



Ecclesia

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PEMBROKE

Introducing the new English translation to the Diocese of Pembroke

On the first Sunday of Advent parishes all over the Diocese of Pembroke, and across the country, introduced the new English translation of the Roman Missal.

Fr. Michael Costello of Quyon said the introduction went well for him. "Even I got through it," he laughs.

"Like anything, it will take some getting used to, but there is a richness to the liturgy in the new prayers that will come through once we get used to it."

He also points out an added benefit of the changes. "You're focusing more on it," he says, "you have to pay attention."

Deacon Albert Benoit of Bonfield introduced the new Missal in their bilingual Mass.

"The response was excellent," he says, "there were no remarks at all, I was amazed at how well it went."

He agrees with Fr. Costello that there have been improvements. "The Eucharistic prayer is beautiful, a big improvement."

Ministering to a largely bilingual parish, Deacon Albert says he expects one positive outcome from the new translation's greater fidelity to the Latin source.

"Before people would ask me why it was different in French and English, now it's not." This applies particularly to the new response "And with your spirit", which replaces the former response, "And also with you".

Fr. Pat Blake of Calabogie agrees that the translation will be well-received.

"Like anything new it will take a little time to get used to it," he says.

"It's a little heavy for the altar servers, though," he jokes. The full-size edition of the Roman Missal is 1,480 pages long!

Parishioners will not have to worry about the weight of the new Missal. The Diocese of Pembroke, in cooperation with the Sacred Music Society, based at Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy in Barry's Bay, has prepared a small booklet to assist parishioners in becoming familiar with the changes to the liturgy resulting from the new translation.

The booklet also has instructions for musicians and a number of Mass settings composed by Jeff Ostrowski, a pianist and composer who is president of Corpus Christi Watershed in Corpus Christi, Texas.



During a private audience on November 7, 2011 with Pope Benedict XVI, the Presidency of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) presented the Holy Father with a specially bound edition of the first printed copy of the revised Canadian English-language edition of the Roman Missal. Above, Archbishop-elect Paul-André Durocher of Gatineau, Vice President of the CCCB, Pope Benedict XVI, and the CCCB President Archbishop Richard Smith, the former Bishop of Pembroke.

Photo courtesy: Servizio Fotografico, Osservatore Romano

Fr. Mitch Beachey, who has been responsible for much of the work of introducing the new translation, says that many older parishioners will find some of the "new" translations very familiar.

For example, in the Penitential Act, the phrase "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault" has been inserted. This phrase was part of this prayer, then known as the "Confiteor", in both the "St. Joseph Missal," published in 1965, and the standard English translation of the Tridentine Mass used before the reforms of Vatican II. The replacement of the phrase, "and also with you" with the words, "and with your spirit," also return to the earlier usage.

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Introducing the new English translation, continued from page 1...

Another interesting reversion to earlier translations is the replacement of “He took the cup” in the Eucharistic prayer with “He took the chalice,” the version used in most earlier translations.

As discussed in the previous edition of **Ecclesia**, the reason for the new translation stems from the way the Catholic Church sets down the recognized outline of the Mass. Beginning in 1570, following the Council of Trent, the Church issued a Latin “Missale Romanum” which would be mandatory throughout the Roman Catholic Church, with a few minor exceptions. This was brought about to deal with a confusing number of variations which were creeping into the liturgy. This was made worse by the introduction of printing in Europe.

Substantially updated in 1604 and again in 1634, the Missale Romanum was used, with minor modifications, until 1962, when an updated edition was issued by Pope John XXIII.

Following the Second Vatican Council, a new edition was issued by Pope Paul VI in 1969, followed by further editions in 1975 and 2002, both containing relatively minor modifications. All of these documents are written in Latin, the idea being that, as explained by Fr. Mitch Beachey in the last edition of **Ecclesia**, Latin is a dead language and not as subject to change through daily use as modern languages.

Because the Missale Romanum is “typical”, which in the Roman Catholic Church means it is to be conformed with in all published forms, it is the source of all translated versions.

In 2001 Pope John Paul II issued a requirement that translations must follow as closely as possible the Latin without paraphrase, and it is this decree that has led to the new translation we have in our pews.

The translation introduced in the mid-‘70s in the English-speaking world is generally conceded to have many weaknesses, and as noted above, was sometimes glaringly different than the meaning of the Latin text and the language embodied in other translations such as French and German.

The new translation deals with this by sticking strictly to literal translation of the Latin original. It has been criticized in some circles for introducing highly technical terminology such as “consubstantial with the Father” in the Nicene Creed. Even in the pre-Vatican II translations this was translated as “of one substance with the Father.”

However, the idea is to use the most precise terminology available.

None of these changes affect the Francophone areas of the diocese. This is not a new Mass, it is a new English translation of the existing Mass.

That isn’t to say there won’t be some difficult transitions as people get used to the new language, after all the existing translation has been in use for over three decades.

As Fr. Beachey says, “When you buy a pair of new boots they may hurt a bit until you wear them in and they get comfortable.”

The Importance of Being Earnest

Presented by Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy

February 10-12, 2012 at Madawaska Valley High School, Barry’s Bay.

Friday-Saturday at 7:30 pm, and Sunday at 2:30 pm.

Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy’s Don Bosco Drama Club has once again begun preparations for its annual theatrical production. Lines are being rehearsed, sets constructed, and costumes made from silk wedding dresses, as the students prepare for another humble masterpiece.

The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde, is a period play set in the late 1800s. A farcical comedy, the three-act play portrays the hilarious dangers of maintaining a false identity, the witty triviality of all things serious, and the salutary aspects of love and marriage. With its fast-paced dialogue and comic irony, The Importance of Being Earnest is sure to delight our audience this Valentine’s Day weekend. Please contact OLSWA for more information: (613) 756-3082.



THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

At the same time as the new English translation of the Mass is being adopted, the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops has instituted a revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). This is the universal law of the Church governing the manner in which Mass is celebrated. This is the second time it has been updated since the introduction of Mass in the vernacular. The GIRM governs the actions and forms of the Mass, as compared to the new translation, which is only concerned with language.

The changes will seem very minor to the average person attending Mass as most of them concern the gestures and actions of the priest.

The principal changes that a layperson attending Mass will see are the following:

- You will be asked to stand after the priest says, “Pray my brothers and sisters that my sacrifice and yours will be acceptable to God the almighty Father.”
- The Lectionary will no longer be carried in procession by the reader.
- We are asked to make a bow of the head before receiving Holy Communion.
- It asks us to maintain silence in the church before Mass begins.
- During the Nicene Creed and the Apostles’ Creed, we are asked to make a bow when the Incarnation is mentioned. Previously, this was only required in the Nicene Creed but it now applies as well to the Apostles’ Creed.
- This is not new, but people may have forgotten that they are to strike their breast during the Penitential Rite (I confess to almighty God) when they say, “through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.”
- Extra-ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to approach the altar after the priest has consumed the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord.
- Only a priest, deacon or an instituted acolyte (in our diocese, this is a seminarian) is to purify the vessels either after communion or after Mass.

This is not a “new” mass. Most of the GIRM is the same as it was before, with but a few changes in law and on emphasis. The purpose of the GIRM is to ensure a visible manifestation of the unity of the Church throughout the world in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This is why no one, not even a priest, may add, remove or change anything contained in the General Instructions.

The GIRM presents options for the priest. One priest may choose to exercise one option while another exercises a different option. This is the case with the posture during the Eucharistic prayer. The Bishop has decided that parishes can use one of two options, to kneel after the Sanctus and to rise before the Memorial Acclamation, or to kneel after the Sanctus, rise after the Great Amen and then to kneel again after the Lamb of God.

As with the new English translation, there will be a transitional period while everyone, clergy and laypeople, get used to the new guidelines. As Fr. Bill Burke, Director of the National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops says, quoting Cardinal Kasper, “After a deep freeze, when you finally get a thaw, you can expect things to be muddy for awhile.”



Some reflections on faith

By Fr. Michael Smith

Some friends of mine were enquiring recently about whether it is possible to “know” that God exists. This raises some important questions about the nature of faith. Is faith a form of knowing, or is it “believing” in the sense of having an opinion, albeit a strong one?

St. Thomas Aquinas is helpful in this regard. He says that faith is, in one sense a kind of knowing, and in another sense a kind of not-knowing. It is a kind of not-knowing in that we do not see God face-to-face in this life. We do not have direct perception of God with the five senses while on this earth. We cannot know “what” God is because the essence of God infinitely surpasses the minds of us earthly creatures. But in another sense, faith is a kind of knowing. God reveals himself to us through the effects of his action: through everything in creation, including our lives and those of others. Most of all, God has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ, who is one like us, the human face of God. This once-and-for-all revelation is perpetuated in our lives, individually and collectively (i.e., the Church), through the action of the Holy Spirit. Our knowledge of God is the knowledge that comes from God’s loving initiative and our response to that love.

Why make the decision to believe in God? There are many reasons why one can make that decision, and many arguments for the existence of God have been put forward over the millennia. Here is an approach that I have found helpful recently. It takes the form of a thought experiment. First, suppose that there were no God. Without God, what would have been the probability that the universe, with all its complexity, would exist at all rather than nothing being the case? Next, suppose that the universe has, as the origin of its being, an intelligent Creator. Does the universe’s coming into existence from a Creator have a greater or lesser probability than its “just being there”? My point is that belief in the existence of God is a reasonable decision because of the relative implausibility of the alternative. In other words, those who do not believe in God have the burden of giving an alternative account for the existence of the universe. It is illogical to say that the universe comes from nothing (assuming that the Big Bang Theory is true), since nothing can come from nothing.

Why believe in Jesus Christ? The supernatural gift of faith is something like the ordinary experience of believing someone who is trustworthy. If I trust that someone will not lie to me, then I will be inclined to believe that person on the basis of my trust in that person. Now, if a person were incapable of lying, then I could believe and also be morally certain that what

the person is saying is true. When I reach the conclusion that the person and teachings of Jesus are trustworthy in this latter sense, then I can place my complete trust in him. Replace the word ‘faith’ with the word ‘trust’ and see where that takes you.

Secondly, I can trust the testimony of those who ate and drank with Jesus after he rose from the dead. People in such large numbers would not have gone to their deaths for their faith in Jesus if their reports of Jesus’ resurrection were a mere fabrication.

The Letter to the Hebrews (11:1) describes faith as “the assurance of things hoped for, the

conviction of things not seen.” This inner conviction is nothing less than a gift from God. To receive that gift and to maintain it, we must be open to it and be willing to live our lives according to its demands.

Fr. Michael Smith is parish priest of St. Theresa Parish in Temiscaming. Before returning to diocesan service in 2008, he was a professor and formation advisor at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ontario for 16 years.



On June 12, 2011, the reliquary of St. Brother André came to St. Anthony of Padua church in Haliburton. It was received by the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women’s League, and carried reverently into the church by Barb Winn, Barb Wood, Lou Vesh and Scotty Morrison, seen here with Fr. Pat Dobec, parish priest of St. Anthony.



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Who is St. Stephen?

We all know that “Good King Wenceslas” went out on the feast of Stephen, but who exactly was St. Stephen?

The feast of St. Stephen is celebrated on December 26 and commemorates the first Christian martyr.

In the Acts of the Apostles the name of St. Stephen occurs for the first time on the occasion of the appointment of the first deacons (Acts 6:5). Dissatisfaction concerning the distribution of alms from the community’s fund having arisen in the Church, seven men were selected and specially ordained by the Apostles to take care of the temporal relief of the poorer members. Of these seven, Stephen is the first mentioned and the best known.

Stephen’s life prior to his appearance in Acts remains almost entirely unknown. His name is Greek and suggests he was a Hellenist, one of those Jews born in some foreign land and whose native tongue was Greek. According to a fifth century tradition, the name “Stephanos” was only a Greek equivalent for the Aramaic “Kelil”, meaning “crown”.

His ministry as deacon appears to have been mostly among the Hellenist converts with whom the Apostles were at first less familiar. The fact that the opposition he met with sprang up in the synagogues of the “Libertines” (probably the children of Jews taken captive to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C. and freed, hence the name Libertini), and “of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia” shows that he usually preached among the Hellenist Jews.

His abilities and character, which the author of the Acts dwells upon so fervently, indicate that he was well suited to the task he was assigned. The Church had, by selecting him for a deacon, publicly acknowledged him as a man “of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). He was “a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost” (vi, 5), “full of grace and fortitude” (vi, 8).

His abilities as an orator were to lead to his death.

Conflict arose with some Hellenist Jews who had challenged Stephen to a dispute. When they were unable to get the better of him they encouraged false witnesses to testify that “they had heard him speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God” (vi, 11).

No charge could be more apt to rouse the mob; the anger of the elders and the scribes had been already kindled from the first reports of the preaching of the Apostles. Stephen was arrested, not without some violence it seems (the Greek word “synerpasan” implies so much), and dragged before the Sanhedrin, where he was accused of saying that “Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place [the temple], and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered unto us” (vi, 12-14). No doubt Stephen had by his language given some grounds for the accusation. The accusation left him unperturbed and “all that sat in the council...saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel” (vi, 15).

Stephen’s answer (Acts 7) was a long recital of the mercies of God towards Israel during its long history

and of the ungratefulness by which, throughout, Israel repaid these mercies. This discourse contained many things unpleasant to Jewish ears; but the concluding indictment for having betrayed and murdered the Just One whose coming the Prophets had foretold, provoked the rage of an audience made up not of judges, but of foes. When Stephen “looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God”, and said: “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (vii, 55), they ran violently upon him (vii, 56) and cast him out of the city to stone him to death.

Stephen’s stoning does not appear in the narrative of the Acts as a deed of mob violence. By those who took part it must have appeared to fulfill the law (Leviticus 24:14), or at least its usual interpretation.

Stephen was taken out of the city. Custom required that the person to be stoned be placed on an elevation from where, with hands bound, he was to be thrown down. It was most likely while these preparations were going on that, “falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (vii, 59).

Among those leading the accusations was Saul, the future Apostle Paul. The praying martyr was thrown down; and while the witnesses were thrusting upon him “a stone as much as two men could carry”, he was heard to utter this supreme prayer: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (vii, 58).

The bodies of men stoned to death were to be buried in a place appointed by the Sanhedrin. Whether in this instance the Sanhedrin insisted on its right



cannot be affirmed; at any rate, “devout men” took order for Stephen’s funeral, and made great mourning over him” (vii, 2).

In 415 a priest named Lucian claimed to have learned by revelation that the body was in Caphar Gamala, some distance to the north of Jerusalem. The relics were exhumed and carried first to the church of Mount Sion, then, in 460, to the basilica erected by Eudocia outside the Damascus Gate, on the spot where, according to tradition, the stoning had taken place. The site of the Eudocian basilica was identified some twenty years ago, and a new edifice has been erected on the old foundations by the Dominican Fathers.

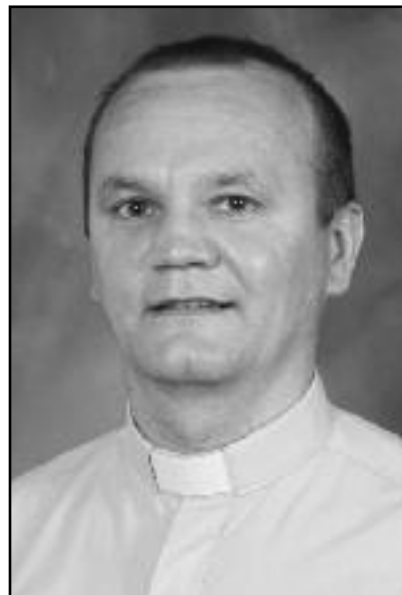
The only first-hand source of information on the life and death of St. Stephen is the Acts of the Apostles (6:1-8:2).

Wilno welcomes a new pastor to the Polish community

The community of Wilno received a new pastor at the end of August. With the transfer of the previous pastor, Fr. Mirosław Olszewski, to Round Lake Centre, there was a need for a Polish-speaking pastor to serve the parish community of St. Mary.

Fr. Wojciech Blach is an Oblate priest who, until his move in August, was serving as Director of the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga. Fr. Blach is a priest of the Oblate’s Assumption Province, whose mission is to serve Canada’s Polish-speaking community, as is Fr. Olszewski.

Fr. Blach was born in Kedzierzyn-Kozle, Poland and educated at the largest Oblate formation house in the world, the Oblate Seminary in Obra, Poland. He came to Canada as an Oblate in 1996 and has primarily served



the Polish community in the Toronto area, although he was also living in Winnipeg for a time.

Wilno is Canada’s oldest Polish community and has a long tradition of ties to the larger Polish communities of Toronto and Montreal. Fr. Blach says that his congregation can double in the summer vacation season, even with many of the Polish-speaking summer visitors being served by the Franciscan-run outdoor church and chapel near Wadsworth Lake. One of the major Polish cultural activities in the area is a Polish scout movement that draws hundreds of young people to the area. In fact, Fr. Blach’s first experience in the Wilno area was with the scouts many years ago.

Wilno is currently the only parish in the Diocese where the Mass is said regularly in Polish.

Fr. Chris Shalla returns to his roots as he celebrates 25 years in the priesthood

As Fr. Chris Shalla celebrates his 25th anniversary in the priesthood, he has come full circle, returning to the parish his family helped build, St. Hedwig, in Barry's Bay.

Fr. Shalla was ordained on May 3, 1986, at St. Hedwig. He spent a few weeks at the rectory at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke following his ordination. "I don't think Bishop Windle knew quite what to do with me," he says, "those were different times, there were a lot more priests."

Fr. Shalla served his diaconate in Pembroke, assisting Fr. Brady McNamara and Fr. Howard Chabot at Holy Name parish. After his brief stay at St. Columbkille, he spent two years at Deep River before moving to Chapeau, Quebec, as assistant to Fr. Alph Harrington. He served in Quebec for 20 years, spending 1988-1994 as assistant at Chapeau and its mission churches, and then moving on to Sheenboro and St. Joseph. Although unable to speak French, he said there was never any difficulty in serving the people of Quebec.

In 2005 Fr. Shalla returned to his home church of St.

Hedwig. He says he found a very different community from the one he had left over 20 years before. "The dynamics have changed," he says, "As a parish priest there is the challenge of working with very different groups." The proximity to Madonna House in Combermere has led to an influx of devout Catholics relocating from outside the area. He said initially there was concern among the older inhabitants, typically Polish descendants with a long family history in the area, that the newcomers would overwhelm the traditional families. Fr. Shalla seems to enjoy the challenges and looks on the developments positively.

One of the newer developments has been the birth of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy, which he says started with a few people giving university level instruction to a couple of local students and has developed into a respected institution which draws Catholic students from all over the world, along with a well-educated and devout faculty.

"A lot of local people appreciate that the Academy brings in many talented people who become parishioners," he says.

He emphasizes that the key is that all of the diverse groups are encouraged to participate fully in the parish.

Fr. Shalla says the parish has a rich spiritual life with a commitment to assisting the needy. For example, St. Hedwig has raised money for the restoration and maintenance of a rare wooden medieval church in the Kashub region of Poland, ancestral home to many of the long-time residents of Barry's Bay.

Another mission initiative has been work to support the poor in the area of the shrine of St. Hedwig, their patron saint. Working with a local nun from Trzebinca, Poland, Barry's Bay has been raising money for aid. Fr. Shalla hopes that the connections will lead to a pilgrimage to the shrine in Poland.

Fr. Shalla says that there is an active program of prayer and devotion in the parish which he finds very rewarding. "In my life as a priest, prayer has been very important to me personally," he says.

Looking back on 25 years in the priesthood, Fr. Shalla says, "I love my priesthood and being able to be of service to people."

Fr. Rochefort finds his military service rewarding

Fr. Jean-Paul Rochefort, a native of Astorville, was ordained on January 31, 1986. Fluently bilingual, he began his ministry at Fort Coulonge and moved to Mattawa about a year later. In 1989 he became parish priest of St. Bernadette, Bonfield. In 1994 he became the parish priest of Otter Lake in Québec, where he also had responsibility for the mission church of Lac Cayamant. After 12 years serving in the diocese he says, "I just wanted to do something a bit different."

As a seminarian at St Paul's University he had participated in cadet programs during the summer and he felt a calling to the Canadian military. In 2000, after discussions with Bishop Brendan O'Brien, he entered basic training. He laughs when asked about the challenges of taking on a grueling course of physical training at age 44. "It's not everyone who can do it," he says, "but I started running about a year-and-a-half before I joined, and I had kept myself in pretty good shape."

He says many military chaplains join the forces in their early 40s. He says it helps that older recruits have a bit different attitude. "When the young guys are out partying, we're at home preparing for our courses."

Following his chaplaincy training he also did clinical pastoral education at University Health Network in Toronto. This program essentially trains people for pastoral work in a hospital setting.

Fr. Rochefort enjoys the unpredictable nature of life in the military. "You have to be ready to go at all times," he says, "you never know when you're going to get a call."

As someone who says he gets restless if he lives in the same place for more than a few years, he has enjoyed the opportunity to travel throughout the

world. In his military career he has lived in Alberta, Cyprus and Germany. His longest posting, five years, was as an instructor in the chaplaincy course at Borden, north of Toronto.

In 2007 he did a tour of duty in Afghanistan and then participated in a "decompression" exercise afterwards. "It was just before Christmas," he says, "and the men were angry and just wanted to get home, but after the three-day course they were all glad they had participated." He adds, "they didn't realize how wired up they were."

He currently holds the rank of Major in the Canadian Forces and is based at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. He says Mass regularly at the former base at Uplands in Ottawa, but primarily he says he is in the "action/reaction" business of providing personal pastoral care. He says he was particularly busy during the period when soldiers of CFB Petawawa were posted to Afghanistan, as those suffering injuries would be assigned to hospital in Ottawa.

Fr. Rochefort has enjoyed his service with the military. After more than a dozen years of service in conservative parish communities where many of

the parishioners were aging, he enjoys the challenge of dealing with young families and a wide variety of people and the spontaneity of military life. He also says that, in the military, he is never alone. There is always the support of colleagues.

He also enjoys the ecumenicalism of the chaplaincy.

"Often we meet with people and they don't even know what faith we belong to," he says.

As he finishes his 25th year in the priesthood, it is clear that providing personal pastoral care to people in need brings Fr. Rochefort great satisfaction.



Fr. J.P. Rochefort, at right, on Remembrance Day, November 11, 2007, at the Canadian Cenotaph at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

Associate members assist many organizations

Fr. Jack Lau of the Oblate-run Galilee Retreat Centre in Arnprior says that many times the people drawn to their associates program have been performing a mission or had a spiritual connection to the order and did not even know it. When they become associates, he says, “people may be doing the things they used to be doing, but now they’re doing them with a sense of purpose.”

“It’s about the connection with something bigger than they are,” he says.

Many of the religious groups active in the Diocese of Pembroke operate associates programs. They are all about lay-men and women sharing the charism and mission of the order.

In the case of the Oblates, Fr. Lau said there was a surge in interest in the order in 1995 when their founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod, was canonized. For many people, says Fr. Lau, “St. Eugene speaks to them – there’s a saint they can relate to and a community that welcomes them.”

Fr. Lau says that there has been a fundamental shift in the way the Oblate community views associates. Recently returned from the 2011 convocation in Vancouver, he says that he sees a difference in the relationship between the associates and the “canonical members”. “Years ago there was a sense that they were outsiders helping us,” he says, “now everybody feels that we are equal.”

The Oblates at Galilee have about 15-20 associates and have been active in the diocese for a little over two years. Fr. Lau makes a distinction between what an Oblate Associate “is” and what they “do”. He says, “the “is” is vital, for that speaks of being. It is sensing and finding the charism/spirit of St. Eugene already working and active in our lives.”

Fr. Lau continues, “The “doing” consists of works/ministry placed within the framework of an international religious family – the de Mazenodian family.”

Fr. Lau says that at this point their focus is on formation. “We need a foundation to build on before we go out into the world,” he says. The group is concentrating on prayer, meditation and study. “As pilgrims journeying along the path followed by St. Eugene de Mazenod, and by all vowed Oblates, they are studying the charism of St. Eugene and the spirituality of the Missionary Oblates.”

For example, in December, the associates are studying the beatification of 22 Oblate martyrs killed at the Scholasticate Community of Pozuelo (Madrid, Spain) during the Spanish Civil War.

As part of the focus on prayer and meditation the group will be studying the “Lectio Divina” a meditation on sacred scripture, and practicing “oraison” which is a special form of prayer that Oblates participate in. “It is like ‘the world wide web of prayer’ for the Oblate family around the world, performed a half-hour daily. The founder did this in the early evening before the Blessed Sacrament,” says Fr. Lau.

Marian prayer is also a part of the daily life of the Oblates. Mary Immaculate is both the patroness of all Oblates and a model of faith for all who follow Christ.

Fr. Lau says, “Marian devotions lead us to encounter Christ, and to say “yes” to God’s will.”

As the associates progress to “doing” they join in the apostolic work of the order. “Oblate Associates, like the vowed members, embrace the poor and those alienated from the church,” he says, “by acknowledging the dignity of each person we, like St. Eugene, remind them of their humanity as a child of God, calling them to be disciples of Christ and then calling them to be saints.”

Fr. Lau says the associates participate in the Oblate community and faith sharing. “We gather in prayer to share with each other our journey, and then together lift up the needs of our families and community.” The associates are also invited to join vowed Oblates during the annual retreat and days of reflection.

Fr. Lau says that some associates may choose to make a public commitment to lead a life inspired by St. Eugene and the Oblate charism. An Oblate symbol, often a small Oblate Cross, would be given to the associate during a formal prayer service.

Fr. Lau encourages anyone interested in the Oblate associates to visit the Galilee Centre website at www.galileecentre.com.

The Sisters of St. Joseph in Pembroke operate a very active associate program. Their vision statement says they are “a vibrant faith community of women and men inspired by the CSJ charism and spirituality, committed to participate in bringing about the transformation of self, society and planet through inclusive and active love.”

The program, coordinated by Sr. Marjorie Fitzpatrick of Pembroke, involves about 45 people throughout the diocese. The Sisters of St. Joseph take an interesting approach to organizing their associates. Instead of one large central group, the associates are organized in small regional groups, each pursuing their

own direction as the Holy Spirit works through them.

In Arnprior, Elaine Gibson has been leading a group since 1998. With nine members at present, they take a collaborative approach to planning their activities. In the past they explored the environmental movement. They pursued an extensive program intended to help them live responsibly on the earth, studying everything from recycling and composting, to being aware of how each purchase impacts on the environment.

They are now mid-way through a 13-week program on non-violent communication, a philosophy developed by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg which focuses on ensuring that we remove verbal “violence” from our communications with others.

Elaine says the CSJ principle of “oneness” informs the group’s activities. “We have a prayer that all might be one – an answer to the prayer of Jesus,” she says.

Her own experience with the Sisters of St. Joseph developed over a long period of time. She trained as a teacher at the order’s school in Chapeau, Quebec, but she said, although she always admired the sisters, she at first felt no strong connection.

“I looked at it the way you’d look at going into the Bay, or into Eaton’s, they were providing what I needed,” she says. She continues, “but gradually the Spirit worked on me.”

“The history of their founding is so marvelous,” she says, “the courage of those women!”

She says the group dynamic is a very important part of the experience.

“What we all see happening within ourselves is a spiritual growth that we wouldn’t be seeing otherwise.”

In the Mother St. John group, which takes in associates from the Round Lake, Palmer Rapids and Barry’s Bay area, there is a completely different focus.



The Sisters of St. Joseph and their associates joined together at the Motherhouse on Pembroke to celebrate the order’s co-foundress, Mother St. John Fontbonne, on November 22.

Rose-Anne Boucher, a member for about 10 years, says that their primary focus is supporting the work of long-time associates Richard and Susan Schmaltz in their "Oneness" program which does aid work in Guatemala. She says that members of the group regularly go to Guatemala and assist in work such as construction, building school furniture and well-building.

"It's been a very positive experience all round," she says.

Erik Marx of Palmer Rapids was recently in Guatemala. He says, "My wife Irene and I have been "friends" of the Sisters of St. Joseph for nearly 39 years, but only in the last 10 or 12 years have we been associates. We are both devotees of the charism of the sisters, and rely on their example and prayers to live the charism as best we can."

Erik's most recent activity has been helping to build furniture for the "Planting Seeds" early childhood education program initiated by Susan Schmaltz.

"They have opened early childhood programs in a number of communities in the surrounding area, as well as in the dump area of Guatemala city," she says.

"This year we, a team of 18 people, have built enough furniture for two classrooms; one a preschool program, and another a grade three." "In spite of the workload," says Erik, "we always find

time to walk into Antigua to meet local people, among them many beggars, and offer what charity and "presence" we can."

Erik says, "Guatemala is a hard contrast between incredible beauty and heart-aching poverty. It is difficult at times to be here, seeing the incredible gulf between those that have everything and those who barely have enough to survive." He continues, "it is a blessing to be here with a supportive group; being here working alone would be mentally very difficult." Sr. Marjorie says, "I really enjoy working with the associates – it's been a great gift for me."

When possible the associates and sisters join together to celebrate special feasts, most recently the celebration of the order's co-foundress, Mother St. John Fontbonne on November 22, as well as retreats and workshops.

The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, based in Pembroke, have about 50 associates. Long-time member Jane Scott says the primary focus is on prayer. "We meet once a month," she says, "and prepare a prayer." She continues, "we have many older members and one of the important things is to remember those who are unable to be present in our prayers."

The group is committed to living the charism of St. Marguerite d'Youville, founder of the Grey Sisters, and applying it to their daily lives.

The associates also support community programs such as Jubilee Place, a service supporting young parents in need. In June they hold a potluck dinner and on October 16 they join with the Grey Sisters in celebrating the feast of St. Marguerite d'Youville.

Jane says, "I think the biggest thing for me about being an associate is that we are called to be advocates for those without a voice; that's why I serve on the board of Jubilee Place; and to serve with love, not judgment, all those we encounter each day."

In Fort Coulonge and Mattawa the Soeurs de la Charité d'Ottawa are active within the French-speaking communities. The Soeurs de la Charité d'Ottawa are a Francophone order of Grey Sisters. In Fort Coulonge there are about a dozen active associates. In addition to prayer and a commitment to the charism of St. Marguerite de Youville, they undertake many forms of active ministry in the parish. Members of the associates, who range in age from their 40s to over 90, teach catechism and other religion courses. There is an active music ministry as well. An important facet of their work is visiting those in need of companionship, especially the elderly residents of Sacred Heart Manor, in Fort Coulonge. This past June, four of the associates in Fort Coulonge celebrated their 20th anniversary.

Throughout the Diocese of Pembroke, associate members assist in spreading the ministry of our Religious men and women.

Fr. Nil Guillemette celebrates 40 years as a priest of the Diocese of Pembroke

Fr. Nil Guillemette has baptized over 1,000 babies since his ordination on May 22, 1971. He describes the joyful occasions as highlights of his 40-year priesthood. He speaks of his enjoyment in the preparation of young families for the sacrament and of the celebrations that follow.

Fr. Guillemette also remembers fondly the many weddings he presided over during his career and how he was honoured to be able to provide support during the more difficult times when he performed funerals for his parish family.

Following a serious heart attack early this year, the decision was made to move him to a smaller parish, St. Jean Baptiste in Pembroke, from the busy centre of Fort Coulonge.

"Now I get maybe five calls a day," he laughs, "in Fort Coulonge I would get 20 to 25 phone calls every day."

Because he also served several smaller parishes in Québec, the post was quite demanding. All together, serving Fort Coulonge, Vinton, Otter Lake and Waltham, he was responsible for 2,200 families. In Pembroke he serves about 400 families.

The distances made it even more challenging. For the past few years, Fr. Guillemette would put an average of 50,000km per year on his car, spending about \$500.00 a month on gas.

He enjoyed his time in the rural parishes, however. One of his favourite pastimes was snowmobiling. "You could hop on your machine at the priest's house and in five minutes you would be on a trail," he says,

"it was beautiful country." He estimates he has logged over 110,000km on his snowmobile, and he also enjoyed his four-wheel ATV.

In addition to his 15 years at Fort Coulonge, he especially enjoyed his 12-year tenure at Témiscaming, another rural parish. He also served in Chapeau for eight years.

In addition to his duties in the parish, Fr. Guillemette has found time to serve the community in many other capacities. For a number of years he was a member of the Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec, the provincial body responsible for funding restoration of religious heritage buildings in Québec. He is proud of his work on the committee. "We administer a budget of \$14-million a year," he says, "many individual projects such as a major roof can cost close to \$1-million alone."

"We've helped a lot of parishes," he continues.

Although he is no longer on the provincial committee, he is still working on the Outaouais regional group.

He has also served on the Priests Council of the Diocese of Pembroke for 35 years, and he served as Vocations Director for 24 years and a member of the Finance Committee for 15 years.

He says he is enjoying his first parish in "the city".

"When I came here I knew maybe eight people," he says, "but that's getting better." He's been on a number of trips with parishioners and he says that helps in getting to know people in the parish.

Fr. Guillemette's new parish includes the Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke and he looks

forward to working with it. "As I get more integrated, I'll be more involved."

He is also taking responsibility for hospital calls one week of every month.

Fr. Guillemette is looking forward to being able to travel a bit. He is planning to attend the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in June 2012. And he remembers fondly his trips to Peru with pilgrimages from the Diocese of Pembroke. He is hoping to return to Lima next November.

As he looks back on his 40-year career he says, "I've enjoyed my priesthood, I can say that I always felt respected in all of the parishes I've served."



Fr. Guillemette represented the Diocese of Pembroke at a provincial conference on religious heritage architecture in 2009.

Fr. Alphonse Harrington (1925 - 2011)

On Monday, August 29, 2011 the Diocese of Pembroke lost one of its best-known priests when Fr. Alphonse Timothy "Alph" Harrington died peacefully at the Pembroke Regional Hospital.

Fr. Harrington was born in Killaloe, Ontario on August 16, 1925 to the late James Harrington and Anne Sammon. He was raised by his uncle and aunt, Sam and Mollie Coyne, who raised a number of foster children, three of whom became priests. He is survived by his brother, Patrick Beggan of Victoria, BC, and Sister Helen Smaggus, CSJ, his sister. He also leaves behind many beloved cousins, nieces and nephews, and a multitude of friends. He was predeceased by his brother Thomas.

Growing up on the Coyne farm near Brudenell, Fr. Harrington developed a strong attachment to rural life and a great love of the outdoors. His long-time friend, Fr. Chris Shalla, said

parishioners maintained that, "the best thing you could ask Fr. Harrington to do was to help cut down a tree."

Fr. Shalla says he remembers his friend as a man of deep and simple faith. "He was very compassionate and generous to people in need." Living with Fr. Harrington as assistant in Chapeau for six years, he says, "Fr. Harrington always woke up with a positive attitude, ready to meet the day." He adds with a laugh, "That didn't always last."

Over his 18 years of service in Chapeau, Fr. Harrington developed a deep attachment to the people of his parish. "He was very much a part of the community," says Fr. Shalla, "especially the French community." Fr. Shalla says he also spoke with great affection of his time in Stonecliffe.

Fr. Harrington was ordained to the priesthood at St. Andrew Church, Killaloe on May 24, 1951. He

served as assistant at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Deep River and at the Cathedral of St. Columbkille, Pembroke. He was then appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Stonecliffe; and later served as pastor at the parishes of St. James the Great, Portage-du-Fort; St. Anthony, Chalk River; Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deep River; St. Anthony, Chalk River; and lastly, as pastor of St. Alphonsus in Chapeau, with its associated missions.

Following his retirement in 2002, he resided at Marianhill, where he continued to carry out his priestly ministry. Fr. Harrington's funeral was held at St. Alphonsus Church, Chapeau, on September 1 and he was buried in the parish cemetery.



Fr. Léon Bélanger (1925 - 2011)

Fr. Léon Germain Bélanger died peacefully at Marianhill, Pembroke, on Tuesday, November 1, 2011 in his 87th year.

Fr. Bélanger was the son of the late Léandre and Marie Louise Bélanger (nee Benoît), born in Montreal on September 28, 1925. He was ordained for the Diocese of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan on June 16, 1960. He was originally incardinated in that diocese and later transferred to the Diocese of Victoria.

After serving as assistant priest in parishes of both dioceses, Fr. Bélanger joined the Chaplaincy Service of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1965. A navy chaplain, he spent most of his time on the east coast. Fr. Tim Moyle of Mattawa was a close friend, having

lived with Fr. Bélanger at the rectory of St. Columbkille Cathedral after he retired from the military in 1990.

Fr. Moyle said that Fr. Bélanger loved the sea and managed to serve on board Canada's naval vessels whenever possible. "He was on the water more than he was on the land," says Fr. Moyle. One of his pastoral positions was on the HMCS Bonaventure, Canada's last aircraft carrier.

After his retirement Fr. Bélanger took up residence at St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke. He assisted Fr. Alph Harrington of Chapeau, filled in around the Pembroke area and took a particular interest in the Royal Canadian Legion and the Korean War Veterans Association.

Fr. Moyle remembers him as a man with a deep devotion to Our Lady, along with a great sense of humour. "He was a great practical joker," says Fr. Moyle. "When we were told we couldn't keep a pet in the rectory he bought a big plastic cat and kept moving it about the house."

About eight years ago declining health forced him to move to Marianhill.

A funeral mass was celebrated at St. Jean Baptiste Church, Pembroke on Saturday, November 5, 2011 at 11 a.m., followed by cremation.



Fr. Paul Émile Bécharde (1918 - 2011)

Fr. Paul Émile Bécharde, a priest of the Madonna House Apostolate, died peacefully on August 31, 2011 at Our Lady of the Visitation - St. Mary's, in Combermere, Ontario. On June 17 of this year he had celebrated 66 years of priesthood.

Fr. Bécharde was born on July 20, 1918 in Sedley, Saskatchewan to Exupère and Marie-Louise (Gibeau) Bécharde. For his early schooling he was a boarder at the convent in Montmartre, Saskatchewan. He later attended College Mathieu in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, and Regina Cleri Seminary in Regina. On June 17, 1945 he was ordained to the priesthood at his home parish, Our Lady of Grace Church in Sedley. His parish assignments included Holy Rosary Cathedral in Regina, and St. Maurice de Bellegarde, also in Saskatchewan.

Fr. Bécharde's first contact with Madonna House was in 1954 on his way to Quebec for study days with the Young Christian Farmers. He continued a number of years in parish work before joining Madonna House on July 14, 1957, becoming the fifth full-time

priest to serve the Apostolate. His first assignment was to St. Benedict's Acres as chaplain of the farm staff. Along with that he used his carpentry skills to help construct various farm buildings as well as the chapel at Cana Colony used for family retreats.

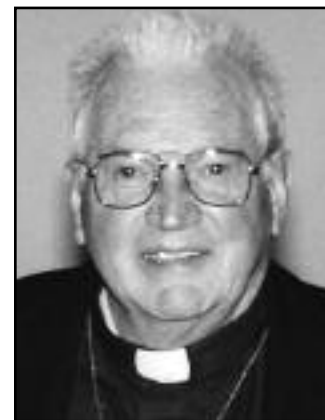
In 1959 he was assigned to Maryhouse, Madonna House's first field house, in the Yukon to fill in for the acting chaplain. He taught catechism and helped with maintenance and carpentry projects. He returned to Combermere as chaplain to the farm and staff of St. Joseph's House Rural Apostolate. He provided retreats and classes to the staff workers and used his carpentry skills to help build the new house for St. Joseph's. He also assisted Fr. Michael Hass, along with other Madonna House priests, in serving St. Francis de Sales Parish in Latchford Bridge, as well as other parishes throughout the Diocese of Pembroke. Other assignments for Madonna House included Our Lady of Aquia, Virginia; Paris, France; and Robin Hood's Bay, England.

In the mid-1990s Fr. Bécharde began living a more

prayerful life as a poustinik at Madonna House Combermere. He continued an apostolate of listening, spiritual direction and carpentry. In 2009, because of failing health, he moved into Our Lady of the Visitation, an extension of Madonna House-St. Mary's which cares for their sick and elderly.

He was predeceased by his parents and brothers: Gabriel, Marcelle, Jérôme and Dr. Jean-Benoît Bécharde, his sister-in-law Gisèle, and a nephew Giles. He is survived by his niece Jocelyn (Al) Ash, nephews Clément (Diane), Côme (Jackie) and Jean Giles (Madine) Bécharde, his sisters-in-law Germaine and Lise as well as several grand and great nephews and nieces.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on September 5, 2011 at Madonna House St. Mary's chapel, with interment at the Madonna House cemetery.



Parish Profile

St. Martin of Tours - Whitney

The town of Whitney has a population of about 900 and is located a few kilometres from the eastern gate of Algonquin Park.

Fr. Jim Beanish has been parish priest of St. Martin of Tours parish for nine years. Born and raised in Barry's Bay, just 50km east of Whitney, Fr. Beanish says that he feels quite at home in the rural setting.

"Whitney as a community is blessed with so many good things," says Fr. Beanish, "especially the people."

"Although we're distant from any of the large centres," he continues, "because of the natural beauty, the world comes to us."

The natural world defines Whitney, with the two main employers being the resource sector and tourism. Algonquin Park is the biggest presence in the town, providing employment for many and drawing the tourists that are one of the biggest contributors to the local economy. The lumber and construction industries are also substantial employers, with McRae's Lumber Mill being one of the most prominent.

Emily Etmanski, who works in the parish office, says the people are very proud of their community and are very supportive and tightly knit.

"Our CWL lunches are famous," she says. She said one of the most prominent features of life in Whitney is the way people come together whenever an individual is in need.

"When there's a benefit for somebody who is sick," she says, "the support is amazing."

The strength of community involvement also shows up in the support for organizations like the Catholic Women's League and the seniors club.

The CWL has 54 members and draws from a wide age range. The youngest member is 21 and the oldest, Theresa Cannon, just turned 104.

There is an active seniors group as well, with activities running four days a week. They operate programs such as shuffleboard games, fitness classes and, of course, regular card parties.

The community operates an outdoor rink in the winter for young people and ball hockey and soccer in the summer.

Fr. Beanish says that, "we're at the end of the line out here – you're always traveling."

Whitney is 50km from Barry's Bay and about a half-hour drive from Maynooth. As in so many other parishes in the diocese, Fr. Beanish is also responsible for two other communities, Madawaska and Maynooth. The additional care of the Maynooth parish has forced the cancellation of popular outdoor masses that used to be held in Algonquin Park.

Emily says that the tourists camping in the park are a very real presence in the summer. "I would think there are about a third as many people at church in the summertime," she says.

Most of these are campers who come in from the park for Sunday mass. Even in the winter there is a noticeable presence of campers from Algonquin.

Surprisingly, Whitney has relatively few cottages in the area, most of the lakes being occupied by year-round homes. Much of the surrounding district is within the park boundary which, of course, restricts the building of cottages.

Fr. Beanish enjoys the opportunity of working outdoors that comes with being in a rural setting, and he undertakes many of the routine maintenance projects in the three parishes himself, recently assisting a newly retired parishioner, who was a former mason, in repointing and repairing the church building in Madawaska. He also keeps a woodlot near Wilno, where he cuts firewood.

Before he began studying for the priesthood, Fr. Beanish worked for eight years as a saw filer, building and maintaining saws in the area, and all over Ontario, so he has a good understanding of the realities of life in an area like Whitney.

When asked what drew him from working in the lumber industry to the priesthood, he says, "I started to search for what I was really here to do." He continues, "looking back, I believe I was led the right way."

"It's challenging," he says, "but who doesn't like a challenge?"

Fr. John McElligott (1935 - 2011)

Fr. Cornelius John McElligott died at Marianhill in Pembroke on November 30, 2011. Fr. McElligott was born in Mattawa, Ontario on September 5, 1935 to the late Francis McElligott and the late Bérénice Landriau. He is survived by his brother, Dr. Joseph McElligott of Ottawa, and his sister, Mrs. Berenice Paoli of Peterborough, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister, Mrs. Frances Nickel and his brother Raymond. Father John attended St. Anne's Separate School and Mattawa Public High School in Mattawa, St. Patrick's College in Ottawa and St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto.

On May 27, 2011 he had celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination. He was ordained by Bishop William Smith in his home town of Mattawa. His ordination was the first to take place in the newly built St. Anne Church, which had been consecrated only two days before, having replaced an earlier building destroyed by fire in 1959.

Fr. McElligott began his career as assistant to Fr. J.A. Latourelle at St. Theresa, Temiscaming, and in 1968 he returned to his hometown as assistant at St. Anne.

In 1971 he returned to the Pontiac as parish priest of St. John the Evangelist in Campbell's Bay, Québec. He

served there until 1994, taking on responsibility as well for Vinton in 1993. In 1982 he was joined in Campbell's Bay by his uncle, Fr. Robert McElligott, who lived with him and assisted him in parish duties until his death in 1985. Fr. McElligott's last parish assignment was in the northern region of the diocese, serving the parish of St. Bernadette, Bonfield, with responsibility as well for the small communities of Astorville, Chiswick, Corbeil, Grand Desert and Feronia. Deacon Albert Benoit of Bonfield says that Fr. McElligott's leadership and organizational and pastoral abilities came at a crucial time for the area. He presided over the unification of these small parishes into a single pastoral unit. "He put up a pastoral and liturgical plan that is still in place," says Deacon Albert.

In addition to the difficulties of closing several of the smaller parishes, he oversaw the amalgamation of Bonfield, Corbeil and Astorville. The challenges were compounded by the need to move to a fully bilingual mass in Corbeil and Bonfield. Deacon Albert says that, thanks to Fr. McElligott, the transition went extremely smoothly.

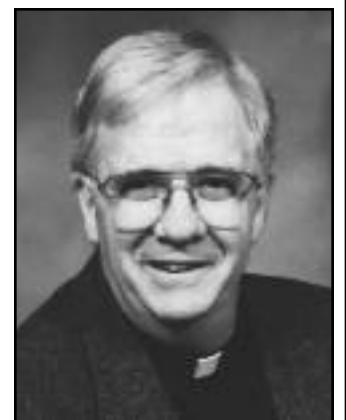
Deacon Albert says Fr. McElligott was well-liked in the parish. "He was a humble man, a pastoral man," he says, "and he had an ability to communicate with the young people."

He adds that Fr. McElligott also did an excellent job of the challenging task of introducing the communities to a larger role for the permanent diaconate.

In 1963 Fr. McElligott played in the first game of the legendary Flying Fathers hockey team, in North Bay. After a hiatus, he returned to the team, playing forward for over 20 years. Fr. Grant Neville, a long-time member of the team, recalls Fr. McElligott visiting schools with the team.

"When we went into the schools he would lead the kids in action songs, get them imitating flutes and pipes and so on, a real Pied Piper," he says. "He would always get them wound up, he really put a lot of enthusiasm in it!"

He retired from active ministry in 2004 to live in Ottawa, however, he continued his priestly ministry by relieving in parishes when called upon. In August 2011 he moved to Marianhill for health reasons. Fr. McElligott's funeral was held at St. Anne Church in Mattawa on December 6, 2011, followed by interment in St. Anne Cemetery, Mattawa.



The diocesan partnership with Peru continues

A partnership was initiated in 2004 between the Diocese of Lima, Peru, and the Diocese of Pembroke.

A committee initiated fundraising in our diocese to help start a child-feeding project in one of the slum areas of Lima, called Chorrillos. This was a three-year commitment to help feed approximately 300 children each year by providing them with a nutritious breakfast and lunch and teaching their mothers about nutrition and hygiene. The people of the Diocese of Pembroke have been very generous in their support of this project.

This partnership continues very strongly today. This past fall Sr. Pauline Coulterman of the committee received the following letter from Bishop Adriano Tomasi, Auxiliary Bishop of Lima:

Dear Sister Pauline:

First of all, I want to thank you and all the donors, and specially Bishop Mulhall of Pembroke, for the very generous and permanent donations you send each year to our Archdiocese.

This morning I had the chance to talk to Mr. Armas, Caritas Lima's secretary general, and I asked him to write to you as soon as possible, sending all the information about the different places and people we were able to help with your donations, and send also the pictures we have with some comments, so that you may see what a marvelous job we are able to do with your aid.

I can tell you that thanks to your donations we were able to open the Wawawasi (a daycare centre that

allows mothers to work) on the hill of el Agustino: it was a God's-send, because we discovered that of the 25 children who were admitted, 23 of them are suffering severe anemia! Because of these results, the parish priest is feeling that we now have to open three more, because no other organizations are taking care of the children on the hill. A government authority promised us that if we were to open at least three of these children's centres, they'd help with a nutritionist and the necessary food. This would make it easier for Caritas and the parish to sustain the program. We'll see what we can do, relying always on Divine Providence.

At the same time, Caritas has already built more than 50 wooden small houses for the poorest families on the hills of el Agustino and Rimac.

Our program in support of the children's hospital is also going very well. This year Caritas could help with four programs of surgery for children with facial deformations, performed by doctors from Peru and also doctors from the United States. Each time I had the joy to go and visit the children, their mothers, and doctors and nurses, giving the blessing of God. Talking about the house for the sick built by the Archdiocese, I can tell you that in two years we were able to receive 1,570 guests, and Divine Providence gave us all that was necessary to assist them with food, some medicines, etc...

There is an association of volunteers working hard, and we hope to be able to have some funds to enlarge

the house, because we need more space for better service. The Cardinal is personally helping a lot and the three sisters are doing a really wonderful job giving the best testimony of Christ's charity.

Be completely sure and, please, assure also your bishop and all the benefactors, that your donations are used completely for the programs you have given them for, in favour of the poorest.

I'm glad to hear that you are coming down to Chinchu in February: I don't think that I'll be able to go and visit you, but maybe you can come to Lima and we can visit some missions.

I look forward to the next pilgrimage you are planning for next year to come visit us. Anything you think I can do be sure to tell me and we'll do our best. Once again, thank you and the best greetings to you all.

Bishop Adriano Tomasi, Auxiliary Bishop of Lima

Donations to the committee's annual fundraising campaign are gratefully accepted at any time. Pilgrims from our diocese are able to visit the communities in Lima that benefit from our contributions and see first-hand how our donations are used and how grateful the Peruvian people are. If you are interested in supporting our partnership please check the bulletin boards or information tables at your church for the donation forms which are sent to the Diocese of Pembroke Chancery Office (Peru Projects), or contact your zone representative. The next pilgrimage will be held in the fall of 2012.

Round Lake begins its recovery process

Early on the morning of March 20, 2011, the rectory of St. Casimir church in Round Lake Centre was tragically destroyed by fire, taking the life of Fr. George Olsen, the well-loved parish priest.

Fr. Mirosław Olszewski, OMI, known locally as Fr. Mirek, heard about the fire at his morning Mass in Wilno. "It was a shock for the people – a great shock for me," he says.

A few weeks later he was asked to become temporary administrator of the parish, a position he took May 1, 2011.

In the months following the fire the people of Round Lake Centre had to start putting their parish community back together from scratch, as the rectory had contained the parish office and was also used to store many of the items often taken for granted in the day-to-day operation of a parish.

Parishioner Edna Laginski was a member of a committee which also included Zigmund Biernaskie, Sandra Borutski, Kevin Cybulski, Gilbert Peplinski, Bill Povey, along with Fr. Mirek. In addition to the "nuts and bolts" of carving a new office space out of a meeting room behind the church, and obtaining new office equipment, the parish had to deal with the loss of all of their records.

"We put out a call", says Edna. "We talk about people being hoarders, but thank God for them." One of the most important sources of information as the group started putting the records back together were old parish bulletins. Incredibly, some parishioners

had collections of bulletins going back decades, and the documents proved invaluable in recreating the lost records of weddings, funerals and baptisms that had been held in the church. Local residents also responded to a request in the parish bulletin for anyone with wedding, funeral or baptismal certificates to come forward.

Local schools had other records, and the Zohr Funeral home in Eganville was also able to help.

Fr. Mirek says that two registers have been started, one for the period following the fire, and another for the reconstructed records from before the tragedy.

The committee managed to put a working office back together by mid-summer, in time to meet the next challenge, operating the parish's annual supper and bazaar in October. They ran into two obstacles in putting on this important fundraiser. As bazaars are regulated by the Ontario Alcohol and Gaming Commission, a substantial amount of information about previous year's activities had to be supplied to obtain a license and most of this data had been destroyed in the fire. Once the license was finally obtained, the committee had to replace almost all of the paraphernalia accumulated over years of operating the fundraiser.

"Games tables, the wheel of fortune, bingo materials, they were all lost in the fire", says Edna. In the end, the event went on as scheduled, and did a little better than last year, demonstrating the

commitment to community enjoyed by the small parish of about 250 families.

Fortunately, says Fr. Mirek, important tax records had been stored on a memory stick off-site. There will be a much greater effort to maintain back-up records now, and an electronic copy will be made of the registers.

"Nobody ever imagined something like this could happen until it did happen," says Fr. Mirek.

Finally, there was the challenge of re-assembling all of the little day-to-day items that are essential to running a parish. In addition to the usual round of office supplies essential to operations, there were the items peculiar to a parish office that had to be replaced. Blank baptismal and marriage certificates were needed, and even the little souvenirs distributed at confirmation and first communion had been destroyed. Even two collection baskets were lost, with whatever money they had contained.

Edna says that, once news of the fire became known, many of the suppliers contacted the parish which assisted in getting things operational again.

On August 22, 2011 Fr. Mirek was appointed full-time administrator of the parish, although he still lives at the Wilno rectory. With the arrival of a new full-time parish priest, the community looks forward to moving on from a tragic part of its history. Fr. Mirek says that one of the tasks ahead will be a suitable memorial to the tragedy, and in remembrance of the much-loved Fr. Olsen.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul - helping the needy in Pembroke

This winter the St. Columbkille Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Pembroke Council, will celebrate its fifth anniversary.

Society President Irene Perrault says that, unfortunately, the need for their services is greater than ever.

The society operates a soup kitchen, "St. Francis' Cupboard," three days a week out of St. Columbkille Cathedral. It provides a healthy free lunch for people in need on the days when meals are not available through other community support organizations.

About 30 committed volunteers minister to an average of 30 clients on days the kitchen is open. Depending on the time of the month, the number of people in need can be as high as 50.

Irene says that the people they serve are primarily struggling with mental health needs.

"It seems as if the government programs are taking pretty good care of those with physical disabilities," she says, "but people with mental health issues really seem to be in need."

Volunteers prepare and serve food and also handle the mundane but vital jobs of cleaning and maintaining the premises to make sure the operation meets all health standards.

In addition to providing nutritious meals, the society operates an outreach program that assists people in need throughout the community. On receiving a call about an urgent need, the society does a background check to ensure that the needs are legitimate. Volunteer Clare Mungham, a retired pastoral care worker, is in charge of this assessment process. This outreach program also assists about 30 individuals.

Irene says that the services the society provides cover a wide range. Often the needs are for emergency

financial assistance to help with rent, heat or electricity. If people need food they will supply it from stock at the St. Francis' Cupboard. On more than one occasion they have had to provide accommodation for people in local motels when there has been no place else to go.

"There are a lot of people 'couch surfing' in Pembroke," says Irene. "They move from friend to friend and sometimes there is just nowhere for them to go anymore."

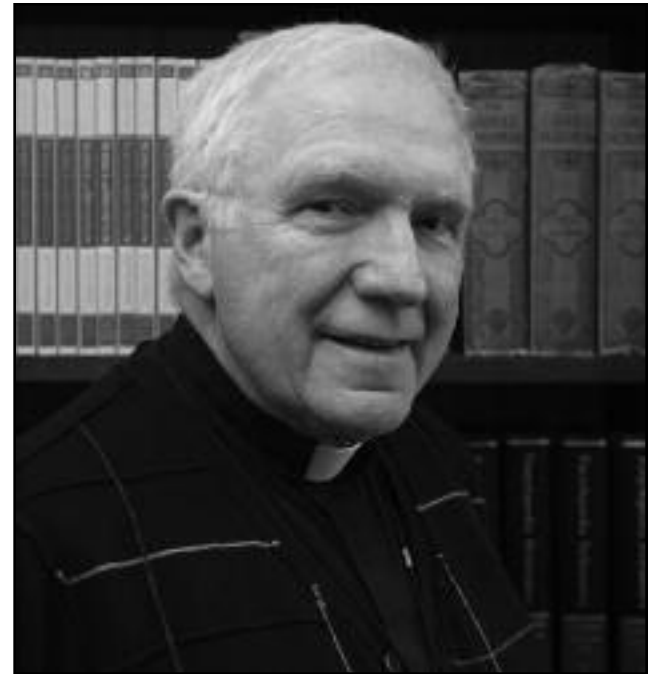
For people on some form of social assistance, rents are often as much as they receive in aid from government sources, and even when there is cheaper accommodation there is still not much money left over.

The work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is completely supported by donations, primarily from service clubs and individuals. The space at St. Columbkille Cathedral is provided free of charge by the parish. Every penny donated to the society goes towards helping the people and putting food on the table. If you are able to make a donation, contact the office phone number, (613) 732-9058.

All work performed by the society is done by volunteers. Although they have a good level of support, Irene is concerned about the future, as members of the group get older.

"It's the older people who are keeping things going," she says, "cleaning under the fridge and dusting." Most of the regular workers are in their 60s, 70s, and 80s.

"I say to the Lord, if you want to keep this going then send us some good, committed volunteers." Anyone interested in answering this call is welcome to phone the society's office at the number above.



Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Academy (OLSWA) in Barry's Bay is pleased to announce the appointment of a new associate chaplain, Fr. Joseph Hattie, OMI, who joins OLSWA chaplain Fr. Paul Burchat of Madonna House in ministering to the spiritual needs of the academy. He brings many years of experience in pastoral ministry. He served as chaplain at Dalhousie University in Halifax for 10 years, and then, after obtaining his Doctorate of Theology in Marriage and Family at the John Paul II Institute at Rome's Lateran University, he worked for 24 years in both the Archdiocesan Offices of Marriage and Family Formation in Vancouver and in Halifax. Fr. Hattie has authored books on sacramental marriage, and manuals for marriage preparation.

Merton Retreat @ Galilee

with Vaughn Fayle, OFM, Jan. 13 - 15, 2012

Vaughn Fayle, OFM, a Franciscan friar based in Chicago, is a member of the International Thomas Merton Society and has given over 20 presentations on Merton's thought for various chapters in the USA, and most recently has premiered his setting of Merton's poetry for chamber orchestra in Chicago at the past International Meeting. Born in South Africa, he holds graduate degrees in theology and philosophy and is a music graduate of the Royal School of Music, UK. He is an adjunct professor of philosophy at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. In 2007 he received the Shannon Fellowship from the ITMS for his work on Merton's poetry. This retreat will explore key themes of Thomas Merton's spirituality as they relate to the search for the authentic self in a world fraught with partisanship, the collapse of economies and increasing demographic shifts.

For more information and registration contact the Galilee Centre

Private/Single: \$235; Shared/Double: \$205;

Commuter: \$130; Includes all meals.

The retreat begins 7:30 pm Friday and concludes Sunday with lunch at noon

398 John Street N, Arnprior, (613) 623-4242

www.galileecentre.com
info@galileecentre.com



The St. Vincent de Paul Society received a Trillium grant for St. Francis' Cupboard. Seen here, from left, Colleen Sauriol, City of Pembroke, Irene Perrault, Bernie Hartlin of the Ottawa Central Council, Dan Callaghan of the City of Pembroke, and Deacon Adrien Chaput.

Morning Watch: Something beautiful for Jesus

youth
in the diocese

By Yvette Bourque

In this day and age, with so many activities vying for our time, it is not hard to imagine that spending quiet time in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament may not be at the top of our list of things to do. In years past many Catholics grew up spending much more time in this way, reaping the benefits of the many graces that God has for us when we sacrifice our time to be with Him. Given that the very reason we exist and the purpose of our lives is to know, love and serve Jesus in this world so that we can be with Him forever in the next, Eucharistic adoration is a powerful way to get to know Jesus intimately. Yet, so few people really understand this.

It is my experience that many Catholics today are lacking an intimate relationship with Jesus and do not understand what Eucharistic adoration is. Many have not experienced it or even heard of it. Certainly this leads to many children and young people today not being educated in this very powerful practice. With each passing generation we lose more and more the importance of adoration in the faith life of a Catholic.

When I heard about “Morning Watch”, an all night adoration event that begins with Saturday evening Mass and continues through until Sunday morning Mass, being practiced in the Diocese of Peterborough, my heart literally leapt. I believe this was God’s way of telling me that this was something to look at initiating in our diocese, hopefully bringing about a renewal of Eucharistic adoration.

I saw this as something beautiful for Jesus. After receiving approval from Bishop Mulhall, who was familiar with this event because it began in his home diocese, the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team went to work. Initially, the team was determined to have the very first event on the Feast of Corpus Christi but after a last minute cancellation, the decision was made to begin whenever we found the first parish to host it.

On November 12 and 13, Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Pembroke hosted the very first diocesan Morning Watch event. People of all ages came to pray, worship and spend intimate time with our Lord Jesus. Fr. Bill Kenney led the people in Lectio Divina, and members of the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team provided worship music throughout the evening. Fr. Real Ouellette offered the sacrament of reconciliation and led the participants in the “power hour” which ended with the rosary. For me personally it was comforting to know that at least for one night Jesus was not alone. He had many adorers all throughout the night. I am especially proud of the high school age youth who came out and spent the entire event with us. I look forward to this event growing as people of the diocese gain familiarity with it.

How does Morning Watch work?

Morning Watch is an all night adoration event hosted by a parish and planned and implemented by the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team in coordination

with the priest and hosting parish. It begins with Saturday evening Mass (or at a specified time) and continues through the night until Sunday morning Mass. During the evening on Saturday there is scheduled time for praise and worship, catechisis or Lectio Divina and a “power hour” ending with the rosary. All during the night people are scheduled for adoration for an hour at a time (or more if they wish). Those staying overnight sleep, except for their scheduled time of adoration. Those living close by can come and go as they need to. All surrounding parishes are invited to participate and spend some intimate time with our Lord, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Youth under 14 who wish to stay over must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, youth over 14 but under 18 must have a waiver form signed by a parent.

What is the purpose of the event and why is it important?

The purpose of the event is simply to give our time to Jesus and to receive the many graces He has for us as we sacrifice our time to be in His presence in the Blessed Sacrament. It is meant to bear much fruit and many blessings for the parish that hosts it. Its importance is also to pray for the intentions of the host parish and of the people participating so that all may grow in intimacy with our Lord. The event also brings the faithful together from all across the diocese in fellowship, which is comforting, powerful and creates a sense of unity.

What is Eucharistic adoration?

Eucharistic adoration is the adoration of Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist. As Catholics, we believe that Christ’s body and blood, his soul and divinity, are truly present in the Holy Eucharist and that He offers Himself to us in this Holy Sacrament as real spiritual nourishment for our souls. During exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist is displayed in a special holder called a Monstrance, and people come to pray and worship Jesus. Adoration can be for a short time or continually throughout the day and often the night. While quiet contemplation is the usual form of prayer during adoration, psalms, readings, devotional music and prayers may be performed during Eucharistic adoration.

The Franciscan archives credit Saint Francis of Assisi (who died in 1226) for starting Eucharistic adoration in Italy. For Francis, the adoration of the Eucharist amounted to “seeing Christ”. In the thirteenth century the Feast of Corpus Christi was instituted. From this point, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, both within and outside the Mass, became central in the piety of the Western Church.

Certainly participation in the sacrifice of the Mass and receiving Holy Communion is the most powerful source of grace for us, but it is not the only source of Eucharistic grace. After the sacrifice is completed, the sacrament continues on. Jesus, in His sacramental

Body and Blood, remains here with us as our friend, just as He promised. We should take time to return His love for us and to draw spiritual nourishment and strength from Him. But the best reason for having exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is simply that God wills it. During His Eucharistic discourse, Jesus made this unmistakably clear...

“Indeed, this is the will of My Heavenly Father, that everyone who looks upon the Son, and believes in Him, shall have eternal life. Him I will raise up on the last day” (John 6:40)

“Could you not watch one hour with Me”... (Matthew 26:40)

Would your parish like to host a Morning Watch event?

Contact the Family Life and Youth Ministry Office to discuss dates, details and a specific schedule for your parish. (613) 732-7933 x 208 or yvettebourque@pembrokediocese.com.



The Sisters of St. Joseph celebrate 90 years in the Diocese of Pembroke

By Sr. Loretta Rice, CSJ

On August 25, 2011 a beautiful celebration of the 90th anniversary of our founding in the Diocese of Pembroke was celebrated.

At 11a.m. Bishop Mulhall celebrated the Eucharist in the chapel and delivered a reflective and very inspiring homily. Having been raised in Peterborough and educated by the CSJ sisters, Bishop Mulhall has experienced first-hand the spirit and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In his homily, he said, "As we celebrate jubilees and anniversaries, it is important to reflect on God's goodness in our lives."

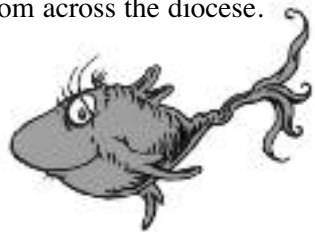
He remarked that as those first sisters traveled from Peterborough to Pembroke they would have experienced difficulties in making the transition from one community and responding to the call to become fruitful in a new home.

The Diocese of Pembroke Family Life and Youth Ministry Office presents...

TRUTHQUEST

*A high school retreat for youth, grade 8-12
February 3-5, 2012 at St. Joseph's Catholic
High School, Renfrew*

This retreat is based on an apologetics approach and is intended to help youth understand what Catholics believe and how to defend those beliefs. The guest speaker this year, Fr. Denis Lemieux from Madonna House, Combermere, will be covering topics such as An Introduction to Apologetics, Apologetics and Scripture, Faith and Reason, How to Explain the Sacraments, Mary and the Saints, and Tough Moral Issues. This retreat will also familiarize participants with the new Youth Catechism (YOUCAT) recently released for Catholic youth everywhere. Come and enjoy a fun-filled weekend of learning, praying, playing, discussing, singing, adoring, confessing, laughing and celebrating with other youth from across the diocese. See you there!



• Fee: \$40.00 before January 20, and \$45.00 until the final deadline of January 27.

Registration forms are available at parishes, high school chaplaincy offices, or by contacting the Family Life and Youth Ministry Office (FLYMO) - yvettebourque@pembrokedioocese.com (613) 732-7933x208.

"At first it is faith that helps us to respond 'Amen' and then we learn to understand the love and experience we are called to live. Sharing our mission of love is very challenging at times but nevertheless fruitful."

Those attending included members of the local clergy, as well as Fr. Frank Morrissey, OMI, our canon lawyer, and representatives from our federation, the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada.

Also in attendance were our visiting Peruvian sisters, Sr. Maria and Sr. Gloria, our past and present associate leadership teams, and the leadership team of the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

As we entered the dining room a beautiful and creative display by Sr. Pauline Coulterman put us in touch with our early history. We enjoyed a delicious banquet during which Sr. Betty Berrigan gave an overview of the history of the congregation.

"Since 1921," she said, "we educated children and youth in 13 parishes in the Pembroke Diocese, in five schools in the Ottawa Diocese, as well as schools in the Belleville Diocese. We also opened and staffed Our Lady of Fatima School in Chinchá Alta, Peru."

She continued, "We opened and staffed a bilingual teacher's college in Chapeau, the second bilingual teacher's college in the province of Québec. We also opened Villa St. Joseph in Renfrew."

"We opened and staffed the community hospital in Radville, Saskatchewan, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Barrhead, Alberta, and St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay."

"In Regina we helped staff the Marion Seniors Home, Radville, and Santa Maria Seniors Home. Staffing was also supplied for the Bosco Home in Regina, a facility for teens in crisis. The Valley Manor Seniors Home in Barry's Bay was also staffed by some of our sisters."

"In 1989 we opened Stillpoint House of Prayer in Burnstown, where spiritual direction and retreats are still being offered."

"In 1991 the associate movement was re-energized in Pembroke, the first group of Canadian associates in the federation. In 2000, our Canadian associates began working in Guatemala to meet the educational needs of children, and today this work is thriving."

"The scope of work of the Sisters of St. Joseph was wide – teachers and principals, nurses and hospital technicians, music teachers, sacristans, cooks, homemakers and secretaries. There were CEOs of six facilities and workers in pastoral ministry and missionaries."

"Until the early 1960s our lives as religious were monastic in many respects, regimented, quite uniform, and regulated closely by Canon Law. As the Second Vatican Council unfolded and the Council Fathers



Sr. Marjorie Fitzpatrick and Sr. Marion Muldoon, centre, join with other members of the Sisters of St. Joseph and associates in a ceremony dedicating a tree donated by the associates marking the 90th anniversary of the presence in the diocese of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The ceremony was held on October 22, 2011.

reflected on the nature of religious life, we were urged to renew our lives in every aspect, according to our founder's original vision, in line with the Gospels, and taking into account the nature of the times."

"As women religious, we took this mandate very seriously and thus initiated tremendous changes. We worked diligently together to imbibe the spirit of Vatican II, freeing ourselves and our 300-year-old structure, to be more apparent and available as prophetic witnesses to the Gospels and a source of hope, strength and unity to those whom we serve and with whom we associate."

"All of this was hard work and cost us much anguish and pain, yet in and through our ongoing process of discernment, we experience much satisfaction, peace and joy."

"What has sustained us is our attempt to be faithful to the founding grace given to us by our founder, Fr. Jean Pierre Medaille, to be faithful to the Gospel and to try to read the signs of the times."

"Our experience centres around God's fidelity, which is central to our lives, our zeal for the 'more', an active and inclusive love, our love for our land and for this diocese, and our enthusiasm and readiness to go where we were invited, no matter how small the location."

"Most congregations today are engaged in new ministries, not ones that require buildings and structures, but 'where the people are.'"

"Most congregations are not acting out of survival or maintenance modes, but are acting out of mission, doing the work of God and furthering the reign of God. We religious understand better now that the Holy Spirit has been leading us to a very different type of active religious life to better suit these present times."

In the afternoon we gathered in the cemetery to honour our deceased members. Sr. Catherine Yantha and Associate Anita McGean led us in a prayer ritual which began with Sr. Mary McGuire, General Superior, blessing the new cross. The 143 deceased sisters were remembered by name, those original and risk-taking women who made our path by walking, a path we are challenged to continue following.

The entire day was a wonderful, joy-filled and memorable celebration.

Exploring native spirituality

The worshippers bow their heads in prayerful reflection. Together, they honour their creator, pay tribute to the faith and integrity of their ancestors, and ask for insight and understanding. A sweet, smoky scent lingers in the air as they express the core beliefs they share. Those beliefs have been handed down to them through hundreds if not thousands of years.

The setting could be a glorious Catholic cathedral or a small church in the countryside. It could just as easily be a traditional outdoor gathering place.

The description applies equally to a native worship ceremony or a Catholic mass.

Fr Peter Proulx spent the better part of a year studying native spirituality with his parishioners at St Francis Xavier parish in Renfrew. He came away from the experience with a new appreciation of the common elements he found – the sweetgrass in place of the incense, for example.

About 40 of his parishioners shared the learning experience, attending day-long workshops on native culture and spirituality as part of a world religions study course they created. They grew to understand spiritual symbols such as the medicine wheel and the four cardinal directions, which each have a guiding spirit and unique attributes that symbolize the stages of the life journey.

“It took away any lack of ease people were having,” recalls Fr. Proulx.

But the studies resulted in more than a sense of comfort with other religious practices. The parishioners also gained a level of compassion and respect for the sense of injustice expressed by many of Canada’s Aboriginal people.

“This was the spirituality that was taken away from them that they themselves are searching to understand,” he explains.

Fr. Proulx would like to see others throughout the diocese have access to the insights and understandings the parishioners of St. Francis Xavier gained through such a course of studies. He reports that the effects of their learnings linger in how they think and respond to various situations today.

“From that flow things,” he says. “It would be nice to provide that type of information to others, and help them connect with these understandings.”

There is an Algonquin presence in many of the parishes throughout the diocese. The Algonquin people make up significant portions of the population in places like the Pontiac, Mattawa and Golden Lake.

In fact, the Nativity of Our Lady Mission is located on the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation reserve at Golden Lake. Fr. John Lacey serves the congregation there as well as at St. James Parish in Eganville. He says mass on the reserve once a week.

While the congregation consists primarily of nearby cottagers in the summer and off-reserve local residents throughout the year, it has comfortably blended some Aboriginal spiritual traditions with standard Catholic practices.

Native culture blends with Catholic symbolism in the stained glass windows along the church walls. They were installed about 20 years ago, and bear witness to the two cultures that come together within the building.

About the same time, the church began incorporating Aboriginal rituals with the celebration of special events at the church.

This is especially present during funeral celebrations, when the deceased’s heritage is commemorated along with their life of Catholic faith. Fr. Lacey describes funeral masses where an Algonquin honour guard stands at the church entrance bearing traditional native symbols. They follow the casket and the cross in procession to the front of the church, where the symbols are displayed throughout the ceremony. Following the Catholic burial rites at the cemetery, the priest steps aside to make room for a native ceremony featuring chanting and drumming.

Lionel Baptiste is a member of the Pikwàkanagàn Algonquin First Nation and a prominent member of the parish. He points to his name as one example of how his Aboriginal history was suppressed through the years. When he researched his family history, Mr. Baptiste discovered that his family’s traditional last name was “Pessendawatch”, an Algonkin term for “little fire”. It was when his ancestors were baptized into the Catholic faith that the name was changed to “Baptiste”.

Mr. Baptiste says he grew up in a time when the local hockey and football teams were anxious for players, and he never felt isolated or subject to discrimination. Even so, he has benefited from experiences such as attending the Sacred Assembly in Hull in 1986 where Aboriginal people from throughout Canada gathered to learn about and discuss the role of churches in residential schools and other aspects of colonialism.

At 72, Mr. Baptiste is pleased to have lived to see the day when drummers can perform a farewell song as part of a Catholic funeral, or Algonquin dancers can participate in a wedding ceremony at the church.

“It brings the people back to the church,” he says.

“It’s a matter of respect,” adds Fr. Lacey.

For Fr. Proulx, the goal is to see that respect grow in individuals and spread throughout the diocese.

He points to opportunities like the annual native healing prayer conference hosted at the Marguerite Centre in Pembroke, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2008 and attracts participants from throughout Ontario. He acknowledges the work of Sr. Sheila Whalen, GSIC, a member of the Grey Nuns administrative leadership team who worked with the Dene in the far north for a number of years, as well as Sr Priscilla Solomon who led a workshop at St. Francis Xavier on how to incorporate native spirituality with Catholicism. Fr Proulx also points to organizations like the Kairos chapter in Ottawa that take a thoughtful approach to issues regarding respect and social justice.

“There is work and learning that we all can do,” he concludes. “I would encourage anyone with an interest to pursue the opportunities, to talk with their fellow parishioners and to explore the concepts. Our parishioners have joined with the wider Renfrew community and meet at the United Church to explore these issues with local members of our First Nations community from both the local area and the City of Ottawa. We appreciate the call to become a healing community.”

National Day of Prayer for Aboriginal Peoples - Rose Prince: an example of goodness and compassion

Each year on December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) invites the faithful to pray with Aboriginal Peoples.

This year’s focus was Rose Prince, a remarkable woman from a small First Nations community near Fort St. James, in the Diocese of Prince George, British Columbia.

Rose Prince was born in 1915 at Nak’azdli. Descended from the great Carrier Chief Kwah, Rose was a good student and a gifted artist. Her life was not easy. Born with curvature of the spine that resulted in a hump on her back, she lived with pain that made her movements awkward. Rose was devout in her practice of the Catholic faith and lived a simple life of prayer and work in the service of others. As it came time for her to leave Lejac Residential School, she asked if she could stay on as a lay staff member. She lived and worked at the residential school for 27 years, and was known there for her goodness and compassion.

Rose died of tuberculosis in 1949 at the age of 34. In 1951 when it was decided that a few graves west of the school would be moved to a larger cemetery nearby, her coffin broke open during the transfer and the workers were amazed to find her body and clothing perfectly preserved.

Devotion to Rose Prince has developed over the years. A pilgrimage to her gravesite began in 1990 and has grown into an annual event that attracts hundreds of people.

The Mission of the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council

The CCCB’s Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council (CCAC) is composed of seven Aboriginal members and two bishops from across the country. Its mandate is to advise and assist the CCCB on issues concerning indigenous peoples in Canada in general, including socio-economic conditions, discrimination and poverty, as well as opportunities for healing, reconciliation and social advancement. The CCAC also advises and assists the CCCB on concerns of Catholic indigenous peoples in Canada, including questions regarding the relations of the Church with indigenous communities, traditional expressions of indigenous Catholic spirituality, and opportunities for pastoral ministry.



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

God is love actually

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

By Andrew Baklinski

The question, “Why do you believe in God anyway?” can elicit a number of interesting responses. One could of course reply, “Because it makes sense.” This is a good answer and based on what we have covered so far in this series on beginning apologetics, it is certainly sensible to say this. There is nothing irrational in maintaining that truth is objective, that faith and reason work together, that God exists and that Jesus is God. This however, will only take one so far. For most people, life is not lived on the plane of what is logical or illogical, rational or irrational. Rather, it is lived on the level of the heart and this is a good thing for God, as we shall see, is actually all about heart, all about love.

Love makes the world go round

How many songs on the radio are about love? Love desired, love lost, love found, love requited and unrequited... the list goes on. How many movies, how many books, how many great works of art? How often do people think about love, of being loved and of loving in return? It is clear that we human beings are rather preoccupied with love! It is easy to see that human love plays a very important part, or perhaps the main theme, in human existence and that this brings untold happiness, joy and meaning to life. This is a good and beautiful thing.

The problem is that for many, when it comes to talking about God and love, all of a sudden, the parameters seem to instantly change. The images of joy, mystery and longing associated with human love drop away to be replaced by images of boring church services, long lists of “Thou shall nots...,” guilt, shame and general confusion. Is it any wonder that many of our churches are empty and that many of our young seem only intent on tasting of the delights of human love?

The Holy Father

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, in his loving wisdom, decided to address head on this modern confusion about God and love in his very first encyclical letter entitled “Deus Caritas Est,” or, “God is Love.” Hoping to call forth a new energy and commitment in the world, Benedict chose to begin his pontificate by reiterating the central message of Christianity. He begins by writing that, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” (Para 1) In other words, calling oneself a Christian is not about long church services and “do not lists”, guilt, shame .etc. It is about an encounter with the person of Jesus who reveals to us the deepest mystery of God – that God is love and that our destiny is one of love. The way to understand this, is to look at the Trinity.

The Trinity and love

The Holy Trinity, the belief that God is three in one, is not some abstract addendum to the Christian faith, but is indeed at the very heart of what it means to be a lover of God, for the Trinity reveals who God is in His essence. Blessed Pope John Paul II wrote that, “God in His deepest mystery is not a solitude but a family, since He has in Himself fatherhood, sonship and the essence of the family which is love.” (Homily, 1979) In other words, God is not some lonely old guy sitting on a throne with nothing better to do than to watch the stars go by, but He is a family in the truest way possible in a dynamic communion of life and

love. God is not like a family – He is family and all earthly families are to be modeled after the Divine family.

The Holy Trinity is, as the Catechism puts it, “the central mystery of Christian faith and life... the mystery of God in himself...” (CCC 234), and is the key by which to understand who God is and who we are called to be. It is not an understatement to say that the Catholic faith can be summarized down to three things: love, life and family. We learn this by looking at who God is. We also know this by looking at who we are. God created human beings in his image and likeness as male and female and it is precisely in the call to communion that both man and woman experience the need to give and unite oneself to the other – something that points ultimately to the union that God desires with each person. Thus marital love is a sign of the interpersonal life and love of God Himself – something that He desires us to partake in. This message of God, which is written in flesh in the very bodies of man and woman, or this “Theology of the Body,” is the powerful and intimate way that God reveals the deepest mystery about Himself to us in our humanity. Is it any wonder today that the family is so under attack from all sides? The adversary knows well that in breaking apart the family as God intended, we lose sight of this incredibly beautiful and profound message that God has given us.

Covenant as key

In looking at how God loves and fathers His family in the Bible, a central word becomes apparent: covenant. A covenant, from the Latin meaning “to come together,” is a sacred agreement made with an oath. Unlike a contract, wherein goods and services are exchanged, a covenant involves an exchange of persons, who become so closely connected, that they become one flesh, one family. An example of covenant is marriage, where an oath is sworn: “I promise to take you in good times and in bad...” and the husband and wife become one. God does the same thing in making a covenant with his people. In giving Himself totally to his people, he becomes one with them. He is father and they are his beloved children, part of His family and heirs to His kingdom. The concept of covenant is crucial, as it gives a birds eye view of what is really going on in the Bible.

The story of God’s enduring love

Scripture then, is the story of God’s enduring and overflowing love for us his children. From the first page in the book of Genesis, to the last in Revelation, Scripture is replete with stories, images and messages about our Father’s love for us and how He has faithfully fathered and built His family throughout all time right down to today.

Five main covenants are readily discernable in the Old Testament and with each, it becomes evident how God’s family grows. The first covenant God makes is with Adam who is husband to Eve. God’s family starts off nice and small. A second covenant is made generations later with Noah who is head of a household, or several families. Much later, God makes a covenant with Abram who is head of a tribe, or many households. Next, a covenant is made with Moses and the 12 tribes of Israel. Finally, a covenant is made with David who is head of a kingdom. From a single family to a whole kingdom, the story of the Old Testament is the saga of how God builds his family. God however is not content with just a nation and so the stage is ready for Jesus Christ who makes a New Covenant and establishes the universal family of God – the Catholic Church. God’s family, beginning with a man and his wife now extends to all peoples.

Like any family, God’s family has much familial language. We call priests “Father” and they preside at the family table, the altar. We have a Holy Father, the Pope, as our guide and shepherd. We have a blessed mother, Mary, queen of heaven and earth. We even have elder brothers and sisters - the saints who have gone before us and whom we can imitate on our journey to heaven. The Church, as we have seen previously in this series, is also our mother, guiding us and nourishing us with the sacraments. Thus, surrounded by family, we are truly not alone and we are very loved.

Do we have the courage to believe this?

So, do you really believe and know that God loves you? So many of us have so often heard the phrase, “God is Love,” that it becomes like a platitude and we are not moved the way we need to be. In my experience as a teacher and a counselor over the years, I have found that many people do not really believe that they are loved deep down inside themselves. They might know that God is love in their heads, but they don’t know it in their hearts. We have this sense, probably in part from our modern ‘work-a-day world’ culture with its emphasis on productivity and materialism that our main importance, dignity and value lies in what we do or in how we look. In embracing this falsehood, we take on a sort of utilitarian, consumerist worldview, which leads to radical dehumanization. In other words, we end up treating ourselves and others as objects to be used and not personal beings to be loved. The sad manifestations of this are very present all around us.

The message of our Christian faith, the “good news,” is that God loves us - not for what we do, or what we look like, but for who we are. Our dignity and values lie in the fact that we are sons and daughters of the King of heaven and earth who calls us to be in the great wedding feast of eternity. He wants us desperately to be a part of His family, as each of us is so precious in His eyes. We are His beloveds and He desires us as we are.

He really does love you - you dear reader, just as you are right now. It does not matter what you have done in your past or how you view yourself now. All your accomplishments and failures add up to very little when compared to the love that God has for you. Like any good father who knows the strengths and weaknesses of his children and yet who loves them more than anything, God, the perfect father knows you and loves you more than you realize. God loves you and with a burning, passionate love and he waits like a loving suitor to woo you for Himself. He has withheld nothing from you in his pursuit of you. He has even not withheld His own beloved Son whom He offered up in the words of Pope Benedict, “in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form. By contemplating the pierced side of Christ, we can understand the starting-point of (the) Encyclical Letter: “God is love”. It is there that this truth can be contemplated. It is from there that our definition of love must begin. In this contemplation the Christian discovers the path along which his life and love must move.” (Deus Caritas Est, Para 12)

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I have often told my students, in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, that the way to be a saint is to will it! It really is that simple. The saints that we so love and cherish in our Catholic family, are people just like you and me. They had their good points and their bad ones. What made them saints is that they wanted to be holy. Why did they will to be holy? Because they knew somehow deep in their beings, this central truth of God’s love. This love lit them on fire and burning with zeal and passion, they were never the same again.

The world needs saints. The world needs lovers. The world needs people who know and have experienced God’s love to go out and transform it. May the words of Scripture echo within us, “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:16) and may each of us, in our own lives, experience something of this powerful love. You will never be the same again.