



# Ecclesia

The Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

Spring 2024

## How a bishop is named to a diocese

Originally printed in Ecclesia June 2007; updated January 2024

As the people of the Diocese of Pembroke learned that their bishop had been appointed Archbishop of Moncton, New Brunswick, many wonder how a new bishop would be chosen.

Who chooses a new bishop? The short answer is “The Holy Spirit.” Christ has not abandoned His Church and continues to guide and govern her through the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit uses human beings to accomplish this. Another correct answer is “the pope.”

While it is true that the pope can appoint any Catholic priest to be a bishop, the actual process usually involves many people. The process consists of two parts, first identifying priests with the necessary qualities, and secondly, selecting the one who best fills a specific vacancy. “We try to find the saint who fits the niche,” quipped Archbishop Pio Laghi, who once served as the Apostolic Delegate to the United States.

### Identifying the right priest

The process of identifying priests with the qualities desired in a bishop is an ongoing process, even when there are no vacancies. The bishops of a conference (the Catholic Church in Canada is divided into four assemblies: West, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic) give their archbishop the names of priests they think would make good bishops. The Diocese of Pembroke belongs to the Ontario Assembly. There are three archbishops in the Ontario Assembly in Ottawa, Toronto and Kingston. Our archbishop is Marcel Dampousse, Archbishop of Ottawa. The names of candidates passed on by a bishop are usually from his current diocese or from one where he has served, since these are the priests he knows best.

### The qualities of a bishop

The Church is very explicit about the qualities that must be present in a candidate to the episcopacy. He must be “a good pastor of souls and teacher of the Faith.” The Church examines whether candidates “enjoy a good reputation; whether they are of irreproachable morality; whether they are endowed with right judgment and prudence; whether they are even-tempered and of stable character; whether they firmly hold the orthodox Faith; whether they are devoted to the Apostolic See and faithful to the Magisterium of the Church; whether they have a thorough knowledge of dogmatic and moral theology and canon law; whether they are outstanding for their piety, their spirit of sacrifice and their pastoral zeal; whether they have an aptitude for governing.

Consideration is also given to “intellectual qualities, studies completed, social sense, a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, openness to the signs of the times, praise-worthy impartiality, family background, health, age and inherited characteristics.”

*continued on page 2...*

### Former Bishops of Pembroke



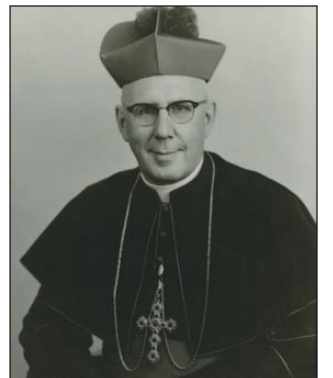
Bishop Narcisse Zephirin Lorrain  
Named Bishop of Pembroke: May 6, 1898



Bishop Patrick Thomas Ryan, DD  
Named Bishop of Pembroke: August 7, 1916



Bishop Charles Leo Nelligan  
Named Bishop of Pembroke: August 16, 1937



Bishop William Joseph Smith, D.D., J.D.C.  
Named Bishop of Pembroke: May 19, 1945

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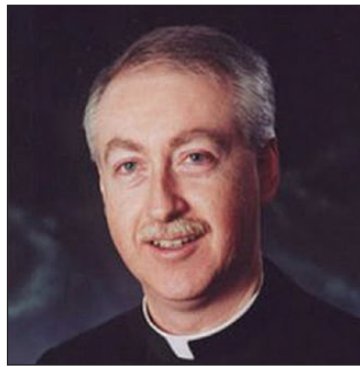
Our Wilno Call to Youth Ministry



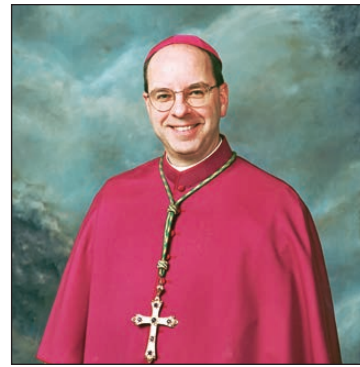
Bishop Joseph Raymond Windle, D.D.  
Named Bishop of Pembroke:  
February 15, 1971



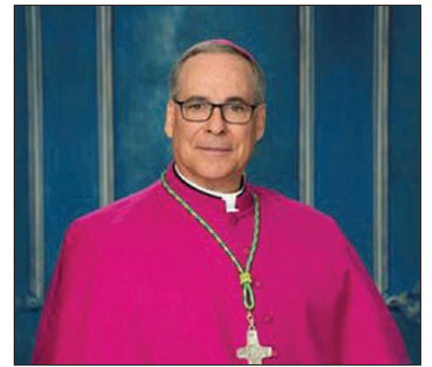
Bishop Brendan Michael O'Brien, S.T.D.  
Named Bishop of Pembroke:  
May 5, 1993



Bishop Richard William Smith  
Named Bishop of Pembroke:  
April 27, 2002



Bishop Michael Mulhall D.D.  
Named Bishop of Pembroke:  
June 30, 2007



Bishop Guy Desrochers, C.S.S.R.  
Named Bishop of Pembroke: May  
6, 2020

### The Assembly list

Periodically, the bishops of an area meet under the chairmanship of their archbishop to consider the names of priests who are possible candidates for the episcopacy. At this meeting, a list of candidates for the episcopacy is assembled, voted on and forwarded to the Apostolic Nuncio. While the nuncio could nominate for bishop someone not from this pool of candidates, and the pope could appoint any priest he wanted, most appointments come from these lists.

When a diocese becomes vacant, the second part of the process gets underway, the search to find the specific person who will fill a specific vacancy.

### The Apostolic Nuncio

A nuncio represents the Holy Father to both a country's civil government (as ambassador) and the Catholic Church in that country. The Most Rev. Ivan Jurkovic, originally from Slovenia, has been the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada since 2021.

When vacancies occur in Canadian dioceses and a diocesan ordinary (bishop) is being chosen (as opposed to an auxiliary bishop), the nuncio chooses several candidates to suggest to Rome from among the names that have been submitted. The nuncio's recommendations to Rome are based on his own extensive investigation of the needs of the diocese and each candidate's suitability for that particular diocese. For example, the Diocese of Pembroke is a small rural diocese that includes parts of both Ontario and Quebec. There are a few larger populated centres. The diocese represents the same faith and personnel challenges as a larger diocese.

During his investigation, the nuncio sends a confidential questionnaire on the candidate to people who know him. The questions address the physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social and priestly characteristics that one would hope for in a bishop. Those questioned include priests, religious and laity. Some are suggested by the candidate priest's diocesan bishop, others are diocesan officials or people

the nuncio has gotten to know personally. The laity consulted tends to be officers in diocesan lay organizations or on diocesan advisory committees. Each is told to answer the questions without consulting others. They cannot tell anyone, especially the candidate, that they have received the questionnaire.

### Nuncio's report

After the nuncio has examined the responses to the questionnaires, he prepares the "terna," a list of three candidates, and writes a report extracting and synthesizing the content of the consultation and giving his own judgment. The "terna" and the report are sent to the Dicastery for Bishops in Rome, and no bishop sees them unless he is a member of the Dicastery. The report gives a description of the diocese, describes the process the nuncio went through in selecting the candidates and gives the nuncio's recommendations.

### Dicastery for Bishops

When the nuncio's report arrives at the Dicastery for Bishops, the members discuss the appointment under the Chairmanship of the Prefect; the Dicastery then votes on the candidates and attaches its own recommendations to the report.

### The pope

The final step in the appointment process takes place when the prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops presents the nuncio's, the Dicastery's and his own recommendations to the pope in a private audience. The prefect summarizes the discussions of the Dicastery and reports any dissenting opinions. The pope may ask for more information about the candidates, or may even ask for other candidates to be proposed. In the end, however, the Pope, led by the Holy Spirit, makes the appointment.

### Notification and consent

After the pope makes his decision, the nuncio is notified, who then approaches the nominee and

asks if he will accept the appointment. When the candidate accepts, Rome is notified and a date is set for the announcement. Although the process normally takes four to eight months, it can be much shorter or much longer. The Diocese of Pembroke has, in the past, waited patiently for more than a year while the Holy Spirit led the Church to the best bishop possible – the "saint who fit the niche."

### In the meantime

After the bishop took possession of the Archdiocese of Moncton, the College of Consultors assumed the administration of the diocese and elected a Diocesan Administrator (Canons 419 and 421). Upon his election, the Diocesan Administrator assumes the administration of the diocese until a new bishop is installed or takes possession of the diocese (Canon 430). The Presbyteral (Priests') Council lapses until the tenth Bishop of Pembroke reconvenes it (Canon 501).

Until his installation in the Archdiocese of Moncton, Bishop Guy Desrochers was mentioned in the usual way during the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. After his installation on October 18, the prayer for him as diocesan bishop was suppressed in the Eucharistic Prayer. Meanwhile, until the new bishop of this diocese is appointed, may the Holy Spirit be active in the process of selecting our new bishop. May he be a man of deep faith, integrity, fidelity and compassion. Let us pray daily.

### Prayer for the election of our new bishop

*Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose the new Bishop for this Diocese of Pembroke, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Update from the Office of the New Media

By Fr. Réal Ouellette and Patrick Sullivan

In the days of modern media, video is king. Whether it is being used in long-form content like the series you watch on Netflix, medium-size content like the kind that pops up after a YouTube search, or even bite-sized videos like those that come as quickly as they disappear on various social media platforms; the rule holds, video wins.

This is why the Office of New Media of the Diocese of Pembroke is now turning its attention to video production. We want Catholics and even non-Catholics to encounter faith-filled and inspiring content in a format that they enjoy and are used to.

This is important.

If we cannot send our family and friends to a Catholic resource that is both easily digestible and enjoyable, then that makes our task of evangelizing all the more difficult.

So how do we do this?

**Rule number 1:** We go to where they already are and not to where we would prefer they be.

By accepting the fact that the majority of people today are on Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and TikTok, we can reasonably conclude two things. First, they find these platforms easy to access and relatively easy to navigate. Second, in all likelihood, they use these platforms because they enjoy the experience that they find there.

You see, if we are serious about evangelizing an entire diocese, then it is not good enough that we go where we want to be. If that were the case, I for one would gladly stay home.

Instead we must ask – on a consistent basis actually – where are the lost sheep? Because it is there that we must bring the Good News of Jesus.

**Rule number 2:** Do it *at least* as well as others on these platforms.

Right now, individuals and companies are spending millions of dollars trying to create videos so that Catholics and non-Catholics in our diocese watch them. Some of these videos and their messaging are not necessarily bad, they might even be good, while other videos and their themes are just downright evil.

The point, regardless, is that whatever the nature of the content might be, *the quality of the video itself* draws people in to take a closer look. And if the content is packaged poorly? Well, you can very well imagine how little watch time those videos receive.

**Rule number 3:** Build a solid foundation on a few platforms and then expand.

You may have already noticed that the Diocese of Pembroke has a Facebook account and a YouTube channel. On them, we post videos from our pastors across the diocese in which they provide encouragement during key moments in the life of the Church. We also go live from our beautiful cathedral, St. Columbkille, during special moments in the life of the diocese so that you, too, wherever you happen to live, can tune in and be united with your fellow Catholics. In other words, our Facebook account and YouTube channel are operational; the foundation has been laid.

Now comes the exciting part.



With your help, the Office of the New Media will be expanding its presence on these platforms by increasing the frequency of our seasonal messaging, so that you can hear from our priests more often.

We will be introducing a new video series that you can follow along weekly and receive inspiration to share the Gospel with others around you.

We will also be live streaming communal prayer across the diocese, so you can tune in daily to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Litany of the Parishes, the Rosary and more.

As you can see, we're taking our role to bring the Good News across the diocese quite seriously, and more than ever before, you're going to see us using quality video to do it.

So, if you haven't subscribed yet to the Diocesan YouTube channel or followed the Diocesan Facebook page, then please do so! Simply head over to our website ([pembrokediocese.com](http://pembrokediocese.com)) and click on the appropriate link to get started.

# Ecclesia



Diocese of Pembroke | Diocèse de Pembroke

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## New address of the Diocesan Chancery Office

In 2022, a major construction project was undertaken at the former diocesan chancery office and St. Columbkille's Cathedral Rectory (now "Cathedral House") on Renfrew Street in Pembroke. As part of the project, the 1960s-era chancery office was ultimately demolished.

### 1. Why was the chancery office at 188 Renfrew Street demolished?

A. There were many reasons for the demolition of the office building on Renfrew Street, among them, the condition of the building – many renovations and upgrades would have been required to bring the building up to standards. It was very inefficient – cold in the winter and hot in the summer, with extensive water leaks and damage. When the initial revitalization project at 188 Renfrew Street began, it was the intention to renovate the Chancery building. It soon became apparent that it would not be prudent to direct funds towards a building that was in such poor condition.

In addition to the challenges facing the building, it was not architecturally harmonious with the beauty of St. Columbkille's Cathedral and Cathedral House. Since demolition, many in the wider community have expressed their appreciation for the beautification of the Cathedral property.

### 2. Where is the chancery office located now?

A. From October 2021 until March 2023, diocesan staff temporarily worked out of a leased office at 545 Pembroke Street West while a decision was being made about a permanent location. After considering several options, the diocesan building and property committee made it a priority to try and utilize a church-owned property rather than make a new purchase. In 2023, Holy Name of Jesus Parish Rectory at 284 Trafalgar Road in Pembroke was re-purposed as the new chancery building. This kind of consolidation and cooperation was seen to be reflective of the realities facing parish communities at this time.

### 3. What is the function of the diocesan chancery?

A. The Chancery is the administration that handles all the written documents used in the official administration of the diocese. The chancery office coordinates the various aspects of diocesan life.

### 4. What offices are located/personnel work out of the chancery office?

A. The Bishop of Pembroke, vicar general, chancellor, finance and administration, religious education, youth and family life, evangelization initiatives, historical archives and the diocesan marriage tribunal.

The chancery office of the Diocese of Pembroke is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 4:30 (closed from 12:00 pm to 1 pm) and may be reached by phone at: 613-732-7933, by email: [reception@pembrokediocese.com](mailto:reception@pembrokediocese.com) or for a list of contacts, visit the website at: <https://pembrokediocese.com/contact/>

**Sunday, July 28, 2024**  
**84th Annual Pilgrimage**

**Shrine of St. Ann**  
**Cormac, Ontario**

**Thursday, July 25 ; Friday, July 26 ; Saturday July 27**  
7 p.m. : Mass & Homily in the church

**Sunday, July 28**  
11 a.m. Outdoor Solemn Mass  
2 p.m. : Mass of Healing & Anointing with St. Ann's oil

Please bring your own seating.  
No seating provided.  
[www.cormacpilgrimage.com](http://www.cormacpilgrimage.com)  
613-628-2020

On Highway 512 – between Eganville and Foymount

## Sharing the Gospel with the Kerygma

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

When it comes to evangelization, the Kerygma plays a crucial role. Derived from the Greek word meaning “proclamation,” it encapsulates the fundamental elements of the Christian message. The Kerygma serves as the bedrock for sharing the Gospel and invites individuals to enter into a personal and loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The Kerygma highlights the following key points:

- **The love of God for humanity:** God created humanity to live in fellowship with Him. (CCC n°1)
- **Sin and separation from God:** Sin is a reality that separates us from God. (Reconciliatio et Paenitentia n° 13)
- **Salvation offered by Jesus Christ:** Jesus Christ came to earth to save humanity from their sins. (Deus Caritas Est n° 12)
- **The call to conversion and faith:** We are called to repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ. (CCC n°1226)
- **Following Jesus:** To follow Jesus is to walk in His footsteps and with Him on a path of conversion and holiness. (Christifideles Laici n°16)

Here are some verses from the Bible that illustrate these points:

- **The love of God:**
  - Isaiah 43:4: “You are precious and honored in my sight, and I love you.”
  - 1 John 4:8: “God is love.”
  - Jeremiah 31:3: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”
- **Sin and separation from God:**
  - Isaiah 59:2: “your iniquities have separated you from your God;”
  - Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  - Romans 3:23-24: “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- **Salvation offered by Jesus Christ:**
  - Romans 5:8: “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
  - Ephesians 1:7: “In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”
  - John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

- **The call to conversion and faith:**

- Acts 17:30: “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”
- Romans 10:13: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- Acts 2:38: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

- **Following Jesus:**

- Matthew 22:37-39: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Mark 16:15-16: “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.’”
- 1 Peter 2:21: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”

### How to share the Gospel using the Kerygma?

When sharing the Gospel, we should approach others with prayer, sensitivity, compassion, and clarity asking God where the action of his Grace is. Here’s a concrete way of presenting the Good News and inviting others to entrust their life to God.

Start by sharing that all begins with a simple yet profound truth: “God loves you!”. But in our lives, we encounter the reality that the Bible confesses – we’ve all sinned. This separation from God brings with it pain and guilt, a burden that many of us carry. However, God offers us forgiveness. This forgiveness is not a distant concept but is personified in Jesus, God’s gift to us. Jesus died for you. Through Him, we can reconcile with God, experience His peace, and receive the hope of eternal life.

Consider entrusting your life to God. Open your heart to Jesus. I invite you to respond personally to God’s call. Let’s take a moment to acknowledge God’s love, our own sins, the gift of his forgiveness through Jesus and pray together...



### Here are different versions of a prayer we can ask people to repeat after us:

*“Heavenly Father, I’m sorry for my sins. I accept Jesus as my Savior and invite Him into my life.” I repent and trust in your mercy. Save me and lead me in your ways. Amen.”*

*“Jesus, I confess my sins and ask for your forgiveness. Come into my heart and be my Savior. Amen.”*

*“Heavenly Father, I come before you and thank you for your infinite love. I understand that I am precious in your eyes. I acknowledge the separation from you caused by my sins. I receive your forgiveness now and the gift of eternal life offered through the sacrifice of Christ. Come into my heart and guide me. Amen.”*

### Conclusion

The Kerygma is the heart of the Gospel, presenting God’s love and call to salvation. By proclaiming it, we give others the opportunity to be reconciled with God and begin a personal relationship with Jesus.

Once an individual responds to the Gospel, it is vital to guide them towards integration into a Catholic community. This transition from personal encounter to communal experience within the Church nurtures their relationship with Christ. The Church community provides support, guidance, and fellowship.

Integrating individuals in the Christian community involves:

- Welcoming and hospitality within the Church community.
- Providing catechesis to receive the sacraments of initiation.
- Offering spiritual guidance.
- Encouraging participation in ministries, service, and Church activities.

The Kerygma, in a concise manner, invites people to convert and develop a personal relationship with Christ, while also facilitating their integration into the Christian community.

# The Synod Unveiled: Unpacking the Synod's Synthesis Report of 2023

By Pierre-Alain Giffard, Director of pastoral work

In October 2023, the Synod on Synodality concluded its first general session, focusing on themes of a “Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.” Throughout the process, the synod emphasized the significance of listening to God and others as key to discernment and understanding. The term “listening” resonates as the core experience, both given and received, shaping the synodal journey.

This emphasis on listening extends to various aspects, including the discernment of mission, addressing controversial questions, and accompanying those who feel marginalized or excluded. The synod sees listening as a reflection of Christ's unconditional love, inviting all voices to be heard in the spirit of genuine dialogue and mutual respect.

The first general session explored themes such as synodality, communion, mission, and participation. Issues discussed included clerical sexual abuse, women's roles in the church, outreach to the poor, and the concept of synodality itself. Divergence exists on the issue of women's access to the diaconate. Some see it as discontinuous with tradition, while others view it as a restoration of early Church practice, or a response to contemporary needs.

Assembly members also discussed pastoral approaches to welcoming and including in the life of parishes people who have felt excluded, including the poor, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ Catholics and Catholics whose marriages are not recognized by the church.

The resulting synthesis report, titled “A Synodal Church on Mission,” is a summary of discussions during small-group and plenary sessions. The 42-page report covers 20 topics, including “Women in the Life and Mission of the Church” and “the Bishop of Rome in the College of Bishops.” Each topic presents “convergences,” “matters for consideration,” and “proposals” emerging from the discussions.

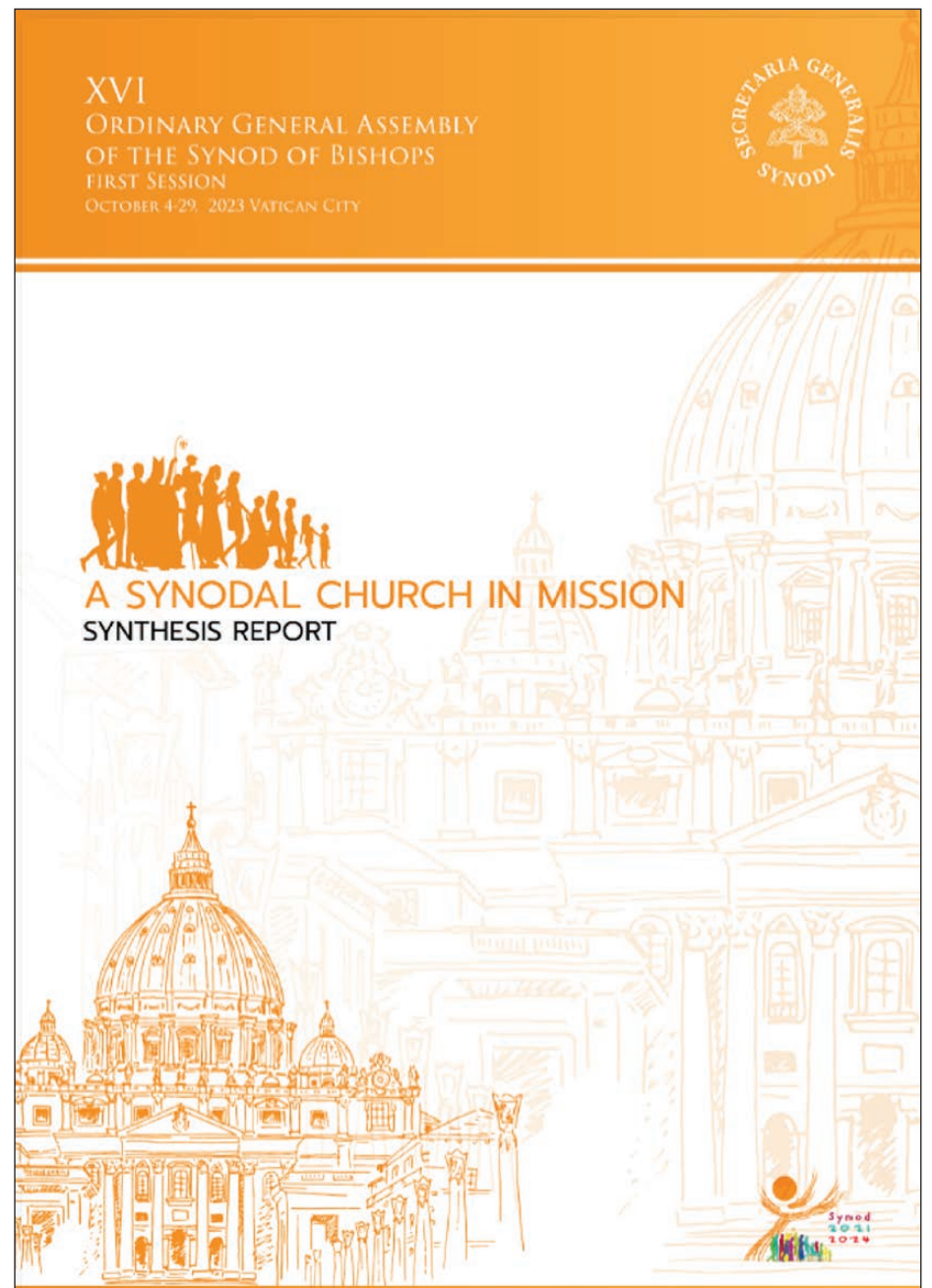
The synthesis report is an interim document, and the synod will continue with another session in Rome in October 2024. The report will go back to local churches (the dioceses) for further consideration and input, setting the stage for the final steps of the Synod on Synodality.

The synod emphasizes the importance of formation in authentic discipleship and calls for a mature exercise of the “*sensus fidei*” (the believers' sense of faith) rooted in baptism and lived in discipleship.

Recognizing the digital realm as a crucial dimension, the synod calls for intentional evangelization of digital spaces. It suggests engaging younger generations and forming “digital missionaries.”

The synod acknowledges the ongoing challenges of sexual abuse and the need for justice, healing, and reconciliation. It emphasizes a culture of transparency, respect for safeguarding procedures, and concrete gestures of penitence. It also proposes a new path for ecumenism, including the development of ecumenical martyrology. It highlights collaboration between different Catholic churches and emphasizes the importance of unity in diversity.

The synthesis report did not use the term “LGBTQ+” or even “homosexuality” and spoke only generally of issues related to “matters of identity and sexuality.” Still, it said, “in different ways, people who feel marginalized or excluded from the Church because of their marriage status, identity or sexuality, also ask to be heard and accompanied. There



was a deep sense of love, mercy and compassion felt in the Assembly for those who are, or feel hurt or neglected by the Church, who want a place to call ‘home’ where they can feel safe, be heard and respected, without fear of feeling judged.”

The synod calls for intentional discernment and communal reflection on how to live out the mission of the Church at all levels. Finally, the synod leaves it to worldwide episcopal conferences to discern the next steps and encourages greater participation from the laity. The synthesis document is intended to be thoroughly discerned, with feedback provided within a year.

The second and final session of the Synod on Synodality will take place in October 2024. During this session, the synod fathers will discuss and prepare a final document for the pope. The final document is expected to be released in late 2024 or early 2025. It will contain recommendations for how the Church can better live out its mission in the 21st century. The document is also expected to include a call to action for all Catholics, encouraging them to embrace a more synodal way of being Church.

Many people hope that the Synod on Synodality will result in a Church that is more participatory, collaborative, and missionary.

## CWL Diocesan Day of Reflection on Indigenous Spirituality

The Diocesan Catholic Women's League (CWL) organized a Day of Reflection in September 2023 on the topic of Indigenous Spirituality and how it compares to the Catholic faith. It was held at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Hall in Renfrew, with approximately 65 members from across the diocese in attendance.

Five ladies from the Bonnechere Algonquin First Nation donned in beautiful deerskin robes and beaded jewelry, drummed and sang several songs: a welcome song, a 'take back the power' song (which focused on reclaiming their identity and culture), a song about Mother Earth, and a safe travel song at the end of the morning. They talked about important teachings from their culture and how they shaped their view on life.

Dr. Emilie Pigeon, Assistant Professor at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay, shared a PowerPoint presentation on Dan Jerome's work, comparing symbols and concepts in Ojibway spirituality with those in Catholicism. Participants asked excellent questions that resulted in the provision of additional interesting information.

A prayer service was celebrated to end an amazing morning. The drummers were included in the prayer service, not only in the drumming, but also through the reading of an Ojibway meditation by Richard Wagamese.

The gathering was an experience that deepened our sense of solidarity with each other. All in attendance felt especially blessed.



**Dr. Emilie Pigeon, Assistant Professor at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College, Barry's Bay, spoke at the Catholic Women's League's Day of Reflection.**

*Photo courtesy of Faye O-Reilly.*

### Bonnechere Algonquin First Nation drummers participated in the Diocesan Catholic Women's League's Day of Reflection in September 2023.

*Photo courtesy of Faye O-Reilly.*



## Indigenous Reconciliation Fund

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund of the Roman Catholic Church in Canada is an effort of the Canadian Catholic Bishops' Conference to concretize its commitment to reach out in practical ways to assist Canada's Indigenous Community. The bishops have made a commitment to offer 30 million dollars, over five years, through this fund, to build a better tomorrow for those who have been scarred by past acts that have caused pain and/or isolation for our Indigenous Community.

The first annual report of the 'National Indigenous Fund Committee' was published in December 2023. In its first year, it approved 132 projects. As well, by year end, contributions are just shy of \$14 million of the overall commitment. This includes private donations from many individuals who are supporting the fund in their own generous way.

Here, in the Pembroke Diocese, Bishop Desrochers made a commitment that we would contribute \$50,000.00 each year for five years to the fund. Local applications will be accepted

annually and reviewed by our local committee. A decision of awarding funds to a particular request will be recommended to the National Committee. We deposit our donation with them. They, in turn, provide the funds.

Last year, the Committee had requests for funds for seven projects. Reflection and discussions concluded that we share the monies equally with two projects that outreach Indigenous projects that provide professional services. They became aware of the unique needs of Indigenous clients and the challenge to find funding.

By the diversity of requests received in 2023, the committee recognized the **varied** and **valuable** efforts being made to unfold the desire to restore the relationship that was damaged by our history. A question for the committee to struggle with is how to best use the money to build a better tomorrow.

We thank everyone who encourages the representatives of the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Committee of the Diocese of Pembroke. Making choices like this is never easy. The

committee 'recognizes the struggles' of so many who are trying to assist the cause of healing.

We invite anyone who wishes to request financial assistance for your project in 2024 to complete a GRANT APPLICATION FORM. If you have not received one to date, please feel free to download it from the website of The Diocese of Pembroke.

Applications will be received at our Chancery Office, address below or by email through Fr. Peter Proulx. Recommendations to the National Committee will be made by our local committee in time for the May meeting in anticipation that funding will be made available by June.

**Respectfully,**  
**Fr. Peter Proulx**  
**petergproulx@outlook.com**

**Diocese of Pembroke**  
**284 Trafalgar Road**  
**Pembroke, ON**  
**K8A 6W2**

## Asking the big questions of life, faith and meaning?

Family, friends, neighbours, strangers... we all know people or will meet people who are quietly or passionately looking for the answers to these universal questions.

Presented below are four experiences, viewed from a Catholic perspective, that can contribute to this endeavor. Their commonality lies in their openness to all individuals, utilization of a well-prepared video series as a foundation for small group discussions, and provision of the opportunity to nurture personal faith and share it with others. There's no pressure; participants can be themselves without fear of judgment. These gatherings can be hosted in residences, educational institutions, or church halls and often involve the communal sharing of snacks or even meals. Typically, an internet connection and media system (such as a Smart TV) are required.

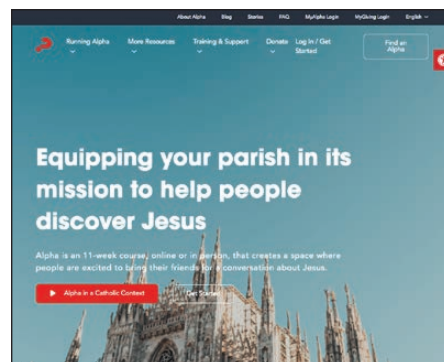
Taking advantage of these simple and relatively straightforward church gifts allows us to reach out generously and effectively to those around us.

**Alpha for Catholics:** <https://alphacanada.org/catholic-context/>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/349705105>

This very successful original series with Nicky Gumbel has been updated with new presenters and Catholic context. There is no cost to this 11-week course, which includes a Holy Spirit weekend.

*"There's nothing you can't ask and everyone is welcome. Alpha is an 11-week course that creates a space, online or in person, where people are excited to bring their friends for a conversation about life, faith and Jesus. Alphas have been run across the country in churches, coffee shops, schools, prisons, and homes."*  
—Alphacanada.org



**The Search:** <https://www.thesearchbegins.org/>

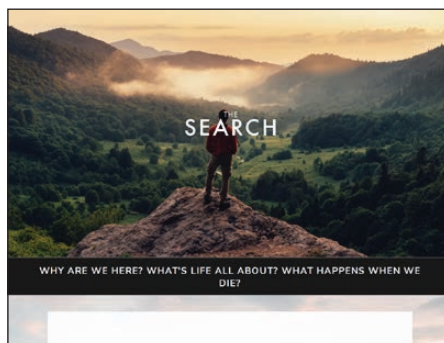
Trailer: <https://watch.formed.org/the-search/videos/the-search-promo> or <https://www.thesearchbegins.org/>

Presented by Chris Stefanick and various other experts, The Search involves seven episodes, each using 30-minute videos as a basis for learning and discussion. Guides, manuals, posters and flyers for The Search are also available. It is streamed on Formed, which is a comprehensive Catholic online platform that offers a vast array of resources for those seeking to deepen their faith. A Formed subscription for individuals is \$9.99 US/month or \$100 US/year. Parishes or schools can also subscribe for \$99 US/month per program with guides or \$139/month for the entire platform. <https://formed.org/subscribe> <https://watch.formed.org/the-search>

Guides, manuals, posters, and flyers for The Search are also available.

*"The Search is an innovative video series that tackles the key questions of every human heart. In seven beautifully filmed episodes, Chris Stefanick and experts from multiple fields of science, medicine, psychology, art, and religion examine our place in the larger story of existence."*

*Whether you're a practiced inquirer or a jaded skeptic, The Search will speak to you. You may be reassured by some parts, and challenged by others. Either way, you'll find a lot here to think about. And when all is said and done, life's questions demand to be answered."*  
—<https://www.thesearchbegins.org/>



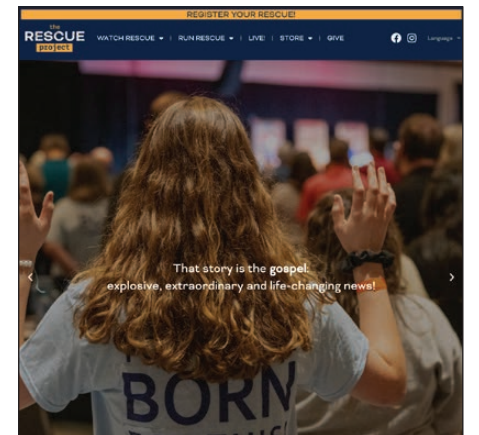
**The Rescue Project:** <https://rescueproject.us/>

Trailer: <https://watch.actsxxix.org/therescueproject/videos/the-rescue-project-trailer>

The Rescue Project is presented by Father John Ricardo and the Acts XXIX team. It is nine episodes based on 35- to 60-minute videos either streamed (free) from <https://rescueproject.us/> or on a five-DVD set (\$30 US). Participant and facilitator guides are also available.

*"Created. Captured. Rescued. Response. We passionately believe that the most urgent task is the compelling proclamation of the gospel, one that not only shares it in an attractive – and concentrated – way, but that also offers people a way of seeing reality, and of making sense of the world, history, and life that is vastly different from the story our modern culture tells."*

*Until this happens, the Christian faith is often experienced as a mere set of rules and disciplines, and simply going to Church isn't likely to lead a person to embark on the great adventure that is following Jesus and continuing His mission of the rescuing of this world. Created. Captured. Rescued. Response."*



**Sycamore:** <https://www.sycamore.fm/>

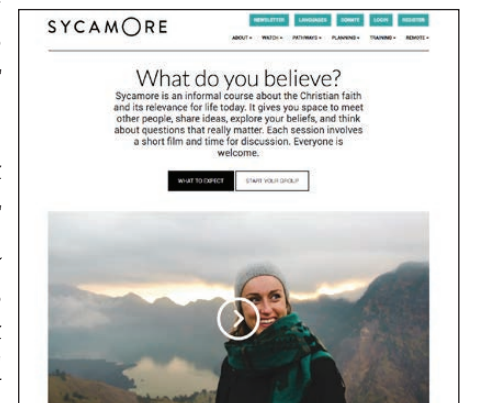
Trailer: <https://www.sycamore.fm/videos/sycamore-trailer/>

Videos: <https://www.sycamore.fm/videos/>

Sycamore is a free informal course that explores the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It provides a space for people to meet, share ideas, explore beliefs, and engage in discussions about meaningful questions.

Each session involves watching a short film related to faith topics, followed by time for discussion. Whether in person or online, Sycamore groups create a welcoming environment where participants can freely express their thoughts... It's a place to connect, learn, and grow together, regardless of where they are on their faith journey.

Sycamore offers over 30 different courses, making it adaptable for various contexts. It can be used for inquiry groups, catechesis, sacramental preparation, adult faith formation, and even in school religious education.





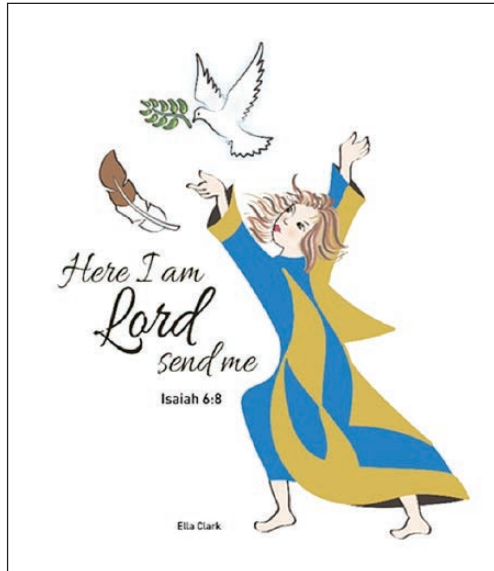
## Here I Am, Lord, Send Me

### The CWL in Pembroke Diocese

Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada are embracing the new national theme, *Here I Am, Lord, Send Me*, based on the passage from Isaiah 6:8. It elicits a readiness and willingness to go out into the world and heed God's call.

Several years of strategic planning have brought the League into a better position to meet the needs of a changing world. The new streamlined structure works to bring a team approach to activities, draw on the gifts of all members, and bring together the three core values of Faith, Service, and Social Justice. Rather than compartmentalizing activities, there's an integration that brings unity.

As an example, St. Michael's CWL Council in Douglas took up the "Bee Compassion into Action" Challenge initiated by the Ontario Provincial Council Community Life Committee. The challenge offered three issues on which to focus: Homelessness, Human Trafficking, and Reconciliation. St. Michael's Council chose Homelessness. The team took an integrated approach to align with the new League structure by involving Faith,



Service, and Social Justice. Members learned about the local situation concerning homelessness and housing insecurity and, in particular, that caused by domestic violence. In response, personal care items and a monetary donation were given to Bernadette McCann House in Pembroke. It was a team effort, drawing together many members for a common purpose.

The Diocesan Council is looking forward to its annual convention to be hosted on Saturday, May 25, 2024, at the Lion's Hall in Chalk River, with the convention Mass celebrated at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Deep River. Provincial President Linda Squarzolo will be in attendance, as will Fr. Ryan Holly. The annual convention is a time for members to gather and celebrate their year's experiences of faith-filled service to their parishes and communities.

Like other organizations, the League faces many challenges, but members are working to bring their Catholic faith into all aspects of their lives and to the larger community. Connect with a CWL parish council and reap the benefits of the sisterhood found in the League. Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.

## Evangelization: Ear, Heart, Mouth, Foot

By Fr. Michael Smith

*"...if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*

*"But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."*

– Romans 10:9-17

*"May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf hear and the mute to speak, grant that you may soon receive his word with your ears and profess the faith with your lips, to the glory and praise of God the Father."*

– Ephphatha, from The Order of Baptism of Children

The word 'evangelization' sometimes stymies people. We wonder exactly what it means. We imagine it to be a complicated process that only an initiated elite can engage in. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Scripture passage above and the short rite from the baptismal ritual give us a template by which we can understand evangelization as taking place in stages. Each stage is represented by a part of the body.

First, the ear. Only in rare cases is faith infused in a person directly from God in a dramatic spiritual experience. For most of us, we first heard of Jesus because someone introduced us to him. It could have been our

parents, or a friend in school or college, or a co-worker. Whatever the circumstances, faith comes from hearing. We hear because someone spoke.

Secondly, the heart. In the Scriptures, the heart has a deeper meaning than it does in popular culture. It is more than the organ of the body, more than the seat of our emotions, and more than the part of us associated with love. In the Scriptures, the heart is all these things, but it is also, and most of all, the core or centre of our being, our deepest self, the seat of all our thoughts, emotions, desires, and decisions.

When we believe in our heart that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, the fact of the Resurrection transforms the core of our being. The victory of life over death gradually shapes our thoughts, emotions, desires, and decisions. Our lives become oriented toward a new and broader horizon. In some cases, we make an about-face, leaving behind paths that lead to our destruction, and heading in a new direction. We become people of hope.

Thirdly, the mouth. When we have an experience that transforms our lives, we want to tell others about it. The desire is irrepressible, to the point that new converts sometimes have to learn to adjust their approach so that it will attract people and not scare them off. Even in spite of that, we cannot overestimate the importance of introducing others to Christ and telling them what this great discovery has done for us.

Finally, the foot. This part of the body represents going into action: to bring good news (see the quote above), but also to commit our lives to the service of others. As someone once said, "When we meet God, God gives us a job to do."

I hope that this brief template has made evangelization more understandable. It is a process by which we go from being introduced to Jesus to introducing others to Him and backing up our verbal witness with the quality of our lives.

## Seat of Wisdom College Receives Permission to Grant a Four-Year Bachelor of Arts

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay, Ontario, has been granted permission to offer a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities of the Province of Ontario. In 2017, the Province gave the institution permission to use the name "College" and to grant a three-year Bachelor of Catholic Studies degree. Now, students will also have the option of continuing their studies at the college for a fourth year and obtaining a four-year B.A. Three majors for the B.A. have been approved: Classical and Early Christian Studies; History; and Literature.

The four-year Bachelor of Arts is intended to build on the three-year degree, adding further depth and specialization in a particular field, namely the chosen major. Seat of Wisdom plans to launch the four-year Bachelor of Arts in 2024-2025, which will also be the institution's 25<sup>th</sup> year.

Dr. Christine Schintgen, President, offers her guiding perspective to the Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College community: "Obtaining permission to grant a four-year Bachelor of Arts represents a significant achievement, and is the fruit of much prayer and hard work. My thanks to all those who poured their heart and soul into this project to make it a reality. The advantages for our students, as well as for future generations of young people seeking to be formed as persons and as Catholics will be manifold."

Dr. Natasha Duquette, Vice-President Academic and Dean, who shepherded the application for this four-year honours baccalaureate degree through the rigorous review process of the Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board of Ontario, is excited to see fourth-year students develop skills in independent and creative research as they work on thesis projects. Such projects will allow students to delve more deeply into a specific area of individual interest for them, guided by a faculty member of their choice. The composition and presentation of an honours thesis will prepare students not only for graduate studies, and for teaching positions in both secondary and higher education, but also for professions in law, politics, journalism, and communications, among other fields.

Archbishop Marcel Damphousse of the Ottawa-Cornwall Archdiocese wrote to congratulate President Schintgen, saying: "Building a Catholic academic institution takes time and patience and lots of prayers. I'm proud to hear that Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College has been granted a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree, with majors in Classical and Early Christian Studies, History, and Literature. May this new stepping-stone be a sign of God's will coming through."

M.P.P. John Yakabuski of the Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke riding praised the College for its impressive accomplishment writing:

In another congratulatory message to the President, Township of Madawaska Valley Mayor, His Worship Mark Willmer, wrote: "Congratulations to Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College on the exciting news that they are now able to offer a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree. This will allow the college to continue to expand its programming and educational offerings within our township. Again my sincere congratulations."

Current third-year student Jacob Afelskie, who grew up in the local area, shares: "I am very excited that the College has finally received the four-year degree! I'm so pleased that I am able to finish my entire undergraduate degree at one institution, and hope to use the degree to enter teachers' college."

The alumni of the Bachelor of Catholic Studies degree have been thriving within graduate programs in Philosophy, Theology, Museum Studies, Communications, and Political Science; and they are serving in the wider world as primary school teachers, journalists, priests and seminarians, and communications specialists. The new four-year B.A. degree will forge further pathways into graduate studies in Classics, History, and Literature, as well as create the foundation for additional career options in secondary or post-secondary education, editing and publishing, advanced communications, and law.

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College believes in the formation of the whole person, and many students come for just one, two, or three years of formative education. The college has 2:2 agreements with other colleges or universities that allow students to complete Bachelor's degrees in such fields as Psychology and Business after two years at Seat of Wisdom and two years at the partner institution. Seat of Wisdom students spend at least the first two years living in residences of approximately ten students—studying, eating, praying, doing chores together, and having fun. There are many opportunities for spiritual development, as well as social events such as clubs, drama, music, outdoor activities, and sports. For more information, see the college's website at [seatofwisdom.ca](http://seatofwisdom.ca).

## June ordination in the diocese of Pembroke



**Lukas Časta at his Diaconate Ordination, June 2023**

Deacon Lukas Časta will receive Sacred Ordination to the Priesthood on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Saturday, June 29, 2024 at the Cathedral of St. Columbkille at 10:30 a.m.

All are welcome to attend.

## 50-year anniversary

# The Young Father O'Brien... a human priest who still speaks his mind after 50 years

By Katrina Boguski

While Fr. Ken claims that, at 76, he is now allowed to say what he wants, one gets the impression from his stories that he probably always has. Irish on both sides of his family, he has a quick-witted tongue and a penchant for storytelling that would rival the best of the Irish bards.

Blaming the Irish genes, he claims that his temper is also quick, and for that reason, has had a longstanding devotion to St. Peter. O'Brien thinks that the decision to make the hotheaded St. Peter the first pope points to Jesus' sense of humour. It is not often that one hears a priest speak about Christ's sense of humour, but then again, it is not often that one encounters a priest such as O'Brien.

Ordained on May 11, 1974, his ordination had to be moved from St. Joseph's in Esmonde to St. James in Eganville. O'Brien's family alone numbered 212 members, and the walls of the humble St. Joseph's Church on the Opeongo Line could not contain the multitude that wanted to attend and receive the blessings of this new priest.

O'Brien's call to the priesthood was heard as young as age six, and he says it never really left him. Even before entering school, his sister, who wanted to be a teacher, taught the young Ken to read and count. After he was finished being taught by her, he would put that learning to good use by pretending to be a priest and to say Mass.

The O'Briens lived on a farm at Clontarf, a point on the map that existed largely because it had a post office. As a high school student, he studied at Eganville Roman Catholic Continuation School, which had been run by the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. From there, O'Brien started his priestly formation at Resurrection College in Kitchener and later moved to St. Peter's in London to study philosophy and theology.

While he credits his parents for his early faith formation, it was the example of his uncle, Fr. John Kenneth O'Brien, that enkindled the spark of his vocation. Although he goes by Fr. Ken, O'Brien's first name is really Joseph. Since

both priests had the name Fr. J.K. O'Brien, Fr. Ken became known as "the Young Fr. O'Brien" and his uncle was soon referred to as "the Old Fr. O'Brien; it was a moniker that the senior clergyman did not greatly appreciate.

Before he was "the Old Fr. O'Brien" he was simply "Uncle Kenny" and his regular visits to the family farm would have a lasting impact on "the Young Fr. O'Brien." During visits on the priest's day off, there wasn't a big deal made about his being a priest. O'Brien said, "It was just Uncle Kenny coming." He added that learning from his uncle that priests are human and having him close at hand always made him feel that, as a priest, he was "not in the boat alone." He also noted that over the years, he had some wonderful pastors, who had been diocesan priests, and they also encouraged his vocation.

As a priest, O'Brien served at Holy Name and St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke. He also served as pastor to flocks in Chalk River, Osceola, Cobden, Combermere, Latchford Bridge, Eganville, Pikwakanagan, and Cormac. Concurrently with his duties as a pastor, he served as chaplain to Bishop Smith High School and Marianhill.

In commenting on his 50 years as priest, O'Brien said, "I loved every minute of it." As a priest he said his job has been to bring God's love and forgiveness. "People had to meet a loving Jesus," he stated. Although now "retired," O'Brien is still very active and celebrates Mass for different groups at least twice a week.

As a cancer survivor, O'Brien knows that God's plan for each of us is complex. While at the time we are carrying our cross, we may not always understand the bigger picture, eventually, we come to realize the wisdom of God's plan. Shortly after being declared free of cancer, O'Brien visited a man who had recently been diagnosed with cancer. When he heard this news, O'Brien said, "Well, I'm a cancer survivor," and the man's face lit up. Being able to greet this man truthfully, human being to human being, made him see that his cancer had been a gift.

Despite his very positive outlook on life, O'Brien does not shy away from making forthright statements about things that he feels still need



**Father Ken O'Brien**

*Photo Credit Katrina Boguski*

to be corrected in the Church; including the fallout from abuse that has so greatly wounded so many people.

Although the task of rebuilding the Church is an epic one, he encourages people to remain faithful; he sees the Holy Spirit working through the visible hierarchy of the Church and conveys great respect for the office of bishop.

His specific advice for young men considering the priesthood is "to be open to the Holy Spirit and do what the Spirit is asking you to do and not doing [just] what you want to do." He said during his years of formation, "We were taught we are the servants of the servants of YHWH. Yet, we are servants who know what the Master wants."

# Tim Foster spent 30 years trying to elicit confessions, now as deacon he can't hear them

By Katrina Boguski

Paragraph 1570 of the *Catechism* notes, “Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity.”

One of the things deacons cannot do is hear confessions. In a phone interview, Deacon Tim Foster said, “For 30 years, I tried to get people to confess to me.” Now, as a deacon, he has to turn people down. For some context to Foster’s comment, it is helpful to know that before entering the diaconate, Foster served as a member of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Foster says that often people see the work of a police officer and the work of a deacon as very disconnected vocations, but in both vocations, his work frequently involves helping people through difficult times; and both vocations are rooted in service.

Foster said, “I don’t find my service taxing.” He also has spent a lot of time serving various groups such as the Columbian Squires, the Knights of Columbus, cadets, scouts and various hockey organizations. Foster has served 12 years on the Board of Directors of Northern Credit Union and is on the Board of the Directors’ Forum Cooperative (DFC) that provides education events for directors of numerous cooperative organizations.

He retired from the police in September 2012 and was ordained to the diaconate on September 6, 2014.

Foster was ordained to the diaconate at Paroisse, St. Thomas d’Aquin in Astorville, where he still lives. The deacon is fluent in French and English, and his language skills are an asset to the ABC parishes (Astorville, Bonfield and Corbeil) and Mattawa, where he serves.



Although the history of deacons goes back to the earliest days of the Church and is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, the diaconate was renewed in the Church in recent decades. Foster first heard about deacons in the early 2000s. Since that time St. Stephen, has become one of Foster’s favourite saints. St. Stephen was the first Christian martyr and an early deacon to the Church in Jerusalem.

In recounting his personal vocation, Foster recalls that his friend Fr. Jean Marc Raymond from Quebec was the one to plant the seed. Fr. Raymond frequently celebrated New Year’s Eve dinner with the Fosters. After one of those dinners, the priest mentioned that Deacon Albert Benoit said Foster would be a good candidate. To the surprise of Raymond and Foster’s wife Sue, Foster accepted the call.

His formation for the diaconate was done through the STEP program of the McGrath Institute at Notre Dame in Indiana. Being married for almost 46 years and his experience in policing and hockey also played an important role in honing the skills he needed to serve. The word deacon comes from the Greek word *diákonos* meaning “servant” or “waiter.” While the tasks of the deacon are many, all of them are to be carried out with a spirit of service.

Deacons are different than priests, and Foster pointed out that these differences stem from their fundamental relationship to the Church itself. He noted that priests are married to the church and he is not. He said, “I’m married to my wife. I serve the Church.”

Practically speaking, this means Foster serves the Church anywhere from 10 to 30 hours per week. He plans to keep up this service for many years into the future. Foster joked that his next move will be about 500 yards away, to the graveyard down the road. “I’ll be a deacon here until God comes to get me,” he said.

## 40th Anniversaries

In 2024, we also celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversaries for:

- **Father Ron Cafeo**, ordained to the diaconate in the Island Chapel of Madonna House, and to the priesthood at Holy Canadian Martyr’s in Combermere. He currently lives in the priests’ residence known as Regina Pacis. He was ordained in June 1984.
- **Father Robert Ryan**, an extern priest from St. John’s, Newfoundland, who resides in the diocese and has served here for many years, concluding at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Braeside. Father Ryan was ordained in April 1984.
- **Father Michael Smith**, ordained at Our Lady of Fatima Church, Renfrew, by Bishop Joseph R. Windle. Over the course of his priesthood he has been in Fort-Coulange, Temiscaming, Notre Dame (Indiana), Quebec City, London (Ontario) for 21 years, and Pembroke. He is currently pastor of Paroisse St-Pierre, Fort-Coulange Paroisse St-Charles-Borromée, Otter Lake, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Vinton and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission, Waltham. Father Smith was ordained in May 1984.
- **Rev Richard Bertrand** was ordained May 19, 1984. Served in the parishes of St. Anthony, Chalk River, St. Francis Xavier, Renfrew, Our Lady of Mercy, Bancroft and St. Andrew, Killaloe. Currently on health leave.

## Deacon Smith celebrates 20 years of the diaconate, ministry to the poor remains central to his calling

By Katrina Boguski

On May 22, 2004, Don Smith was ordained to the diaconate at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke. That same day, the late Deacon Niilo Kuisma and Fr. Ryan Holly were also ordained to the diaconate. Kuisma and Smith became permanent deacons and Holly became a transitional deacon enroute to the priesthood. Bishop Smith presided.

Before his ordination, Deacon Don was a high school teacher and answered the call to the diaconate after it was suggested by Fr. Murray Tardiff. The diocesan priest, who died March 10, 2013, would continue to influence Smith throughout his years of formation. At Smith's ordination, Tardiff was given the honour of vesting the new deacon.

He attended the diaconate formation at the Ottawa Diocesan Centre, which was a four-year program, and the wives of would-be deacons also had to take the formation program. Smith spoke highly of the training he received in Ottawa saying they had "awesome teachers." Since being ordained, Smith has always served at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew where he now lives. He returned to the area about 22 years ago after living in Arnprior.

When asked, "What advice would you have for men considering the diaconate?" Smith said, "Have a clear idea of what your ministry should be after you are ordained." He noted that the work needs to involve some sort of ministry to the poor and that there are many types of poverty faced by people today. Even those who have ample financial support can be desperately poor in the spiritual sense.

The call of serving the poor, however that poverty is manifested, is central to any deacon's vocation. For Smith, though, service to the poor takes on a special significance because he has a deep appreciation for Franciscan spirituality.

Those struggling with substance abuse and other addictions often face multiple forms of poverty and frequently can become isolated from family and the Church community. Throughout his years as a deacon, Smith has served people bearing the cross of addiction. He said, "I have been involved with both of the drug alcohol rehab centres for 20 years. I was chairman of the board of MacKay Manor for 10 and worked with clients there." Smith is also the chair of the board of Pathways Drug & Alcohol Treatment Services in Renfrew.

While a deacon's service during liturgical celebrations is important, the ministry cannot be fully lived without also serving other needs of the people. Smith said all deacons must be servants to the poor and "not just a glorified altar server."

Smith also shared that the experience of being a deacon is exactly what he expected it would be like. He added that Fr. Peter Proulx helped prepare the congregation in the lead-up to Smith becoming a deacon; in this way, those whom he has served were also aware of what to expect.

As deacon, Smith is a volunteer. He said that he is married first and is a deacon second. His responsibility to his family has included being a father and now a grandfather. Smith and his wife Nancy have been married 58 years.

While his commitment to his family is first, Smith does keep himself busy volunteering with the church – although he says that busyness is sporadic. He does everything from performing baptisms to officiating at



**Deacon Don Smith St. Columbkille Cathedral Basement after Chrism Mass 2024**

*Photo Credit Katrina Boguski*

weddings. He also does a lot of preaching. As a retired teacher, preaching came naturally to him and it is something he enjoys. His primary ministry is bereavement ministry, working with people who have had a death in the family. To date, he has been present at four deaths at the hospice in Renfrew.

Smith notes that after the pandemic, church attendance dropped at his parish, as it did at so many others. He said, "Rebuilding will take time." At 82, Smith still plans to be part of that work. Although he submitted his resignation at age 70, as he was required to do, he asked the bishop not to accept it. It is no wonder that when asked who his favourite saint was, Smith replied St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis was also called to serve the poor and rebuild the Church in his time. Smith plans to continue with this work as long as he is able to do so.

## A window into the heart of a joyful priest – Fr. David Linder celebrates 25 years of ordination

By Katrina Boguski

The large window in Fr. David Linder’s office looks out onto one of the most picturesque views of the Madawaska River. The office, with its view, is certainly a perk that comes with being the Director General of Priests at Madonna House. Like the river, Linder’s route to the priesthood had many twists and turns. Although he first heard the call of a priestly vocation during his college days in Indiana, it would take many years of discernment before his ordination.

Armed with a liberal arts degree and a major in Theology, Linder went into construction to pay off his student debt. He had heard about Madonna House through a friend of his college roommate and had read some of Catherine Doherty’s books, but initially had not known that there was a community associated with Doherty.

In 1982, he came as a guest to Madonna House in Combermere. Linder said, “I came for discernment.” He went on to say that this initial stay put him on “a new footing” and helped to put his “spiritual life in order.”

Despite the benefits of this extended stay, Linder said he was not mature enough to answer the call to join Madonna House at that time. That maturity would start to develop while volunteering for the Church in the Yukon. On his days off, Linder would hitchhike to one of the two Madonna House fieldhouses that were operating in the Yukon at that time. It was during time in Poustinia there that Linder heard the message in his heart, “Madonna House isn’t just any family; it’s your family.”

On December 8, 1984, Linder entered into that family by becoming an applicant in the community.

Despite the many responsibilities that press upon him in his role as a priest, the joy Fr. David exudes as a priest is palpable. He views his work as a fulfilment of his baptismal vocation. Being with other priests in his community has helped him serve not only the members of Madonna House but also people from outside the community who seek out support and spiritual direction from him.

In speaking of the long days that he and his brother priests routinely put in, he said, “There is no moss growing under our Madonna House priests’ feet.” For him, the busy days are fulfilling and life-giving. His commitment to celibacy leaves him available to serve the needs of the Church, and he views the celibate life as a real gift.

Linder says that he and his fellow priests are stewards of the “unbelievable gifts” of the Sacraments, but at the same time, like all of us, are sinners.



**Fr. David Linder in his office at Madonna House, Combermere**

*Photo credit Katrina Boguski*

Despite our sinful nature, he says, we are all answering a call toward sanctity.

Linder spent 11 years in the Madonna House community before he went to seminary. At age 41, on August 15, 1999, David Linder was finally ordained at Madonna House’s St. Mary’s Chapel. He has no regrets and is happy to be a priest. That happiness is palpable and it becomes another expression and witness to the Gospel of Christ.

## “Like a dove preparing to take flight,” Our Lady of Fatima Parish celebrates 75 years

By Katrina Boguski

In his book *Lift Up Your Hearts*, the late Fr. Joseph C. Legree covers the history of the Pembroke Diocese. Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Renfrew has a substantial entry in that book. The chapter on the parish concludes with the lines, “Our Lady of Fatima Parish carries on in the 38<sup>th</sup> year of its existence, vibrant, caring, with great expectations for the future. Some 600 families of both town and country are happy to worship the Lord in their home parish church.”

While the number of people attending Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Parish has decreased significantly in recent years, the spirit of the parish remains strong and many families that originally built the church continue to be active in the parish.

“This community of faith is comprised of many dedicated people for whom Our Lady of Fatima Parish is their spiritual home. Most of the parishioners are life-long residents of Renfrew or have been living in the Renfrew community for many years. There is a deep sense of connectedness among the people,” shared Fr. John Lacey, the current pastor.

In the post war years from 1946-47, St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew was growing at such a rate that an additional parish had to be added to meet the needs of local Catholics. Although the parish was established on May 1, 1949, by Bishop William. J. Smith, it would take years to build the new church. Bishop Smith appointed Fr. Roney as the first parish priest; and establishing the new parish had its challenges, including where to hold Mass.

In theatre, one sometimes hears the phrase, “*Deus ex machina*” which means literally, “God out of the machinery.” It implies a plot device where a tense and seemingly unsolvable problem is resolved quickly by divine intervention. In the case of Our Lady Fatima Parish, the phrase might instead read, “God out of the machinery shop.” The parish solved many of its early problems by starting out in the former home of the Renfrew Machinery Company.”

Fr. Lacey notes, “The first parish church was located in the former Renfrew Machinery Co. building located at the foot of Lochiel Street. The first floor served as the parish church while the upper floor became the parish hall. It took 17 years of hard work and commitment to accumulate the resources necessary for the construction of the beautiful place of worship which stands today.”

In his book, Legree says, “During these years, a lengthy and appropriate room was converted in the church. On the second floor of the building, a convenient and practical parish hall was formed with offices and committee rooms for the staffs of parochial organisations, Holy Name Society and Confraternity of Christian Mothers.” Legree adds, “These organizations helped to raise funds for the support of the new parish and for the support of the Catholic High Schools...”

Those fundraising efforts eventually led to the establishment of new church building designed by Roger Thibault of Ottawa; the contractor was Paul D’Aust, also of Ottawa. The church was completed in time to celebrate Mass on Easter Sunday of 1966 and would be blessed by Bishop Smith on May 29 of that same year. Fr. Lacey said, “The parish church was described as an ‘ultra modern’ building when it was constructed in the 1960s, and the silhouette of the building invokes the image of a dove preparing to take flight. The interior, with its use of wood accents and the beautiful terrazzo floor, speaks unpretentiously about the permanence of our faith, symbolized by our beautiful church buildings.”



**Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Renfrew**

(Photo Credit Katrina Boguski)

In speaking of the church’s interior, Legree notes, “...the altars, organ’s screen, sanctuary design and furnishings [as well as the] baptistry were by Michael Roger of Esthetiques & Arts Sacrés, Montreal.”

Over the years, many improvements and maintenance projects have been carried out in the church. Lacey said, “The concrete entrances were renewed last year at significant, but necessary, cost and a video monitoring system was added to address security concerns. The Knights of Columbus and especially the CWL have been very generous in their support of these projects and the parish.” Of course, the building is only part of the story. The people inside the church are the ones who keep the community going.

Fr. Lacey said, “Parish life is enriched through the involvement of many groups. For example, the CWL engage in many efforts to assist the less fortunate in our community. Their support for the parish and their priest is heartwarming. Thanks to a dedicated group of people, the parish enjoys active ministries of lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and greeters/ushers. The music ministry and choir focus on congregational singing, and the music is appreciated by parishioners and visitors alike.”

Prayer and the sacraments are central to all of these good works. Fr. Lacey said, “The parish has a strong devotional life, fostered by frequent weekday Mass, and a Divine Mercy Holy Hour on Monday mornings, which is very well attended. We do our best to be family friendly, and are grateful for the volunteers and parents who lead the children’s liturgy at the Sunday morning Mass. Fr. Lacey added, “It is a privilege to accompany this community in their experience of the faith.”

The parish plans to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special Mass to be celebrated on May 5th at 5:00 p.m. Lacey said, “Following Mass, there will be a catered dinner in the parish hall. Tickets for the meal are \$25 and may be obtained from the parish office.”

## The spiritual journey of a poet-priest: Madonna House publishes the poetry of Fr. David May

9 November 2023 – Press Release, Madonna House

**T**ourist out of Time: Fifty Poems from Fifty Years by Fr. David May of Madonna House, Combermere, traces the poet's journey from his high school years into the priesthood, the *poustinia*, and the beginnings of Parkinson's disease. As the poet ventures deeper into the Ontarian backwoods, he embarks also on a pilgrimage into the depths of the heart – his own, that of others and, ultimately, the inexhaustible heart of God.



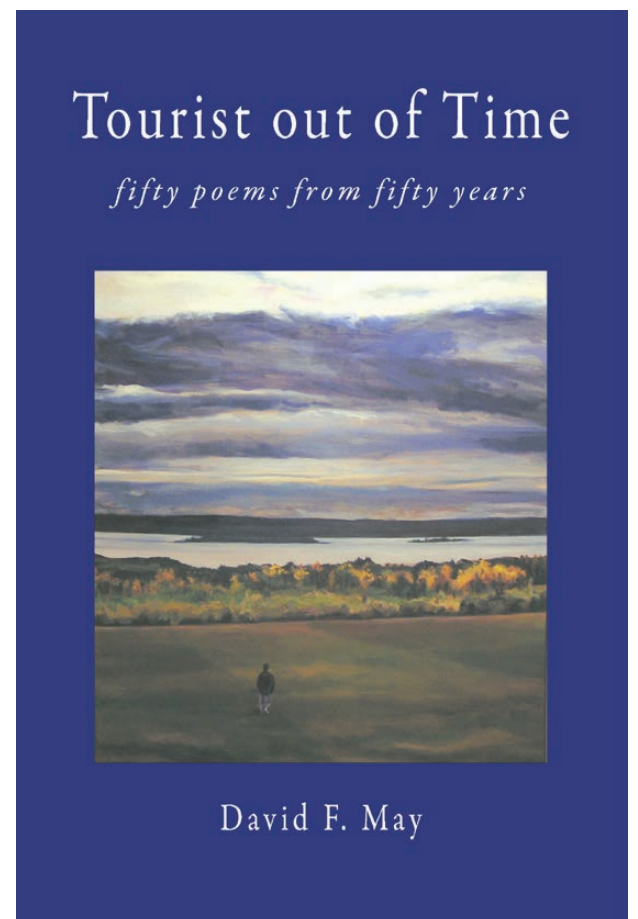
Ordained in 1981, Fr. David May has been a member of Madonna House Apostolate since 1974. For over ten years he served as editor for Madonna House's monthly paper, *Restoration*, for which he has written countless articles. He has lived in *poustinia* (Russian type of hermitage) since 2016. He was the Director of Priests from 2004 to 2016 and is a beloved spiritual father to many. Readers will be touched by the vulnerability in his poetry, and the window into his spiritual journey, including his later years living with Parkinson's disease.

Although the author admits that poetry is not "everyone's cup of tea," there is a long tradition of spiritual writers who describe the inner journey through art and literature. Christopher de Vinck, author and contributing columnist for *The Dallas Morning News*, writes: "Your life will be changed under the sound and sense of these fifty poems as you hear the music of these words... from the life of a man who knows a bit about God, and about both victories and defeats, and in his vulnerable sharing in these poems you will see that he also knows a bit about you—and that is a mark of a true poet."

Poets and those not inclined to read poetry will find wisdom in Fr. May's words, which testifies to the unyielding nature of life's most urgent questions. *Tourist out of Time* is an unflinching

Michael O'Brien, himself a Catholic artist and writer praised the "highly developed poetic sense beautifully integrated with penetrating spiritual awareness, not a word of which fails to breathe authenticity." The poems are "the fruit of a life laid down and poured forth, distillates of lived experience of both joys and sorrows, of long desolations and flashes of light from the infinite, of radical honesty and searing beauty."

This memoir in verse is a new endeavor for Madonna House Publications, the publishing department of the Madonna House community, whose book catalogue is typically the prose writings of founder Catherine Doherty.



exploration of suffering, God, and the suffusion of an ordinary life with intimations of the divine.

The collection of poems is available at Madonna House Publications: <https://madonnahouse.org/madonna-house-publications/>

## A need for care and compassion

By Catherine Kerr  
Chairperson for Development and Peace  
Diocese of Pembroke Council

**T**he Council for Development and Peace in the Pembroke Diocese continues to promote and teach its parishioners about the incredible work of Development and Peace Caritas Canada. We are called Development and Peace Caritas Canada because we fall under the Papal Charity, Caritas, which is the second largest humanitarian organization in the world, next to The Red Cross.

It is Development and Peace that answers the call to both humanitarian disasters in the world for the Canadian Roman Catholic Church and the humanitarian injustices of the rich and powerful against common men, women, and children. The former is a hands-on, boots-on-the-ground experience, where much is being done to and for the people who are struggling through a natural or human-made disaster. The latter is

Development and Peace Caritas Canada supporting those who live the consequences of grave injustices brought forward by greed and who are trying to balance the scales of justice. Both require financial backing. Both require our council, and councils like ours, to endeavour to educate our parishioners to the depth of the need and what we can do to help.

Firstly, we need to pray to right the wrongs and have the courage and wisdom to do God's will. After this, we need to find engaging ways to convey what is happening in the world of Development and Peace Caritas Canada and how people can help.

Please give generously of your wealth and time so our first world diocese can be a model of Christ's compassion and generosity. For more information or upcoming meetings in our diocese, please contact Deacon Adrien Chaput at the Office of Faith Formation at 613-732-7933 ext.206 or [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com)



## Parish Profile

# Paroisse St. Jean Baptiste serves our local francophone community

By Katrina Boguski

With a population of approximately 75 to 100 parishioners, *Paroisse St. Jean Baptiste* differs from other parishes in that it is a personal parish rather than a territorial one. Former pastor Fr. Mike Smith explained that the parish was established to serve French-speaking people in the region.

“St-Jean-Baptiste is what is called a ‘personal parish’; that is, it does not have a territory. It was founded in 1941 to serve the francophone community of the Pembroke-Petawawa area,” said Fr. Smith.

Today, the parish attracts mostly seniors, but it is actively trying to draw younger people to Mass. Fr. Fortunatus Rudakemwa is the parish administrator, and serving French students is one way he reaches out to the younger generation. Rudakemwa goes to the Catholic school Jeanne-Lajoie to prepare students for the Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Confessions for these students are held in the parish.

Mass is offered at 9:00 a.m. from Tuesday through Friday. The anticipated Mass is held Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. and Sunday morning Mass is at 10:30. All of the Masses are in French; however, parishioners sometimes request bilingual services for things such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. A children’s Mass, held once a month, is followed by refreshments by the FFCF association and by a few parishioners.

Fr. Smith explained, “Rather than having a CWL, which functions in English, St-Jean-Baptiste has *La Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises*. *La Fédération* functions similarly to the CWL, except that it has the added mandate of preserving and promoting the French language and culture in the communities in which it exists.”

The Knights of Columbus also get support from parishioners.

“Several members of St-Jean-Baptiste Parish belong to the Knights of Columbus, both the 3rd and 4th degrees. Rather than forming a parish K of C Council and Assembly, the Knights at St-Jean-Baptiste have chosen to integrate into the English-language Council and Assembly, which serve the entire Pembroke region,” said Fr. Smith.

On Fridays at 2 p.m., there is also a prayer and biblical studies group at the *Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke*.

Since COVID, there are fewer people attending the parish; however, the community is working very hard to welcome more people to keep the community vibrant.

Lucile Tourigny, president of the parish liturgy committee, noted that, “It is important for us to gather and pray and socialize in our language. In our diocese, on the Ontario side, our closest neighbors are Mattawa and Ottawa. Of course, there are French and bilingual parishes in Quebec, but not that close. So, at times, we feel isolated!”

Fr. Smith elaborated on the role the parish has played in helping to preserve the French language in the area.

“As a personal parish that serves Franco-Ontarians, the parish has historically been part of the bulwark against the assimilation of the francophone community into the English-speaking majority. The survival of the French language and culture in Ontario has always been a struggle.



**Paroisse St. Jean Baptiste, Pambroke**

Photo Credit Katrina Boguski

The abandonment of this struggle would result in assimilation. Even though the struggle for a language and culture is not, strictly speaking, the mission of a Catholic parish, the parish has assumed that role, given the historical context,” said Fr. Smith.

Fr. Smith had been pastor of St-Jean-Baptiste in 2008-2009 and then again from 2013 to 2022. He noted that things have changed a lot in that time saying, “The role of the parish is evolving. Whereas it used to be the case that faith could be taken for granted but vigilance was required for language and culture, increasingly faith cannot be taken for granted. The parish’s role is to be a locus of evangelization within the francophone community.”

Of course, in order to respond to the word of God, people actually need to be able to hear it and technology has its role to play. Parish staff told *Ecclesia*, “We are working on improving the church’s sound system; multiple associations and community groups have been approached to help us finance the project. We are grateful to be halfway to reaching our goal. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus, *La Fédération des femmes canadiennes françaises de Pembroke*, *Centre Culturel Francophone de Pembroke* and *Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste*.”

## Healing Services with Eucharistic Adoration – Who, What, Where, When, and Why?

By Greg and Mary Doyle

If you haven't yet attended one of the "Healing Services with Eucharistic Adoration" that have been taking place throughout the diocese since May of last year, you may have some questions. If you're wondering whether miracles of healing still happen, you can read of one in the "Why" section below. If you've attended one or more of these services, you might find this article helpful when encouraging others to attend.

**Who are these services meant for?** Since we are all in need of spiritual, physical or emotional healing, these special services are meant for all of us.

**What are Healing Services with Eucharistic Adoration?** These services are opportunities to

come before our Lord Jesus, present in the Eucharist, to ask for healing according to His will.

On entering the church, we hear songs of praise being sung by Deacon Chaput. This allows us to "enter in," to leave behind the cares of the day, and to feel the presence and peace of Christ.

Fr. Réal Ouellette then speaks to all present, using the scriptures and the lived-out lives of the saints as his basis, presenting new understandings and insights regarding the Holy Eucharist, suffering and healing.

A time of Adoration then follows, during which, Fr. Réal walks throughout the congregation, with our Lord, present in the Holy Eucharist, stopping at each pew to allow each person their

own time with Jesus. The Blessed Sacrament is then placed again on the altar for a continued time of prayer.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is made available at this time until around 8:05 p.m., at which time there is Benediction and the Blessed Sacrament is reposed to the tabernacle.

Following this, people might like to stay for quiet prayer, reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or to be prayed with by one of the prayer teams available at that time for personal prayer.

Note: If you'd like to watch any of the talks given by Fr Réal during the Healing Services, please go online to Fr. Réal Ouellette's YouTube channel [@PadreReal2002](#)

**Where and when do these Healing Services with Eucharistic Adoration happen?** These evenings have been taking place throughout the diocese for a number of months and will continue each month, except for July and August. To date, they have taken place in Pembroke (May 9/23), in Barry's Bay (June 13/23), in Arnprior (September 20/23), in Mattawa (October 3/23), in Otter Lake (November 8/23), in Deep River (December 15/23), in Renfrew (January 17/24) and in Bancroft (February 21/23).

Note: Check the diocesan website <https://pembrokedioocese.com/> for future dates and locations, or email Deacon Adrien Chaput: [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com)

**Why?** God wants us to come to Him. He knows us intimately. He knows all our needs. He wants us to feel His peace and His joy. Simply put, "He can't stop loving us!"

Testimonies of God's healing are being told. One such testimony, which we've been given permission to mention here, is from Doris Gagnon (Renfrew). Here are her words: "The first time I attended a Healing Service, I was having pain in my sciatic nerve, going down my leg to my foot. I went up for a healing. A lady and gentleman prayed over me, and I could feel the warmth going through my body. I have never suffered from my sciatic nerve since. I am a firm believer in healing, faith and prayer. Thank you for the Healing Service."

If you've experienced a healing during one of the services, you might like to tell the rest of us about it. Email Deacon Adrien Chaput at [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com), or phone (613) 732-7933, ext. 206.



Photo Credit: Dustin Abbott

# Walk the Opeongo Line to St. Ann's Shrine

## July 25-28, 2024

Join pilgrims from ages 7-77 in this life changing, 4-day journey from Our Lady of Fatima, Renfrew to St. Ann's Shrine, Cormac.

For more information and to register visit:  
[walktheopeongoline.org](http://walktheopeongoline.org)

Walk, pray, sing, and camp (i.e., pilgrimage) your way to St. Ann's!

## Saint Profile

### St. Louise de Marillac

**Feast Day: March 15**

At every St. Vincent de Paul meeting, we ask the saints to intercede for us as we answer God's call to help our brothers and sisters in need. Saint Vincent de Paul and St. Louise Marillac are always called upon and as well Blessed Frederic Ozanam, whom we pray will also be canonized one day as a saint. Saint Louise de Marillac was the foundress of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Louise was born August 12, 1591, most likely at Ferrieres-en-Brie near Meux, France. Louise was the daughter of Louis de Marillac and Marguerite Le Camus. Louise's mother died when she was a young age. Louise received her education from the Dominican nuns at Poissy. She had a deep desire and believed she had a calling to be a nun, but her spiritual confessor recommended she consider the vocation of marriage and enter into the Sacrament of Marriage with Anthony LeGras, an official in the Queen's service. Unfortunately, Louise would become a widow with the loss of her husband in 1613. During the years that passed, God was with her and, in 1625, as part of God's plan, she met St. Vincent de Paul, and he became her spiritual advisor.

Louise found great peace under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul and became very involved with helping St. Vincent's Ladies of Charity who cared for the sick, poor and neglected. Louise knew that this was a special calling for her and knew that God was calling many to serve in this ministry. In 1633, she set up a training centre

in which she was the directress of the home. Louise answered God's call and took her vows in 1634.

Many others became interested in becoming candidates as they also wanted to help. With this increasing growth, there was need of a so-called rule of life, which Louise herself, under the guidance of St. Vincent, drew up for the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (though he preferred the name "Daughters" of Charity).

St. Vincent was always prudent concerning matters with Louise and the new group. He shared that he never had any notion of starting a new community, that it was God's plan, and that our loving God orchestrated everything into place.

St. Vincent said to Louise, "Your convent, will be the house of the sick; your cell, a hired room; your chapel, the parish church; your cloister, the streets of the city or the wards of the hospital." When choosing their apparel for the ministry, it was to be the dress of the peasant women and later St. Vincent de Paul would allow them to take annual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. With great works being accomplished, Rome approved their order under the direction of Vincent's own congregation of priests.

Louise was busy helping wherever she was needed even in the midst of her poor health. She traveled throughout France, establishing her community members in hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions. At her



death, on March 15, 1660, the congregation had more than 40 houses in France, and since then, have spread all over the world. St. Vincent de Paul, her spiritual advisor, died six months after her. Louise de Marillac was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1934, and was declared Patroness of Social Workers by Pope John XXIII in 1960.

In a greater awareness of this great saint, let us pray together:

*Loving and compassionate God, we celebrate with great joy the faith and works of our patroness St. Louise de Marillac. Instill in us the fire of her love, the tenacity of her belief, and the tenderness of her care for the most abandoned. Draw us together into the light of Your presence and help us to trust in the power of Your Spirit, leading us ever closer to You, who live and reign forever. Amen*

*St Louise de Marillac please pray for us.*

## CHURCH SUPPERS

- **Sunday, May 26th**, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Braeside – BBQ Chicken
- **Sunday, June 16th**, Community supper – Bazar (Cipaille) \$25.00 per person –Knights of Columbus – Council 7221 at the Knights of Columbus Community Hall – 525 rue Baume, Fort-Coulonge QC.
- **Sunday, July 28th**, Ste-Bernadette Parish, Bonfiel – Take-out Sea Pie & Beans, Raffle Draw
- **Sunday, September 8th**, Our Lady of Mercy Church, Bancroft. 613-332-2954 | [olmbancroft@gmail.com](mailto:olmbancroft@gmail.com)

## Annual Lenten retreat takes place in Eganville

By Elwood Fitzpatrick

The Faith Formation Committee of the Diocese of Pembroke held its annual Lenten retreat at St. James the Less Church and Hall in Eganville on Saturday, February 17, 2024. The theme was “The Dwelling of God in Our Souls” and the presenter was Father Réal Ouellette, Administrator of St. James the Less Parish.

The retreat was well attended with representation from many areas of the diocese and even beyond. It opened with registration and a welcoming message by Deacon Adrien Chaput, followed by Opening Mass at 10 a.m.

After a short break with coffee/tea/juice and muffins, Father Réal launched the first session with the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch and a brief history of St. Teresa of Avila, a Carmelite nun of the 16th century in Spain, who initiated a number of needed reforms for the Carmelite Order and was the author of *The Interior Castle*, which was the focus of this session. St. Teresa described the soul as a great castle with many mansions leading to the heart of the castle, which was the seat of the King. Father Réal went on to explain the purpose and details of each of the seven mansions, showing the journey one follows to reach the core, which is a spiritual marriage with God. The castle is our soul and each mansion shows the stages of one’s progression through the steps in the development of God’s image in our soul. Father accompanied his explanation with a visual summary of the contents of each of the mansions.

The presentation was very informative and interesting. It gave me a much better grasp of the meaning and significance of the book,



which I had read a few years earlier. Now I feel much more prepared and inclined to reread the book. Father Réal’s inclusion of a visual summary during his talk made the presentation so much easier to follow for me and all those in attendance.

The session ended with a question-and-answer period. Father Réal graciously responded to a number of questions posed by attendees.

Following the first session, the retreatants were treated to a delicious lunch prepared by Valley Buns Bakery & Deli in Pembroke.

The afternoon session focused on “The Presence of Sin in Our Life.” Father started by comparing sin to walking on a tightrope. He spoke about the Sacrament of Reconciliation, recognizing how difficult a task it is, but how important it is, especially now, as there is such a decline in the reception of this sacrament. He recommended making use of this great sacrament on a regular

basis. He then went on to outline and explain the Seven Deadly Sins: pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony and lust, and countered each with the appropriate Virtues: humility, mercy, patience, diligence, charity, abstinence, and chastity. He again included a visual summary of each sin and virtue to make his presentation more clearly understood. He recommended The Seven Deadly Sins as a good basis for an Examination of Conscience in preparation for Confession.

I found this session very informative, leaving myself and others with a much more positive outlook and approach to Confession.

Father Réal was very thorough, clear, and informative in each of the presentations, helping all in attendance feel more open and relaxed. There was a positive reaction to the sessions and to the presenter and all look forward to next year’s retreat.



### Follow us on Facebook

For the most up to date information on events and news in the Diocese, follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/DiocesePembroke>

## A Warm Welcome to New Members in Our Faith

During the celebration of the Easter Vigil on March 30, 2024, at St. Columbkille's Cathedral, four new members were welcomed into our Catholic family. Terrence Polychronidis was fully initiated into the Catholic Faith through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion. Trever Burgess and Marianne Riccio made their Profession of Faith and received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Daniel Riccio also received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Their reception into the Church followed a period of study, prayer and discernment that began in October of 2023 through the process called the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, commonly called the RCIA. The participants met on a weekly basis with other Catholics to study, pray, and discern as they explored the Catholic Faith. This process of study and preparation exists in many parishes throughout the Diocese of Pembroke, through which others have chosen to enter into full Communion with the Catholic Church. Please see below a sharing about their faith journey and some photos of these beautiful moments within the celebration of the Easter Vigil on March 30, 2024.

### My Journey with Christ

*Firstly, I would like to thank everyone within the Church who assisted me on my journey to be baptized. Not only did I learn more about the Church, faith, and how we all came to know Christ in our hearts. But I learned so much about myself. When I first started down this path, I did not know what to expect. I also told myself to be completely open-minded to learning new ways and how each and everyone around me interprets their faith with God. For all my life, I was out of touch with my faith and didn't do enough to teach myself and prepare for Him. With this mindset I carried, I didn't worry about anything except myself, which I now know was wrong. After our sessions each and every night, I found myself going home and sitting and praying and opening up to the conversation that I can have with God and should be doing more. During this time, I was able to find a new love for the Church and in my faith. It's so hard to put into words how I felt when I was baptized and accepted into the Church. I find myself feeling happier and closer to God than I ever have before. I'm able to sit and pray every day in my own way and speak with God on my next steps in life, and carry myself better as a man of God, a future husband, and a father to my children. I will continue to play my part in this bigger mission. I will continue to carry my faith down to my family for future generations and help others in need of guidance as I was once lost. Lastly, I want to thank everyone within the RCIA course who was also on their own journeys. Speaking with everyone and sharing thoughts was very special to me. I found it extremely helpful to learn and hear other perspectives, on top of Deacon Adrien's wonderful teachings. Truly a remarkable program and Church.*

– Terrence Polychronidis



*My faith journey is not one of simplicity, which might sound similar to the stories of many others who have come to accept the call of Christ in their life. RCIA provided me the opportunity to feel at home, comfortable, and welcome to both explore and deepen my understanding of the Catholic faith and my relationship with Christ. Questions were always welcomed with open arms, and answered with respect, love, and truth in light of the Gospels. To be able to grow in knowledge and nurture my faith in this way, along with the support and love of those who attended each session and prayed for me along the way, has been most rewarding. This truly is a journey, and though mine is just beginning, I am most certain that Christ will continue to work in and through me.*

– Trever Burgess

*What a different world this would be if we all just listened to God. Through this journey of life, it seems that all our troubles can be traced back to the times we don't listen – when we make bad decisions, when we make mistakes, when a bad decision affects not only ourselves, but also others. Mankind is fortunate because God is forgiveness. God is abundance, God is love. Through Jesus, find love... find God. Amen.*

– D. Riccio

*In joining the Catholic Church, I have embarked on a journey of spiritual growth and discovery. Along the way, I have encountered a community of believers and spiritual mentors whose faith and fellowship have enriched my life in countless ways. As I look to the future, I am filled with hope and anticipation, knowing that this journey is just the beginning and that God's grace will continue to guide me every step of the way. God bless,*

– Marianne Riccio

We congratulate and welcome these new members into our Catholic Family of Faith. If you know someone who has questions about the Catholic faith or if you want to grow in a greater understanding of your faith, RCIA is the way. RCIA is The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; it is a journey where adults learn about and experience the Christian life, specifically our Roman Catholic beliefs and traditions, and become initiated into the life of our Church through the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. For more information, please contact me, Deacon Adrien Chaput, at the Office of Faith Formation and Leadership Development at 613-732-7933 ext. 206 or at [dcadrienchaput@pembrokediocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokediocese.com)

## Divine Mercy Sunday 2024

On May 5, 2000, five days after the canonization of Saint Faustina by St. Pope John Paul II, the Vatican announced that the Second Sunday after Easter would be known as Divine Mercy Sunday.

On April 7, 2024, many parishes in the Diocese of Pembroke celebrated Divine Mercy Sunday in their community with a special prayer service in the afternoon. This year, St. Columbkille's Cathedral was one of those parishes. This Holy Hour was well-attended by the faithful throughout the diocese. The service consisted of adoration, prayer, and singing of hymns by St. Columbkille's choir and recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. This service provided an occasion to focus on asking for God's mercy and renewing our trust in the Risen Lord. It was also a time of thanksgiving for souls who will be set free with the Lord's Divine Mercy.

Father Michael Lund was our guest speaker for the service and presented a wonderful message on Divine Mercy. Father Lund is the Administrator of St. Michael's in Douglas, St. Pius V in Osceola, and Sacred Heart in Cobden. Here are some of the excerpts from his message:

Divine Mercy Sunday is to celebrate the mercy God has given us, so it makes sense that it is close to the Sacred Triduum.

Mercy pours forth generously from our God.

The devotion comes from St. Faustina, the image, devotion, and prayers as per our Lord's request.

Similar to the Sacred Heart, it reminds us of something important – God loves us. We need to refocus on something we have been missing. We focus on our sins and think God identifies us by our sins, which is wrong. That is not who you are, not your identity. God is looking down as a loving father looks upon his children. He wants us to return to Him when we go astray.

In Baptism we are His beloved children. Not perfect in this life, but in the next. He desires our salvation. On the cross, He said, "I thirst," but it was not physical. His thirst was for our souls; it was for all souls.

The novena shows the souls Jesus asks us to pray for:

1. Mercy for all mankind, especially all sinners
2. Mercy for Priests and Religious
3. Mercy for the devout and faithful
4. Mercy for the pagans, for those who do not know God and do not know Christ
5. Mercy for those who have separated themselves from the Church
6. Mercy for those who are meek and humble, and for little children
7. Mercy for those most devoted to Christ's Mercy
8. Mercy for souls in the prison of Purgatory
9. Mercy for souls who have become lukewarm.

The Feast of Divine Mercy is so we can grow in Divine Mercy and to give us confidence in God's mercy—not presumption. There is something we have to do to receive mercy. We need to follow the path of righteousness. Even if we are imperfect, He wants to freely give us His mercy and love. Sin is insignificant compared to God's love. He gives mercy freely but will not override free will. Without freedom, we cannot love. There is the choice to reject His love and turn away from God, which is a tragedy. If you prayed, "Lord, I wish I was perfect," you wouldn't be yourself. There would be no growth to choose to love God and turn away from sin and reciprocate the love He gives so freely. The love we are to give back to God – that's what He wants for us. That's why His mercy is there. He is rich in mercy and ever so patient with us. In the Old Testament, He showed love and patience.



How many times did the people turn away from God? How many times did He call them back?

Today, rejoice in the mercy we have received from God. Rejoice in the sacraments He has given us, which are a path to holiness. Today, pray for those who have strayed off the path, so they can turn back to God. The Sacrament of Confession is one of the greatest ways you can feel the love God has given us. We can experience the great mercy of God as He calls us back to Him. God loves us, and He doesn't see us as the sum total of our sins. He wants our salvation. On the cross, He thirsted for our souls.

Jesus, I trust in You, let it be true for you. He is faithful to His promises, and He forgives us our sins when we turn back to Him.

*Let us remember and pray together the words Saint John Paul II left with us, "Lord, who reveals the Father's love by Your death and Resurrection, we believe in You and confidently repeat to You today; Jesus I trust in You, have mercy upon us and upon the whole world." Amen.*

# Family, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Update

By Yvette Bourque

## Carlo's Crew Youth Night

In February, the first Carlo's Crew Youth Night was held at St. James the Less in Eganville for youth in grades 7 to 12. The name Carlo's Crew was chosen since Blessed Carlo Acutis became the idea for the topics of the first three youth nights. We were incredibly blessed to see such a great turnout of around 45 youth participating. Since this is a great opportunity to invite others who don't attend church on a regular basis, it was also great to see those youth out as well. It is always great to see other youth learning and growing from their own peers by the good example they show to others. It is my hope that new friendships will be made and that existing youth ministries at the parish level can provide a more frequent experience for youth as we direct them to these various ministries already established and perhaps establish new ones at other parishes as well.

I am very grateful to those who have stepped up to help make these events happen for our youth. An Office of Youth Ministry simply cannot run without volunteers, and I am eternally grateful for all of you, past and present. The next event will be on **June 7<sup>th</sup>** and runs from 7-9 p.m. at St. James the Less Parish, Eganville. All are welcome.

## Image of God Series

Since last October, Our Lady of Sorrows parishioners in Petawawa have been enjoying a presentation each month by Patrick Sullivan on various topics related to growing in the spiritual life with your spouse and family. Participants are challenged to apply simple techniques, ways of thinking, and posing certain questions to their families to bring about greater unity and love for each other. Patrick also shares thought-provoking questions to ask and reflect on with spouses to help bring clarity to the purpose of their marriage and family. This has been the first opportunity for my husband, Mark, to attend this series, and we are both enjoying the time set aside for the two of us to reflect and deepen our spiritual lives together as are other couples. I encourage couples (especially those who are still raising their children in the home) to join the last presentation in Petawawa on Wednesday, June 12 at 7 p.m.



John Paul Meenan, Theology Professor, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College

## Theology on Tap

Finding a speaker for Theology on Tap and a date are never a challenge, but finding a location is proving to be especially challenging. In the past six months, the two restaurant locations that suited the needs of the Pembroke group quite well have both closed their doors. The group in Barry's Bay is also struggling to find a suitable venue. It seems both groups are searching for a new location and, in the meantime, the Pembroke group has opted to use the parish hall of St. Columbkille Church. I like to joke that, on those nights, we call it POP THEOLOGY. We are all praying that both groups can find a solution to this dilemma of suitable venues. It seems it is a sign of the times with rising costs of food, increasing rent for the local restaurants, and other issues that occur.



**Theology of the Body for Teens – YOU by Ascension Press, which took place last fall for the teens of the Diocese of Pembroke. Many thanks to all who joined in and for our speaker volunteers, Fr. Scott Murray, Angela Watson, Dave Afelskie, James & Ellie Hrkach and Veronica Ferri from Madonna House. A big thank you to Fr. Réal Ouellette for his help in the kitchen.**



Theology on Tap – Father Scott Murray

### Northern Ontario Youth Conference Feb. 24, 2024

This past year, due to the rising cost of buses and decreasing availability, the diocese did not hire a bus for this event. However, almost 30 youth piled into vehicles and made their way to the annual conference on February 24 in North Bay, either on their own or carpooling.

This year, the keynote speaker was David Patterson, who is currently living in the Toronto area and experienced a reversion in 2009 at the age of 21 after attending a retreat. Since those pivotal moments, David has led the way in youth ministry, high school chaplaincy and, most recently, through social media by founding **Yes Catholic**, an organization that calls young people to the Catholic faith by sharing real-life stories that have the power to change hearts.

I have to say that, through his amazing life stories, it was his humour that was quite entertaining, which was a surprise because, when you first see and meet David, he does not seem like he would be a funny guy. I was reminded, once again, to never judge a book by its cover. The parent chaperones also had the good fortune of being able to spend about half an hour speaking with Bishop Thomas Dowd, Bishop of Sault St. Marie. It was a wonderful experience enjoyed by all, and listening to the youth on the way home talk about and reflect on some of the talks and their favourite parts of the day was very heartwarming.

This year was the first time that the next year's date and speaker were revealed at the end of the conference with a video and personal invite by none other than Paul J. Kim. Paul J. Kim is on the Steubenville Toronto Conference list of speakers, and everyone is very excited to have him as the Keynote speaker for next year's conference. **Save the date! February 22, 2025.** Check out Paul on YouTube!



**David Patterson, Keynote Speaker at the Northern Ontario Youth Conference in North Bay on February 24, 2024.**



**Paul J. Kim has been announced as the Keynote Speaker for the 2025 Northern Ontario Youth Conference in North Bay.**

#### **About Paul J. Kim – Keynote Speaker for 2025 Northern Ontario Youth Conference, North Bay.**

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.

He's the author of the best-selling *A Catholic Guide To Adulthood Online Course*, he's the founder of the Triumph Men's Conference, he has released two music albums, his videos have accumulated tens of millions of views, and he presents to an average of 40,000 people a year at events throughout the world. His background includes a BA in Philosophy (Franciscan University of Steubenville), an MA in Marriage and Family Therapy (Hope International University), religious formation with the Community of the Franciscans Friars of the Renewal (NYC), and life experiences working as a therapist, missionary, and youth minister. He currently resides in Austin, TX, with his beautiful wife and five children.



## TESTIMONIAL

# Reflections on faith life, World Youth Day and sharing Jesus

By Jessica McCluskey

**G**rowing up in a Catholic home, faith is something that has always been a part of my life, although it hasn't always looked the same. As a child, faith is given to us by our parents. As we get older, we have different experiences and relationships that impact the direction our faith takes. I was fortunate to have found different groups and organizations in my young adult life that have guided me into making my faith my own and coming to know Jesus in a personal way. Some of these experiences include two mission trips – to the Dominican Republic and Peru – becoming involved and joining a youth group at the parish I attended during university, attending many groups and conferences through Catholic Christian Outreach and, most recently, attending World Youth Day in Portugal. Through all these experiences, I was able to make new and lasting friendships, place Jesus at the centre of my life, and learn what it means to be in a relationship with Jesus as an adult.

During World Youth Day, young Catholics from all around the world gathered for a six-day event, where we participated in an Opening Mass, Welcoming Pope Francis, Stations of the Cross, and, most notably, the evening Vigil and Missioning Mass. After being hosted in a local school with my group for the week, we made our way to a large field where we spent 24 hours 'camping' outside. As you can imagine, 1.5 million people in a crowd under the hot sun is not a quiet experience. But, as we began Adoration that evening, there was a deafening silence when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed. The level of reverence and love for Jesus that was displayed was unimaginable and an experience I will never forget, something I pray everyone can experience in some capacity. Jesus was, and remains, present in each young person who was there.

Being surrounded by so many young Catholics filled me with such peace, hope and courage.



Jessica McCluskey at World Youth Day in Portugal.

World Youth Day was such an eye-opening experience for me, and a witness to others, that our faith is alive and being lived out by youth in every corner of the world! Ultimately, I left Lisbon with hope for the future of our Church and a renewed strength to follow Jesus.

In keeping with the theme of WYD, "Mary arose and went with haste," I felt called to start a youth group in my parish. As someone who fell in love with Jesus and learned what it was to be Catholic as a young teen, I felt it was so important to give young people a space to learn about, encounter and build a relationship with

Jesus and each other. Since the fall, we have been gathering as a small group to complete Youth Alpha and Chosen. Being able to provide the youth in our church community a place to come together, make new friends, grow in faith, and find answers to some of their questions has brought new life into my own faith and brought me closer to Jesus. I urge you to continue to pray for the youth of our Church, for with the Holy Spirit, they are the ones who will keep Jesus alive for generations to come.

## Our Wilno Call to Youth Ministry

By Gabriel Sullivan

It was about April 2023, when we first started to talk about launching a ministry. We were discussing as a family how to get more involved in the church, and were pitching ideas to each other to see if we'd come across anything inspiring. When the term "youth group" first came up, I dismissed it... but my siblings didn't. Sure, they wanted to take part in ministry as much as I did, but I couldn't see them wanting to start an initiative with seemingly so much prep work and organization involved. Regardless, for some reason, it really resonated with them. In retrospect, it was most likely the Holy Spirit's prompting that helped them approach the daunting subject with such confidence.

After much more discussion and prayer, we agreed. The last Friday of every month, we would hold an event at our parish, St. Mary's (Parafia Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej Królowej Polski) with our pastor's permission, of course. Everything fell into place, and we held our first event on June 30, 2023.

We were aware of the need to minister to other teenagers to connect them with the faith. Whether they were practicing Catholics or not, we realized they could all benefit from a monthly meeting where we would pray, discuss our beliefs, and have fun together. Practicing Catholics need to get to know each other, and the non-practicing need to have a solid group of peers to turn to. If we don't provide them with an alternative to toxic worldly acquaintances, then what do we have to complain about when this generation grows up faithless?

With that in mind, we just had one problem; how on earth do we do this? We're fortunate that we knew plenty of people who had led youth ministry before, who helped us create a good format. We wanted a good program to run as well, something that would draw those with little faith experience in easily, so we decided on Alpha for Youth.

Alpha explores ideas which, although simple, should really be discussed more often. At our most recent event, for example, we explored the question, "Why don't people always get what they ask for in prayer?" Answers to questions like these from well-formed believers are both



Wilno Call to Youth Ministry

interesting and quite necessary. Continuing to investigate these kinds of questions helps to ensure that we never take parts of our faith, particularly the "simpler" parts, for granted. Of course, it's important that we remember why we believe what we believe for ourselves, but it also enables us to more easily follow the teaching of St. Peter, who wrote, "*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*" (1 Peter 3:15 NRSV).

The last thing we needed to begin was a name. "Youth on the Hill" was a fitting title (if you're ever taking Highway 60 through Wilno, take a glance at our church and you'll understand the reference). As Jesus' words "...*apart from me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5) have always been pretty clear to us, we knew that we'd need to pray for the effort, and since having a powerful saint on your side is always an excellent idea, we dedicated our youth group to St. Joseph, patron of evangelization and of all Canada.

So, what's the response been like? Well, overwhelmingly positive! From the first, Father Roman Majek (our pastor) has been encouraging and supportive in a multitude of ways. It's fair to say that this wouldn't be possible without him. Other parish priests

in our area have been supporting us as well, mostly with getting the word out, which is critical. Our parish community has always been uplifting and kind, and in this endeavour, they have been no less so.

We currently have about 20 kids coming out, just different mixes of them depending on the day and who's free. We've heard a lot of positive feedback, but we've continued to make improvements every night. Since our goal is basically to make the youth group a well-oiled machine for evangelization, we fully recognize that there will always be something to improve upon, but hey, we love a challenge!

In conclusion, I want to say that watching this little movement grow has been a pleasure. Gatherings like this one are a spark of hope in the darkness of this world. What's wonderful is that everyone can make a difference in the evangelization of their parish, of this diocese, and of this country. In fact, you can help us right now. If you have a moment after reading this, say a quick prayer for us and our ministry. Just ask God to bless us in our efforts and give us the strength to carry on this work. I know firsthand how much the smallest prayer can do for any situation, and we'd appreciate it immensely.