



Ecclesia

The Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

Fall 2024

Bishop of Pembroke asks the faithful to pray for him as he takes up his new position

By Katrina Boguski

When Fr. Michael Brehl got the news that he had been named Bishop of Pembroke, he was on his annual retreat in New Jersey. Brehl said, “I had just begun and they came and got me to tell me that the Nuncio wanted me to call him in Ottawa.” That phone call would initiate many significant changes in Brehl’s life, including giving up being head of the Redemptorist Congregation of Canada.

When asked, “What will you miss most about your previous role with the Redemptorists?” The new bishop replied, “It’s funny, but I won’t miss the role – I was just starting as Provincial Superior for Canada. I will miss the ministry in our Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, the parish, and celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I loved being close to the people in the sacraments. Of course, I’ll continue to do many of those things here in the Diocese.”

Brehl’s response reminds us that the life of a priest, and of a bishop, requires the ability to transform oneself constantly and to continually grow to meet the needs of the Church and the people they serve; although some things are easy to move away from, others require genuine sacrifice.

While it may be easy for him to step away as the Provincial Superior of his congregation, being apart from his community will bring some feelings of loss. Brehl said, “I think most of all I’ll miss the Redemptorist Community. We really lived together as a family of brothers, and I’ve lived in the Community for 50 years.” It was community life as well as the order’s commitment to the poor and marginalized that initially drew Brehl to the Redemptorists. He also continues to have a devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. This image was present at his episcopal ordination and appears in the background of his official photo on the diocesan webpage.

Brehl is stepping into a new position that will bring with it much responsibility and many challenges. When asked, “What are the biggest challenges you face as the new bishop?” Brehl responded, “This is a difficult question to answer. I really don’t know the biggest challenges – I am learning so much every day. I am blessed to be assisted by such an able staff at the Chancery – priests, deacons, lay men and women – all of whom love God, the Church and the Diocese. They have so much experience, and they’re wonderful to work with.”

He went on to say, “So, I guess, the first lesson I have learned is that we need to address whatever challenges there are together, as the people of God. I don’t have all the gifts that are needed here – but together, we have the necessary gifts. And the Holy Spirit will guide us and help us to meet the challenges together.”

“I’ve also learned that the priests and people here have already done a lot of praying, discerning, and thinking about how we can renew our presence as missionary-disciples and evangelists to share the Good News of Jesus. And don’t forget all the wisdom and commitment of our Sisters – the Grey Sisters and the Sisters of St. Joseph, along with the apostolate of Madonna House.”

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The bishop's reply reflects a discerning attitude and reveals that his preparation for his new role did not begin with the call from the Nuncio; his formation has been years in the making. Brehl has a love of history and seems keen to do his research well before jumping to conclusions. Brehl said as a student he also enjoyed several subjects; these topics, too, are a good preparation for role in which he now serves. In addition to history, Brehl said, "In high school, I loved English and French literature, and mathematics..." He added, "In seminary, I didn't really like philosophy, but I loved Scripture Studies, Liturgy and Church History."

This love of history reveals itself through some of the books Brehl has been reading recently. When asked "What's on your reading list these days?" Brehl replied, "Well, I'm beginning with the reading I need to do to better understand the Diocese, including: *Lift Up Your Hearts* by Fr. Joe Legree (history of the diocese), and then the various reports, statistics, policies of the Diocese of Pembroke. As well, I am reading the *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* from the Vatican; *LIFE: My Story through History* by Pope Francis; and two novels I received this summer."

To get up to speed on his new role, the bishop already has met with many people in the area. In response to the question "What are your initial impressions about the diocese you lead?" He replied, "My initial impression from my first visit to Pembroke was the warmth of the hospitality, and the natural beauty of the landscape reflected in the people I met. It felt like 'coming home.' And that impression has continued to the present moment. There will be challenges and even difficult moments we will have to face together, and we will face them together! This gives me great confidence – in God and in the Diocese."

The new bishop has gained a lot of experience about life and human nature through other means including through a variety of sports. He said, "When I was younger, I played a lot of racquet sports – tennis and squash. I also used to run road races, including some marathons. Today, I do a lot of walking – every day – and some hiking when I am on holidays. I like reading, especially history, spirituality, and some novels. And I still watch tennis and some other sports – including the Toronto Maple Leafs." He added, "The Maple Leafs are in my blood. And I always keep an eye on the Blue Jays too. But I especially like the World Juniors when I get the chance to watch them."

The bishop also speaks several languages. He said, "I can speak English and French quite well, as well as Italian and Spanish which I can speak fairly well, and I can understand and communicate in Brazilian Portuguese – but less fluently."

He could not identify any particular saint as his favourite, but has been influenced by many. He said, "I have too many 'favourites' to name one: There's Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avila from the Medieval era; then Alphonsus Liguori and Clement Hofbauer from the post-reformation period; and John XXIII and Oscar Romero."

In reflecting on the role of saints in the Church he said, "I am very attracted at the marvellous ways in which God constantly raises up men and women for each time who show us how to live according to the Gospel. I could talk about any one of these – and many others – at length. However, all of them prayed to do God's will, they loved Jesus and celebrated his humanity, they loved Mary his mother and the Eucharist, and they never, never forgot the poor and the abandoned but gave their lives for them."

Brehl is reticent to reveal any major plans that he might have for the diocese; one gets the impression that he is still discerning God's will in the manner of the saints who have influenced him. He said, "It is too early to offer details about what I hope to accomplish. In general, I hope to continue to build on the foundations already so firmly established – faith in God, strong families, real friendship and cooperation between priests and people. If we can continue to build on these fundamentals, rooted in justice, inclusion, and compassion for the abandoned and the poor, then I think the 'details' will fall into place."

He added, "I believe that it's especially important that we seek to discern what God wants to accomplish here in the next few years, so that we can be instruments of his will, and servants of his plan."

To keep in touch with God's will, Brehl continues to maintain a solid discipline of prayer. He said, "My personal prayer is the focus of the first hour of every day. When things get really busy, I get up earlier each day to start with prayer."

When asked, "If the sheep of your flock could do one thing to help you in your new role as bishop, what would that be?" He replied, "Pray for me! And for all of us together! That we might do 'Whatever he tells us'."

New priest celebrates his first Mass at the church where he once served as an altar boy

By Katrina Boguski

Over the years, St. Hedwig Parish in Barry's Bay has fostered many priestly vocations for the diocese. That tradition continued with the recent ordination of Fr. Lukas Časta. On Sunday, June 30, Fr. Lukas said his first Mass at St. Hedwig after being ordained the day before at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke.

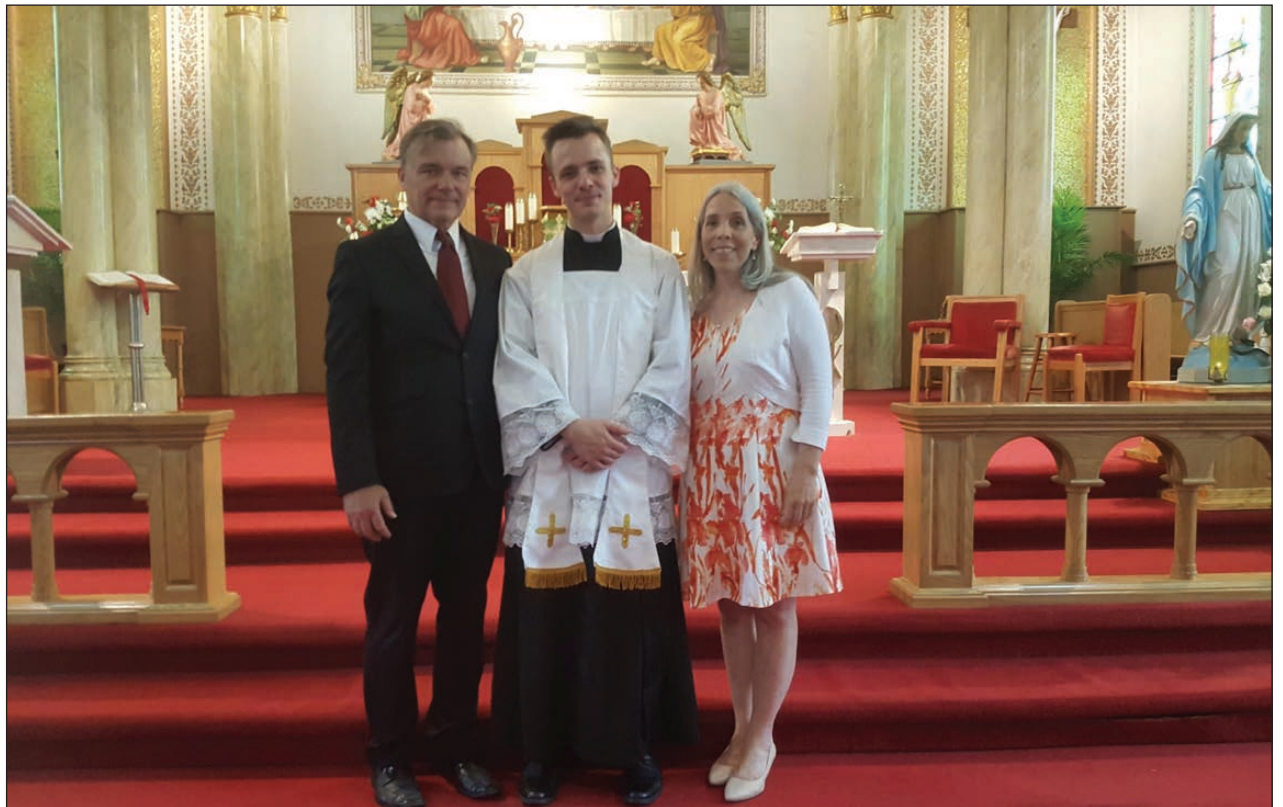
The newly ordained priest said that he was "...very joyful, but nervous at the same time" on the occasion of his ordination. He explained, "I'm not a fan of being the focus of attention, so while I'm glad the ordination went so beautifully, I'm also happy it's over."

Saying his first Mass at St. Hedwig was also an emotional experience for the young priest. He said, "I was even more nervous to be at home saying Mass at the altar where I'd served so many times growing up. But it was wonderful all the same, especially to have so many people there who have known me for so long." Despite his nerves, Fr. Lukas appeared calm and confident in his new role. He was joined at his first Mass by several other priests, and their presence witnessed to the fraternal bond that is exclusive to this vocation.

Fr. Lukas was grateful for the support of his brother priests and said that he wanted to thank "...all the priests who were an example and inspiration for [him] growing up and in the seminary, who showed what it means to live a life in *persona Christi*."

In reflecting on the recent celebrations, Fr. Lukas said, "The Ordination and first Mass were both wonderful occasions, and it was a great honour and blessing to be able to do that in the places and among the people I love. While it was the culmination of many years of discernment, preparation and formation, it was not the end but rather the beginning of a new state of life, a life dedicated to the service of Christ and His Church within the Diocese of Pembroke. I hope to have many such years of service ahead of me, where I can have the privilege of celebrating Mass and the sacraments and serving all the people in whatever parish I happen to be."

While some priests explore many potential paths before answering the presbyterial call, Fr. Lukas had a fairly direct path toward the altar. He said, "I've been certain that I was called to be a priest since I was about 12 years old." He said that the Catholic faith was central in his family life growing up and that it always took priority.



Fr. Lukas with his parents Anton and Monique Časta after his first Mass at St. Hedwig in Barry's Bay.

His faith formation and encouragement from others continued through his studies at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College and during his time at St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto. He said, "My family and the people around me were always supportive, and the Pembroke [diocese] supported me during my time of studies and formation."

Currently, Fr. Lukas serves as the Parochial Vicar (assistant priest) at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew and Calabogie. There, he is already beginning to experience the many and varied tasks that fill the schedule of a priest. When asked what a typical day looks like for him, Fr. Lukas replied, "Most days, prayer and morning Mass first. Then taking care of office work, catching up on messages, making calls, etc. Depending on the day, the afternoon might be filled with hospital/sick call visits, funerals... and other things. It really depends on the day, and can change a lot week to week."

Outside of his growing list of responsibilities, Fr. Lukas still has many forms of recreation to balance out life. When asked what his favourite hobbies are, he listed, "Sports and outdoor things, especially soccer, hockey, hiking/backpacking, and canoeing." He also enjoys books, board games, and playing cards.

When asked who his favourite saint is, the priest admitted to having several whom he admires. One of those at the top of his list is St. Louis de Montfort. He chose this saint's name at confirmation. While there is much to admire about this 18th-century saint who wrote *The Secret of the Rosary* and *True Devotion to Mary*, Fr. Lukas was particularly drawn to him for his virtuous life. He said, "I found especially inspiring his humility and obedience to the Church in the face of misunderstanding and persecution, as well as his unmatched devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary."

St. Hedwig Parish has influenced a lot of priestly vocations because day in and day out for many years, faithful parishioners have prayed the Rosary there before Mass. The Rosary is prayed not just some days, but every single day. The number of young boys and men who daily serve at the altar also has remained strong. The combination of prayer and service is unbeatable in the formation of vocations.

Fr. Lukas shared "...I'd also like to thank all those who prayed for me all the time I was in the seminary, who I know are praying for me still. Those prayers have made all the difference, and I wouldn't have gone far without them."

Get to know our Seminarians

On the first Thursday of each month, a Holy Hour to pray for vocations takes place at different parishes throughout the diocese. It is a time of prayer to intercede for more priestly and religious vocations.

Consisting of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Music, a reflection by Fr. Scott Murray, a Rosary for vocations, and time for silent prayer, these Holy Hours are open to everyone, not just those considering a priestly vocation.

The Diocese of Pembroke currently has four seminarians:



Marcus Poisson
St. Bernadette, Bonfield

Born and raised in Scarborough, Marcus moved to the Bonfield area and became a parishioner at St. Bernadette's Parish. He completed his first year of Philosophy at St. Peter's Seminary and began his second year this fall.



Felix Ugochukwu Ujo
St. Columbkille Cathedral, Pembroke

Originally from Southeast Nigeria, Felix moved to Barry's Bay in 2023 to study at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College. This fall, he began theology studies at St. Peter's Seminary.

"My passion for the Catholic priesthood began at a young age, and the experiences of my high school formation played a significant role in shaping my life. The daily routine of prayer, studies, and community life taught me discipline, empathy, and the value of good relationship with God."



Samuel Freemark
St. John Chrysostom, Arnprior

Sam grew up just outside of Arnprior and then lived and worked in Ottawa, prior to applying to St. Peter's Seminary.

"The call to share His Good News through the vocation of the priesthood has grown strong. I hope and pray that through this discernment, I will learn more about who our loving God is and how He wants me to serve Him."



Augustine Tardiff
Madonna House

Augustine Tardiff was born in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. While still a baby, his family moved to Rhode Island where he was raised. After studying at Magdalen College in Warner, New Hampshire, he visited Madonna House and joined the community two years later in 2015. Now, as part of that community, he is in second year theology at Kenrick Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, studying everything from Pastoral Counseling to Christology.



Chris Kuehl
Our Lady of Lourdes, Pembroke

A native of Petawawa, Chris graduated from uOttawa in Mechanical Engineering. He is attending St. Peter's Seminary this fall.

"My greatest inspirations to discern the priesthood are the exemplary priests and faithful parishioners in my life."

"After discerning for about a year, I became confident in this call to enter the seminary, and I look forward to unveiling the next step of God's plan for my life."

If you would like to learn more about vocations, visit pembrokevocations.ca

Ecclesia

Evangelization and the call to holiness

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

At the heart of the Christian message lies a powerful call, an invitation not reserved for an elite few, but extended to everyone: “Be holy in all you do” (1 Peter 1:15-16). This quest for holiness is indissolubly linked with the mission of evangelization. As we strive to lead lives of holiness, we become living witnesses to the transformative power of the Gospel. Our words and actions demonstrate the love, mercy, and grace of God, inspiring those around us to seek a deeper relationship with Him. Through our pursuit of holiness, we not only draw closer to God but also become instruments of His love and agents of change in the world.

Holiness is a state of being set apart for God, living in Him and in accordance with His will. Above all, this journey demands that we cultivate a love for God and our neighbour. As Jesus emphasizes in His teachings: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

In the Bible, holiness is rooted in the nature of God Himself, who is holy. Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize the importance of holiness for God’s people. In the book of Leviticus, God commands the Israelites, “Be holy, for I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44). Holiness involves separating oneself from sin, pursuing righteousness, and living a life dedicated to God.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ reveals himself as the perfect example of holiness. He lived a sinless life, obeyed the Father’s will, and demonstrated love and compassion towards others.

On the other side, Pharisees are depicted as only emphasizing strict adherence to laws and traditions. They seem to perceive holiness as primarily a matter of ritual purity and separation from anything considered impure. Their practices included following meticulous rules about food, dress, and behavior, as well as avoiding contact with Gentiles (non-Jews) and sinners.

Jesus presented a very different understanding of holiness. He stressed the inner state of the heart and mind over external rites and rules. Jesus strongly criticized the Pharisees for their tendency to judge others harshly, their focus on outward appearances rather than inner character, their desire for prominence and status, and their neglect of cultivating true virtue within themselves (Matthew 23:25-28). He taught that holiness does not consist in separating oneself from others but in loving, being merciful and full of care and compassion for others.

According to the Church’s teachings, there are several ways to cultivate holiness.

- **Openness to God’s Grace:** Holiness is a gift from God that requires our openness and cooperation. As Pope Benedict XVI states, “God always respects our freedom and asks that we accept this gift and live the requirements it entails and he asks that we let ourselves be transformed by the action of the Holy Spirit, conforming our will to the will of God” (General Audience of 13 April 2011). Pope Francis also affirms that “holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration” (*Gaudete et exsultate* 147).
- **Cultivating a Life of Prayer:** Pope John Paul II writes that “the call to holiness is accepted and can be cultivated only in the silence of adoration before the infinite transcendence of God.” (*Vita Consecrata* 38) Holiness is living in constant union with God, recognizing His presence in every aspect of life. This involves faithfully receiving the sacraments and practicing self-denial.
- **Living out Charity:** Holiness is fundamentally about growing in love of God and neighbour; pope Benedict XVI tells us that “Christian holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full.” (General Audience of 13 April 2011) A holy life consists of helping others, especially those in need and those who are suffering (Matthew 25). Holiness is also extending forgiveness to those who have offended

us and the imitation of qualities such as, patience, kindness, wisdom, knowledge, fortitude, and perseverance. This imitation of divine attributes is a pathway to becoming more like God and producing spiritual fruit that benefits others.

- **Openness to God’s Word and Will:** Holiness requires a devoted and obedient heart, willing to follow God’s word. This involves a commitment to living out the teachings of Jesus and embodying His love and humility. Submitting our will to God’s will and being transformed by His word is what pleases God the most.
- **Overcoming Temptations:** Pope John Paul II cautions against the “temptations which sometimes, by diabolical deceit, present themselves under the appearance of good.” (*Vita Consecrata* 38) Vigilance is needed to resist these temptations and remain faithful to one’s vocation.

Overall, holiness is about aligning oneself with God’s will, embodying divine virtues, and being transformed by the Holy Spirit into a living testimony of God’s love and presence in the world. The Holy Spirit imparts his gifts, guiding believers towards spiritual maturity and a deeper understanding of divine mysteries.

Holiness is not limited to religious acts but extends to every part of life, including thoughts, words, and deeds. It calls for a continuous alignment (synchronization) of one’s entire being with divine principles, making our actions a reflection of God’s very nature.

The path to holiness often involves purification through trials and suffering, which build spiritual endurance and hope. This process is essential for deepening one’s relationship with God and achieving spiritual growth.

By living holy lives, we not only become witnesses of Jesus but we also become His emissaries, spreading the light of the Gospel and inspiring a world in need of hope and love. The call to holiness is not a mere suggestion but a profound invitation that resonates at the core of the Gospel.

Transforming parishes into missionary communities

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

“The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.” Evangelii Gaudium, Apostolic Exhortation, 2013, no. 28

Parishes play a pivotal role in the Church’s mission to evangelize. The document from the Congregation for the Clergy, *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*, provides a framework for transforming parishes into missionary communities. Through a detailed guide, it outlines practical steps for parishes to become dynamic centers of faith and outreach.

1. Embrace Pastoral Conversion

The journey begins with a fundamental shift in mindset. Pastoral conversion is about moving from a maintenance-focused approach to one that prioritizes evangelization. This involves recognizing the urgent need for reaching out to the unchurched and committing to making the parish a center for encountering Christ.

2. Reform Structural Organization

Structural reform is crucial for a parish to become truly missionary. The document suggests reorganizing parishes into “pastoral units” or “pastoral regions” to foster collaboration and more effective pastoral care. This reorganization allows for shared resources and coordinated efforts in evangelization. It’s about creating a network of parishes that work together, supporting each other in their mission to spread the Gospel.

3. Promote Lay Participation

A missionary parish recognizes the invaluable role of the lay faithful. Laypeople should be encouraged to take active roles in parish life and pastoral care. This can be facilitated by creating opportunities for lay leadership in various ministries, such as catechesis, liturgical roles, and outreach programs. The document underscores the importance of lay involvement in evangelization, ensuring that the mission of the Church is a shared responsibility. This broadened participation requires proper formation and support, ensuring lay leaders are well-prepared for their responsibilities.

4. Develop Common Pastoral Projects

Collaborative pastoral projects between parishes are essential for addressing common challenges and maximizing resources. Parishes can work together to create joint evangelizing initiatives, such as community outreach programs or social services. This collaborative approach not only enhances the effectiveness of evangelization but also builds a sense of community and shared purpose among different parishes.

5. Provide Continuous Formation

Ongoing formation for all members of the parish, including clergy, lay leaders, and parishioners, is vital. Continuous spiritual, theological, and pastoral training ensures that everyone is equipped with the knowledge and skills needed for effective evangelization. Formation programs can include Bible studies, workshops on evangelization techniques, retreats, and courses on Church teaching.

6. Implement Flexible and Gradual Changes

Change can be challenging, and sudden reforms may cause resistance or confusion. The document advises a flexible and gradual approach to implementing changes within the parish. This involves careful planning, consultation with parishioners, and phased implementation of new initiatives. By taking small, manageable steps, parishes can build momentum for larger transformations without overwhelming the community.

7. Enhance Eucharistic and Scriptural Engagement

Central to the mission of any parish is a deep engagement with the Eucharist and the Word of God. The document highlights the importance of making the Eucharist the heart of parish life. This includes fostering a profound understanding of the sacrament through catechesis and ensuring that the celebration of the Eucharist is vibrant and inclusive. Similarly, the Word of God should be a living force within the parish, with regular Bible studies, reflection groups, and scripture-based teachings that inspire and guide the faithful.

8. Focus on Outreach and Charity

A missionary parish is outward-looking, always seeking ways to reach out to those in need. This includes both spiritual and material support. Parishes should develop programs that address local social issues, provide support for the marginalized, and offer a welcoming environment for newcomers and non-believers.



9. Foster a Culture of Encounter and Dialogue

The document emphasizes the importance of a ‘culture of encounter,’ where parishes become places of dialogue, solidarity, and openness to others. This involves creating spaces where people feel welcome, where long-term relationships are fostered, and where there is a genuine sense of community. Such an environment encourages people to share their faith experiences and to support one another in their spiritual journeys.

10. Engage in Proactive Evangelization Activities

Finally, parishes must engage in proactive missionary activities. This can include organizing evangelization events, participating in mission trips, and utilizing modern technology and social media to reach a broader audience. Evangelization activities should be innovative and tailored to the needs and interests of the community, always aiming to bring the message of the Gospel to as many people as possible.

Conclusion

The mission is clear: to bring the light of Christ to the world. This missionary transformation of the parish involves the entire People of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, working together to fulfill the Church’s evangelizing mission in today’s world.

References

Congregation for the Clergy. (2020). *The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church*. Retrieved from [vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

A journey toward reconciliation

By Father Peter Proulx

“To heal a nation, we must first heal the individuals, the families, and the communities.”

– Elder Art Solomon

Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation is an Indigenous, federally recognized, not-for-profit corporation established in 2021 following a community-needs analysis. Through the analysis, it became clear that there were prominent levels of systemic racism and discrimination, significant gaps in service, and no culturally specific support provided, or a safe space for this population to attend. It was also determined that the very things that were taken in the act of colonization were the most important for revitalization: culture, tradition, ceremonies, language, and land. Based on these results, the Mashkiwizii Manido (Strong Spirit) Foundation was born, with our primary focus on the overall health and well-being of the Urban Indigenous Population of Renfrew County and surrounding areas.

Since 2021, we have been providing culturally specific services and programs developed, implemented, and delivered by Indigenous Peoples for Indigenous Peoples and their families. These programs include mental health, addictions and trauma supports, 60s scoop, residential schools, intergenerational trauma, impacts of colonization, land-based healing, ceremonies, and connection or reconnection to culture, language, and land. Currently, the following programs are being offered:

- Community Crafting
- Circles - Men's, Women's, Youth
- Counseling – Individual and group, Acudetox acupuncture
- Drumming Group
- Wellbriety – 12 steps and the medicine wheel
- Wisdom to Wellness – Workshops for teachings and knowledge exchange
- Ceremonies – Full moon, fasting, sunrise, smudging, prayer
- Land-Based Activities and Healing – A variety of programming to connect/reconnect with land and waters, trapping, harvesting, traditional skills
- Special events – water walks, change-of-season feasting, community engagement.

We value our relationships with non-Indigenous peoples and settler populations. In a journey to better understand our history, shared history, values, and ways of life, we can move forward together in true authentic relationships. We support this much-needed work by doing the following:

- Workshops and Cultural Awareness Training – tailored to your organization
- Guest speakers to educate on a variety of topics such as treaties, residential schools, 60s scoop, and more
- Kairos Blanket Exercise – experiential learning and 500 years of history.

Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation, as a not-for-profit organization, relies on the generosity of donations and grants for the operation of the healing organization. We have had support from the United Way, Bell Let's Talk, 60s Scoop Healing Foundation, and the Indigenous Relief Fund from the Diocese of Pembroke. Individual donations have also contributed to continuing to offer our programs, services, and support to all Indigenous individuals and families at no cost.

Often individuals ask what part they can play in the act of reconciliation or RECONCILI “ACTION,” my response is the following:

- Education – The most crucial step you can take, learn about the impacts and ways of Indigenous Peoples, our collective roles, and responsibilities. Familiarize yourself with UNDRIP, 94 Calls to Action. Ask questions
- Work towards those true authentic relationships with Indigenous individuals and organizations
- Volunteer at Indigenous organizations and/or events
- Amplify Indigenous voices – Speak truths according to Indigenous knowledge you have learned, voting for, and advocating for change
- Offer your land for cultural and ceremonial purposes – This can include land back or the use of extra space you may have for harvesting medicines, trapping, or ceremony. Land has gone from Indigenous Peoples using and occupying all lands to the settler population controlling 99.8% and Indigenous Peoples 0.2%. (Kairos Script 2019 – Indigenous rights activist Art Manuel, founder of the Indigenous Network for Economies and Trade: Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation does not own any land for land-based healing or activities)
- Offering donations – Monetary donations allow us to continue our free programming, one-time or monthly donations are appreciated. They can be done by check, cash, or E-transfer to info@mashkiwiziimanidofoundation.com
- Donations of non-perishable food items and gift cards are also useful.

Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation's doors are open to all seeking understanding and moving forward in truth and reconciliation, connection, and reconnection to culture. We all need to heal together, and at Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation, we will make this possible.

Miigwetch (Thank you).

Visit our Facebook page Mashkiwizii Manido Foundation, or our website at www.mashkiwiziimanidofoundation.com

Office location: 84 Isabella St., Unit #10, Pembroke, ON K8A 5S5 (613) 281-7969

Indigenous reconciliation fund

By Father Peter Proulx

On the two-year anniversary of Pope Francis’s penitential pilgrimage to Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), in a “Letter to the People of God,” has provided an update on the steps that the Catholic Church in Canada has taken to respond to the Holy Father’s calls for a future of justice, healing, and reconciliation. It encourages Catholics across the country to continue to listen to and support residential school survivors and Indigenous communities on this journey.

“After years of listening, learning, prayer, and dialogue, the Bishops of Canada were deeply grateful for the Holy Father’s apology, and to the many Indigenous partners who shared their experiences and desires for a brighter future,” said Bishop William T. McGrattan, President of the CCCC. “We believe this was a meaningful step in the reconciliation journey – but the effects of the residential school system persist to this day. As we look back on the words of Pope Francis, we must continue to confront this painful legacy and to walk alongside the Indigenous Peoples in the spirit of solidarity and hope.”

In his various public and private addresses, the Holy Father not only expressed profound sorrow for the devastating effects of the residential school system on Indigenous communities but also called on the Bishops of Canada to approach reconciliation through concrete actions and shared projects. Building on the important progress achieved in planning the penitential pilgrimage of the Pope, the Bishops of Canada took tangible steps in this direction in the years since the papal visit, including:

Financial support for Indigenous priorities

In September 2021, following their national apology, the Catholic Bishops of Canada pledged \$30 million for projects that support healing and reconciliation. These projects are identified by local Indigenous people and overseen by the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund (IRF). To date, the IRF has raised more than \$15 million, and is, therefore, ahead of its five-year timeline. It has approved 166 projects determined in collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners across the country. The Diocese of Pembroke has committed \$250,000 to the National Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. In our diocese, through our Indigenous Fund Committee, we have reviewed twelve requests for funds to date and \$100,000 has been allotted to four of these requests over the last two years.

We invite any person or group who is working with Indigenous people and trying to assist them on their healing journey, to apply to us for financial assistance. Please see the diocesan website for an application.

Projects are reviewed by our Diocesan Indigenous Fund Review Committee made up of diocesan and Indigenous representatives. Recommendations are sent from here to the National Office, where final approval and disbursements are awarded.

We look forward to future efforts in building healing relationships.

Please direct any questions or concerns to our Diocesan Indigenous Coordinator, Fr. Peter Proulx, at the Diocesan Chancery Office.

Obituary: Deacon Frank Martel (1944–2024)

The Diocese of Pembroke is saddened by the passing of Deacon Frank Martel on Sunday, May 12, 2024, at the North Bay Regional Health Centre.

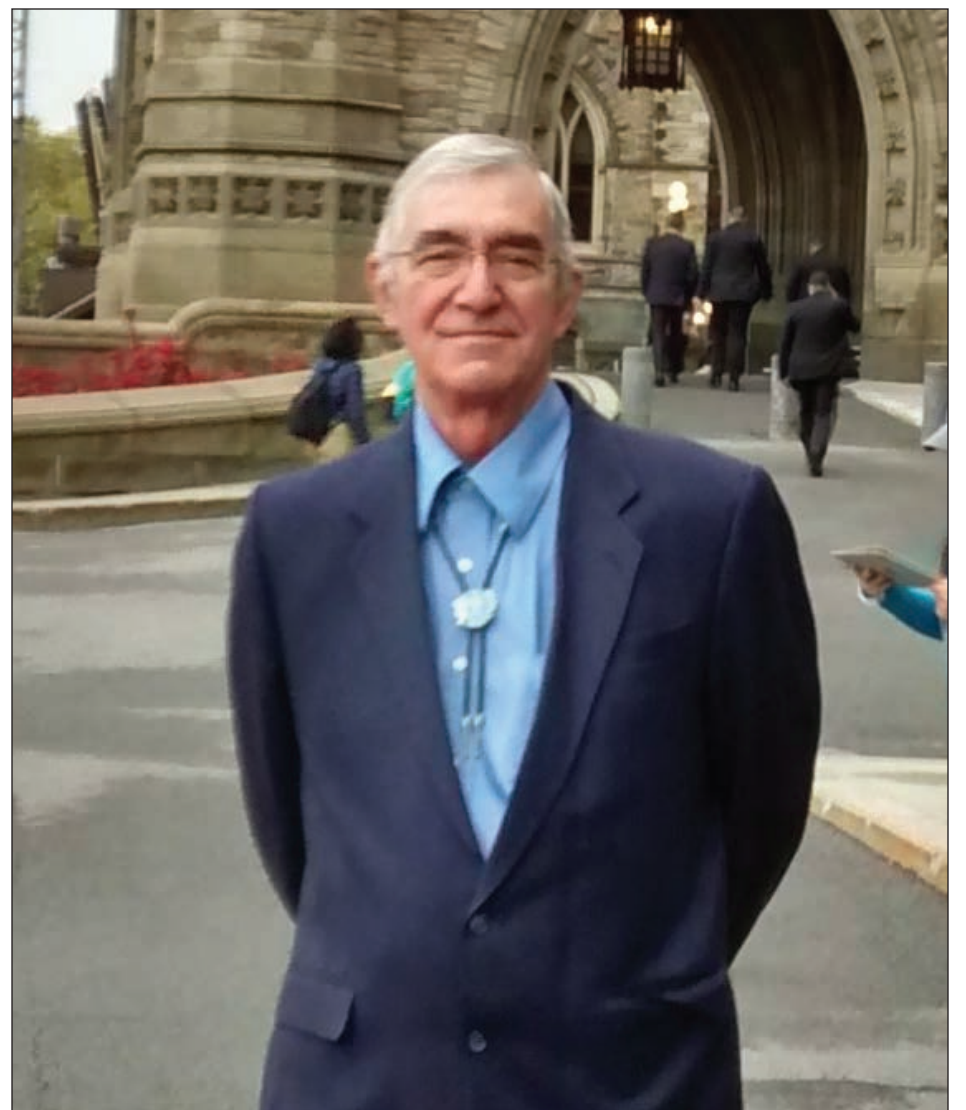
As a youth, Deacon Martel was active in the Church, serving Mass at the age of seven and continuing for several years.

After graduating as a teacher and getting married, Deacon Martel worked in various locations in Canada. During his stay in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, he first felt the call from God to serve in a greater role. Upon settling in Bonfield, Deacon Martel was ordained to the diaconate at Ste-Bernadette Parish in August 1992 and served there during his early years as deacon. Deacon Martel moved on to serve 12 years at Sacred Heart Parish in Corbeil, returning to Ste-Bernadette in January 2016. Over his 31 years as a deacon, Frank was supported by his wife of 56 years, Danielle, and their family.

He was also a fourth-degree Knights of Columbus, council 6664, in Corbeil and served as the chaplain for the order for more than 29 years.

While Deacon Martel would prepare the church for Mass, prepare parents for baptism, and deliver the homily when called upon as part of his duties, he shared on the occasion of his 25th ordination anniversary, that his favourite role was helping others discover the presence of Jesus Christ during religious retreats.

Deacon Albert Benoit, who studied and worked with Deacon Martel in the northernmost parishes of the diocese – Astorville, Bonfield and Corbeil – recalls that “Frank was an honest man; he was really devoted to the people and was very well-liked.”



In memoriam: Fr. Joseph Daniel Hattie OMI

Father Joseph Hattie passed away peacefully on September 8, 2024, while he was praying his breviary. This day is the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and was also the anniversary of his final profession as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

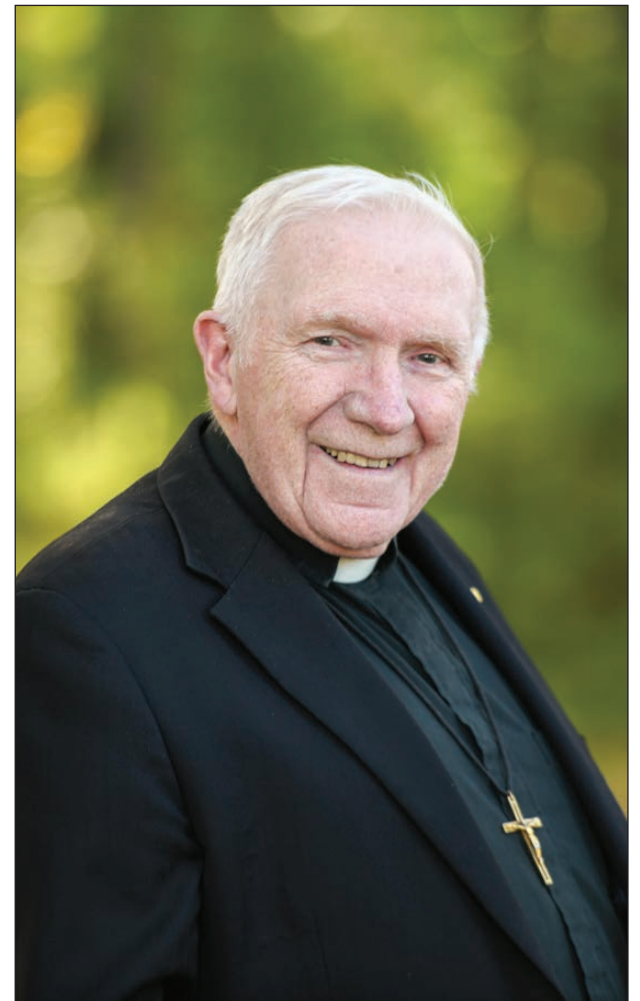
Fr. Joe was born in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and grew up in Digby, NS. It was after graduating with a B.Sc. from St. Patrick's College in Ottawa that he received a call to the vocation of priesthood in the Missionary Congregation, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, OMI. His first obedience was to teach at St. Patrick's High School in Ottawa, during which time he stayed at Springhurst Residence for Oblate teachers.

He gained a Master's from Notre Dame University and from St. Paul's University and worked as a chaplain at Dalhousie University in Halifax. He then spent several years in Rome where he earned a Ph.D. in the Theology of Marriage and Family from the Lateran University, Rome. He worked in this field in the Diocese of Vancouver where he developed a Marriage and Family preparation course, which is still in use. Following his time in Vancouver,

he spent a short time in Lourdes and then went to the Archdiocese of Halifax to continue his mission in Marriage and Family Life. He began a career as associate chaplain at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay and resident at St. Hedwig Parish after being in Halifax, and returned to Springhurst Residence for the last five years of his life.

His official obituary noted: "Fr. Joe had a great love of the Church and served the Church faithfully in many different areas. He was a man of prayer. He had always loved sports, and followed several teams; he walked every day; kept up a frequent correspondence with many couples he had married in his Marriage and Family work: read usually religious books and enjoyed television; he was a holy man, he died while praying morning prayers on his tablet."

Prayers took place at Canadian Martyrs Church in Ottawa, on Friday, September 13 and the Funeral Mass took place at Canadian Martyrs on Saturday, September 14. Interment was to take place at St. Theresa's Oblate Cemetery in Arnprior at a later date.



Decades of Priestly Influence – A personal tribute to Fr. Joe Hattie O.M.I.

By Katrina Boguski

In the 1980s, Fr. Joe Hattie was in residence at St. Peter's Parish in New Westminster, British Columbia. It was, at the time, an Oblate parish, and Fr. Hattie had been assigned to work at the chancery in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. Providentially, St. Peter's was also my home parish, and meeting Fr. Hattie there would have a profound and lasting impact on my life. Although his "day job" then involved working for the archdiocese, he frequently would say Mass at St. Peter's and would participate in parish events. Regardless of the positions he held, Fr. Hattie was always a priest who stayed close to the people.

Our paths would eventually cross in three different provinces, and Fr. Hattie remained a strong influence in my life for almost four decades.

In the early part of 1989, Fr. Hattie gathered a group of women in the upper room of Dontenwill Hall where he held a seminar over the course of several evenings. I was a teenager, impressionable, and just on the threshold of becoming an adult. It was the perfect time to hear Fr. Hattie's teaching; it was a teaching that, to this day, continues to bring me "peace in truth."

The subject of Hattie's talk was the Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, On the Dignity and Vocation of Women.

In the late 1990s, not long after my graduation from UBC with a master's in Religious Studies, Fr. Hattie asked me to join the Board of Catholic Family Services where he was chaplain. One of the perks of this position was spending more time with Fr. Hattie before, eventually, he was sent to Lourdes and then Halifax.

Fr. Hattie remained an enthusiastic preacher during his time in Barry's Bay, serving at St. Hedwig's Parish and Our Lady Seat of Wisdom. He continued to make the Church's teachings on marriage accessible to the young generation of students and newly married couples. His method of preparing couples for marriage still influences marriage preparation courses in places where he served, such as Vancouver and Halifax.

In 2020, after Fr. Hattie was transferred to Ottawa, I was researching the history of a prominent 20th-century priest and was discouraged to discover that this man appeared to carry out what seemed to be a direct act of disobedience against Rome. Upset by my findings, I emailed Fr. Hattie with some questions about how to respond to this discovery.

Long after I had forgotten my concerns about the priest who was the subject of that email exchange, I developed the habit of calling on Fr. Hattie almost daily to solve problems for me in at least three distinct areas of my life.

Fr. Hattie reminded me to "Focus on the present and how God wants you to help produce more good fruits..."

Fr. Hattie influenced not only decades of my life in the chronological sense, he influenced decades and decades in the spiritual sense. His testimony to the power of the decades of the Rosary will be my most treasured memory of him. Whether you knew him or not, you, too, can still allow Fr. Hattie to influence you for decades and decades yet to come. Nothing would please Fr. Hattie more than to know he inspired others to pray the Rosary; and nothing would do more to continue the good work he began in his lifetime.

Saint Profile

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

1910–1997

This extraordinary woman began her life journey named as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, born on August 26, 1910.

Her faith was amazing, and her desire to be nourished by the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was celebrated when she received her First Holy Communion at the age of five. She was confirmed in November 1916.

At the age of eight, she experienced the loss of her father, and this had a great effect on the family's finances. Agnes continued to place her trust in the Lord as her religious formation began in the vibrant Jesuit Parish of the Sacred Heart where she was actively involved during the years of her youth. At the age of eighteen, Agnes began her journey of missionary work and joined the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Sisters of Loreto, in Ireland. Agnes was given the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Thérèse of Lisieux. In December 1929, her call to mission led her to India, to a place called Calcutta. There, she was assigned to the Loreto Entally Community and taught at St. Mary's School for Girls. On May 24, 1937, answering God's call, Sister Teresa made her vows of Final Profession and, as she said, became the "spouse of Jesus for all eternity." Sister Teresa's love for God, along with her charity, unselfishness, courage and love for the children was noticed and, in 1944, she became the school principal. She experienced great joy for the next twenty years as she lived her consecration to Jesus.

God's call upon Sister Teresa would take a new direction on September 10, 1946, while journeying from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat. The call that Jesus' thirst for love and souls took hold of her heart and the desire to satiate His thirst became the new motivating strength of her life. Jesus revealed to her, "Come be My light." He begged her, "I cannot go alone."

Two years of discernment passed before Mother Teresa, on August 17, 1948, entered the world to work vested for the first time in a white, blue-bordered sari.

On December 21, after receiving Holy Communion with her Rosary in hand, Mother Teresa went out into the difficult areas visiting

families, caring for children with grave skin sores and assisting in the care of a man on the road who was very ill, as well as nursing a woman dying of hunger and tuberculosis. After a period of time, she was joined by her previous students to assist her in the daily care of the people.

On October 7, 1950, the new Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Mother Teresa then began to assign her Sisters to other parts of India.

In February of 1965, Pope Paul VI encouraged Mother Teresa to continue her great works in other parts of the world with a new house in Venezuela, then Rome, Tanzania and eventually houses were also opened in Communist countries including the former Soviet Union, Albania and Cuba.

Mother Teresa never stopped recognizing the physical and spiritual needs of the poor as she founded the Missionary of Charity Brothers in 1963, the Contemplative Branch of the Sisters in 1976, the Contemplative Brothers in 1979, and the Missionary of Charity Fathers in 1984.

Mother Teresa continued her works wherever she went with so many people of different faiths and nationalities who understood her great works of love for God's people.

Mother Teresa was recognized by many in the world for her work with the poor and received the Indian Padmashri Award in 1962, as well as the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

In her continued dedication to doing God's work, Mother Teresa's sisters numbered 4,000 with 610 foundations in 123 countries. In 1997, Mother Teresa began to prepare her newly elected successor to carry on as Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity. Mother Teresa visited Pope John Paul II and returned home to Calcutta continuing to guide her Sisters and receive many visitors.

On September 5, 1997, Mother Teresa made her journey home to our loving God. She was given the honour of a state funeral by the Government of India, and her body was buried in the Mother House of the Missionaries of



Charity. Her resting place became a place of pilgrimage for people of all faiths, poor and rich alike. On October 19, 2003, Mother Teresa was beatified by Pope John Paul II. Her canonization was delayed as they waited for confirmation of a second miracle. On December 17, 2015, Pope Francis announced a second miracle had been attributed to the intercession of Mother Teresa. The miracle involved a man from Brazil who was afflicted with tumours and was miraculously cured. This cleared the way for Mother Teresa's canonization.

On September 4, 2016, St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was canonized by Pope Francis in a ceremony that was witnessed by tens of thousands of people, including 1,500 homeless people across Italy. Saint Mother Teresa's Feast day is September 5, and she is the Patron Saint of World Youth Day, the Missionaries of Charity, and co-patron of the Archdiocese of Calcutta alongside St. Francis Xavier.

Prayer to Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Jesus called you to bring the light of His love to those who live in darkness. By tender, loving care for the poorest and the neediest, you became the sign of God's presence, His love and compassion in the midst of suffering and pain. Following your example, help us to recognize the face of Jesus in our suffering brothers and sisters and to serve Him with humility and joy. Teach us to be carriers of God's tender love and mercy and so bear witness that God still loves the world through each one of us. Amen.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

To God be the Glory that so many of our faithful are living out their Baptismal call each day as true servants of the Lord and are carrying out the Corporal Works of Mercy in the Diocese of Pembroke. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2447 states: The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, and comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially of feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all of these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none, and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warm and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

Answering God's call to serve, some of the organizations in our diocese share below how they continue to reach out and serve our brothers and sisters in Christ each day.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Columbkille Conference

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) will have been serving those in need for 17 years this October. They are able to do this through the generosity of people in the community and with the dedication of many loyal volunteers.

Currently, the organization serves lunch to an average of 55 people per day on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday each week, year-round. Lunch may be soup and a sandwich but also includes lasagne, meatloaf, shepherd's pie and other dishes made from scratch in their own kitchen in the basement of St. Columbkille Cathedral.

"We do our best," says Muggsie Boland, President of SSVP. "We listen to the needs of the people who come in, but also try not to duplicate services that are available from other organizations" that they work with collaboratively.

Over the last few years, the number of people accessing a warm meal has increased as the cost of living has increased.

Running strictly on donations, Boland shares that Food Basics has a collection bin for canned goods designated to SSVP, schools organize food drives, and service clubs make donations.

"It is the charity of people that keeps us going," she notes. "Most of our donations are spent on food."

St. Vincent de Paul has a 'home visit committee' that responds to crisis situations, providing help in many ways to ensure the best outcomes for families and emergency food kits are delivered when a call comes from someone in urgent need of food. When delivering the food kits, they provide education about the food bank.

While SSVP doesn't have space to store a lot of clothing items, they do sometimes have items such as hoodies, footwear and warm coats for those in need.

Boland thanks and welcomes people in the community to come for a visit and see the work that they do at St. Vincent de Paul – "witness for yourself your donations at work."

St. Joseph's Food Bank

Since 1986, the St. Joseph's Food Bank has been serving those in need in Pembroke and the Laurentian Valley from its location on First Avenue in the Holy Name of Jesus Annex. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food bank has seen its clientele triple in numbers to over 1,000 per month.

The food bank is open two part-days each week – Monday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Thursday 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., with the Thursday shift being added just over two years ago to help meet the increasing demand. Sadly, that includes those who work and still can't make ends meet, notes Rene Lachapelle, President of St. Joseph's Food Bank.

The organization relies on many volunteers (13–15 per shift, from a total of 55) to serve those who use the service. Volunteers facilitate donations, purchase items, collect funds, and rescue food from stores, agencies and events.

There is no government funding, so the food bank also relies entirely on donations to provide the supplies for the food baskets. As well, a food bank network has developed across Renfrew County whereby food is shared among agencies.

The campaign for food is ongoing, says Lachapelle, and a current capital campaign is raising funds for the expansion of warehouse and refrigeration space to store the volumes of provisions required.

"A big thank you to the community for being so supportive," says President Lachapelle. "It is very encouraging."

The Grind Pembroke

The Grind Pembroke is a faith-based organization that provides wrap-around supports to those in need, including client services (needs assessment and connection to appropriate agencies), a daily coffee house with breakfast, and a community kitchen serving lunch every Tuesday to Friday.

"Our focus is on meeting the needs of clients where they're at," says Jerry Novack, Executive Director of the Grind Pembroke. Lately, they have seen an increase in the number of clients in need of their services, in particular, those struggling with addictions. Partnerships with local health and social services agencies ensure support, options, and opportunities to meet clients' particular needs.

Other programs include a Sunday dinner and worship service every third Sunday and the "Warriors" youth recreational program for youth ages 5–12 who are challenged with disabilities. In the winter of 2023–2024, The Grind, in collaboration with the Town of Petawawa, The City of Pembroke, and the County of Renfrew, provided a warming centre for those who would otherwise be forced to sleep outside and hopes to do it again this coming winter.

The Grind does not receive regular government funding (they do apply for grants that are available) and relies on fundraising to keep its programs running. The main fundraising event is the "Coldest Night of the Year" walk that takes place each February.

"We do a lot of praying and God keeps providing," stated Novack.

Community Friendship Meals, Renfrew

Several years ago (2018), in a partnership of parish and school, students in the food and nutrition program at St. Joseph High School (SJHS) in Renfrew began making meals to serve to the community.

Pastoral team students serve the meal once a month from September or October through to June in the hall of Our Lady of Fatima (OLF) with the help of the OLF CWL, who prepare the hall and make coffee, tea and occasionally some sweets.

Former CWL president Darlene Meleskie notes that the CWL is pleased to be a part of a program that benefits the community. "It has brought people out to socialize and have a warm meal."

The program currently serves approximately 40 people on the second Wednesday of the month, a mix of parishioners, seniors and individuals in need of a warm meal. Leftovers are sent home with those in need.

There is no specific school budget for this community service, however, donations from patrons and the Catholic Women's League (CWL) help to support the program.

"It's an excellent program," states former SJHS Chaplain Jason Dedo. "It is a really good practical exercise for the food and nutrition students and a good partnership with the school chaplaincy team and the community."

Family Life Centre, Bonfield

The Family Life Centre in Bonfield was established more than 40 years ago, a project for newly ordained Deacon Albert Benoit in 1982. The centre

includes a food bank and a clothing 'store' based out of the church rectory, where everything is free.

Approximately 15-20 families make use of the centre each month for food, and there is an emergency service as well.

Food is donated by individuals and stores, and monetary donations are used to purchase food. The Knights of Columbus supports the centre through donations of both food and funds.

Any extra food, donated or collected from stores, is shared with neighbouring organizations in Mattawa and North Bay, who reciprocate when possible.

The food and clothing operations each have a leader with a team of volunteers. "We have a good team of volunteers," confirms Deacon Benoit.

To all who serve, who support each charitable organization prayerfully and financially, may God richly bless each one of you. As Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew 25-40, "In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me." God bless you all.

Nigerian priest encourages other priests to guard their priestly calling

By Katrina Boguski

Originally from the city of Aba in Abia State, Nigeria, Fr. Malachy Ekezie SMMM came to Canada in 2008. As the commercial centre of Abia, Aba has a rich cultural history, and the people of the area are known for their industrial prowess and their entrepreneurial talents. Rather than pursuing commercial interests like many other people from this area, Fr. Malachy devoted his life to God by answering the call to join the Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation, Umuahia, Abia State of Nigeria.

Fr. Malachy has served at multiple parishes throughout Canada, including St. Alexander Parish, Fort Alexander and St. Mary's Parish, Hollow Water, St. Boniface Diocese, Manitoba. He describes Canada as a place where he has experienced friendliness and love.

Currently, he serves the Pembroke Diocese as the pastor of St. Ignatius, Maynooth; St. Martin of Tours, Whitney and St. Matthew, Madawaska. These small country churches, spread out over a considerably large territory, stand in some contrast to the complexity of the highly populated area from which Fr. Malachy hails. The United Nations calculates the population of Nigeria to be approaching 233 million. There are some 250 tribal groups in Nigeria, and there are over 500 languages spoken in the country. Father himself speaks English and Igbo.

For his priestly training, Fr. Malachy went to Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. When asked about when he first responded to the call to the priesthood, Fr. Malachy said, "In my early years as a little Mass server." He added, "[The] priestly vocation is a call; I was called by God through the...Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy, Congregation." His vocation was encouraged by his parish priest at the time, Rev. Fr. Edward Nwafor.

When asked who his favourite saint is, Fr. Malachy replied, "St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, because of her humility, simplicity, love for God and humanity." It is not surprising that these aspects of the saint's character resonate with Fr. Malachy.

When asked about what he enjoys most about being a priest, he replied, "Priestly holiness of life, humility and gentleness." This gentleness comes across in his thoughtful style of preaching, which is delivered gently in a lyrical and deliberate manner.

Ecclesia asked Fr. Malachy, "Do you have any advice for young men considering the priesthood?" He replied, "[The] priesthood is a call from God; hence, those who have a vocation to the Catholic priesthood should guard it jealously, for it is a precious gift."



“We Can Meet God”

By Maria Reilander

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS), an international child-centred catechetical program for young children, has found a home in Pembroke! Our Lady of Lourdes Parish now hosts Pembroke’s first atrium offering Level 1 CGS for children ages 3–6 years.

Using Montessori-based methods in experiential learning, the atrium is a special room designed to meet the age-specific needs and capacities of each child in their encounter with God. It is called an atrium because, in a church, the atrium is the place of entry – the space between the outer world and the church. *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* facilitates that joyful meeting of the child with God, particularly through lifting up the Holy Scripture – God’s living word – and the Liturgy of the Church.

It is a prepared environment where children spend time musing upon the most essential mysteries of the Catholic faith through their work with beautiful but simple handmade catechetical materials, such as the model altar and the wooden sheepfold of the Good Shepherd. The environment is quiet and prayerful where they may enjoy the many ways that God seeks to draw close to them. It is about fostering a joyful relationship with Jesus, The Good Shepherd.

“CGS teaches me about God. It’s fun. It makes me happy to do the work in the atrium,” said one boy.

This past year, the new atrium at Our Lady of Lourdes welcomed nine children, who met for two hours on Saturday mornings. In addition to head catechist Maria Reilander, two to three adults assisted on a weekly basis.

“We are so thankful to Fr. Ryan Holly and the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes for welcoming this program,” said Maria. “All the children loved to come to spend time in the atrium – a sacred place of peace where we listen to God’s voice in the Bible and in our hearts. Here also the Mass and the life of Jesus come to life. They learn the names of the articles of the Mass and what is put upon the altar, as well as the gestures of the Mass (such as the preparation of the chalice with the wine and water); they learn the meanings of the liturgical seasons.

“The children think about the life of Jesus by exploring the geography of ancient Israel and the gospel accounts of Jesus’ nativity as well as his death and resurrection. Our session together includes times for songs and prayer. And, importantly, silence! We ‘make silence’ so that we can better hear and listen, especially to God’s word to us in the Holy Bible.”

The young children particularly respond to Jesus’ words that “I am the light of the world,” and “I am the Good Shepherd.”

In the words of one little girl, “CGS is important because we can meet God. There are two ways to meet God: at church and at CGS. We learn about the Good Shepherd so we can learn about Jesus.”

The prayer and work in the atrium follow the Church’s liturgical season. CGS presentations this year included:

- **Geography** of the Land of Israel
- **Advent:** Isaiah’s prophecies of the Messiah; the Annunciation to Mary
- **Christmas:** Birth of Jesus and Adoration of the Shepherds; Adoration of the Magi; Presentation in the Temple.
- **Ordinary Time:** Parables of The Mustard Seed, The Precious Pearl, The Good Shepherd
- **Lent & Easter:** Psalm 23; The City of Jerusalem; The Cenacle; The Empty Tomb
- **Baptism**
- **Pentecost**

The children give artistic expression to what engages them in the atrium, such as through tracing images, pasting collages, and free drawing. A work that all the children really love is flower arranging (with real, donated flowers!), to beautify the atrium.

The Lourdes atrium is the second one to open in the Diocese of Pembroke. St. Hedwig Parish in Barry’s Bay opened an atrium in 2018, which is currently also facilitated by Maria Reilander.

Registration for the 2024–2025 Level 1 program in Pembroke opened in September, for 25 sessions on Saturday mornings from October through May (cost: \$150).

To learn more about CGS in the Pembroke Diocese, to enroll your child in this program, or for information on becoming a CGS catechist or assistant, so that we may expand the program, please contact Maria Reilander (613-756-0528).

To learn more about this beautiful program for our young children, visit cgsac.ca (The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada).



Catholic education initiatives include Alpha Sessions for parents

At the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board, we strive to cultivate an active faith journey rooted in the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments. This statement is just a glimpse into what the schools work towards every day. Catholic Education is a true gift for students, and we are proud to model a servant leadership style following the example of Jesus, and live by and proclaim the principles of Catholic teaching.

To encourage adult faith formation within the RCCDSB, the school board recently offered Alpha Sessions for Parents. Every week for 12 weeks, participants, some of which included staff from RCCDSB, gathered in the library of Bishop Smith Catholic High School to eat dinner, watch an insightful video on faith, and then discuss the video's meaning in smaller groups. This was the first time the board had taken on an initiative such as Alpha, and we received great feedback from everyone who attended. The Board also offered childcare for parents with young children who wanted to

attend, and we are thankful to the Educational Assistants and Early Childhood Educators who assisted us in this effort.

In addition to the Alpha Sessions, RCCDSB has annual celebrations for Christian Community Day and Catholic Education Week.

Christian Community Day is for RCCDSB staff and takes place on a Spring PA Day. Staff gather for Mass at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke, followed by brunch with colleagues, and end the day with a guest speaker or a breakout session of their choice on various topics.

For example, some of these sessions from the 2024 Christian Community Day included: Indigenous Orange Shirt Beading – Cultural Appreciation versus Cultural Appropriation, Christian Meditation, Supporting Health and Wellness in the Classroom and as Adult Educators, Revitalizing Kindergarten Excellence – A Dynamic Dive into Play-Based Learning and Instructional Programming for Early Educators, and Holy Moments – Finding Holiness and Joy in the Every Day.

Another way the board celebrates Catholic Education is through Catholic Education Week.

During Catholic Education Week, a theme is established by the Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (OCTSA) early in the school year. This upcoming theme is Pilgrims of Hope as we will soon enter the Year of the Jubilee. Schools organize activities surrounding the theme each year and have a week-long celebration for Catholic Education. It is something that everyone looks forward to!

At the end of the 2023–2024 school year, RCCDSB sent a survey to all staff to gather feedback on what they would like to see offered for Adult Faith Formation. This year, we will work to provide sessions on faith formation to encourage staff to live out our vision to cultivate an active faith journey rooted in the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments. The Renfrew County Catholic District School Board is excited about what is to come in the 2024–2025 school year!

Youth night

Pictures taken at the June 7 diocesan Carlo's Crew Youth Night at St. James the Less Parish, Eganville, for youth grade 7 to 18 years of age. Our next Youth Night will take place on November 1, All Saints Day. For more info, contact Yvette Bourque yvettebourque@pembrokedioecese.com or 613-585-6301.



The Cathedral House

A brief history

Construction began on the 'bishop's palace' in 1885, three years after the Vicariate of the Pontiac was erected and Narcisse Lorrain became bishop, choosing Pembroke as his base. It was built in three stages:

1. The original building. Three main stories with the tower, built of limestone, with the kitchen, offices, parlour and dining room on the first floor.

The second floor had one suite – for the bishop – and six bedrooms. Two bedrooms would share one bathroom. As well, a chapel was, and still is, located on the second floor.

The third floor was used briefly by the Christian Brothers prior to building their own residence.

2. The convent. Two stories built above the kitchen and another three-story piece made of cinder block were built around 1904–1906 and occupied by *Les petites sœurs de la sainte-Famille* (The Little Sisters of the Holy Family), an order started by Blessed Marie-Léonie Paradis who will soon be canonized a saint.

The convent was made up of a chapel and many small rooms. The nuns' chapel is a unique feature. Part of it, on the second floor, protrudes on the outside wall. This was because the Blessed Sacrament could not have a bedroom above it in the old Code of Canon Law. This build-out was the solution.

After the sisters left in 1995, the space remained unoccupied.

3. The third addition. The two-storey piece off the main house along Moffat Street. The upstairs became the bishop's office and residence, and the downstairs rooms were the chancery offices. It was built during the time of Bishop Nelligan, circa 1939.

A fourth addition no longer exists. Built in the 1960s, it was the yellow brick chancery office that was demolished in May 2023. It housed the chancery office downstairs and the bishop's residence upstairs.

The Cathedral rectory remained unchanged for much of its history. There were minor updates such as flooring changes, installation of telephones, etc., as you would expect, but the floor plan remained the same.



This photo taken from the Isabella Street angle shows the build-out for the nun's chapel.



Motivation for the recent renovations

The lease for the suites that the diocese used for retired priests at Marianhill were up and, at the same time, a big renovation and expansion of the facility was being undertaken. The cost of building new suites and paying for them going forward would have been excessive.

In addition, the Cathedral rectory was in dire need of repairs, so the decision was made to renovate the Cathedral rectory to include suites to house our retired priests.

continued on page 16...



Dining room with the original table restored.



The original entrance doors, encased in the front entrance, and staircase remain intact.

What did the renovations involve?

While much of the interior was removed to the bare studs due to asbestos and to allow for improved insulation and a new HVAC system, some historic elements were saved. In places, the stone structure and wood beams have been left exposed.

Four large suites were created to replace the suites at Marianhill. In addition, two smaller suites in the main building may be used for a retired priest, as a place for convalescence or respite, or for a priest (or seminarian) needing a place to live for a short period of time.

The second-floor suite, originally built for the bishop in the 1940s, is now a guest suite. The original marble fireplace, wood panelling, and book shelves remain.

The former convent now houses two suites – one for the rector and one for a parochial vicar.

On the first floor, the living room or parlour and dining room remain basically unchanged. The dining room now features the original table which has been beautifully refinished. The kitchen was modernized, but downsized to allow for storage space and stairs to the suites that meet current code.

The Cathedral and Holy Name parish offices are also co-located on the first floor of the Cathedral House for efficiency and cost savings.

What this means for our diocese

The renovation of the building will save costs in the long term and meet the current need to house retired priests and guests of the diocese.

“It’s a good building and a good investment. What we have now is an updated building that will last another 135 years,” says Fr. Mitch Beachey.

“The building was totally gutted, taken down to the studs. There is a new HVAC system, proper insulation, a new elevator – basically everything is new.”

He points out that the project will also ensure that the diocese is self-secure, able to carry out the new evangelization, and meet future needs of the diocese.



Much of the silver in the cabinet belonged to Bishop Lorrain.



Newly landscaped exterior after demolition of the 1960s chancery office.

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College continues to positively impact local economy and culture

By Katrina Boguski

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay has grown to have a student population of about 97 "full-time equivalents," including approximately 32 first-year students. The students are provided for by 26 full- and part-time staff, nine regular faculty, and 12 sessional faculty. The school also keeps closely connected to its alumni, which now number approximately 800 former students. With this significant influx of students and employees to the Madawaska Valley over the years, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom is beginning to be recognized for its substantial contribution to the culture and economy of the region; and its vision for the future includes still more growth and development.

In 2018, the college's board of directors approved a plan entitled *Where We Want to Be* by 2033, and, in the fall of 2021, it approved a revised version of this document. The vision includes bringing the enrollment up to between 150 and 200 students and providing "a first-class academic program, staffed by a faculty with national or international reputations." With multiple faculty who earned their doctorates at Oxford, and other notable international institutions, the college is already making strides toward these goals.

To support the college in its work of forming students equipped "to engage with and critique contemporary culture," several major donors have stepped up to the plate in recent years. College president Dr. Christine Schintgen told *Ecclesia*, "We have received several large bequests over the last few years, the biggest one being a legacy gift of just over half-a-million dollars – our largest gift ever! We are very grateful to God and to our donors."

Despite the support of many donors who understand and appreciate the mission of the college, it has taken some time for the broader population to understand exactly what role the college plays in the diocese. Schintgen said, "In the early years, people mistook us for a convent or a seminary. We are not that, although on average about one graduate per year goes on to seminary/priesthood or religious life." She went on to clarify the role of the college saying, "...[W]e are a post-secondary college that offers an excellent, integrated liberal arts education from a Catholic perspective."

As the college went from being an academy to a degree-granting college, there was also the need to upgrade people's understanding of what the Seat of Wisdom offers to the students. Schintgen said, "Another misconception is that we offer only one type of degree or certificate. Actually, we offer something for everyone: a one-year certificate in Christian Humanities that can serve as a foundation year for any further studies or future path in life, or even a gap year; a two-year program with pathways to other programs such as psychology and business at other Christian universities; a three-year Bachelor of Catholic Studies that provides a well-rounded liberal arts education; and a new four-year Bachelor of Arts with a choice of three majors: history, literature, and classical and early-Christian studies."

Despite increasing the breadth and depth of what it offers to students, the college continues to operate on a very tight budget of only about \$2.8 million per year. This small purse puts pressure on many aspects of the college, especially the staff and faculty who work there. However, with necessity being the mother of invention, the narrow margins they must operate within also encourage collaboration and innovation among all those involved in the college.



Despite operating on a shoestring budget, the college does pump a substantial amount into the local economy by its mere presence in the area. Students and faculty need housing, they purchase food and other necessities locally and many students have part-time jobs at local companies who might otherwise struggle to attract reliable staff.

In 2021, Renfrew County did an economic impact analysis of Seat of Wisdom College. This public document is available on the college's website seatofwisdom.ca. It states: "[Seat of Wisdom's] economic contribution is extremely significant for local businesses and services...the school provides an economic stimulus during the fall, winter and spring months, a typically slower business time of year for this cottage country and tourism-oriented town."

In addition to the financial impact that students and staff have on the region, the report also credits the college with some secondary contributions. The report states: "Throughout the year, with students being dropped off and picked up during semesters as well as for various events like homecoming and the annual play, the college attracts approximately 460 visitors annually, most of which come for at least one overnight stay. Using the Ontario Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM), these visits are estimated to contribute a total of over \$47,000 to the local economy."

Thanks to the multiple economic streams through which the college supports local businesses, the combined total is significant. Referring to the county's report, Schintgen said, "The study found that Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College contributes about \$2.3 million to the local economy every year. That number would be higher now, thanks to inflation."

Schintgen was also keen to recognize the cultural impact that the college has on this rural community. She said, "We also do a number of things to contribute to the local culture, such as put on a yearly drama production and offer musical performances. Some students volunteer in seniors' homes and other places, and also read, sing, and serve in the local parishes. We recently held a charity yard sale that raised nearly \$2,000 for the Madawaska Valley Food Bank! We love being situated in the Madawaska Valley, and we hope to keep building a positive relationship with the local community and the diocese."

An Icon for our times arrives in Pembroke

By Katrina Boguski

Recently, Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Pembroke commissioned an icon called “Holy Motherhood.” The icon, depicting Jesus, Mary and St. Anne, was received by Fr. Holly at Madonna House and taken to the Shrine of St. Ann in Cormac before going to its final home in Pembroke.

The tradition of creating icons, known as “writing icons,” goes back to the early history of the Church, and this particular icon was written by Madonna House member Marysia Kowalchuk.

Kowalchuk has been writing icons since 1994, and this particular work took her somewhere between 300 and 400 hours to complete. It measures approximately 26” X 36” and was created using traditional materials such as egg tempera. The iconographer said that this substance is made by mixing egg yolk with a little water and vinegar and then combining dry natural pigments from the earth. Kowalchuk explained, “This is a centuries-old, traditional method of writing icons dating back to the early centuries. Although some iconographers now use acrylic, most iconographers prefer the luminosity of egg tempera.”

While the tradition may be ancient, the important theme of a mother’s influence extending from one generation to the next has never been more relevant. While grandparents have always played an important role in passing on the faith, in many families today, grandparents may be the only witness to faith some young people have. Even in situations where things look bleak, grandmothers can exercise a substantial power over a future generation. Although communication over matters of faith may have broken down or turned hostile in some settings, grandparents can still influence young people by their good example and by their unrelenting



Fr. Ryan Holly with Madonna House Iconographer Marysia Kowalchuk.

prayer. While grandparents may not always live to see their prayers answered, they can still lay a faith foundation that will impact many future generations.

The work of writing an icon also begins with a solid foundation. While the faithful are drawn to enter into contemplation by gazing upon the finished work, that final image can only exist after careful preparation of the wood beneath it. Kowalchuk originally began by preparing boards herself but said in recent years, she has been getting her boards from a very good craftsman. Kowalchuk said, “Basswood is one of the preferred woods to use since it is non-resinous. If the icon is large (like the Holy Motherhood icon) several pieces are laminated together and most often braced on the back with a hardwood like oak.” On the surface to be painted, a linen cloth or type of cheesecloth is applied with rabbit skin glue, then up to 10 layers of gesso (usually calcium carbonate with rabbit skin glue) are applied. This is then sanded to give an extremely smooth white surface.”

Kowalchuk’s practice of using boards prepared by others provides a strong metaphor for another way in which the holiness of motherhood might be approached in our times, especially for those women who have not been blessed with grandchildren of their own. If unable to experience the joy of being a grandparent to their own descendants, mothers can still help lay the faith foundation by spiritually adopting children who may have no parents or grandparents to pray for them. The number of young people in this category grows with every day, and there is no shortage of people who would benefit from such an intervention. Without a basic foundation, it is hard to build a life of stability and joy.

After the foundation of the icon has been prepared, Kowalchuk then traces onto the white surface a drawing she has prepared ahead of time. It is only after all of this preparation that the icon then begins to take its form; and this process is also intricate and demanding of patience.

Kowalchuk said, “For the halos and sometimes the whole background, 23K gold leaf is applied using a special glue called “mixtion. With this done, I can begin applying the pigments using the egg yolk emulsion. The darkest colours are laid on, then lighter areas created to give definition. These light areas become smaller and smaller. Symbolically, this is creating light over and out of darkness [as] God [did in his own creation]. The very final highlights are usually white or almost white.”



Unlike some other works of art, the process of writing icons is a highly spiritual one and the traditions surrounding them are passed down from one iconographer to another. Kowalchuk said, “Icons were the original form of sacred images in the early Church. Until about the 14th century, religious images throughout the Church were iconographic; [they were] symbolic rather than realistic. This symbolism is meant to portray the spiritual realities and draw one into the spiritual or divine. Icons are often called ‘Windows into Heaven.’”

Kowalchuk noted that eventually the Western part of the Church and world began moving into more and more realistic images. She said, “Think of Michelangelo’s figures in the Sistine Chapel.” She further explained, “The Eastern part of the Church, Eastern Europe, the Middle East [and] Russia...guarded the tradition of icons very diligently. It seems the Western Church is slowly beginning to appreciate and honour this ancient tradition.”

In the Pembroke Diocese, the tradition of icon writing is alive and well thanks to the many iconographers like Kowalchuk who learned their practice through their association with Madonna House. As a local community, Madonna House offers members, guests and associate priests the possibility of experiencing many Eastern spiritual traditions. These traditions came not only from the eastern roots of their foundress, Catherine Doherty, but also through the influence of Nobel Prize nominee Archbishop Raya, whose Melkite traditions still impact the art and liturgy of Madonna House.

Madonna House Gift Shop celebrates 60 years

By Katrina Boguski

In the age of online marketing, good retail shops with quality merchandise and outstanding customer service can be hard to find. Still fewer are those stores offering sustainably sourced products. Add to this mix the fact that the money from the sale of goods goes to support those in need, and it is clear to see why the Madonna House Gift Shop has been a favourite destination for Catholics visiting the Madawaska Valley since the doors opened in May 1964.

The store did not start out to become a popular tourist destination, but often when you do good work, word spreads quickly. As the old adage says, “Word of mouth is the best form of advertising.” Madonna House founder Catherine Doherty was known for her “chitchat apostolate.” With these roots, it is easy to see why word about the gift stop has spread, literally around the world, and why it has taken up such a special place in the hearts of so many shoppers.

In a reflection from 2014 commemorating the shop’s 50th anniversary, Madonna House member Carolyn Desch wrote, “Madonna House Gift Shop it is truly a Mission Shop. The money goes to missionaries all over the world. The needs are so great that they can never begin to fill them all. We continue to do what we can with a lot of help from our friends and benefactors. We especially rely on the help of the Mother of God, who keeps the shelves filled and keeps us motivated to pass on the wealth and beauty that come to us. Though we advertise the shop in various ways, our greatest advertisement continues to be by word of mouth. Friends tell friends and they become our friends at the Gift Shop. We pass on that friendship to many dedicated missionaries around the world.”

According to Desch, the building that houses the gift shop was originally designed and built by Madonna House men staff and volunteers. From its earliest days, the store has been a place to buy quality artisanal arts and crafts made by members of Madonna House. Often these works are made using supplies sourced locally from their farm or gardens. Other supplies are made available thanks to the generosity of supportive donors. The list of items made and sold by Madonna House staff varies depending on the time of year and the demands of the apostolate, but at any given time may include exquisite pottery, pysanki, candles, wood carvings, and textiles such as knitting and felting.



Madonna House Member Flora Jeon (left) will become the department head of the gift shop when the current department head Linda Owen steps down at the end of the year.

The one-of-a-kind treasures made by Madonna House member Michael Amaral disappear quickly from the shelves when they are available. Amaral’s creations include “lampetta” candleholders made from upcycled aerosol cans and artsy airplanes made from sparkplugs and cutlery. At first, these items catch the eye for their beauty and craftsmanship. Once you realize what they are made from, they capture the imagination and offer inspiration for other ways in which surplus materials might be repurposed. Catherine Doherty’s vision of “restoring all things to Christ” takes on a tangible meaning when looking at Amaral’s work and the work of many other Madonna House members who use their talents to create gifts for the shop.

Cards, calendars and books from Madonna House Publications are available for those wishing to learn more about the Madonna House Spirituality. These books include not only the works of Catherine and Eddie Doherty, but also those of many other Madonna House members who have explored more deeply their teachings and teachings of the Church. Many members breathe deeply from “both lungs” of the Church, so writings and art include those which have been influenced by a variety of Byzantine traditions as well as the Roman rite.

Over the years, the shop also has collected a substantial inventory of religious objects, antiques, curios, jewellery and one-of-a-kind items. Initially, there was a steep learning curve as staff and volunteers had to be taught how to identify and care for the many sorts of expensive treasures that came through the door. This learning was often facilitated by friends and visitors with a discerning eye for authentic items. Still, the range of items donated over the years means that experts in a variety of fields need to be consulted from time to time in order to appreciate the value of the goods donated.

One example of some rare inventory is the collection of very valuable lace that was donated. These specimens of high-quality handmade lace may only be appreciated by lace aficionados and collectors.

At present, the shop is open from the May long weekend until Thanksgiving on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 1-4 p.m. However, these hours may be subject to change based on the availability of staff and other demands of the Madonna House Apostolate. For updated gift shop hours and for more information on other aspects of Madonna House, checkout Madonnahouse.org.

Parish Profile

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Braeside

The community of Braeside came into being due to the location of the McLaughlin Brothers sawmill. The Catholics amongst the mill and bush workers originally joined with the congregation of Sand Point to worship until 1938, when Father Michael Wingle was tasked with planning a church at Braeside dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

During Father Wingle's absence as a chaplain for the R.C.A.F., he was replaced by Father Thomas May. After his return, Fr. Wingle spent a year at Braeside before being assigned as pastor of St. Joseph's, Allumette Island, in 1947. In the same year, Father May returned to Braeside as administrator. In need of a residence, he and a local carpenter set to work constructing a rectory using donated materials. Once it was completed in the Fall of 1948, he directed his attention to the church hall, removing the ground floor of the drive sheds and horse stalls and lowering the second floor to ground level—which was no small feat!

Father Michael J. Hass was the next administrator from 1954 to 1957, followed by Rev. Louis Casartelli, who was responsible for building the Separate School.

In 1960, the churches of Sand Point and Braeside were returned to the jurisdiction of the pastor of St. John Chrysostom, Arnprior, with only Sand Point open in the summertime.



In 1978, Father Howard Chabot became the parish priest. With the establishment of Gilles Bros. Lumber Mill, the community flourished and Braeside parish was reopened with Sand Point as its mission church.

Father Chabot oversaw renovations on the church and the rectory, as well as remodelling of the sanctuary with carpeting and new light fixtures. The vacated one-room school was repurposed as a parish centre, where parish events were held.

A celebration was held in 1979 for the 40th anniversary of the building of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. On his departure

in 1980, Fr. Chabot noted that “the parish developed a sense of identity and exhibited many signs of spiritual growth.”

He was succeeded by Rev. P. Brady McNamara who directed landscaping of the church grounds.

After Rev. J.F. O'Malley took over, plans were initiated in 1985 for the construction of a new church, hall and rectory due to safety concerns with the older churches at both Braeside and Sand Point.

Statues and the bell from the first Braeside church as well as two stained glass windows from the St. Alexander, Sand Point church were brought to the new church. The official blessing took place in June 1987 by Bishop Windle.

At the time, Father O'Malley commented on parish growth and interest in parish activities such as a monthly ecumenical gathering, an active youth group, men's and women's scripture study groups, and a CWL.

In 2012, a 25th anniversary celebration (of the 1979 church rebuild) took place shortly after a refurbishment of the church interior. A new altar and lectern were donated by parishioner Jane Tremblay in memory of her late husband, Michael. One of the key features was its barrier-free accessibility, notes Father Ryan, Pastor at the time. “It was a very good design for its time and drew people from the surrounding area.”

Father Ryan confirms that Father Chabot's words still ring true for the parish – there is a strong church community, with an active CWL that is well-known for its annual church supper, and good attendance at Sunday Mass (at 10:30 a.m.).



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Memorable anniversary and reunion

By Jane Carroll

Saturday, June 22 was a special occasion for many former graduates of St. Mary's Teachers College (SMTC) to return to the old St. Joseph's Convent in Chapeau. Although these places of learning are no longer in existence as such the reason was twofold; a reunion of graduates from 1955–1966, as well as the 100th anniversary of the convent in Chapeau.

The Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in the Diocese of Pembroke in 1921. Shortly after, Father Anthime Renaud sent a young priest, Rev. D.J. Harrington, to request the community to open a mission in Chapeau and the rest is history.

Following many setbacks and persistent requests, dedicated people, etc., things moved on in 1924 for both English and French students. The convent housed high school and normal school boarders from many distant places. Through all these times the Sisters of St. Joseph mothered, nourished, and taught in elementary, high school, normal school and lastly St. Mary's classes. In later years they were joined by several priests and lay persons. The Sisters also served in other capacities—music teachers, choir directors, organists, sacristans and, most importantly, cooks for the many persons in their care.



Back row: Andre Pilon, Daniel Donlan, Denzel Spence, Brian Sarsfield, David Maloney
Next row: Grace Sullivan McGuire, Kay Sullivan Ranger, Margaret Sullivan, Sandra Herault Mousseau, Anne Johnston Beriau, Clara Keon O'Brien, Lois Adams Parkinson. First step: Colleen Dunnigan Donlan, Jackie Isabelle Collin, Mary Dugan Lavoie, Elenaore Kelly Keon, Marion Morin Perry, Mary Theresa Berrigan Kidd, Front row: Gerard Venasse, Marilyn Conroy, Angie Kibee Retty, Jane Carroll, Loella Waters Gagnon

The Sisters remained after the closure of St. Mary's in 1969 and the building went on to serve many other purposes. St. Joseph's Centre was a meeting place for small groups and organizations in the diocese. The history of the Community in Chapeau reached its finality in 1999 and the remaining Sisters moved to the Motherhouse in Pembroke. A story of commitment, dedication and love... we were so fortunate!

This reunion celebrated many friendships and recollections of happy times in years gone by. A tour of parts of the old SMTC, which are now parts of the high school, was given, but we will always remember it the way it used to be! Our thanks are extended to all those who made this day possible. In the words of Sister M. Edwin, "I honestly feel that SMTC will not cease to exist but rather live on in loving memory in the lives of its graduates."

NORTHERN ONTARIO CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 22, 2025

in North Bay, Ontario
For ages 13–19

Featuring Keynote Speaker Paul J. Kim

<https://www.pjkmusic.com/>

Paul J. Kim is one of the most sought-after Catholic youth and young adult speakers in America. The way he presents is a rare gift to witness and has impacted people of all ages in 48 states and in 16 countries over the past decade. Moving his audiences from laughter in one moment to deep reflection and prayer in another, Paul utilizes his many talents (i.e., music – beatboxing, comedy, inspirational talks) to communicate the Gospel message of Christ to people in a way that is engaging, entertaining, and altogether life-changing.

For more information on how to register and transportation from the Diocese of Pembroke to this event, contact Yvette at yvettebourque@pembrokediocese.com.



Pilgrimage to the shrines of Quebec

By Father Réal Ouellette

On June 10, 11 and 12, a group of 48 pilgrims took the bus to go and pray at various shrines in Quebec. The idea of a pilgrimage lasting a few days was not the first of its kind for me. In 2018, I made a similar pilgrimage from Fort-Coulonge. This time, it was organized with the parish of St. James the Less in Eganville. Although organized by the parish, the group was made up of people from all over the diocese, and even a few from other dioceses.

After a few hours on a chartered bus, our first stop was the Ste-Kateri-Tekakwitha Shrine in Kahnawake, where we celebrated Mass right next to the tomb of Saint Kateri. It was an emotional experience to be able to pray to this courageous local saint. Our second stop was to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy (housed at Paroisse St-Nazaire in Montreal). There, we were also able to venerate a first-class relic of Saint Faustina, as well as a few other relics, including one of Saint Padre Pio.

The next day, our morning schedule was disrupted when the Notre-Dame-du-Cap Shrine was unable to accommodate us. By a happy twist of Providence, we were able to substitute a pilgrimage to the Holy Door (at Quebec Cathedral), which is open this year for the 350th anniversary of their diocese. The Lord knows how to do things well. This last-minute change brought some very special graces, including the possibility of a plenary indulgence.

Our Tuesday concluded with Mass and a candlelight procession at the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. It's always impressive to visit this grandiose holy place, which is nonetheless a simple parish church.

On the way back, we made a stop at St Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. Unfortunately, we couldn't get there in time for Mass, so the pilgrims simply visited at their own pace this place inspired by Saint Brother André's devotion to the venerable Saint Joseph.

Although listing these visits in a few words may sound like a rushed pilgrimage, spreading it out over three days allowed time to really experience an enriching spiritual journey.

I would like to organize such a pilgrimage every year, visiting mainly the shrines of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Notre-Dame-du-Cap and St. Joseph's Oratory, with a few other lesser-known but equally beautiful sites. The 2025 pilgrimage (date as yet unknown) will be a bilingual pilgrimage (French –English), this time organized by the Paroisse St-Jean-Baptiste (my new parish).



Celebrating 150 Years – pilgrimage to Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré

Excerpts from a presentation by Mike Budge,
Volunteer Director

The 150th Anniversary of the Annual Pilgrimage to Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré and the 60th year to Our Lady of the Cape from the Dioceses of Ottawa-Cornwall, Pembroke, Mont-Laurier, Kingston, and Gatineau was celebrated on August 10-11, 2024. This gathering brought together over 300 pilgrims, along with many others from Québec and the Côte de Beaupré, all united by a common desire to experience and participate in this profound spiritual journey.

As our journey began, everything seemed to be going smoothly. However, as we approached the exit to Our Lady of the Cape, challenges arose. Highway 40 East was unexpectedly closed, turning our route into a bumper-to-bumper stretch of vehicles. Despite the delays, our spirits remained high, with Archbishop Terrance Prendergast aboard bus 3, ready to lead us in prayer.

We arrived just minutes before 11 a.m., only to discover that the entire region was experiencing a power outage. Archbishop Prendergast was robed and prepared to proceed with mass, with no microphone or organ, but as we were about to begin, security urgently evacuated us due to a fire in the basilica.

In the midst of the chaos, I suggested to Archbishop Prendergast that we celebrate mass at the little shrine, the first one built over 300 years ago. The word spread quickly, and within minutes, everything was set up. The shrine was filled to capacity, with over 300 people, including tourists, joining us. With no power, no lights, and only the pure, unamplified voice of our cantor, the mass was profoundly beautiful. It was a testament to the strength of our faith, which shone even brighter in the face of adversity.

After an early departure from the cape, we arrived at the Shrine of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, where pilgrims were able to find rest and solace in their hotels.

The evening mass, celebrated by Bishop Yvan Mathieu and concelebrated with Archbishops and Bishops: Terrence, Guy, Pierre, Damphousse, Father Jacques Fortin, President of the Shrine, Father André Morency, Rector of the Shrine and in attendance Cardinal Lacroix was a deeply a moving experience. The candlelight procession that followed was a poignant reminder of the love and devotion we all share for Mary, our beloved Grandmother, and Jesus.

On July 3, 1960, a moment of profound grace unfolded at the Shrine of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré as the MAJOR RELIC—Ste-Anne's sacred right forearm bone—was bestowed upon the shrine by Blessed Pope John XXIII, now honored as Pope St. John XXIII. This cherished relic, a symbol of enduring faith and divine connection, rests in solemn repose behind the miraculous statue of Ste-Anne in the basilica.

Every evening, with reverent care, the relic is withdrawn from its altar and securely enfolded in the sanctuary of the Redemptorist Monastery, shielded from public view. Its rare appearances in the light of day are reserved for moments of exceptional sanctity.

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Annual Pilgrimage, a rare and heartfelt request was made to the President of the Redemptorist Province of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré: to allow each member of the

pilgrimage committee, alongside the Bishops, the sacred privilege of touching this revered relic. This divine gesture was granted, and in that hallowed moment, each individual was touched by the profound holiness of Ste-Anne, connecting deeply with the spiritual heritage of the pilgrimage and the sacred legacy it upholds.

The following day, we continued our journey with Mary's Way of the Cross, a bilingual celebration that nearly filled the crypt at the Immaculate Conception. The Sunday Solemn Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Lacroix and concelebrated by a host of Archbishops and Bishops, was a powerful culmination of our pilgrimage. Our time together concluded with a banquet where we shared a meal, gifts presented to our Committee Members and volunteers from Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, and reflected on the incredible journey we had undertaken.



Mass of St. Anne, on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at 7 pm, celebrated by Bishop Yvan Mathieu and followed by a candlelight procession.

84th Annual Pilgrimage to St. Ann Cormac

The 2024 St. Ann's Triduum Parish Mission was held from Thursday, July 25th, to Saturday, July 27th. A nightly Mass and homily by Fr. Ryan Holly in the church led up to the outdoor Solemn Mass at the shrine on the morning of Sunday, July 28th, and the Mass of Healing with anointing of the Oil of Saint Ann in the afternoon.

Father Holly spoke of the importance of continuing the tradition of the pilgrimage.

"Today we speak a great deal about evangelization in our current context and culture. The pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Ann is an extraordinary gift and public witness of faith in our own diocese. It comes from a lived tradition of faith in Christ and devotion to his grandmother, St. Ann, and the Blessed Mother. I have been long convinced that, as a diocese, we must ensure this venerable tradition continues for generations to come," he said.



Fr. Holly added, "The Cormac pilgrimage is something that we cannot overlook. At a time when church attendance and the practice of the faith may appear to be declining, we have this annual spiritual gathering that attracts so many families and young adults. That should tell us something about the spiritual hunger that still exists in this very fast world."



He also pointed out that "One of the most visible signs of God's healing at work on pilgrimage Sunday is in the large number of people who seek out the Sacrament of Confession. That's where the real miracles take place. God's mercy at work in the Sacrament allows people to know that they are forgiven and loved by God."

Walk the Opeongo Line to St. Ann's Shrine

By Fr. Scott Murray

On July 25th, over 60 pilgrims set out from Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Renfrew on the 67 km walking pilgrimage along the Opeongo Line to St. Ann's Shrine, Cormac. The pilgrimage always begins and ends with Mass, because the liturgy is the "source and summit of the Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). The Mass gives us the spiritual food – the Eucharist – to sustain us on our journey, and the Mass is a foretaste of heaven – the summit to which we all must climb.

In addition to the spiritual food that gives transcendent meaning to the pilgrimage, there is also the physical food that forms an integral part of the pilgrimage experience. The various groups (Renfrew CWL, Mt. St. Patrick volunteers, Heritage House volunteers, and Knights of Columbus from Renfrew, Killaloe, and Pembroke) outdid themselves once again with meals that left pilgrims speechless, until they had eaten their fill, at which time they overflowed with gratitude for the generosity and hospitality shown to them. Hospitality – both the giving and the receiving – is a defining characteristic of true pilgrimage. Jesus says, "And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mt. 10:42). It is a humbling experience to



entrust yourself to the care of others for several days and to be overwhelmed by their generosity.

Of course, there are many other elements, both spiritual and physical, that combine to build a beautiful pilgrimage. The daily Mass is the focal point of the day; however, there are other times and ways to pray. There are opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacrament of Confession, praying the Rosary, or other devotions in groups or individually while walking or resting. At the rest stops along the route – roughly every 5 km – locals offer their front yards as a meeting place for pilgrims to take a break, refill their water bottles, use the portable toilets being transported in a trailer, have a snack, and receive more hospitality! The combination of their hospitality with the generosity of volunteers tending to practical matters (baggage truck, route signs, portable toilets, water, picking up exhausted pilgrims,



etc.) is what allows pilgrims to set out on the journey only really having to worry about two things: keeping an open heart and taking care of their feet.

Once again, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers who make the pilgrimage possible. I also want to thank the pilgrims for their participation. It is an incredible gift to see so many set out on pilgrimage offering their time, energy, bodies and souls to God: "For you know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Perina's Christmas cards

Cards for Chalice

Dear Chalice,

I'm a 15-year-old Catholic girl, and I live in Combermere, Ontario. I regularly read Chalice news and I am always so heartbroken to see the children in their extreme poverty. Despite this, all those children have such beautiful smiles. It was this, and my love for the poor, that led me to create Christmas cards to sell and raise some money to give these children some additional Christmas joy and hope.

I painted five scenes: a tree with lights; Mother Mary with baby Jesus; angels singing around his manger; families carolling with joyous hearts; and an old church in the woods bedecked with Christmas decorations.

So many people helped make my project possible. My parents encouraged me and aided me with scanning, layout and finding a printer. My sister, Teresa, was always so helpful. When the local printer found out what the project was about, he gave me a charitable discount. My brothers and sisters helped me by pairing the cards with envelopes, putting them into packages, and selling them to friends and neighbours at social functions and after Mass.

I was inspired by what Mother Teresa calls the Gospel on five fingers: "Truly I say to you, whatever you do for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, You did it for me."

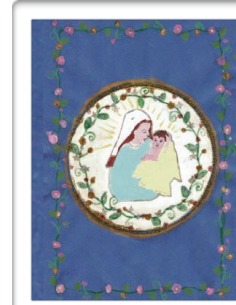
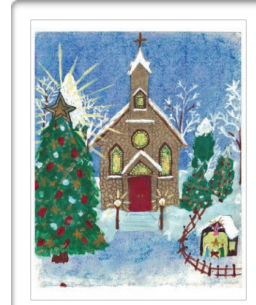
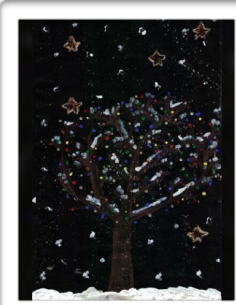
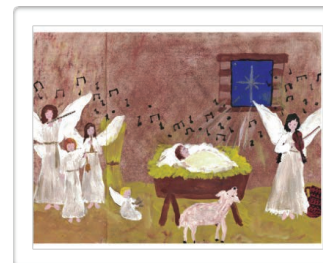
I sold 30 packages of cards, each package for \$20. There were 10 cards in each package. There were some people who, when they heard about why I was selling these cards, gave an extra donation. After covering the cost of printing, I was able to raise \$400 to help these poorest of the poor.

May God bless all of you at Chalice and may your hearts be full of God's love.

Sincerely,

Perina Baklinski

MERRY
Christmas



Sample Christmas cards created by Perina.

Editor's note: for more information about Chalice, visit: <https://chalice.ca/about>



Perina with some of the cards she created



Perina with some of her siblings putting packages of cards together.

How fully has God revealed himself in Jesus?

By Fr. Michael Smith

“For in the mystery of the Word made flesh a new light of your glory has shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that, as we recognize in him God made visible, we may be caught up through him in love of things invisible.”

-Roman Missal, Preface I of the Nativity of the Lord

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9)

Introduction: A paradox

This question presents us with a paradox, an apparent contradiction. On the one hand, in Jesus, God has done the maximum in order to make Himself known to us. It is possible for us to know God and to live in union with God, even in this life. On the other hand, the mystery of God remains a mystery. There is so much that remains “invisible,” as the Preface of the Nativity says above.

How can both be true?

The knowledge of the mind

There is no limit to God’s self-revelation. God has revealed Himself for the sake of our salvation, eternal life, and resurrection in union with Jesus. The limit is not in God’s capacity to reveal; the limit, rather, is in our capacity, at least in this life, to receive divine revelation. At St. Thomas Aquinas puts it, “[W]e cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not, we have no means for considering how God is, but rather how He is not. [...] Now it can be shown how God is not, by denying Him whatever is opposed to the idea of Him.” *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 3, intro.

When we speak of God as spirit, as eternal, as wise, we are denying of God the limitations of being material, time-bound, and being limited in wisdom as humans are. To speak of God’s goodness and wisdom is, at the same time, to deny the limits of goodness and wisdom that are found in this present world.

Our words about God, as can be seen above, are used with extended meanings. We identify qualities that we have experienced in this present life, and we then deny of God the limitations in these qualities that are also part of our experience. Human language about God, even the most sophisticated and subtle theological language, invariably points to mystery. It does not put God in a box. If ever we think that we have encapsulated God within a series of verbal formulae, then we have created idols. In our experience of life, God has a way of smashing our idols one by one.

This does not mean that we must be silent about God. Language about God can be true to the extent that it points reliably to the divine mystery; it can be false to the extent that it deviates from that mystery and points us in another direction.

Nothing of what has just been said is intended to be anti-intellectual. Rather, the human mind is a great gift, and we must use our minds for God’s glory and our neighbour’s good. The problem, rather, is that when we seek God on the level of the mind, we soon bump up against the limits of what the human mind can know. As St. John Paul II writes in his Encyclical *Fides et ratio* (On Faith and Reason), this confrontation with the limits of human reason forces us to make a choice: beyond what our minds can know, there is either infinity or nothingness. To opt for the existence of infinity is a first step toward making an act of faith.

The knowledge of the heart

“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5:5)

As we have seen, the human ability to know God with the mind alone is severely limited. At this point, one would be tempted to conclude that there is an unbridgeable gap. The Good News is that, in Jesus, God has bridged that gap. In Jesus, we see the human face of God. In the human love of the Heart of Jesus, we are given a window into divine love of that same Heart.

What is impossible for the mind to fathom has become possible on the level of the heart. By ‘heart’ is meant the very depths of our soul, the centre of our being, the deepest and truest part of ourselves. It does not necessarily involve “feelings.” At this deep level, intimacy with God, and even union with God, is possible even in this life, thanks to Jesus. This is not something that we can achieve through our own strength. Rather, it is a Gift. The Gift is the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost, and poured into our hearts even now through Baptism and Confirmation. We receive the Holy Spirit in these two Sacraments, and it is then our task to develop this Gift and put it into action. We do this by frequenting the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, by an intentional spiritual life, and by “walking the walk” – by living the path of discipleship.

Conclusion

Both sides of the paradox are, thus, true. On the one hand, our minds, at least in this life, cannot grasp the mystery of God. On the other hand, God has reached out to us in Jesus, such that we are offered union with God in a union of love.



The Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Pembroke invites you to our Faith Formation Day

Location: Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Pembroke, ON

Time: 09:30 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. Mass and the day concluding at 2:00 p.m. (Lunch provided)

When: Saturday November 2, 2024 – All Souls Day

Who: A Formation Day open to everyone

Important Gathering – Call to Register

Special visit by Bishop Brehl, C.S.s.R., with guest speakers Father Michael Smith, Vicar General for the Diocese of Pembroke, Pierre- Alain Giffard, Director of Pastoral Work, Diocese of Pembroke, and Patrick Sullivan, Office of New Media and Evangelization. Registration is necessary. Please contact Deacon Adrien Chaput at the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation at (613) 732-7933 ext. 206 or dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com by October 31, 2024.

Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis: Canada's newest saint visited Pembroke in 1902

By Rev. G. Ryan Holly

Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis, canonized by Pope Francis on October 20, is not only added to the list of Canadian saints, but one with special ties to the Diocese of Pembroke. Born in 1849 in L'Acadie, Quebec, Marie-Léonie entered religious life with the Marianite Sisters of Holy Cross, whose charism was to serve in institutions established by priests and men religious. Sister Marie-Léonie taught in Varennes, Ville Saint-Laurent and in Saint-Martin de Laval, New York, Indiana, Michigan and Memracook, New Brunswick. It was during this last assignment that Sister Marie-Léonie developed sewing workshops for Acadian women attracted to consecrated life. Eventually she felt drawn to establish a new community that would focus on the spirituality of the Holy Family of Nazareth and tangibly seek to support the ministry of priests. With great assistance from the Holy Cross Fathers, this new religious institute was established formally in 1896 under the guidance of the Bishop of Sherbrooke, Quebec. The new community sought to provide administration of diocesan colleges and seminaries and eventually grew to support the work of local diocesan bishops in Quebec, Ontario, and New England.

After many years of overseeing the Vicariate of the Pontiac, Bishop Lorrain shepherded the formal establishment of the Diocese of Pembroke in 1898. Four years later in 1902, the first Bishop of the Diocese began regular correspondence

with Mother Marie-Léonie about the possibility of her new community coming to reside in the newly constructed Bishop's Residence in Pembroke. Mother Marie-Léonie agreed to personally make a visit to Pembroke to examine the needs. Bishop Lorrain noted in his diary that Mother Marie-Léonie made this recognizance visit to the Bishop's House in Pembroke between November 4–7, 1902.

The arrival of the Sisters did not happen immediately. Mother Marie-Léonie's continued correspondence with Bishop Lorrain focused on many practical details, such as the provision of an addition on to the Bishop's House to accommodate the needs of the Sisters. At one point the foundress of this new community informed Bishop Lorrain that she was receiving more requests than she had Sisters. Eventually Mother Marie-Léonie was able to accede to the invitation of Bishop Lorrain and in 1904 the first members of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family took up residence at the Bishop's House in Pembroke. The quiet and diligent presence of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family at the Cathedral continued until 1995 when the Sisters returned to the Motherhouse in Sherbrooke.

At present, the Little Sisters maintain their original presence in Sherbrooke, Quebec, but their larger communities exist in Honduras and Guatemala, where the mission of the institute continues.

Saint Marie-Léonie died in 1912 and was beatified forty years ago in 1984 by Saint Pope



Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis

John Paul II during his historic visit to Canada. One hundred and twenty years after the first arrival of the Little Sisters to Pembroke in 1904, our diocese rejoices that this great friend of Bishop Lorrain, Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis, is now added to the list of other Canadian women and men who have been raised to the altars of sainthood.

A Mass of Thanksgiving in honour of the Canonization of Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis will be offered by the Most Reverend Michael Brehl, C.Ss.R. at St. Columbkille Cathedral, Pembroke, on Wednesday, November 4 at 12:10 p.m., the 122nd anniversary of Saint Marie-Léonie Paradis' visit to Pembroke. All are invited to attend.

CWL annual conventions: Spiritual, educational, and joy-filled encounters

Submitted by Pat Weller

Annual conventions are a highlight for The Catholic Women's League (CWL). They offer members an opportunity to rekindle friendships, share accomplishments, participate in liturgical programs, and be educated on issues of importance.

Pembroke Diocesan Council held its 103rd Annual Convention on May 25, co-hosted by the Chalk River and Deep River councils. Father Ryan Holly, Diocesan Administrator at the time, was guest speaker. He talked about change, both in the church and in the diocese. He spoke of the Church as "sacramental" and of our mission to go out into the world and proclaim the Word. These words tie directly to the CWL national theme, "Here I Am Lord, Send Me," as members

listen to God's call to carry their faith into the world. Also speaking to delegates was Provincial President Linda Squarzolo (2022–2024). Linda presented a workshop on the strengths and gifts of members and how these gifts can be used to complement the League's new structure.

With a new executive elected for the Ontario Provincial Council, this year's provincial convention in Sudbury gave members insight into the direction the provincial council will take over the next two years. Newly installed Provincial President Colleen Martin was inspired by Philippians 4:4 in which St. Paul encouraged followers of Christ to "rejoice in the Lord, always." Colleen envisions a "JOY" filled League, drawing new members to the CWL. She has chosen the sunflower as her symbol. Just as

the sunflower turns to the sun, members turn to Jesus Christ, the true light of the world.

The final convention of the year was the National Convention held in Saskatoon. A key outcome was the adoption of three new resolutions giving all members an opportunity to advocate for important social justice issues.

Women from across the Pembroke Diocese are invited to come and experience the joy of belonging to the League, and to be given a path to live out a faith-filled life based on Faith, Service and Social Justice. Under the guidance of Our Lady of Good Counsel, women of the CWL are listening to God's call, and with their God-given gifts, are saying, "Here I Am Lord, Send Me."