



# Ecclesia

The Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

October 2020

## The long-awaited Installation of our new Bishop



Bishop Desrochers preaches the homily at the Installation Mass.

On May 6, 2020, His Holiness Pope Francis appointed the Most Reverend Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R., Bishop of the Diocese of Pembroke. At the time of his appointment, Bishop Desrochers was serving as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall.

On July 3, 2020, Bishop Guy Desrochers became the ninth Bishop of Pembroke. The Installation Mass took place at St. Columbkille Cathedral. Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., of Ottawa-Cornwall led Bishop Desrochers to the *cathedra*, or bishop's chair. Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, and Archbishop Michael Mulhall of Kingston were also present. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, only the priests, deacons, and deacons' wives were present and all practised physical distancing throughout the Cathedral.

### Getting to know Bishop Desrochers

Despite his busy schedule as newly-appointed Bishop of Pembroke, the Most Reverend Guy Desrochers was kind enough to spare some time for *Ecclesia*.

During his years-long spiritual journey to the clergy, Bishop Desrochers sought God's guidance on where he should serve as a priest. Ultimately, he determined a preaching order was where he was needed.

“Believe it or not, in the following two days after my request (to God), I was asked by two different religious community priests to join their order. After hearing about their own charism, I replied: ‘Nope. This order is not the one I’m looking for,’” said Bishop Desrochers, who eventually was ordained for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists).

“On the third day, I shared this with my mom. I was afraid I was now doing only my will and not God's will. She said to me: ‘Why don't you ask the priest we are meeting this afternoon and who has been teaching us Christian spirituality for the past months? He's a Redemptorist and I think they are a preaching order.’ So I spoke to him that afternoon, and indeed, his community was a preaching order.”

“So I connected with a Redemptorist priest the following week, and he introduced me to their charism and gave me a few books to read. As I read these books, I came to the conclusion that this was the order I was looking for. And, in fact, I have never regretted this choice since my entry into religious life. I have had the privilege to evangelize and to hear confessions all my religious life: as an itinerant preacher, both in Canada and the USA, in French or in English; at the Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré mostly during the summer seasons; in a special evangelization project to reach out to those who don't go

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Archbishop Michael Mulhall, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Deacon Adrien Chaput, Bishop Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R., Deacon Michael Coyne, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi



With the members of the College of Consultors (l-r): Msgr. Douglas Bridge, Bishop Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R., Fr. Kerry Brennan, Fr. Michael Smith, Fr. Jim Beanish, and Fr. John Burchat.



Bishop Desrochers holds the letter of appointment from Pope Francis. With him is Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J.

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to church in the diocese of Gaspé for seven years; as the editor of the Annals of Saint Anne for three years; and as the rector of the Shrine of Saint Anne for four years.”

“During my 39 years of religious life, and 36 years as a religious priest, I have not regretted one single minute of my commitment to the Lord and in helping the people to discover his infinite love and mercy. As our Blessed Mother said in the Gospel of Luke: ‘My heart exults in the Lord my Saviour!’”

As mentioned above, Bishop Desrochers has had the honour of serving at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. The experience permitted him to see first-hand the countless miracles that have unfolded there.

“Doing pastoral ministry at the Shrine of St. Anne was most certainly a very fulfilling time for me,” said Bishop Desrochers.

“So many pilgrims and faithful, and even Protestant brothers and sisters, and non-Christian people visit the Sanctuary on a regular basis. They come to ask a special favour or grace from the grandmother of Jesus. Many

Catholic pilgrims decide to go to the confessionals and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before they ask for their grace, and I have witnessed thousands of miracles in the confessional through my years of pastoral work: conversions, repentance of past sins and promises to change their worldly way of life. I have heard so many testimonies of favours or miracles that people of faith have been granted through St. Anne’s powerful intercession. All of these are inexplicable stories that have created a continual and positive impact in my personal and spiritual life and ministry.”

As a preacher, Bishop Desrochers told of how he structured his evangelization missions.

“When I preached my missions or retreats, as we used to say, I had four major themes to choose from: The True Face of the Father; The Holy Eucharist; The Church, my Family; Our Blessed Mother,” said Bishop Desrochers, explaining the value of using his own personal testimonies when preaching.

“Stories and testimonies are the best way to evangelize and incite people to desire encountering God in a personal and intimate way. I have always known and

felt that only God can give the grace to convert someone and to give that person the grace to persevere in their life-changing experience. So, I invite people to decide by themselves to turn to God instead of trying to impose morals or reforms. And, I always insist on doing this in a simple and accessible language so that all can understand and receive practical exhortations that will help them in their everyday life and throughout their spiritual ascension.”

Prior to his arrival in our diocese, Bishop Desrochers served as Auxiliary Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall where he strived to uphold the tenets of his Redemptorist Order in his decision-making capacity.

“During my time serving the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, I continued to apply my evangelizing principles and made it my priority to be close to the clergy and faithful; to lend an attentive ear to all before taking a decision; to say the evangelical truths to all, but in a compassionate and respectful and sometimes humorous way,” said Bishop Desrochers.

“This cannot always be done in a perfect way of course, because imperfection is not only limited to the lay





Bishop Desrochers holds the letter of appointment from Pope Francis. With him is Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, and Fr. Michael Smith, Chancellor.

Photo credits: Armando Prini, St. Francis Studio



Bishop Desrochers greets people after the celebration.

people. Bishops and clergy are human and therefore imperfect, and this is why conflicts and arguments can sometime emerge when we are tired, anxious or going through personal trials or facing tough challenges.”

As Auxiliary Bishop, he was also involved in the amalgamation of the diocese with the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

“The amalgamation process of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall with the Archdiocese of Ottawa did not always go smoothly at times,” said Bishop Desrochers.

“Many things had to be figured out at the last minute, therefore creating negative consequences for certain people. At first, there was much fear of the small fish being eaten and digested by the big fish. But those worries were finally dispersed through time. Overall, the experience was a learning and fascinating experience for me as a newly-ordained bishop.”

In the midst of the current pandemic, Bishop Desrochers was all too conscious of the toll this crisis has taken on the faithful. But at the same time, a renewed effort to spread the Word of God has taken root.

“The current pandemic has caused quite a stir for the entire planet,” said Bishop Desrochers.

“And our religious life has been considerably altered, especially during the first months of the pandemic. The closing of churches was certainly the most aggravating experience and unexpected challenge for all of us. Deprived of the Eucharist and of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and of other sacraments we could not administer anymore has caused great havoc in our communities.”

“Yet, at the same time, our faith and resilience led us to invent new ways to communicate our faith. Many of our priests, deacons and faithful became proactive and plunged into new and never before experienced electronic and pastoral ways to evangelize or to manifest Christian charity to the aged and vulnerable. Deprived of the Holy Eucharist and of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, many of us have rediscovered the importance of proclaiming and evangelizing through the Ministry of the Word. This, too, is a very important way to experience the presence of and communion with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters. In our Catholic history, sometimes our focus

was more on the ‘Eucharistic table’ rather than the ‘Table of the Word’. The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that both tables are meant to become one, and each should lead to the other.”

In sharing words of encouragement with the faithful of our diocese, Bishop Desrochers encouraged all to remain vigilant in practising social distancing.

“One must certainly follow the health authorities’ directives and be prudent not to be contaminated or to contaminate others,” said Bishop Desrochers.

“My message to all our faithful and clergy would be to remain resilient and patient in this time of pandemic. Our Christian faith and love stems from our relationship with the Lord, so it is of the utmost importance that we not give way to anxiety or fear of death in this difficult period of time. If we love God with all our hearts, if we truly desire to accomplish His will on a daily basis and in the offering of the many little things that can contradict our self will, then we will not fear suffering and death anymore.”





## Message from the Bishop

As I begin my mandate as Pastor of the Diocese of Pembroke, I would like to begin by thanking each and every one of you for the extraordinary fraternal and spiritual support you have shown me since my appointment by the Holy Father on May 6.

On Friday, July 3, during my official installation at St. Columbkille Cathedral, I had the opportunity to meet several priests of the diocese as well as deacons accompanied by their wives whom I had invited for the occasion. I could not invite all the faithful because of the crisis situation related to COVID-19, but the celebration was filmed and is now available on our website. Later on, if the crisis subsides or even disappears, we will be able to prepare a diocesan celebration of thanksgiving in which all will be invited to participate. Thank you to each one of you who supported me with your prayers, solidarity and gifts during this exceptional event, which is now part of our diocesan history.

I would also like to thank each of you for all your efforts since the beginning of the pandemic in trying to adjust to the many directives from health authorities that changed almost weekly. During the first months of the crisis, the Eucharistic fast and the deprivation of certain sacraments, not to mention the array of very demanding health measures, contributed to demoralizing and irritating a good number of priests and faithful. But our faith and our resilience are such that we have invented new ways to evangelize or to render services to the most needy despite this unprecedented crisis. For all the new pastoral initiatives and charitable works that you have undertaken since the beginning of the pandemic, I raise my hat to each one of you who has decided to be proactive instead of letting yourselves be carried away by the wave of pessimism or defeatism that is currently infecting our society more than the virus itself.

I also want to thank all the priests, deacons and laity who exercise different forms of ministry in the diocese, and those among you who generously accepted new

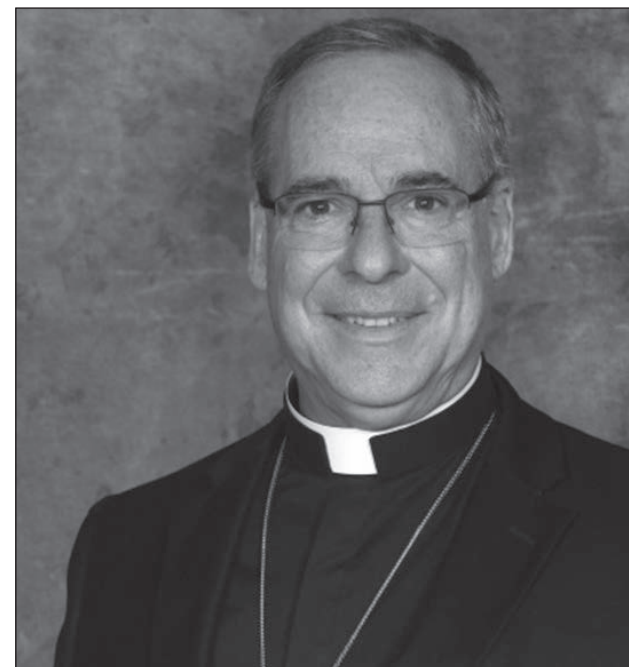
appointments in early September: parish priests, administrators, pastoral offices as assistants, chancery, general vicariate, diocesan sponsors, etc.

What will be my pastoral vision for our great and beautiful diocese in the years to come? To promote, plan and undertake a great common project aimed at both the evangelization of people who practise their faith and, at the same time, of those who have moved away from religious practice for all sorts of reasons. Why work together on such a project? Because the future of our Church and of our Christian communities depends on it. Without the arrival of new followers, our parish communities are doomed to extinction within ten years!

You now understand why it is our responsibility to try, through all kinds of initiatives, to reach those people who live on the periphery of the Church or who no longer feel the need to have recourse to the sacraments. However, as we continue these efforts to reach them, we must work for the spiritual renewal of our congregations so that they remain or become more alive, inviting and welcoming to the newcomers we are trying to reach. Otherwise, they will not feel accepted by the community and will soon leave in search of new horizons.

For the next two years, I also hope to visit all the parishes of the diocese, institutions such as hospitals, schools and religious communities, as well as some charitable organizations, etc. I make this my first pastoral priority. I will certainly participate in diocesan activities, sometimes in specific pastoral activities, and as far as the pandemic situation will allow. I propose to be available to listen to and dialogue with priests and deacons who are living in special or difficult situations; I will take time to respond to the serious concerns and preoccupations of some of the faithful, either personally or through my diocesan team.

In conclusion, I would like to remind us that the Church is a family, not just a hierarchy or a building



where believers can come together. Despite the imperfections and differences that remain among all its members, what unites it is the divine love that the Spirit breathes into those who invite and trust it. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:35). It is not simply human love, then, but supernatural love that has its source in the hearts of the Father and the Son. Let us pray now, dear faithful, that this divine Spirit may be granted to us now and throughout the project of evangelization that we will soon undertake in our diocese. May God bless you and multiply in you the gifts and talents that he has already deposited in your hearts in order to work in his vineyard, explicitly or implicitly, and to produce spiritual fruits for his greater glory.

*Guy Desrochers, C.M.*

**Bishop of Pembroke**

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# Ecclesia





## Pembroke diocese welcomes its newest priest—Father Michael Coyne

This past September 8, the people of the Diocese of Pembroke were blessed to receive yet another member into the priesthood as Father Michael Coyne was ordained to the priesthood at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew.

With family and friends of Father Coyne in attendance, Bishop Guy Desrochers had the honour of presiding over his very first Ordination Mass on the Feast of The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Also gathered were members of the clergy from throughout the Diocese of Pembroke.

“Do you love me, Michael (Coyne)?”, Jesus says to you today,” said Bishop Desrochers during his Homily, reflecting upon the reading of John 21:15-17.

“And because you chose this Gospel today, you know what to answer. You chose that one particularly because you love Jesus. You want to work with Jesus in his vineyard. You want to bring people back to Jesus, into his heart, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is a proof that you love Jesus.”

Prior to his ordination, Father Coyne shared some reflections on his final year at St. Augustine’s Seminary, much of which involved the implementation of past lessons.

“It was, I feel, predominately a practicum year, in which many of the courses involved supervised practical application of previously studied theory regarding celebrating Mass, Reconciliation, homilies, parish finances, etc.,” said Father Coyne.

“In many ways, the last year of studies at St. Augustine was my favourite academic year. To wear a chasuble and practise celebrating a mock Mass, while being critiqued by our priest faculty, for me, was an incredibly powerful experience. The theory becomes viscerally real, and the practicum classes allow one to enter the liturgical experience on a personal level previously untouched. This can be very spiritually formative.”

Father Coyne completed a parish internship in 2017-2018 at St. John Chrysostom Parish in Arnprior with Father John Burchat. This experience would foreshadow the duties he will carry out as a parish priest.

“The final year at St. Augustine’s in many ways attempted to focus our studies on examining practical solutions to the modern problems of today’s Catholic Church. Many times, we were asked what we would do as a priest in this complicated situation, and then examine where we went right or wrong in our imaginary exercises. Church finances, personal health, daily prayer, fraternal support, the list goes on, but the focus was more hands-on and practical than my previous academic years, which I greatly enjoyed, and I believe ultimately benefited from. This final practicum year, much like my internship year, had a huge impact on my formational journey helping to reaffirm my vocational discernment to the priesthood.”

Despite the onset of COVID-19, Father Coyne was fortunate in that the pandemic did little to interfere with the conclusion of his studies. “For me, academically, I was lucky in that the initial pandemic exploded on the scene very close to the end of my academic term,” said Father Coyne.

“I had only my last few classes and of course my end-of-term finals at the University of Toronto left to finish. Also, the University very quickly and efficiently transitioned into online class learning and final exams via the internet.”

However, Father Coyne was not immune to the inherent stress that all persons have endured amidst this crisis.



“I feel the biggest effect of the pandemic for me was emotional, specifically the feeling of uncertainty regarding the future, and how quickly the structured normalcy of life can shift under our feet,” said Father Coyne.

“Studying for my finals during a global pandemic was stressful, of course, but I also felt it focused my attention on recognizing what is truly important in my life, and ultimately reaffirming my call to the priesthood in the midst of such need in the world for spiritual food for the soul.”

Father Coyne was also blessed in receiving his first assignment at his home parish. “I was very fortunate to be assigned by our previous Bishop, Archbishop Michael Mulhall, to St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew before my end-of-school term for the Summer. This assignment to St. Francis was recently reaffirmed by our new Bishop, Bishop Guy Desrochers,” said Father Coyne.

While all peoples of the world are anxious to see the pandemic pass on, Father Coyne was adamant that prayer was absolutely essential in providing Christians the fortitude needed to see through this current adversity.

“I feel it is extremely important for Christians to embrace daily prayer, that these conversations with our Lord give us the spiritual strength needed in these stressful times,” said Father Coyne.

*continued...*





“It is above all a great privilege to be able to speak with God in prayer. If there were no communication between us and God, we would be like rudderless and radioless ships adrift in the middle of the ocean without direction, without guidance, and without hope. God made us body and soul, and as such we owe God the duty of prayer.

“That is why the Divine Office is so powerful. We pray with the rising and setting of the sun, we thank the Lord for the gift of another day and ask God to accompany us on the journey of our day. This pandemic, by its nature, is an isolating catalyst. Above all we need the support of a friend who loves us and gives us hope for a brighter future. Prayer can be this medium of hope for us in these stressful times.”



## Gifted chalice

by Fr. Michael Coyne

I recently was blessed with the gift of Fr. Michael Costello’s chalice from Dom Costello, Fr. Michael’s slightly older brother. As I count down these final days before my ordination, I am once again reminded through this generous gift just how many people have supported me over these formative years towards the priesthood within the Diocese of Pembroke.

Many of my colleagues, now priests for their respective dioceses, bought themselves beautiful chalices for their ordinations and First Masses. But for me, receiving this gift of Fr. Costello’s chalice through the generosity of his family resonated with me as an amazing honour, this honour to carry on this sacred consecrated vessel’s divine purpose.

Too many of our consecrated chalices have been unfortunately relegated to cupboards in different sacristies throughout the diocese. I was extremely happy to be given the chance to once again, very soon, place this chalice upon God’s altar.

It is a great honour to begin my priestly ministry utilizing this chalice that has seen over 50 years of consecrated ministry—it is a powerful legacy.

I enjoyed getting to know Fr. Michael, in a small way, through his brother Dom’s stories of when they were kids growing up together in Arnprior.

I wish again to thank Fr. Michael’s family for giving me his chalice. Please take comfort in the knowledge that this chalice will again be utilized for that for which it was consecrated as I begin my work again of building up the Kingdom of God here on earth.



## The Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Pembroke invites you to our CATECHIST FORMATION DAY

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

**Time:** 9:30 a.m. Registration; 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (Lunch provided)

**When:** Saturday, November 7, 2020

**Who:** A formation day open to everyone

**Special Guest:** Bishop Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.

**Important Gathering Call to Register** – Registration is necessary. Please contact Deacon Adrien Chaput at the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation at (613) 732-7933 ext. 206 or [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com) by November 5, 2020.





## Parish Profile

### St. Lawrence O'Toole, Barry's Bay

With their deep faith, combined with a renewed vibrancy for an array of social activities, the members St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish are a shining example of a passionate faith community.

"If our spiritual and metaphysical lives need an earthly landing pad, and we surely know they do, then St. Lawrence O'Toole is it," is how parish member Karen Yakabuski described her affection for the parish. "One is made to feel welcome and vital as an integral part of something very good!"

The first permanent residents of Barry's Bay began to arrive in 1860 as a result of government initiatives to promote settlement in the region. Primarily of Irish and Polish descent, these hardy souls were responsible for the construction of settlement roads into the area.

With no church in the community, the faithful walked to Wilno to attend Mass. The church in Barry's Bay was constructed in 1897 at the direction of Father Francis L. French, then blessed the following year and dedicated to St. Lawrence O'Toole by Bishop Narcisse Zéphirin Lorrain of Pembroke.

Father Isaiah French, pastor at Killaloe, would oversee the parish beginning in 1901 as it was still classified as a mission church. He would oversee the enlargement of the church as the population grew. Bishop Lorrain, travelling by railway hand car from Killaloe, would return to the community in 1903 to bless a new Catholic school. For many years, Sisters of St. Joseph, residing nearby at St. Hedwig's Convent, would see to the educational needs of parish youth at St. Lawrence at both elementary and high schools.

Finally, in 1934, St. Lawrence O'Toole was elevated to parish status. It was then that Father Martin S. McNamara, a native of Eganville, became the first parish priest. He remained in this position until his death on November 18, 1958.

During his tenure, a rectory was constructed, and upgrades were made to the church building. Perhaps what made Father McNamara so endeared to his parishioners was his unwavering fortitude to serve God's people despite having diabetes. Having had both legs amputated related to this illness, Father McNamara continued to carry out his priestly duties with the use of prosthetics, not to mention overseeing a wide range of other events, such as church suppers, bazaars and concerts.

In 1963, the parish community would witness the construction of a new church that would include a rectory and hall. With Father J. Kenneth O'Brien as senior parish priest, the project was completed in December of 1964, with Bishop William J. Smith blessing the cornerstone of the new structure on June 6, 1965. It has the capacity to seat 300 worshippers.

Father Patrick M. Dobec is the current parish priest at St. Lawrence O'Toole.

"The people extended a very warm welcome and affirmation from the very first days of my arrival to this wonderful parish," recalled Father Dobec.

"Saint Lawrence O'Toole Parish is a vibrant community of faith. Many of the parishioners are eager to grow in their faith and are very open to evangelize in creative outreach to all groups of people.

"This certainly was evident when our Parish Mission was very well attended and the teachings were a profound experience for many. The study groups were yet another opportunity to appreciate the rich teachings of the Church and to apply them to parish life. For many years, the Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus, in so many dynamic ways, have supported the parish through ministries, and spiritual and temporal endeavours. The CWL annual Saint Patrick's Tea is a major valley celebration."

Joanne Olsen, Chairperson of the Parish Social Committee, told of the initiative that Father Dobec undertook upon his arrival at St. Lawrence.

"Early in his tenure as Pastor of St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish, Fr. Dobec invited parishioners to an open meeting to discuss future parish goals and events," said Olsen.

"An ad hoc committee to review past events was struck and its recommendations were to cease hosting an annual parish supper, given the overall physical labour involved and the evolving trends in health regulations surrounding such suppers. A Parish Social Committee then came to be, its mission foremost to build a sense of fellowship and community while bearing in mind the corporal needs of the Parish."



The result was a busy 2019 for parish members that saw two spaghetti dinners, a parish 'trunk sale' fundraiser in the Spring, and a parish picnic to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the founding of the parish. The anniversary event included live entertainment, games of chance, activities for children, BBQ and silent auction.

In the fall, a Down Home Kitchen Party was held, featuring a pulled pork dinner, home baked apple crisp, and live entertainment in the form of singing, step dancing and skits. Near the Christmas season, members dressed in holiday-themed costumes went carolling to the local seniors' centre and other locations to bring some seasonal joy to all.

Although there were plans to continue such events into 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has placed a temporary halt to such endeavours. Nonetheless, parish members have risen to the challenge of adapting to the new reality of celebrating their faith

"COVID-19 has produced an awkward and sometimes fearful practice of the faith, but nevertheless we are still in transition to our new way of ministry," said Father Dobec.

"The parishioners have been extraordinary in their cooperation and support during these dramatic times in the parish and the world."

Father Dobec also noted the unique relationship they share with Saint Hedwig's Parish. Amidst the challenges of fewer clergy members and parishioners, both parishes have sought to work together.

"Never before has it been so vital for the survival of all parishes to work closely together and even share resources and liturgies. Duplication is not necessary at times," said Father Dobec.

"For example, we have combined our Easter Vigil with our friendly neighbours, Saint Hedwig's Parish. We continue to be very open to help each other in the demands of parish life with less priests available."

*With thanks to Father Joseph Legree, author of Lift Up Your Hearts.*







## Updating the Diocese's online presence

In the midst of the current pandemic, members of our diocese must rely on technology now more than ever to stay abreast of the latest happenings within our faith community.

In recent times, visitors to the Diocese of Pembroke website will have noticed a complete makeover. Thanks in part to the efforts of Dylan Longpré, the site now provides easy access to information about the diocesan community.

"Growing up I was interested in anything technological," said Longpré.

"My specific interest for graphic design and web development started back in the early 2000s, when we had Adobe Photoshop installed on our family computer. I am mostly self-taught, but attended one year of graphic design school. I ran a graphic design and web development business for a number of years, before becoming a federal public servant. I've continued the passion for websites as a side hobby."

Born and raised in Pembroke, he is a graduate of Fellowes High School. He is married with two children.

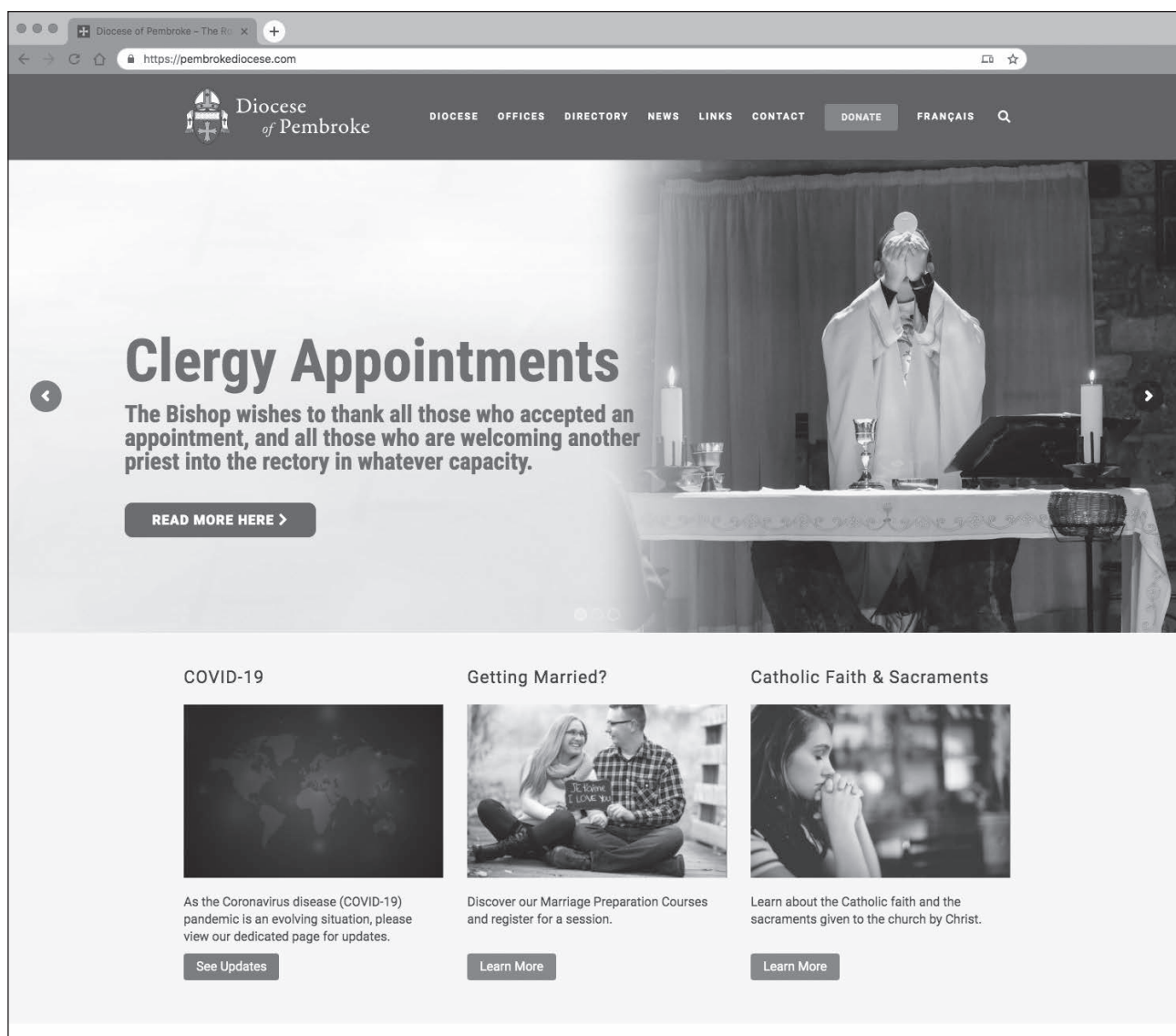
"I obtained a diploma in Business Management from Algonquin College in Ottawa, and moved back to Pembroke in 2016 to raise a family," said Longpré.

"I was an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves for a number of years, specifically working with youth in the Royal Canadian Army Cadets. Today, at 27 years old, I belong to the parish at St. Columbkille's Cathedral."

As he explained, it was Deacon Adrien Chaput of St. Columbkille's that recruited Longpré to assist with the website re-design.

"I met with the diocesan website committee and I heard their concerns and aspirations," said Longpré.

"A big overarching goal was to create a central point of information for the diocese that was bright and welcoming, but also simple and easy to navigate. We spent a dedicated amount of time looking at the structure of pages, and flow of information to make a website that would be simple and easy for the end-user. I was quite happy with the final result. I am very grateful to have been asked to be a part of this project as I learned quite a bit more about the Catholic faith, and how the diocese operates."



## Reconnecting with faith

But this story is more than just Longpré's contribution to the digital presence of the diocese on the World Wide Web. Although born into the Roman Catholic faith, he only just recently re-established his relationship to our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"I did not have a typical upbringing for someone who was baptized as a baby in the Roman Catholic faith," said Longpré.

"My father would occasionally mention God in everyday conversation, but that was about the extent of religion in my early years. After my father retired from the military, I recall him going to Mass. As a young and curious teenager, I went a few times with him. With that said, attending Mass without a foundational understanding of the liturgy can be a bit confusing, especially for a young teenager."

"Something that does stand out from my memory is wondering why everyone was rubbing their forehead, lips, and chest before hearing the gospel during Mass. I now understand the meaning and follow the tradition conscientiously every Mass myself, but at the time I was quite puzzled. I followed my dad a handful of times, but

as I grew up, I went off and did my own thing with other kids my age. Not understanding who God was, without a doubt, made my young adolescence years more difficult than they needed to be. By 2019, I had an amazing wife, two beautiful kids, a house, a great job, but something was still lacking in my life, something was missing. I didn't understand it. I have learned that the void I was looking for was faith in God."

The awakening Dylan experienced led him to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in Pembroke.

"In February 2019, my wife and I attended a baptismal preparation session with Deacon Chaput at the Cathedral," said Longpré.

"While I initially did not see a need to attend the class because we had already had our son baptised in another parish, I credit that evening with the tipping point to moving me forward with my Catholic faith. The instructor, Deacon Chaput, has an amazing gift of expressing who God is, and he always shows his love for God. I found it very contagious from our first meeting. In October 2019, I began the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) program, and had the pleasure of learning from many clergy, religious Sisters, and laity."





Key to the success of the RCIA program is the varied persons who provide instruction to participants. Longpré made note of this team effort.

“Truthfully, I am very grateful for the RCIA team of instructors who helped support the program: Deacon Adrien Chaput, Lance Patriquin, Sister Marie McArdle, Mel Ready, Father Jim Beanish, Father Stephen Helferty, Father Bill Kenney, Sister Sheila Whelan, and Yvette Bourque. I would be remiss if I didn’t thank my father as well, who was my sponsor for confirmation, and all the others who joined me on the RCIA journey,” said Longpré.

“One individual who has had a powerful impact on my time with RCIA, was Sister Marie McArdle. She has been a Grey Sister of the Immaculate Conception since the 1950s, and her life has been a strong testimonial to doing God’s work. I very much value her kindness, insight, discussions, and openness to answering all of my questions during RCIA.”

For Longpré, the RCIA built a foundation from which blossomed a focused exercise in embracing our faith when the opportunity avails itself.

“While RCIA played a formal role in preparing me for the sacrament of confirmation, I would also credit a few other things with strengthening my faith: daily prayer, attending weekday Masses (when able to do so), listening to and reading the works of prominent clergy and laity, such as Archbishop Fulton Sheen, Bishop Robert Barron, Father Mike Schmitz, praying the rosary, and reading the Bible,” said Longpré.

“Finally, for me it was important to learn the parts of the Mass. Everything that the priest does at the altar has an intended purpose. Once I learned and understood each part of the Mass, it put things in a totally new perspective.”

The result of Longpré’s faith journey is confidence in our Roman Catholic way of life and the tranquility that only God can provide to those who open their hearts to his love.

“I have met many younger people who are strong believers in the Catholic faith, and I’m optimistic for the future of the Church,” said Longpré.

“There are a lot of distractions in the world that delayed my Confirmation, but coming to the realization that I needed God, I need to learn about Jesus Christ, and that our Lord died for our sins brings a large amount of comfort. As St. Paul wrote in Romans 8:31: What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”



**Mr. Lance Patriquin assists Fr. Jim Beanish of St. Columbkille’s Cathedral, as Fr. Beanish carries out the Sacrament of Confirmation for Dylan Longpré, sponsored by his father, Dave Longpré.**



**Back (left to right): Mr. Lance Patriquin, Fr. Jim Beanish, Mrs. Becky Chaput, Sr. Marie McArdle. Front (left to right): Dave Longpré, Dylan Longpré, Dcn. Adrien Chaput**





## Worship during a pandemic: Innovative ways to keep the faith

As COVID-19 spread across our country, churches were closed, Mass was cancelled and communities of faith were left to discern how best to continue to worship. Many parishes in the Diocese of Pembroke found unique ways to reach their faith community. Some reverted to methods of bygone days, some took advantage of modern technology, in some instances using both in combination, while others employed innovative approaches to best suit their situation and parishioners.

### Reviving an old tradition

At Ste-Bernadette Parish in Bonfield, Deacon Albert Benoît was inspired by the Bishops in Quebec when they announced they would ring the church bells on Sunday at noon and asked the people to pray.

“With the help of parish secretary Darlene Hotte-Kerr and a few parishioners, the decision was made to bring back the old tradition as an expression of our faith,” said Parishioner Sylvia Girard.

Word of the bells being rung was heard by the town’s people and beyond, and messages were sent on Facebook. On Sundays at 12 o’clock, many people stepped outside of their homes or drove to the church to listen to the bells, she shared.

“This is a small community, but like everywhere else, there is grief and sorrow during this epidemic. The sound of the bells is like the Words of God, the activity of the community, and lets the people know they are not alone and it gives them hope,” said Girard.

There was positive feedback from the community, and Father Cyril Okebanama, Ste-Bernadette’s priest, was impressed by the way the parishioners came together to communicate when they could not gather to pray.



### Pontiac churches go online

Father Justin Bertrand, at the time Parochial Vicar for the parishes in Fort Coulonge, Vinton, Otter Lake, and Waltham, took to the internet to broadcast services into the homes of parishioners by livestreaming Mass on social media daily from a sitting room in his rectory. Fr. Bertrand also offered individual prayers and dialogue via his cellphone, and provided physically distanced drive-through confessions, parking his car in a designated location where parishioners could drive up in their own vehicle.

Father Tim Moyle, parish priest of St. Alphonsus Parish in Chapeau and St. Paul the Hermit in Sheenboro, also invested in the equipment to produce livestreamed Sunday Mass from the sacristy of St. Joseph.



### Taking worship outdoors in Petawawa

At Our Lady of Sorrows in Petawawa, Fr. Steve Ballard moved the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday to the church steps so that parishioners could practice the devotion.







## Other Descents of the Holy Spirit

by Fr. Michael Smith

From taking part in Mass on Pentecost Sunday each year, all of us are familiar with the story of the first descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples (Acts 2:1-13). We may be less familiar with other descents of the Holy Spirit as recounted in the *Acts of the Apostles*. If we take a look at them, they will help us recognize various “descents” of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. By ‘descents of the Holy Spirit’, I mean our awakening to, or our becoming aware of the Gift we received when we were baptized and confirmed. (All quotes from Scripture are taken from the New Revised Standard Version online.)

*When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)*

The apostles Peter and John had just been through an ordeal. They had been in the temple, proclaiming Jesus as Messiah, and they had healed someone. The authorities warned them not to mention Jesus’ name again and had them flogged. The next day, after having spent the night in jail, Peter and John rejoined their friends and reported what had happened. In response, the assembly broke into spontaneous prayer. It was at this point that there was a descent of the Holy Spirit. We see the connection here between the Holy Spirit and boldness in the face of threats and harsh treatment.

*Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)*

After the martyrdom of Stephen, a great persecution broke out. Most of the disciples ran for their lives, fleeing Jerusalem and seeking refuge in the countryside. Some, such as Philip, saw their plight as an opportunity to announce the Good News to people who had never heard it before. Philip ventured into Samaritan territory, a region where people were traditionally hostile to Jews and to the Jewish faith. Much to Philip’s surprise and delight, the Samaritans received the Good News with great joy and were baptized. It is then that Peter and John visit the Samaritans, who receive the Holy Spirit in the same way that the first disciples received the Spirit at Pentecost.

*While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days. (Acts 10:44-48)*

In chapter 10 of the *Acts of the Apostles*, we hear that God intervened to change St. Peter’s mind about something that had been ingrained in Peter since childhood: the idea that Gentiles (non-Jews) are “unclean”, that Jews may not visit Gentiles, and may certainly not eat with them! By means of a vision, the Lord revealed to Peter that he must not call “unclean” what God had declared clean. This revelation was to prepare Peter for an even more startling discovery: that the Holy Spirit would descend on Gentiles as well as Jews. Here is Peter’s account of the event, which he gave to the church in Jerusalem:

*And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God? (Acts 11:15-17)*

*Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)*

This “descent” of the Holy Spirit could more aptly be called an intervention to give a specific instruction to the Christian community. This happens also today, both in personal prayer and when Christians are gathered informally to pray. It comes through the word of prophecy, a word from the Lord spoken through the voice of one of the participants. Such “words” require discernment: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1) At the same time, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Thess. 5:19-22) Once it has been discerned that a word or an insight is truly from the Lord, the difficult challenge, sometimes even more difficult than the discernment itself, is to trust that word and act upon it.

Another example of the Holy Spirit’s intervention can be found in Acts 16:6-8:

*[Paul, Silas, and Timothy] went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.*

Later on, Paul says to the elders of the church in Ephesus:

*And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,*

*except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. (Acts 20: 22-23)*

Through persons and events, the Lord truly does intervene in our lives, individually and collectively, through the action of the Holy Spirit.

*While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied—altogether there were about twelve of them. (Acts 19:1-7)*

This passage emphasizes the intimate connection between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Jesus says, “The Father and I are one.” (John 10:30) This oneness extends to the Holy Spirit. The disciples in Ephesus had not received the Holy Spirit on being baptized with John’s baptism. Faith in Jesus and baptism into Christ’s divine mystery unlocked the floodgates of the Holy Spirit for the Ephesian community.

### Conclusion

As we have seen, the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was the first of many such descents.

What about us? Can you identify times in your life when the Holy Spirit “descended” to you personally or to a group of people of which you were a member? Here are some signs by which we can recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit: We awaken to the fact that God is real, that we can know God by love and not merely know *about* God. We awaken to the fact that Jesus is not merely a historical figure whom we hear about and read about. We come to know the Risen Christ as a Person who is real, who is involved in our lives, who lives in us and we in him. In a mysterious way, we *are* the Risen Christ, as members of his Body, for the world today. When the Holy Spirit is present, people love one another; they forgive one another’s faults, failures, and sins. There is joy and peace.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Are we conscious of this? Do we know who we really are?

Here is a suggestion: How about sitting down and writing the story of how the Holy Spirit “descended” at one point in your life?





## Saint Profile

### Saint Francis of Assisi

**S**aint Francis of Assisi's given name was Giovanni Francesco di Bernardone. Francis was one of several children in his family, and was born in 1181 in Assisi, Italy. His father, Pietro di Bernardone, was a wealthy cloth merchant. His mother, who was named Pica, belonged to a noble family of Provence.

As a youngster, Francis was bright, popular, athletic, and enjoyed partying and celebrating the finer things in his luxurious life. But Francis later would go through a major change in his life.

At the age of 20, in the year 1201, Francis joined a military expedition against Perugia. The campaign proved disastrous, many were injured on the battlefield and Francis was taken prisoner for a year. During this period of imprisonment, a change within Francis grew. He abandoned the desire of material pleasures and rewards of life and began to dedicate his life to Jesus Christ and the essential teachings of the Gospels.

There are many stories that suggest St. Francis began to display seemingly unpredictable behaviour—such as giving away his father's wealth, giving away his personal clothing and going to countless churches looking after outcasts such as lepers.

It was during this time, that St. Francis had a mystical vision in a dilapidated church. The icon of Christ Crucified said to him, "Francis, Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you can see, is falling into ruins."

This revelation gave Francis a clear mission in his life and he embarked on a life of poverty, chastity and devotion to Jesus Christ. Francis would spend a great deal of his time in prayer and meditation, and began to attract other young men, who were drawn by his spiritual dedication and abandonment of worldly attractions. Initially, Francis and his group of men were outside the traditional church hierarchy, which caused some anxiety and concerns among local bishops and powerful people. Because of the ongoing difficulties, Francis resolved to make a pilgrimage to the Vatican in Rome to try to meet with the Pope.

Francis' prayers were heard by our Risen Lord and Saviour and he succeeded in not only meeting the Pope, but also receiving approval for a new order based on the principles of poverty and the spirit of the Gospels. At first, the Pope had refused the request, but later had a vision where he was given to see the spiritual nature of St. Francis. Now, with the Pope's approval, St. Francis was able to grow his mission and had his fellow friars travel around Italy and Europe establishing new communities.

In the year 1219, St. Francis and one of his friars went to Egypt hoping to speak with the Sultan of Egypt about Christianity. At the time, a Crusader army was guarding outside the city after a violent battle had taken place

the year before. But Christian sources suggest that St. Francis was granted an audience with the Sultan, the ruler of Egypt. It is not clear what emerged, but it was still a key moment for a Christian to be granted a friendly and peaceful audience with a Muslim leader during the period of the Crusades. After the Crusader period ended, it was Franciscans alone of the Catholic Church who were allowed to stay in the holy city of Jerusalem as custodians of the Christian tradition and important places of worship, such as the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord.

Many miracles have been linked to St. Francis, and it was recorded that St. Francis seemed to have a close connection with all animals, especially birds. When St. Francis would give a homily, it was said that the birds would come to listen. St. Francis would say to the birds:

"My sister birds, you owe much to God, and you must always and in every place give praise to Him; for He has given you freedom to wing through the sky and He has clothed you... you neither sow nor reap, and God feeds you and gives you rivers and fountains for your thirst, and mountains and valleys for shelter, and tall trees for your nests."

St. Francis often spoke eloquently about his love for all of God's creation, often referring to "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon." He saw how everything was made as a part of God's creation. One story that has been shared over the years about St. Francis relates how he was able to tame a wild wolf in exchange for making a deal where the villagers would promise to feed the hungry wolf.

St. Francis was known to set up one of the first nativity scenes in the year 1220 at Greccio near Assisi. St. Francis used live animals around the manger of Jesus; he hoped that people would gain a much more vivid impression of the humble nature of Jesus' birth. The nativity scene also became an important aspect of the Christian practice at Christmastime.

Francis was always kept busy doing the Lord's work. With the approval of the Pope, he founded a new order, universally known as the Franciscans. As the holy order grew in size, it became necessary to institute more guidelines and an official structure to the organization. The magnitude of this order was too much to rely only on St Francis' example and approach to religious life. After the rules were approved by the Pope, St. Francis began removing himself from daily affairs, spending his time in contemplation and prayer. During Francis' life, he reportedly received a vision that left him with the stigmata of Christ—marks resembling the wounds Jesus Christ suffered on the cross when he was crucified. This made Francis the first person to receive such holy wounds.

After a change in his health condition and a battle with illness and suffering, St. Francis died on the evening of October 3, 1226, singing Psalm 142— "Voce mea ad Dominum." On July 16, 1228, almost two years after his death he was pronounced a saint by Pope Gregory IX.

This great saint is an inspiring example of someone who closely imitated the life of Christ in words, deeds and spirit. St. Francis had a deep love for our Lord, Jesus Christ and willingly embraced a life of poverty, chastity and a simple life of humility.

St. Francis developed a deep love of nature and animals and is known as the patron saint of the environment and animals; his life and words have had a lasting resonance with millions of followers across the globe. Each October, many animals the world over are blessed on his feast day.

St. Francis of Assisi is also one of the two patrons of Italy with Saint Catherine of Siena. In this time of a pandemic, and with all that has been happening around the world, let us ask Saint Francis to hear our prayers and intercede for peace in our world, as we pray this beautiful prayer:

#### The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope  
where there is darkness, light  
where there is sadness, joy  
O divine Master, grant that  
I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen





## Taking a sacramental journey: The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Sacraments of the Church are the foundation that Jesus Christ built for us in order to bring God into our lives. For those seeking to understand what the Sacraments mean, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is available to provide guidance and support.

“It’s a journey where adults come to learn about and experience the Christian life, specifically about our Roman Catholic beliefs and traditions,” said Deacon Adrien Chaput. Deacon Chaput has been involved with the RCIA program since his ordination to the Diaconate in 2008.

As he explained, there are many who are seeking answers in the hope of achieving spiritual enlightenment.

“A lot of people are searching,” said Deacon Chaput.

“They heard about the Catholic Church, but maybe they heard things that they were not sure about, or they have questions about it. Questions are good because it allows us to go deeper. If someone has a question (about our faith), then I feel great about it. If it concerns you, then it concerns me, because I want to be able to help you. If I don’t have the answer, then I’m going to research it and give you the accuracy and truthfulness of the information.”

In particular, RCIA participants are initiated into the Church via the sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. The program is open not only to new members of our faith, but for those who may have only received one particular sacrament (such as baptism), but who may have been baptized but never received Holy Communion, as well as those wanting to go deeper in their faith.

For those seeking to participate in the RCIA program, the most immediate starting point is the nearest parish to you in our diocese.

“We usually start the journey in late September or October,” explained Deacon Chaput in detailing how RCIA participants begin their initiation.

“That journey continues right through the Liturgical Seasons into Lent and Holy week with the celebration at the Easter Saturday Vigil. For those who are ready and want to receive the sacraments, they are able to do so at that time providing those who are instructing and sharing the faith feel that they (participants) are ready to receive the sacraments, that they are ready and want to be a part of the Roman Catholic church.” After receiving the Sacraments, more faith sessions follow.

“We don’t rush it,” added Deacon Chaput, in emphasizing that there is no set schedule for participants to accept the sacraments.

“For some people, they may not be ready, and may take a year off and come back the following year. It’s a journey, it’s a process in allowing ourselves to grow deeper and understand what we are saying yes to. Our yes means that we want to be a part of this church, that we want to be baptized or receive the other sacraments, that we want to draw closer to the Lord.”

Part of that process means being completely honest about any outstanding concerns in embracing our faith.

“That’s okay,” said Deacon Chaput in explaining that to voice one’s uncertainty is perfectly normal. He went on to detail the process he embraces in helping others better understand the teachings of the church through the scriptures.

“Let’s look at that together. Don’t feel bad about that. Let me explain to you why this is what we believe and the reasons why. Maybe that’ll help you with a better understanding of what the church is trying to share with us. The beauty of it is it allows everyone to be honest. I’m on this spiritual journey, I’m searching, but I have difficulties. Well, thank you for sharing that with me. Thank you for being honest. I don’t want you to say yes to something that you have difficulty with. I want to help you so that you can have peace with it. That’s what we search for in this world. We search for peace in this journey. When we have peace, we have joy.”

Dylan Longpré, a recent participant of the RCIA, was kind enough to share his experience with the program.

“RCIA is a great experience for someone who is not just looking to gain more information about the Catholic Church, but to also strengthen their own personal faith with the Lord,” said Longpré.

“Diving into the Church’s doctrine, its history, and studying each of the sacraments provides an in-depth look into what Catholics believe and why. In Pembroke, the RCIA program includes a variety of instructors of different backgrounds from: clergy, religious sisters, and laypeople, including former RCIA catechumens/candidates. As a young adult, I found it a very welcoming experience that very much helped prepare me for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”

Those who complete the RCIA program automatically inherit a responsibility to share with others the joy that our faith brings to us.

“We’re all called to evangelize,” said Deacon Chaput.

“That’s the beauty of our lives; once that gift has been shared with us we want to share it with others so that they can receive it as well.”

On a personal level, Deacon Chaput told of the joy he experiences in seeing those embrace the love that God has to offer via this program.

“It is so beautiful,” said Deacon Chaput.

“I’m the type of person that meets everyone where they’re at and we just love them, embrace them and share with them.”

At the time of the writing of this article, Deacon Chaput confirmed that the RCIA program would be moving forward this Fall. For more information on the program, please contact Deacon Chaput at [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioocese.com) or at the Diocesan Office at 613-732-7933 ext. 206





## St. Alphonsus CWL celebrates its 90th Anniversary

The year 2020 marks the 90th anniversary of the formation of our own St. Alphonsus CWL Parish Council in Chapeau, Quebec. It is also the 100th anniversary of the CWL in Canada. Therefore, we have a twofold reason for rejoicing and celebrating but, unfortunately, celebrations had to be put on hold due to the extraordinary times of COVID-19.

Looking back through the archives that were so well preserved and compiled by the late Sr. Marguerite McDonald (The Golden Years 1930–1980), we marvel at all the projects undertaken by the former presidents and their dedicated members. Records show that in 1938 there were 283 paid members. Clergy at that point in time were Reverend A.M. Renaud and assistants Reverends D.J. Harrington and F. Rennick.

St. Joseph's Convent was the home of the Sisters of St. Joseph, 15 in number. Many notable events took place over the years in which the CWL played an important role. Several Diocesan conventions were held: jubilees of our beloved pastors, blessings of mission churches, new schools, etc. Parish picnics as well as concerts, amateur programs, card parties, etc., all helped raise funds for special projects. The Hospital Auxiliary originated at a CWL meeting. Ladies from other local communities participated and this service operated very efficiently until the little hospital was closed.

It was not all work and no play. Dances sponsored by the CWL were well attended from near and far. Special occasions meant special celebrations—Halloween, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day (the Irish play was always extra special). It should also be noted that our French and English populations all played a part in everything, including the picnics, teas, bazaars, and chicken suppers (the first one was held in 1950). In later years, this would become the Harvest or Turkey Supper and was taken over as a parish event. Then, as now, any funds raised from such activities were distributed for a worthy cause.

On to the present... CWL still exists in our parish with 78 members. We have lost many senior members in the last few years and, sad to say, they have not been replaced. Many of the events and activities have carried on. Facilities to work in are much better equipped and more accessible than in days gone by. People are still very generous when donations are requested for food, prizes, etc.

CWL gives back to the community and beyond. Some contributions include a fuel donation to the church, choir appreciation dinner, Harrington Community Centre, Sisters of St. Joseph (Peruvian child's education), Coady

Institute Sports Complex, Residence Meilleur, DWKS graduation prizes and children receiving sacraments. Christmas party donations are given to a different cause each year—Bouffe Pontiac, palliative care (Shawville Hospital), Bernadette McCann House, etc.

Our seniors are not forgotten either. We were able to deliver close to 100 lap quilts thanks to a local quilting group. They are also remembered with cards at Christmas and on special occasions. Entertainment is provided at neighbouring homes—Marianhill (birthday cards and Christmas Eve) and Sacré-Coeur at Christmas and other occasions throughout the year. We enjoy these visits as much as the seniors.

Funeral home visits and prayers are still a must, as well as an honour guard at funerals of members (when requested). We feel sad not to be able to do so in these restricted times. A Mass is always offered for a deceased member.

Our June dinner is usually the highlight of the year. There is always a guest speaker and service pins are awarded at this time. June 2000 was our 70th anniversary and also that of the founding of St. Joseph's Convent. At the time, Mr. Paul MacDonald (brother of Sister Marguerite) joined us and paid tribute to all celebrating. It was also a time to reflect on all the years of service the sisters have shared with us. The convent closed permanently in 1999 and the last four sisters moved to the Motherhouse.

The Year of the Priest (2010) saw 11 priests who had served here over the years attend. Father Michael Lapierre Sr. (age 96) was also acknowledged that evening. He always helped out when home on holidays. In 2015, we celebrated our 85th anniversary and also Msgr. Bridge's 50th anniversary. He joined us as a guest speaker and rekindled many fond memories.

We cannot complete this article without thinking of those dedicated women who took up the challenge 90 years ago and started our council. The first presidents were Mrs. Edward Flemming and Mrs. Annie Barrow along with 19 others over the years and concluding with our current president, Gail Sullivan, who has served for 12 terms during her years with the league. We also thank our ancestors for bringing us this far, as well as the faithful clergy, the Sisters of St. Joseph and the generous parishioners who have supported our efforts over the years. Tentative plans were in the making for a special celebration this year, but as this is not possible, we pray that in the coming months things will improve and we will all get through this together.



June 2015 – CWL 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Msgr. Bridge's 50-year anniversary. Recipients of service pins, 70 years in CWL: front row centre: Noella Lapierre, right: Yvonne O'Brien



Christmas party 1993. Back left: Noella Lapierre, Alice Mainville, Cecile St. Cyre, Bea Battis, Helen McDonald, Rhea Vaillancourt, Sister Rose Mary Poirier.

Front left: Elva Bowers, Katie Phelan, Germaine Martin



Mrs. Marjorie Morin and Mrs. Edna Mae Conroy, President for nine years, circa 1966-1975.





## The Catholic Women's League of Canada celebrates milestones in a COVID way

On June 17, 2020, the Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, all CWL conventions were cancelled in 2020, so there were no public celebrations of this milestone. To commemorate the CWL's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and in keeping with the national theme of "Care for Our Common Home", members in their parish, diocesan and provincial councils were invited to plant a tree to help the environment. Members of the Pembroke Diocesan CWL gathered at St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church in Renfrew on July 29 to dedicate their commemorative tree.

On the same day, CWL member Pat Weller was presented with a CWL Life Membership pin. Pat has been a member of St. Michael's Parish, Douglas, for the past 28 years. Life

Membership is granted to a CWL member who has shown continued involvement at the parish level, as well as at the diocesan level, including a term as diocesan president, and service at the provincial level. Life members continue to demonstrate love of the league, have the ability to encourage others, participate in study, research, and workshops, and continue to be able and willing to serve. Pat aptly fulfills these criteria. A prayer service was held in St. Francis Xavier church for the presentation of Pat's pin.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada is a national organization, which calls its members to grow in faith and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service. There are 1,763 CWL members in the Pembroke diocese, including 11 Life Members.



Pat Weller, CWL Life Member, Father Kerry Brennan, St. Francis Xavier Parish Priest, Joan Lemay, CWL Diocesan President



CWL members Irene Perrault, Theresa Prince, Carmel Rumleskie, Pat Weller, Donna Provost, Sheila Bielawski, Elaine Turner, Joan Lemay, Fr. Kerry Brennan, Bev Drouin, Nancy Guyea, Angela McEachan, Irene Burchat

## Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College offers online courses – September 2020

Submitted

With COVID-19 forcing the shutdown of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College in Barry's Bay in March, the local Catholic liberal arts college responded by turning to online modes of delivery for the remainder of the semester. Through the generosity of donors contributing to its *St. Joseph the Provider Campaign* for COVID needs, the college has been able to acquire necessary information technology equipment to facilitate delivery of classes to students online, which ensured the 100 students were able to complete their academic year by mid-May. Further, for the first time this Fall, Seat of Wisdom courses are available to those wishing to study remotely.

At a time when many universities and colleges across Ontario are offering classes exclusively online, SWC is

fortunate to also have the option of welcoming students in person, thanks to its small student body and class sizes, and also because it is located here in Renfrew County, with its low rate of COVID-19 infection. The residential aspect of SWC is a key element of the vibrant student life experience of its students, and now the safe reopening of campus is facilitated by the fact that students live in households, which will constitute their "social bubble." Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College is working with the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the Renfrew Country District and Health Unit to make certain that all regional, provincial and federal directives are followed in the classroom and across the campus.

For more information on Our Lady Seat of Wisdom College's COVID response, and for online course options, please visit the college's website, [www.seatofwisdom.ca](http://www.seatofwisdom.ca)



OUR LADY  
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COLLEGE



Ky's class – winter 2020.