history – a foreshadowing of what would actually happen with Jesus in the divine drama of salvation.

Speaking of drama, how many gifted artists put themselves into their own work? Alfred Hitchcock’s films are known for their masterful suspense. What perhaps is less well known, is the fact that he himself appeared in many of his films. If a gifted filmmaker (or painter or author for that matter) could put himself into his work, why not God, the greatest designer and artist?

Give Me Five!

There are only five possibilities regarding who Jesus is:

1. Lord (he is who he says he is) - if he isn’t Lord, then he must be one of the following:
2. Liar (he made it all up)
3. Lunatic (he thought himself to be God, but wasn’t)
4. Legend (the whole divinity thing was made up after)
5. Light and fluffy holy man (he was a new-age guru)

But, no one who looks at the Gospels with an open mind, can honestly say that Jesus was a bad man. Furthermore, Jesus has the wrong psychological profile of a liar. He was unselfish, caring, compassionate and loving. Liars are not like this. What was the motive for Jesus to lie? Lies are normally told to avoid trouble, not to get into trouble. Jesus would have known the consequence for telling a lie of this magnitude. It does not make sense in light of this, to say that he told a lie. No one dies for a lie!

Perhaps the disciples invented this “lie”? Again, they match the wrong psychological profile. They were simple hard-working honest men with nothing to gain from this lie but suffering and death. A final point to ponder: how could a lie like this transform the world for the better? Aquinas writes, “If the Incarnation didn’t happen, then an even bigger miracle happened – the conversion of the world by the biggest lie in the history and the transformation of lives by a mere myth.” It is clear that Jesus was not a liar.

Lunatic?

This possibility holds that Jesus suffered what is known in psychological circles as divinity complex, that he went around claiming to be God and sincerely believed himself. In short, Jesus was mentally sick. (The word lunatic comes from the Latin word for

“The only rational honest alternative in our search for who Jesus is is that he is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings.”

There are no other rational alternatives to these five possibilities. (Note that no-one claims that he did not exist – there is just too much historical evidence to make this claim.) In our search for the truth about Jesus’ identity we need to look at all the evidence remembering that we are not merely concerned with what is possible, but what is probable.

Liar, Liar?

Was Jesus a liar? In other words, did he know that he wasn’t God and then lied that he was? If he was a liar, then he was a bad man – perhaps the worst of all to come up with a lie of such demonic proportions.

moon and is based on the understanding that mental illness was somehow linked to the phases of the moon) The problem with holding this view is that there is no evidence. Jesus does not match the traits of those who suffer with divinity complex – traits which include inflexibility, dullness, extreme egoism, predictability, etc. Jesus was the complete opposite of this! It similarly does not make sense to claim that the apostles were lunatics.

Legend?

Perhaps Jesus existed, but never claimed to be God and now, 2000 years, later we believe that he did. This possibility – one of the main reasons why many have

lost faith in modern times - basically calls into doubt the trustworthiness of the gospels. Proponents argue that over time, the "legend" of Jesus' divinity grew and that made-up stories were incorporated into the Gospels. Calling into question much of what the Gospels say, this group argues that it is now up to enlightened historians and theologians to get to the real Jesus, the historical Jesus.

The dilemma with all of this is the witness of the gospels themselves. They have been proven to be accurate, reliable historical documents. Furthermore, it has been convincingly argued that they were written in full a short time after the events they describe, debunking the idea of certain other divinity "layers" being added in over time. The question can also be raised as to who invented the legend and why? It is not likely that Jesus' divinity is a legend. Who could come up with something like this?

A Light and Fluffy Guru?

A final possibility is that Jesus somehow had connection with the mystical teachings of the east and claimed divinity in the way that Eastern religious gurus do: "I am God and so are all of you - you just haven't reached enlightenment yet." The issue with this is the fact that Jesus was firmly Jewish. There are too many flat-out contradictions between eastern religious beliefs and those of Judaism.

In short, followers of eastern religions believe firstly, in a non-personalistic, non-moralistic, unknowable, passive God, who is bound up with reality and secondly, that the ultimate purpose of life is the realization of the God within, found ultimately in a nirvana-like state. Adherents to the Jewish faith believe that God is a knowable, loveable, active person (Father), is transcendent and that the purpose of life is to love God above all else. If Jesus, as a Jew, was claiming to be God in the eastern sense, then he was the worst teacher imaginable because no one understood him in this way. There is no evidence that Jesus was a guru.

The Lord of the Kings

The only rational honest alternative in our search for who Jesus is is that he is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. He is who he claimed to be. No other possibility makes sense as we have seen. Not only is Jesus' divinity possible, but it is probable. All the evidence points to this simple and undeniable fact: Jesus Christ is God with the power to forgive sins and to lead us back to Our Father in Heaven. Amazingly, this belief works. I often marvel with my students how belief in Jesus has transformed the lives of billions of people around the world transforming them from sinners into saints. It has given the greatest hope, meaning and purpose ever proposed to human life. J.R.R. Tolkien wrote, "there has never been a tale which men more wished was true." Praised be to God, for this tale is true and is ready to transform our world!

Next issue: "The Problem of Evil"

Andrew Baklinski teaches high-school theology and is also a Pastoral Animator at Madawaska Valley District High School in Barry's Bay.

An Invitation from our Partner Diocese

Pilgrimage to Lima, Peru, with diocesan pastors and fellow parishioners

Nov. 15 – Nov. 27, 2010

(includes optional four-day excursion to Cuzco)

This is an invitation to meet Christ in the Peruvian people and to allow their profound spirituality to touch your life.

- Visit some parishes of the Archdiocese of Lima
- Tour historical churches, shrines and museums
- Experience the people of the Chincha Valley
- Marvel at the 'Lost City of the Incas' – Machu Picchu

Cost of the pilgrimage is \$1,900 plus \$900 for the Cuzco excursion. The deadline date is April 30, 2010.

Contact Representatives for the Pilgrimage

Jean-Paul Patenaude (Barry's Bay) (613) 756-3166

Christina Montreuil (Pembroke) (613) 735-6489

Yvonne Sklepwicz (Renfrew) (613) 432-6725

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