

ecclesia

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

www.diocesepembroke.ca

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF PEMBROKE

'As lay people, you are ministers of the sacrament of marriage'



The Sacrament of Marriage

Editors Note: The following letter was sent by Bishop R. W. Smith to parishes, requesting parishioners to take an active role in defending the traditional meaning of

marriage as the union of one man and one woman. He encouraged all to contact Members of Parliament asking them to uphold the traditional view of marriage

Dear Faithful People in Christ,

Re: Response of the Supreme Court of Canada to the Marriage Reference

As you are aware, in its response to the reference from the federal government on possible marriage legislation, the Supreme Court of Canada refused to give an opinion on the constitutionality of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. The federal government now plans to introduce legislation that would presume to alter substantially the nature of marriage in the society in which your children and grandchildren will live.

In their response to the Supreme Court opinion, the Ontario bishops expressed their dismay at the change that may occur in the legal recognition

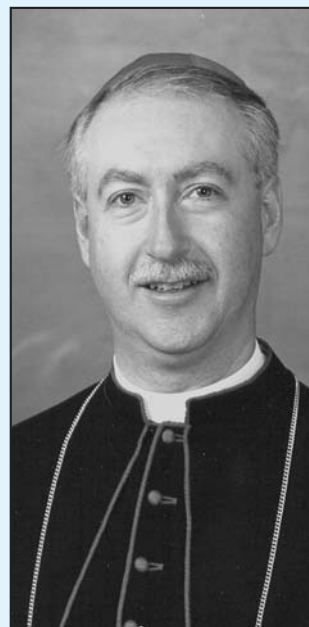
given to marriage in this country. At the same time, they welcomed the Court's acknowledgement that religious groups will not be forced to conduct or support marriages which do not conform to their convictions.

I wish to bring clearly to your attention that the Court has placed the final decision about the definition of marriage in the hands of our federal Members of Parliament. As your bishop, I ask you to take an active role in defending the traditional meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

As Catholics, we have a duty to make our voices heard in the public realm. These are momentous and far-reaching decisions that are being made. Your Members of Parliament need to hear from you.

They need to know what you consider to be for the good of future generations. As lay people, you are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage. You are its beneficiaries.

As citizens, we all have a stake in the democratic process. Write, phone or e-mail the Prime Minister, your Member of Parliament and the leaders of the political parties. Let it be known that the traditional definition of marriage must be upheld for the com-



you to make your voice heard. Every single voice will count.

mon good of our society. We need to make it clear that this is our expectation.

Pray at this time for guidance for our federal Members of Parliament. They are being called upon to make a very serious decision, which will affect future generations.

Pray that they do so with only the common good in mind.

I join you in praying for God's continued guidance in these matters. With mutual support we can strengthen marriage.

I have made my position known to our Members of Parliament. Now, as your bishop, I call on

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Richard W. Smith
Bishop of Pembroke

A CATHOLIC COUPLE SHARES A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MARRIAGE

'It's not just any relationship between human beings'



The Sacrament of Marriage

Editor's Note: The following is an example of remarks given by couples in support of traditional marriage.

We have been invited to speak very briefly about a matter of great importance to us and to our society, namely the proposal of the federal government to change the definition of marriage from what it has always been: "the union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others". Our experience and understanding of mar-

riage is, like yours, deeply rooted. Our earliest memories, our most vital celebrations, our deepest joys and even greatest sorrows, are embedded within our experience of the family, at the heart of which is marriage. Though our experience of marriage and family may be imperfect, we can nevertheless see in it God's plan "from the begin-

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‘Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings’

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ning”. Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was instituted by the Creator with its own nature and purpose. Marriage is a covenant of mutual self-giving, a covenant which flows naturally out of the complementary differences between man and woman. As a sacrament, it gives spouses the grace to perfect their human love; it strengthens their unity and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life. Marriage draws the couple into an ever deeper communion and finds its greatest realization in the gift of new life, the building of family.

The family is our first community, our first school of love. It offers the most stable and secure environment for welcoming and raising children.

It is clear that marriage, properly understood, is a fundamental and precious good for family members as well as for society as a whole. So how can changing the definition of marriage be a problem? First, the change would

deny what we know to be true: conjugal union depends upon the natural and God-given differences between man and woman which are ordered toward mutual self-giving and the transmission of life. True married love will be undermined by equating it with unions which lack this nature and purpose.

Secondly, marriage has been protected and promoted in law since time immemorial precisely because it plays such a vital public role in the transmission

and nurturing of new life. It is also the irreplaceable vehicle for communicating essential values and traditions from generation to generation. Extending the same privileges to unions which are not naturally ordered to these ends will erode protection of the family and marriage.

The common good of society will eventually be compromised. Finally, it must be recognized that civil law is profoundly influential in shaping patterns of thought and behavior. Redefining marriage will cause greater uncertainty in basic moral values. It will also obscure the dignity and beauty of true marriage.

We are in the process of writing to the Prime Minister and our Member of Parliament to make our views known. In doing so, we are taking care to express our respect and concern for those with legitimate needs and other viewpoints.

We are convinced that real compassion and protection of human rights can only be attained in the context of truth. We hope that you will also take up this great challenge to defend marriage. We owe it to our children and grandchildren.



Dr. and Mrs. Michael Ferri share at the Cathedral their Christian view of marriage.

Comments by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on Bill C-38, an act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purpose

1. The Catholic Bishops of Canada are united in their belief that marriage is the unique, essential and fundamental relationship of a man and a woman, and thus are opposed to the proposed redefinition of marriage as the lawful union of any two persons.
2. This opposition is shared with millions of other Canadians of different faith traditions and of no religious affiliation.
3. The proposed redefinition of marriage not only clashes with Catholic faith and practice, but has enormous civil and social implications for all Canadians.
4. The proposed redefinition of marriage voids

what is unique, essential and fundamental about the relationship of a man and a woman in marriage.

5. Furthermore, the draft legislation overlooks how the conjugal partnership of a man and a woman in marriage constitutes an irreplaceable good for society in providing a stable and positive environment for children and thus for future generations.
6. The Supreme Court of Canada did not suggest that the proposed legislation was necessary in order to conform with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, nor did it suggest the traditional definition of marriage was contrary to the Charter.
7. The Supreme Court has stated it is up to provincial governments, not the federal government, “to legislate in a way that protects the rights of religious officials while providing for solemnization of same-sex marriage” (para. 55, Supreme Court ruling). What meaning or protection then does the proposed legislation offer faith groups when the third clause of Bill C-38 states it “is recognized that officials of religious groups are free to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs”?
8. The long-term social consequences of the pro-



posed legislation are unknown. But what one can already anticipate will be prolonged and divisive litigation across Canada on the rights under freedom of conscience and religion to refuse to be involved in so-called “same-sex marriages”, to be free to teach and preach on marriage and homosexuality as consistent with one’s faith and conscience, and for organizations identified with particular faith groups not to be compelled to use their facilities in preparations for or celebrations relating to “same-sex marriages”.

9. In the one area where the Government of Canada is free to legislate on its own, the proposed legislation does not offer protection to faith groups from being penalized with respect to their charitable status if they do not agree with the proposed redefinition of marriage.

Bill C-38 invokes freedom of conscience and religion under Section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is evident all political parties in the House of Commons and Senate should provide a free vote to all members, including those in Cabinet.

The following website will have statements on this issue from various bishops.
www.occb.on.ca

Bishops reaffirm their opposition to redefinition of marriage

Pastoral letter to Catholics in Canada on redefining marriage

Ash Wednesday, 9 February 2005

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Catholic Bishops of Canada are united in their belief that marriage is the unique, essential and fundamental relationship of a man and woman. This has been the teaching of the Church since its beginnings, and reflects human history.



For this reason, the Bishops of Canada reaffirm their opposition to the proposed redefinition of marriage, as they have already

declared on a number of occasions, including statements by individual Canadian Cardinals and Bishops, in addition to those of many other Canadian citizens.

The conjugal partnership of a man and a woman constitutes a particular benefit for the couple and a unique good for society, as evident in their mutual love as well as in the procreation of children.

Marriage provided a stable and positive environment for children and thus for future generations.

The right to marriage is more than the rights of two individuals; it involves the common good.

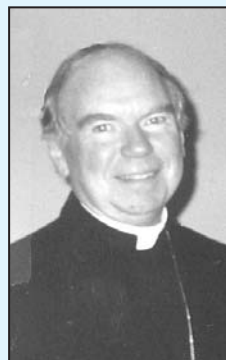
The proposed redefinition of marriage not only clashes with the faith and practice of Catholics and other Canadians, but also has enormous civil and social implications for everyone.

- The committed relationship of a man and a woman in marriage is basic to the family and thus for all society.
- Marriage and family life already are undergoing enormous pressures; the proposed changes risk disrupting the very nature and meaning of the institution of marriage.
- Government and society will contribute to the erosion of marriage and family by decreasing the importance of the union of a woman and man as wife and husband, mother and father. Society should do all it

can so that children have a mother and father living in a stable and loving relationship.

- Instead of uniting Canadians in respect for the dignity of homosexual persons, the proposed redefinition of marriage is divisive in its attempts to impose uniformity in pursuit of equality.
- The proposed redefinition is not a step in evolution but a radical break with human history and with the meaning and nature of marriage.
- The Supreme Court of Canada did not say that the proposed legislation of the government to redefine marriage is necessary to conform with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, nor did it suggest that the traditional definition of marriage is contrary to the Charter.

- As recently as 9 June 1999, the House of Commons reaffirmed the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. Why rush into a radically different definition when the long-term consequences are of such potential importance but have not yet been studied?



The Bishops of Canada encourage all Catholics to express their social concerns by writing to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, Members of Parliament and other elected officials.

As Canadian citizens, you not only have the right but the responsibility to inform your political representatives and government leaders of your convictions about marriage and social issues that are involved in its definition and nature.

May this Lent be a time of serious reflection on this matter and an opportunity for us to pray for the guidance of our political leaders.

Sincerely in Our Lord,

+ Brendan M. O'Brien
Archbishop of St. John's

President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops



Join the Christian Pilgrimage through the City of Pembroke Ecumenical Way of the Cross

Good Friday at 11:00 a.m.,
March 25, 2005 at Moncion Grocers
425 Pembroke St. E.

Scripture readings and prayer
at various community institutions
and churches throughout the city

This pilgrimage will last about 2 ½ hours
A Hunger Meal will be held in the
Most Holy Name of Jesus parish hall.
284 Trafalgar Rd., Pembroke, ON
There will be an offering for the poor

Bus transportation from Holy Name to Moncion Grocers at
the end of the pilgrimage,
courtesy of Valley Transportation

You are invited to gather with our Bishop at the Chrism Mass

Tuesday, March 22, 2005 at St. Columbkille
Cathedral at 7:30 p.m to celebrate
the Mass of Chrism

The Bishop will bless the oils to be used in

Baptism - Confirmation - Holy Orders
The Sacrament of the Sick

Deepening our love of Jesus...

FIRST EVENING

Welcome to our Diocesan mission. It takes the form of two evenings of reflection upon our life of faith. To lead us into this experience, I think it is important to provide the context of this mission by addressing two questions: why are we doing this, and why are we doing this now?

WHY?

I begin with the first question: why? Every mission has as its goal the deepening of our knowledge of and love for Jesus Christ and the renewal of our commitment to follow him as disciples in the Church. Such an objective is especially important today, because we, together with the entire human family, find ourselves at a very significant moment of history: the dawn of a new millennium. This is to say that we are at the threshold of a time of wonderful opportunity to proclaim anew the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that needs to hear it.

As the world moves into this new era, the deep desire of nearly every human heart is to build a civilization of peace, reconciliation and love. Two years ago, gathered in Toronto with hundreds of thousands of young people for World Youth Day, the Holy Father asked this question: "on what foundations, on what certainties should we build our lives and the life of the community to which we belong?" And then he responded to the question with the answer that he says arises spontaneously in the heart of the Christian: "Christ alone is the cornerstone on which it is possible solidly to build one's existence. Only Christ – known, contemplated and loved – is the faithful friend who never lets us down, who becomes our traveling companion, and whose words warm our hearts (cf. Lk 24:13-35)."

Christ alone is the foundation for the civilization that we seek. He must be "known, contemplated and loved". Speaking to those countless young people, he reminded them of the Christian mission, which is given expression in the Gospel image of salt and light as used by Jesus himself: You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world. The message to proclaim Christ is a vital and indispensable one. We are to allow our faith to be seen, so that Jesus Christ, who alone is the world's true light, will find a reflection in our lives of faithful witness to him.

This is the "why" of our diocesan mission. But why now?

WHY NOW?

For some time, we as members of the Diocese of Pembroke have been engaged in a process commonly known as pastoral planning. Until now, that has largely focused upon the question of parish organization in relation to the clergy resources that we have. We've taken a look at our needs, and we have already begun to make some changes to the way we do things. Obviously we will have to con-

tinue examining this particular question of organization as we move together into the future.

But there is another dimension to this question of pastoral planning to which we must attend. In fact, it is the most important dimension, and it will be the focus of our diocesan mission tonight and tomorrow night. I am speaking of the mission of the Church. In virtue of our common baptism and confirmation, you and I together are members of the Church, the Body of Christ, called to participate in its mission. In fact, the question of re-organizing parishes must always be related to this more fundamental question of mission. We make any necessary changes to the way we do things in order to be able to carry on the mission of the Church in our day and in our current circumstances. And that mission is evangelization, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to our world.

Throughout his pontificate, the Holy Father has been calling the Church to a new evangelization.



The Church has always proclaimed Christ. But in our day, throughout the world and even in our own country and community, there are clear signs that modern society has drifted away from Jesus Christ and his teachings, with tragic consequences. So by new evangelization, we mean a proclamation of Christ that is new in its expression, its methods and in its ardor.

In our two nights of mission, and this evening, it is this final dimension that I would like to focus upon: ardor. Ardor for the Gospel; zeal to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. This, it seems to me, is what is needed above all today. If we are to evangelize, then there needs to be awakened within the heart of each believer a real energy, zeal, desire, call it what you will, to share with our world the truth of Jesus Christ. So answering the call to evangelize begins with a new openness to the Word of God and a readiness to allow that Word so to transform our lives that we become witnesses, in word and in deed, to the transforming power of the love of God.

The Holy Father speaks of this in his brief but very powerful letter that he wrote to the whole Church at the end of the Jubilee Year 2000. It is called *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, which means "as the new millennium dawns". What he is doing here is setting forth the pastoral agenda for the entire Church for the foreseeable future. Consequently I have taken it as the blueprint for the pastoral planning that is to take place in this diocese for the next few years. So it is really important that we be familiar with it.

The content of the letter is shaped by his reflections upon the call of St. Peter as recorded in the fifth chapter of St. Luke's gospel. I ask that this be read now.

(Read Luke 5:1-11.)

The Lord asks Peter to put out into deep waters and let down the nets for a catch. The Holy Father sees this command of Jesus, first given to Peter, as directed to the whole Church. We are being called by the Lord to cast out into the deep, and before we finish this evening I'll speak about what this might mean for us. But first, I'd like us to focus for a minute on Peter's initial response to the call: "We've worked hard all night and caught nothing." What he is expressing here is a real sense of futility. And this is striking a chord in the hearts of many of us in the Church today.

In so many ways, we feel like Peter. Parents who have given their lives to bring their children up in the faith, only to see them not participate in the life of the Church, can feel as if their efforts were wasted. "We've worked hard all night and caught nothing." Priests, religious and lay people have worked together in this country for years building churches, schools and hospitals in order to serve the people of God and give witness to Christ. The good work of our ancestors contributed greatly to our society, and yet now we see in so many ways a growing distance from the Gospel: abortion on demand, attempts to re-define marriage, poverty and homelessness, and so much more. Many are feeling like "we've worked hard all night and caught nothing". There can be a sense of fatigue and a definite lack of ardour and zeal in the hearts of many today.

But consider Jesus and Peter. Our Lord said to him, go back out into the water. Continue to do what you were doing, but do so at my direction and in union with me. Make sure I'm in the boat with you, because apart from me you can do nothing. Of course, there was a great catch, and the passage tells us that Peter and his colleagues left everything to follow Jesus and to respond to his call to catch people for the kingdom of God. Their encounter with Christ and his great power transformed any sense of frustration or futility into a zeal for Christ and his mission.

This same message is conveyed to the Church today by means of this letter of the pope. The Lord is calling us to continue to do what we have been doing: prayer, celebration of the sacraments, good works, but to do so from Christ.

For this reason, the pope is saying that we as a Church must "start afresh from Christ". This is the call to us here in the Diocese of Pembroke as well: to know Christ, to know his love and its saving power, to read and discover the Gospels and other books of Scripture as if we were reading and discovering them for the very first time.

So tonight, let's begin to do this. Let's start afresh from Christ. For the remainder of this evening, I want to speak about our Lord, who he is and what he offers, and about the two sacraments which form the basis of our lives as his followers: Baptism and Confirmation.

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...renewing commitment to Him

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Let's consider a particular passage from the Gospel of John.

(Read John 1:35-42)

I am very fond of quoting a saying of the Holy Father given in words to this effect: "Jesus Christ is the answer to the question that is every human life." Every human life is a question, and Jesus is the answer. The question of meaning in life, the question of human destiny, the hungers of the human heart for love, relationship, peace: all find their answer or fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, truly God and truly man. He reveals to us the truth about God; he reveals to us as well the truth about ourselves. Jesus is the answer to the question that is every human life.

Now, let's consider the dialogue taking place between Jesus and the disciples of John the Baptist in the passage just read. St. John had just pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, that is, the one whose blood would free the world from sin. The disciples begin, therefore, to follow Jesus, who turns to them and puts into words that question at the heart of every human life: "what are you looking for?" What are you searching for? What is your deepest desire? What answers do you seek? And notice that they do not give a direct answer to the question. What they ask is: "Rabbi, where do you live?" They cannot put words to what they are looking for, but somehow they sense that the answer is to be found in this person Jesus, and they want to be with him.

So, in answer to their request, Jesus says "Come and see". They spend time with the Lord, and after that Andrew goes running to find his brother Simon and tells him: "We have found the Messiah!" That must have been quite the visit they had! Having spent time with the Lord, Andrew is utterly convinced that this man Jesus is the long-awaited one, anointed by God to save the world. I wonder what Jesus said to Andrew and his colleague. Obviously we don't know because we are not told. But if we consider what next happened when Simon Peter met Jesus, it can give us some important insight into what happens in the life of every person who opens the heart to Christ.

Consider the last line of that passage from John:

John 1:42 [Andrew] brought [Simon] to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

In this brief episode, Simon is led by his brother Andrew to Jesus. In doing so, Andrew places his brother before the gaze of Jesus: "Jesus looked at him." This gaze of Jesus is one which penetrates to the very core of Simon. The change of name indicates that regardless of how others have looked upon Simon, and regardless even of how Simon may have understood himself, the gaze of Jesus attains to his true identity, to who he is

before God: "You are Peter."

At the centre of each one of us stands an "I" which is unique and unrepeatable. Certainly, we are members of the one human race because we share common characteristics, both physical and emotional. But even though we possess many similar human features, there is an inviolable uniqueness to every individual.

Beneath our physical structure; beneath all our thoughts and emotions stands an "I" which exists in no one else. This "I" deeply desires to be known, to be forgiven, to be loved. When we come before Jesus, and place ourselves before his glance, the gaze of the Lord reaches to this "I". It reaches to the true "I", to who I truly am. Jesus looks at me, and truly sees me.

Consequently, as we place ourselves before the penetrating glance of the Lord, we discover the truth of ourselves. In this gaze, we are enlightened by the all-Holy One, and so we come to recognize our sinfulness. In other words, we come to know our own need for salvation. As Luke tells it, after Peter had denied the Lord, Jesus turned and looked at him. Peter then remembered the Lord's prediction of denial (cf. Luke 22:61). The Lord's glance brought Peter to a terrible awareness of his sin.

But the one who reveals our sinfulness to us is the very one who is the bringer of salvation, the very one who wants us to be saved and who died to manifest this will and bring it to completion. In other words, the one who looks within and brings to light our sinfulness is the very one who loves us unconditionally, and who offered his life on the cross to prove it (cf. Rom. 5:8). The gaze of Jesus brings us to an awareness of our absolute need for him and of his limitless love for us.

This divine offer of love seeks a response of answering love. At the end of the Gospel of John, the risen Lord appears to the disciples and asks Peter a question: "Do you love me?" He asks it three times in order thereby to forgive Peter's three-fold denial. "Do you love me?" For our God, this is what matters more than anything else. This is what the Lord seeks. Do we love him? He is not deterred from this by any sinfulness of our past. He erases that through his forgiveness. Neither is he swayed by any mistakes that we have made, that may have hurt others or weakened the witness we give to our faith. The Lord has the power to right any wrong which we have committed. His loving gaze moves inexorably through our lives, lovingly by-passing our worries and fears, our guilt and sorrows, our masks and pretensions, until it reaches that centre of freedom and personhood which is "I". There the Lord asks the question: "Do you love me?" Do you love me? There he awaits our response. The Lord desires a communion of love

with his children, a communion which is meant always to deepen.

This episode from the life of Peter makes clear that this communion of love is the seedbed of service and mission. Service to the Lord and to his Church flows from the communion of love with him. It does not precede it. "Do you love me? Feed my sheep."

It is this knowledge of Christ's love for us that awakens our love for him. This relationship of love is the fire within, the energy to go forth and tell others about him and transform our world into a civilization of love.

Our Christian life was launched through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Let's listen to a passage from Paul's letter to the Romans. It is perhaps his most important teaching on the meaning of Baptism.

[Read Romans 6:3-11]

Paul's basic point is that the life of the Christian requires a definitive break from sin, because of what has taken place in baptism. His goal in this passage is very practical. By reflection upon what took place at their baptism, he seeks to motivate Christians to live as they should, i.e. in accordance with the status given to them through their Baptism. Paul's basic point is that in Baptism we enter into a vital union with Christ. But to be united with Christ is to be united to the very pattern which formed his history, the pattern, that is, of death and resurrection. We are to live as those who have died to sin and have risen to new life in Christ.

I'd like to focus briefly on verses 3-5.

3) Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

In effect what St. Paul is saying to us is: Do not forget who you have become through your baptism! Live always conscious of your status as a son or daughter of the Father, and allow nothing to be part of your life that is not consistent with your status and high calling. The Christian should be always conscious of having been freed from sin through union with Christ in his death and resurrection and, accordingly, live a life of faith, holiness, and obedience.

There is an implicit reference in the passage to the ritual of Baptism. Being buried with Christ and rising with Christ refers to the manner in which people were baptized in the early centuries of the Church. Baptism was by immersion, that is to say,

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MISSION

Renewing commitment

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stepping into a pool and going under the water (symbolizing burial with Christ or death to sin) and then coming up again (rising with Christ to new life). Today the symbolism is often not as strong. Water is poured over the head of the one being baptized, but the significance is the same: one has died to the old way of life, and risen to a new life in Christ. Through the waters of Baptism, the Holy Spirit is at work to cleanse us of sin and to pour into us the grace we need to live the Christian call to holiness.

The meaning of Baptism is brought out in the other parts of the ritual as well. Immediately following the baptismal washing, the baptized is clothed with a white garment. Listen to the words the priest or deacon says as the garment is placed: "You have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven." Baptism gives us not only a new life and a new dignity, but also a destiny: everlasting life in heaven.

Then a lit candle is given to the baptized, or to the parents or godparents in the case of a child. "Receive the light of Christ. You have been enlightened by Christ. Walk always as a child of the light and keep the flame of faith alive in your heart." No longer do we live in darkness. Our faith in Christ and obedience to his teachings is the light that guides us on our pilgrim journey through life.

I'd like to suggest that we make it a regular practice to remind ourselves, as St. Paul is doing here, that we have been baptized. Do we truly realize what that means? Are we living lives that truly accord with the status that is ours as the children of God, called to holiness of life. What influences us more? The world around us, which in so many ways is at enmity with God, or the truth of who Christ is and who we are in him? But not only ought we to stay always conscious of the fact that we have been baptized. We ought also to keep in mind that we have been confirmed. Through the act of Confirmation, a mission has been bestowed upon us. Are we faithful to it?

Let's consider the ritual of this sacrament. Confirmation takes place by the Bishop doing a symbolic action and speaking a word. The symbolic action is two-fold: the laying on of hands and the anointing with sacred oil called chrism. In our biblical tradition, laying hands on a person's head and anointing them with oil was a sign of being set apart for the accomplishment of a particular purpose. It was done with kings, priests, and sometimes prophets. So from this sign action we know that, at confirmation, we are being set apart, chosen, for a mission. But what mission? The word spoken by the Bishop is: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." Through the sacrament of Confirmation, we receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is the same Spirit that Jesus possessed fully, and that

he promised to send upon the apostles from the Father. It is the same Spirit that did, in fact, come upon the apostles at Pentecost, and that transformed their lives and sent them forth into the world. Weak and fearful men, lacking in knowledge, were suddenly made fearless proclaimers of the Gospel, and they went forth through the known world to proclaim Christ and to build up the Church.

The same Spirit has come upon us at our Confirmation. At Baptism we were united to Christ and made a member of the Church, a member of the mystical Body of Christ. Just as the earthly body of Jesus was anointed by the Spirit for his mission, so is his mystical Body anointed with the Spirit for mission. And it is the Spirit of Christ, so to be anointed with his Spirit is to be made participants in his mission.

This is what is behind the Holy Father focusing upon the word of Christ to Peter: cast out into the deep. Go out into the deep waters of the world, and enlighten the world with the light of Christ. In every fact of your life — personal, home, workplace, school, leisure — be a sign of the new life that God wills for all people in Christ.



What are those deep waters into which we are called to cast out? If we think of it in terms of persons, we can speak of the poor and the homeless, the sick, our youth, our native peoples, the unborn. Casting out into these deep waters means striving to understand their situation and to bring the light, life and hope that come from the Gospel. If we think of deep

waters in terms of issues, we realize that the waters are very deep indeed. Bioethical issues like stem cell research, moral issues such as the attempts to re-define marriage, societal issues such as adequate health care or affordable housing for the poor. All of these need to be enlightened by the Gospel. Or we can think of deep waters in terms of places, such as the nations of the Middle East.

Why is there such hatred and killing? What policies ought our governments be pursuing to help alleviate this? Or it could be the countries of the Third World. How does our lifestyle of abundance have a negative impact on the lives of so many millions in want?

What are the deep waters of the Diocese of Pembroke? Who are the people, what are the issues, where are the places that are crying out for the message of the Gospel?

The task is enormous, and we obviously cannot fulfill it unaided. We need God's grace. This is why it is necessary to turn again and again to that sacrament which the Church teaches is the source and the summit of the Christian life: the Eucharist.

This will be the topic of our reflections tomorrow evening, when we gather to celebrate this sacrament together and mark the opening of the Year of the Eucharist, proclaimed by the Holy Father for the whole Church.

Diocesan Mission 2004

Prayer for the New Evangelization

*God our Father, You called us each
by name and gave Your only Son
to redeem us.*

*In Your faithfulness, You sent the
Holy Spirit to complete the mission
of Jesus among us.*

Open our hearts to Jesus.

*Give us the courage to speak His
name to those who are close to us
and the generosity to share His
love with those who are far away.*

*We pray that every person
throughout the world be invited to
know and love Jesus as*

*Savior and Redeemer. May they
come to know His unsurpassing
love.*

*May that love transform every
element of our society.*

*We make this prayer through our
Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who
lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, forever and
ever.*

Amen.

*Mary, Mother of the Church, pray
for us.*

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Amen.

Celebration of the Eucharist

Editor's Note: The second night of the mission held in our diocese by Bishop R.W. Smith began with the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The following is the homily he delivered at this mass.

We opened our mission last evening with attention given to the fact that we find ourselves in the midst of pastoral planning here in the diocese. This is, in fact, the case in most dioceses, to the point where the Holy Father addresses it in the letter that I spoke of: *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. There he lays out the pastoral plan for the Church, which is growth in holiness. We undertake various pastoral initiatives and programmes, certainly, but we must never forget that the ultimate answer to the problems of the world is not a programme, but a person: Jesus Christ. As I said last night, quoting the Holy Father: Jesus Christ is the answer to the question that is every human life. And so he calls the whole Church to "start afresh from Christ", to rediscover the truth of who he is and to contemplate his face as he is encountered in so many different ways in our Church and world.

Central to this pastoral project, this "starting again from Christ" is a renewed appreciation of and gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist. On the Feast of Corpus Christi last June, Pope John Paul announced a Year of the Eucharist. This begins in October of 2004, coinciding with the International Eucharistic Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico, and will end in October of 2005, when Bishops from around the world will gather in Rome for a Synod on the Eucharist. When the Holy Father announced this special year, he stated that we should mark and celebrate it within the context of the Church's pastoral plan. We are called to start afresh from Christ, and where better to encounter him and to be renewed in his love than in the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist!

Accordingly, this second night of the mission is a celebration of the Eucharist. Here I want to reflect with you briefly on this great mystery and to issue a call to the whole Diocese to heed the invitation of the Holy Father to contemplate with seriousness and devotion the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Church lives from the Eucharist. In order to grow in holiness as we journey to the Father, in order to undertake the mission entrusted to us through our Baptism and Confirmation, we need the Eucharist. Here we encounter the Lord in unsurpassable fashion; here we are nourished with a love and strength that can be found nowhere else.

Consider the following teaching of St. Paul. It is taken from his first letter to the Corinthians.

1Cor. 11: 23) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said,

"This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25) In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

St. Paul is speaking here of handing on to his readers something which he himself had received. It is nothing less than the core of Christian life, and the Church has been handing on this truth to succeeding generations ever since, and living from that truth. Paul is recalling what Jesus did at the last supper with his apostles. From what Paul says here, and from the other accounts of the Last Supper given in the Gospels, we know that Jesus took bread and wine, said a prayer of blessing, broke the bread and poured out the wine and gave them to his disciples. At the same time he spoke words which expressed the meaning of his actions. This is my Body given for you; this is my Blood of the covenant. In other words, he is identifying himself with the bread and wine. Specifically, he is relating the meal with bread and wine to the offering of himself which he would accomplish on the cross the following day. And then he says: Do this in memory of me.

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In obedience to this command of the Lord the Church has, in fact, been "doing this" ever since. We, too, take bread and wine; the priest, acting in the person of Christ, says the great prayer of blessing in which we remember Christ and what has been accomplished for us in him; he repeats the words which Jesus spoke at the Last Supper; and then the gifts are given.

But, of course, this is no simple memorial action, only a calling to mind of something that happened a long time ago. Because Jesus related himself to the bread and wine, we understand that he is truly present in a moment of transformation. Through the words of Christ spoken by the priest and by the action of the Holy Spirit, what were once bread and wine are bread and wine no longer. They are changed and truly are the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is the real presence of Jesus our Lord.

This truth was handed on to us by our parents from the time we were children. It is the kernel of all religious education. It is the highlight of Sunday in the regular rhythm of the week. Because it is so much a part of us, we run the risk of taking it for granted. So we must never tire of reflecting upon this mystery and growing in our love for the Eucharist.

What is it, precisely, that is happening here at the Eucharist? Well, consider again the words of Jesus: This is my Body; this is my Blood. In the celebration of the Mass, Jesus gives us himself as food and drink. This means that when we receive him in the Eucharist we are nourished with:

a) strength for the journey: our life of faith, rooted in Baptism and Confirmation, is a pilgrimage to the Father, and is to be marked by holiness, obedience, service and witness. Unaided, we are bound to fail. But nourished with Jesus himself, we are given the strength and zeal we need.

b) hope for eternal life: in the Gospel of John, Jesus promises that the one who eats his flesh and drinks his blood will have eternal life, and that he will raise them up on the last day (cf. John 6: 54). Baptism bestows on us a destiny in Christ: eternal life with the Father. The Eucharist continually deepens our communion with Christ and thus nourishes us with the hope that, by the gift of his grace, the promise first made to us at Baptism will be fulfilled.

c) communion. By partaking of the one bread and one cup, the true presence of the one Lord Jesus Christ, we become one in him. The gift of communion among the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ is not limited to those who participate in one particular Mass. Everywhere in the world that Mass is celebrated, it is the one and same Eucharist. This means that the sacrament brings us into communion with our brothers and sisters throughout the world who share in this sacred meal. In his apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, the Holy Father calls on us to develop a "spirituality of communion", that is to say, living in the awareness that we all somehow share in the lives of one another. Our communion in Christ finds visible expression in our care for one another, especially in charitable outreach to those most in need. One particular expression of our spirituality of communion in the Diocese of Pembroke is our twinning relationship with the Archdiocese of Lima in Peru. In fact, as we gather here to celebrate the Eucharist, parishioners of Lima are assembling at the same time, so that we can be praying for one another.

As we reflect upon the words which our Lord spoke at the Last Supper, we realize that there is more that must be said. His words were not simply "This is my Body, this is my Blood". He said more: "This is my Body, given for you; This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for you". Here Jesus is relating the bread and wine precisely to his offering of himself on the cross. This is why the Church teaches that the presence of Christ in the Mass, under the appearance of bread and wine, is the presence of Christ offering himself to the Father. The sacrifice of Christ at Calvary is made present in the here and now of the Mass. What is the significance of this for us who receive the Lord in Holy Communion?

At the Last Supper, Jesus identified himself with the bread and wine and then offered those gifts to his apostles. By this gesture, he invited his followers to be one with him in his self-offering to the Father. He does the same in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The transformed gifts of bread and wine, now the
(Continued on page 8)

Celebration of the Eucharist

(Continued from page 7)

Body and Blood of Christ, are offered to those who gather for the Eucharist and who are able to receive them. In so doing, Jesus invites us to offer our lives to the Father through, with and in him.

This means when we come forward to the altar and say "Amen", we are saying "yes" to this invitation of Christ. Our "Amen" extends not only to the truth that the Eucharist is the real presence of Christ, but also to his invitation to offer our lives to the Father, for the accomplishment of the Father's saving purpose, through, with and in Christ.

But to give this yes so understood has significant implications for our daily lives. Here in the Eucharist I offer my life to the Father in Christ. This self-offering must be given expression in my daily life, above all by laying down my life in service to my brothers and sisters, especially the needy.

In other words, Eucharist is inseparable from mission. Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, and offering our lives to the Father through, with and in him, we are sent into the world to give witness to Christ's saving and merciful love, to be messengers and agents of his mercy.

Our sending forth is implicit in the name by which we commonly refer to the Eucharist, namely, the Mass. This word comes from the Latin text of the dismissal at the end of the celebration; *Ita, missa est*. It means "go" and *missa*, from which we take the name "Mass", means "sent". We go forth from the celebration as a people sent to proclaim by word and deed the good news of salvation in Christ.

A person I know once suggested that, as we leave the Church following Mass, we look upon the doors of the Church as the point not of exit but of entry. From the Mass, we enter the world of daily life as disciples of the Lord, strengthened to fulfill the mission entrusted to us.

As we mark together the Year of the Eucharist, may we grow in our knowledge of and love for the gift of the Eucharist. May we not fail to see our sharing in this great sacrament as the heart of all pastoral planning in our Diocese.

Pope grants Plenary Indulgence for the Year of the Eucharist

A Decree from the Apostolic Penitentiary, dated December 25, 2004 and published recently, states that "the Holy Father wished to enrich with indulgences several determined acts of worship and devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament, which are indicated below. ... The Decree will be in force during the Eucharistic Year, starting with the day of its publication in the L'Osservatore Romano. Notwithstanding any disposition to the contrary." Following are excerpts:

"A Plenary Indulgence is granted to all faithful and to each individual faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer in keeping with the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, with the soul completely removed from attachment to any form of sin), each and every time they participate attentively and piously in a sacred function or a devotional exercise undertaken in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, solemnly exposed and conserved in the tabernacle.

"A Plenary Indulgence is also granted, under the aforesaid conditions, to the clergy, to members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and to other faithful who are by law obliged to recite the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as to those who customarily recite the Divine Office out of pure devotion, each and every time they recite - at the end of the day, in company or in private -

Vespers and Night Prayers before the Lord present in the tabernacle.

"The faithful who, through illness or other just cause, are unable to visit the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist in a church or oratory, may obtain a Plenary Indulgence in their own homes, or wherever they may be because of their ailment, if, ... with the intention of observing the three usual conditions as soon as possible, they make the visit spiritually and with the heart's desire, ... and recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a pious invocation to Jesus in the Sacrament.

"If they are unable to do even this, they will receive a Plenary Indulgence if they unite themselves with interior desire to those who practice the normal conditions laid down for Indulgences, and offer the merciful God the illnesses and discomforts of their lives."

The Decree asks that priests, especially pastors, inform the faithful "in the most convenient manner" of these dispositions, prepare, "with generous and ready spirit," to hear confessions and to lead the faithful "in solemn public recitation of prayers to Jesus in the Sacrament." The faithful are likewise exhorted "to give open witness of faith and veneration for the Blessed Sacrament" as proposed in such acts as Eucharistic procession and adoration, and Eucharistic and spiritual communion."

Congratulations to the Diocese Pembroke

\$216,866.41 was raised in a special collection for the victims of the recent earthquake Tidal Waves in Southeast Asia.

\$23,380.25 was raised by the students and staff of RCCDSB for the Tidal Wave victims.

\$42,815.51 was raised in the Fall in special collection taken at Bishop's Smith's Mission for the poor at home and our Twin Diocese in Peru.

Thank You! You have been exceptionally generous.

Dear Faithful People,

Once again you have demonstrated great generosity in your response to our brothers and sisters in need. The amounts raised in the special collection for the Tsunami Relief, and in the collection of the Diocesan Mission for the poor at home and in Lima, are a wonderful expression of Christian love and care. Let us not fail to accompany our gifts with constant prayer for those who need our support.

With the assurance of my deep gratitude for your generosity, I am,

*Yours sincerely in Christ,
+ Richard W. Smith
Bishop of Pembroke*

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Bishop Richard W. Smith focused on sanctity of life message at recent Mass

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception St. Columbkille Cathedral Pro-Life Mass

In union with the universal Church, the members of the Church of Pembroke gather today here at the Cathedral, or in their own parishes, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the mother of our Lord. On this very day in 1854, Pope Pius IX made the following proclamation: "We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which asserts that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" (DS 2803). We, who do firmly and constantly believe this

truth of faith, assemble for the Eucharist to give thanks to almighty God for this unique privilege granted to the mother of His Son, Jesus Christ. Indeed, it was in view of the incarnation of the Son of God that Mary was chosen and preserved from all stain of sin. Only a woman so singularly blessed could freely offer herself as the tabernacle of the Word made flesh, as the one from whom the divine Son of God could assume a human nature. In other words, only in the light of salvation history can this dogma of Mary's immaculate conception be fully appreciated and celebrated.

The early moments of the history of salvation are recounted in the first reading from Genesis. It recalls for us God's first response to the original sin of Adam and Eve. In this account, God is confronting our first parents with the truth of their sin of disobedience. The divine reaction is a promise of mercy. Addressing the serpent, God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike

your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15) The early Fathers of the Church referred to this verse as the Proto-Evangelium, the first proclamation of the Gospel. Through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin and death entered human history. The divine response was the promise of a saviour who would conquer sin and death definitively.

In tonight's Gospel passage, we hear that Mary is the first to receive the astounding news that the time for the fulfillment of the promise had come. Moreover, she learns that she has been chosen to be the instrument through which the awaited saviour would enter human history. When the

angel Gabriel salutes her as "full of grace", he makes known that God's grace had already been at work to prepare her for the unique role she was to play in God's plan of salvation. Through the centuries, as believers pondered the truth of the divinity of Christ and the unique role of Mary, the Church became increasingly aware that Mary had been redeemed from the first moment of her life. This is the truth proclaimed by the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. God our Father, who has chosen all people in Christ to be holy and blameless before him in love, has blessed Mary from her conception with the redemption won by Christ her Son.¹

Tonight, we, who celebrate with awe and joy this truth of faith, entrust to the powerful intercession of Mary Immaculate the cause of life. To her whose yes to God brought forth the Saviour of all human life, we send up our cry for the protection of human life from everything that threatens it in our day. To her, who was singularly blessed by God from the moment of her conception and borne by God's love at all moments of her earthly journey, we make our prayer that she intercede with her Son to help us safeguard the dignity of all human beings from their conception to natural death.

But tonight we do not only pray to Mary. We also strive to learn from her. Indeed, as we ponder the Scriptures and the dogma of her immaculate conception, we soon come to see in the example of her life the antidote to the sin which lies at the root of all attacks on human life. That sin is rebellion against God. The antidote is fidelity and obedience.

The passage we heard tonight from Genesis is part of the biblical account of the original fall of the human race. This is conveyed in the story of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in spite of the fact that God had told them not to do so. In that story, the tree, and God's prohibition to eat from it, sym-

bolically teach that there are limits to our creaturely existence, limits that are to be respected with trust in the never-failing provision of God.² God alone is God; human beings are creatures. In eating from the tree, Adam and Eve rebelled against the truth of their human existence. In that act, they strove to be more than they

were: gods and not creatures. In other words, they abandoned their trust in God, and refused to accept the truth of their total reliance upon Him. Here we see laid bare the essence of sin. All sin is ultimately rebellion against God and a refusal to trust in His goodness.

The tragedy of our day springs from the constant repetition of this original sin. There is widespread denial of dependence upon our Creator, and this gives

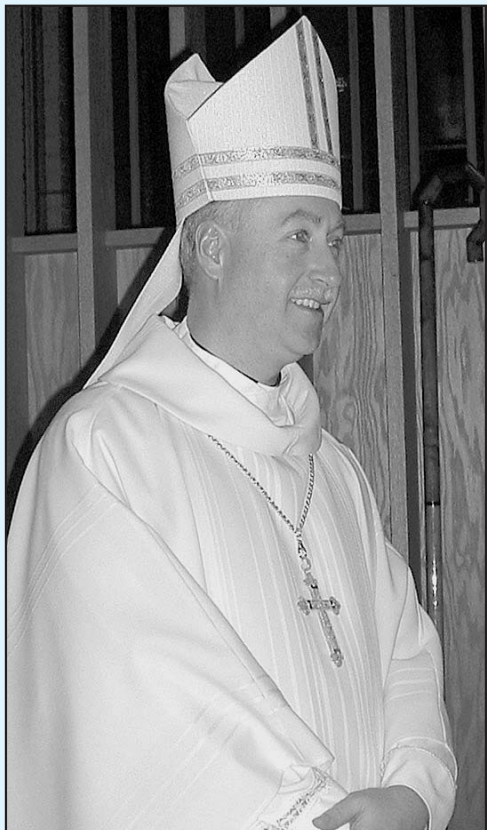
birth to a refusal to be subject to the natural law and moral norms. Nowhere is this sad fact more evident than in the attacks on human life: abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide. It is also manifest in the present efforts to redefine marriage, and can be discerned in indifference to the plight of the poor and homeless or in the wanton disregard of the environment. Beneath all of this is the fundamental choice of self over God, and the breathtaking presumption that the human being is master not only of his own destiny, but also of that of others.

This fundamental option for the self is fuelling the culture of death. By contrast, the example of Mary Immaculate shows us what is necessary for a culture of life.

In its teaching concerning Mary's immaculate conception, the Church is always careful to explain that this does not mean that Mary was free from the need for redemption. Christ died for all, as Scripture tells us, and, therefore, this would necessarily include his mother.

What the dogma does teach is that the grace of redemption, won by her Son, was given to her from the moment of

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Sanctity of life

(Continued from page 9)

her conception. This means that her entire life, from its first moment, was wholly borne by God's grace. In a unique way, God's choice of Mary and the special blessing she received proclaim the radical dependence of the human being upon the grace of God, given in Christ.

Full of that grace, Mary was able to give freely the only appropriate response to the truth of that dependence: the response of faith and obedience. Her fiat, her total "yes" to the truth of her existence and call, gave birth to life; not just to human life but to the One who is Life, Jesus Christ.

So the action of God in Mary's life, and her response to God, teaches that a true culture of life demands from all of us a humble and trusting acceptance of the truth of our reliance upon God, and a complete surrender to His design as manifest in revelation and the natural law.

For this, of course, we need the grace of God. Unlike Mary, we suffer the consequences of original sin. Concupiscence is the abiding tendency within each of us to choose ourselves over God.

Let us not fail to turn to Mary Immaculate, full of grace, seeking

her intercession with her Son for the help we need to serve the cause of life through our fidelity and obedience.



I would like to conclude this homily with words of thanks and encouragement. Gathered here this evening is a community that is dedicated to the cause of protecting human life, our basic right.

In the name of the Church, thank you for the lifting up of your voices and the manifestation of your belief. Thank you above all for your prayer. God will not fail to hear and respond to the heartfelt prayer of the people he has redeemed in His Son.

And do not give in to discouragement. There are troubling trends in our society today, to be sure. But the Cross of Christ has revealed the triumph of God's mercy over sin. This gives us an unshakable confidence in the ultimate victory of God's will for life over any and all forces of death.

Helped by Mary's prayer and encouraged by her example, may that confidence sustain us in our efforts to build a culture of life and a civilization of love.

1 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, '491-492.

2 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, '396f.

Holy Father's Prayer for Families

Lord God, from you every family in Heaven and on earth takes its name.

Father, you are love and life.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman, and through the Holy Spirit, fountain of Divine Charity, grant that each family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family.

Through Christ our Lord who is the Way, the Truth and the Life for ever and ever.

Amen

World Youth Day 2005 Cologne, Germany

*"We have come
to worship him" Mt 2:2*

Throughout Pope John Paul II's papacy, youth have been a priority. When he was elected Pope in 1978, John Paul said that young people are the future of the world and the hope of the Church.

At the end of the Jubilee Year of the Redemption in 1984, the Pope invited young people to a special gathering on Palm Sunday in Rome, which was attended by 300,000 youth. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Frère Roger, the founder of the Taizé Community, also came to this event. It was at this celebration that the Pope entrusted the Holy Year Cross to the youth of the world. This cross is now known as the WYD Cross. It has visited all the countries where WYDs have been held.

In 1985, the United Nations International Year of Youth, Pope John Paul II extended a second invitation to young people. More than 250,000 attended this second international youth gathering held on Palm Sunday in Rome. The theme was, "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

These events in 1984 and 1985 inspired the Pope to create WYD, which brings together young Catholics from around the world to celebrate their faith and learn more about it. WYD is an encounter of the youth of the world with the Holy Father and the Christian community of the host country. With a renewed faith in Jesus Christ, young people go out into the world to be witnesses to the Gospel.

There will be 40 pilgrims from parishes across the Pembroke Diocese (including two priests, Fr. R. Ouellette and Fr. M. Beachey) making the pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Germany this summer Aug. 13-23. This pilgrimage marks the 20th WYD ever held. The anticipation is increasing as the reality of being with the Holy Father, and possibly over 1 million brothers and sisters in Christ, on this special anniversary, draws closer. Planning and preparations are well underway to make this event the exhilarating, exhausting, enlightening, incredible, challenging, motivating, inspiring and unforgettable experience that it was meant to be, both before, during and after the actual World Youth Days. There is still much preparation and fund-raising to be done before August. However, I would like to thank the Knights of Columbus all across the diocese, in advance, for their financial support. This is a particularly

expensive pilgrimage and the youth would appreciate the support from ALL of those who can assist in their fund-raising efforts in any way. If you would like to make a donation to help the pilgrims, you may do so by sending your donation to:

Diocese of Pembroke
188 Renfrew St., Box 7,
Pembroke, ON K8A 6X1

Cheques can be made out to "Diocese of Pembroke", please indicate on it "WYD Cologne".

By Yvette Bourque
Diocesan Coordinator
WYD 2005

Fiftieth Anniversary of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Deep River

On September 26, 1954, Bishop William Smith officially opened and blessed the new Church, named Our Lady of Good Counsel, replacing the small St. Alexander church. 50 years later, on September 26, 2004, Bishop Richard Smith celebrated Mass, blessed the new marble Baptismal Font and the new marble Altar to mark the successful completion of a major renewal program that also included repairs, renovations, remodeling, as well as a spiritual dimension. Parishioners came in large numbers to celebrate this memorable event in the parish life with our Bishop Richard Smith, their present Pastor Fr. Bill Kenney, past Pastor Fr. Alphonse Harrington and local son Fr. Jack Green. The 4th degree Knights of Columbus 4th provided the guard of honour.

A supportive spirit was evident through the entire renovation process. It was always possible to find willing volunteers ready to support the renewal program. They performed a long list of tasks; their co-operation meant saving in renewal costs. Masses were still being offered while construction and dismantling continued. Clean up crews volunteered frequently. Many members of the congregation offered suggestions and comments. The parishioners can all take pride in having been a part of an ambitious project that was carried to a very successful completion.

An opportunity for intensification of prayer and penance

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Each year, the Lenten Season is set before us as a good opportunity for the intensification of prayer and penance, opening hearts to the docile welcoming of the divine will. During Lent, a spiritual journey is outlined for us that prepares us to relive the Great Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. This is done primarily by listening to the Word of God more devoutly and by practicing mortification more generously, thanks to which it is possible to render greater assistance to those in need.

This year, dear Brothers and Sisters, I wish to bring to your attention a theme which is rather current, well-illustrated by the following verse from Deuteronomy: "Loving the Lord...means life to you, and length of days..." (30:20). These are the words that Moses directs to the people, inviting them to embrace the Covenant with Yahweh in the country of Moab, "that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord, your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him." (30:19-20). The fidelity to this divine Covenant is for Israel a guarantee of the future: "that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them." (30:20). According to the Biblical understanding, reaching old age is a sign of the Most High's gracious benevolence. Longevity appears, therefore, as a special divine gift.

It is upon this theme that I would like to ask you to reflect during this Lent, in order to deepen the awareness of the role that the elderly are called to play in society and in the Church, and thus to prepare your hearts for the loving welcome that should always be reserved for them. Thanks to the contribution of science and medicine, one sees in society today a lengthening of the human life span and a subsequent increase in the number of elderly. This demands a more specific attention to the world of so-called "old" age, in order to help its members to live their full potential by placing them at the service of the entire community. The care of the elderly, above all when they pass through difficult moments, must be of great concern to all the faithful, especially in the ecclesial communities of Western societies, where the problem is particularly present.

2. Human life is a precious gift to be loved and

defended in each of its stages. The Commandment, "You shall not kill!", always requires respecting and promoting human life, from its beginning to its natural end. It is a command that applies even in the presence of illness and when physical weakness reduces the person's ability to be self-reliant. If growing old, with its inevitable conditions, is accepted serenely in the light of faith, it can become an invaluable opportunity for better comprehending the Mystery of the Cross, which gives full sense to human existence.

The elderly need to be understood and helped in this perspective. I wish, here, to express my appreciation to those who dedicate themselves to fulfilling these needs, and I also call upon other people of good will to take advantage of Lent for making their own personal contribution. This will allow many elderly not to think of themselves as a burden to the community, and sometimes even to their own families, living in a situation of loneliness that leads to the temptation of isolating themselves or becoming discouraged.

It is necessary to raise the awareness in public opinion that the elderly represent, in any case, a resource to be valued. For this reason, economic support and legislative initiatives, which allow them not to be excluded from social life, must be strengthened. In truth, during the last decade, society has become more attentive to their needs, and medicine has developed palliative cures that, along with an integral approach to the sick person, are particularly beneficial for long-term patients.

3. The greater amount of free time in this stage of life offers the elderly the opportunity to face the primary issues that perhaps had been previously set aside, due to concerns that were pressing or considered a priority nonetheless. Knowledge of the nearness of the final goal leads the elderly person to focus on that which is essential, giving importance to those things that the passing of years do not destroy.

Precisely because of this condition, the elderly person can carry out his or her role in society. If it is true that man lives upon the heritage of those who preceded him, and that his future depends definitively on how the cultural values of his own people are transmitted to him, then the wisdom and experience of the elderly can illuminate his path on the way of progress toward an ever more complete form of civilization.

How important it is to rediscover this mutual enrichment between different generations! The Lenten Season, with its strong call to conversion and solidarity, leads us this year to focus on these important themes which concern everyone. What would happen if the People of God yielded to a certain current mentality that considers these people, our brothers and sisters, as

almost useless when they are reduced in their capacities due to the difficulties of age or sickness? Instead, how different the community would be, if, beginning with the family, it tries always to remain open and welcoming towards them.

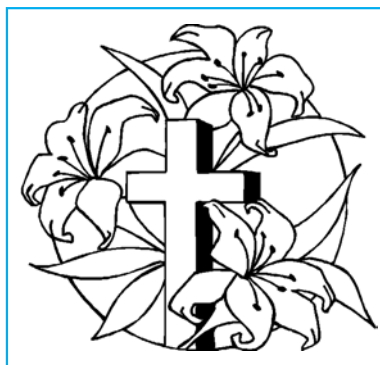
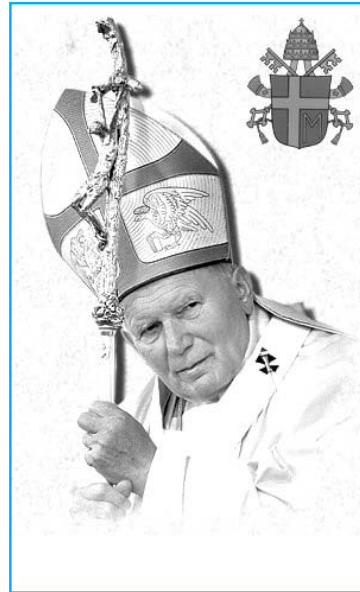
4. Dear brothers and sisters, during Lent, aided by the Word of God, let us reflect upon how important it is that each community accompany with loving understanding those who grow old. Moreover, one must become accustomed to thinking confidently about the mystery of death, so that the definitive encounter with God occur in a climate of interior peace, in the awareness that He "who knit me in my mother's womb" (cf. Psalm 139:13b) and who willed us "in his image and likeness" (cf. Gen. 1:26) will receive us.

Mary, our guide on the Lenten journey, leads all believers, especially the elderly, to an ever more profound knowledge of Christ dead and risen, who is the ultimate reason for our existence.

May she, the faithful servant of her divine Son, together with Saints Ann and Joachim, intercede for each one of us "now and at the hour of our death".

My Blessing to All!

JOHN PAUL II



TOWARDS A CULTURE OF VOCATIONS

Living the call to discipleship

By Rev. M. Beachey

This past November, I had the honour of accompanying seven young men from our Diocese to St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario. Twice a year, St. Peter's Seminary offers a "Come and See Weekend" to those who feel that the Lord may be calling them to a priestly vocation. The week-end offers the chance to live in a seminary environment, to interact with those who are already in a formation program, discerning a call to the priesthood. It gives the participant a chance to see first-hand, the academic, social and formative aspects of



seminary life. Those who attended this past weekend gave positive comments on their experience. It helped to bring a little more focus to God's call in their lives. I ask that we all continue our efforts to support and to pray for an increase in vocations for our Diocese of Pembroke. The efforts that have been made over the past few years by the Bishop, the vocation directors, the clergy and faithful people, have raised the consciousness of our need to work hard for vocations. May God grant to us an abundance of vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life for our diocese of Pembroke.

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Monsignor Michael Hass

Former Parish Priest of St. James Parish, Eganville, Ontario, and Dean of the Priests of the Diocese of Pembroke. Monsignor Hass died on Thursday, January 20, 2005, at St. Francis Memorial Hospital, Barry's Bay, in his 96th year. Monsignor Hass was born in Admaston Township, Renfrew County, on November 11, 1909, the son of the late John Hass and Mary Colterman. Having completed elementary & secondary school education, he then pursued his training for the Priesthood at St. Jerome's College, Kitchener, Ontario, and at St. Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario. Most Reverend P. T. Ryan, ordained Monsignor Hass to the Priesthood on June 10, 1933, at St. Columbkille Cathedral, Pembroke, Ontario. Following his Ordination to the Priesthood, Monsignor Hass offered devoted service, first as curate at Renfrew, and in three additional assignments prior to his appointment as Parish Priest of St. Francis de Sales Parish, Latchford Bridge, on April 27, 1947. Having also served in Braeside and at Combermere, Monsignor Hass was appointed Parish Priest of St. James the Less Parish, Eganville, Ontario, in September of 1969. At St. James the Less Parish, Eganville and Nativity of Our Lady, Golden Lake, Ontario, Monsignor Hass offered dedicated service and sterling priestly example for over twenty-seven years. He is especially remembered for

his pastoral zeal and his excellent reputation among the clergy, religious and faithful of the diocese. In 1993, at the age of 83, Monsignor Hass continued his energetic service and was honored on the occasion of his 60th Anniversary of Ordination. On



May 26, 1993, Pope John Paul II honored Monsignor Hass by naming him a Prelate of Honor of His Holiness. In addition to his attention to administrative responsibilities, Monsignor Hass is

remembered as a caring pastor, beloved by his parishioners, most especially as a dedicated spiritual father. Prior to his retirement, Monsignor Hass gave strong leadership in the building of a new parish rectory. Monsignor Hass retired in November of 1996, at the age of 85 years of age. The Diocese of Pembroke joyfully celebrated the 70th Anniversary of this dedicated priest on June 11, 2003. Monsignor Hass is mourned by his siblings: Sr. Josephine Hass, C.S.J., Pembroke, Ambrose (Joyce) of Renfrew, Cecelia Major of Kapuskasing and his sister-in-law Mary Anne Hass of Kingston. Also mourned by numerous nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his siblings: Agnes Tsakiris, Gertrude McHugh, Lucy St. James, John Andrew Hass (infant), Jeannetta Spacek, Lawrence Hass, John Francis Hass & Sr. Claire Hass, G.S.I.C.

Development and Peace

By Margaret Conroy

The people of the Diocese of Pembroke responded with great generosity to the special appeal for victims of the December 26th tsunami in Southeast Asia. Parishes donated \$216,866.41 and students and staff of the RCCDSB contributed \$23,380.25. This money was forwarded to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, which received \$11.8 million dollars by mid-January. Because the work of Development and Peace is held in high regard by the Canadian government, it was one of the agencies chosen to receive matching funds from the government.

Every year 10% of all Share Lent donations are set aside for emergency work. As soon as word was received about the tsunami, the largest natural disaster of modern times, money for immediate emergency supplies was there, in the hands of local Development and Peace partners Caritas Sri Lanka (SEDEC), Caritas India and sister agencies including Secours Catholique and a coalition of local non-governmental organizations in Indonesia and Thailand. Caritas members reacted quickly and in a coordinated manner, to avoid confusion and duplication, and they continue to provide professional, long-term assistance for the survivors. Development and Peace distinguishes itself from other emergency relief organizations through its commitment to longer-term development, a commitment that goes well beyond meeting immediate needs. After the media turns its attention to other parts of the world, local Development and Peace partners, working collaboratively with the people most affected, will focus on the work of reconstruction.

"Lent is a special time to reflect on the roots of our faith and to respond to the Gospel's call to work for justice and peace in our world" urged Pauline Leduc, the new Development and Peace animator for Eastern Ontario. Speaking at the January 15th Share Lent workshop held at the Marguerite Centre in Pembroke, Leduc urged parish representatives to emphasize the programs funded by Share Lent donations. The concern is that all the attention paid to the tsunami appeal will overshadow the ongoing work in 70 countries on human rights issues, community development, agrarian reform and education. President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Honorary Chair of the 2005 Share Lent Campaign, Bishop

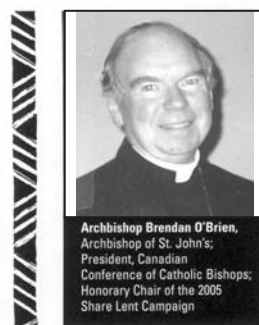
Brendan O'Brien reminds us, "United together in the spirit of solidarity and community building, Development and Peace this year invites us all to become involved in ensuring that the world's poorest nations have access to safe drinking water. Each of us has a special opportunity to be involved and to contribute to these efforts. I encourage all Canadian Catholics to share generously with our sisters and brothers around the world, so that all may have according to their needs."

CWL of Canada

By Andrea Dumouchel
Diocesan President

Congratulations to all members of the Catholic Womens' League in our Diocese! You help to hold our parishes together, working hand in hand with our overworked Spiritual Advisors. This year has been a very busy one for me. I've really enjoyed visiting Councils in many parishes. I at this time would like to tell you of our Past President Patricia Beattie. She was called to her eternal home. A lovely service in her honour was given in Corbeil at our Fall Meeting. The Provincial Convention was well attended from our Diocese. The inspiring speaker happened to be our own Bishop Richard Smith. We really enjoyed the workshop involving us all. Our Diocesan Convention in Haliburton was very well attended. Everyone enjoyed the talk given by Sandra Prather. Our host council from Saint Anthony of Padua, Haliburton was terrific. Our National Convention in London, ON, was well attended from our diocese. The National elections process went well.

Our Fall meeting in Corbeil had another fine speaker, Monsignor Norm Clement, who spoke from the heart. At this fall meeting we gave a workshop on "I Am Called to Service." St. Michael's Council of the CWL will be hosting our Spring Meeting on April 30, 2005. All our members are invited to attend the workshops and hear our speakers. Please mark these dates on your calendars. At our CWL Convention, on May 29, 2005, theme is "Companions On the Journey... share the gift of Elder Care." A wonderful workshop will be given at the convention in Chalk River, hosted by St. Anthony's Catholic Womens' League. Next year is "election year" for the Diocesan Executive and all past presidents are invited to share their gifts.



Archbishop Brendan O'Brien,
Archbishop of St. John's,
President, Canadian
Conference of Catholic Bishops;
Honorary Chair of the 2005
Share Lent Campaign

The Path to Justice

On behalf of the Conference of Bishops,
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CANADIAN CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR
Development
and Peace