



Ecclesia

The Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

November 2021

News from the Diocesan Evangelization Team

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

Since its creation in January 2021, the evangelization team has been working hard. During the summer, members met many times on Zoom and reflected on a diocesan missionary vision. They have also been working on a parish process for evangelizing and making disciples.

One of the main goals of the team is to help Christian communities and the faithful of our diocese engage in evangelization and to accompany them in this effort. The future of our Church depends on our individual and collective willingness to share our faith and to communicate the love of God to others. "Faith is strengthened when it is given," Pope John Paul used to say. This is good news because it means that our closeness to Christ intensifies as we evangelize.

The evangelization team invites the faithful of the diocese to consider prayer as the first step towards our missionary transformation. It encourages parishes, religious communities and movements to launch activities and groups to pray for their missionary renewal and for the people Christ wants to reach. Prayer is the foundation of every undertaking in the Church and should precede and accompany all our efforts. Indeed, the communication of the faith is not, as we know, a simple human endeavour; it is the work of the Holy Spirit and would be fruitless without Him.

The team is also working with the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board (RCCDSB) to implement evangelization projects in the schools. David Afelskie, RCCDSB Religious & Family Life Education Special Assignment Teacher, has joined the team and will be collaborating with Yvette Bourque. Initiatives in the schools are essential because today's youth are facing enormous challenges and need help and support to find meaning in their lives and to seek eternal goods.

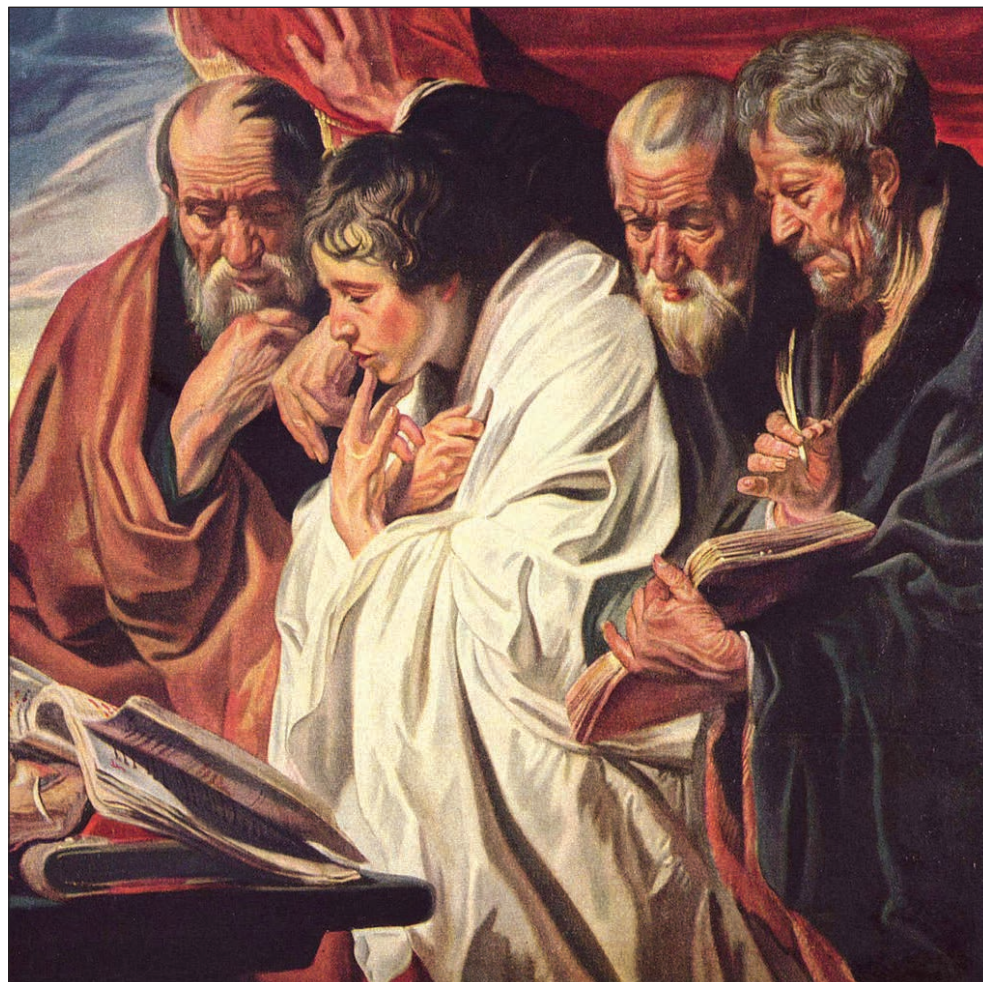
In September, the process of evangelizing and making disciples, mentioned above, was presented to the priests of the diocese during their Study Day. It emerges from an integral vision of mission and offers a concrete way for parishes to make disciples. It sees the evangelized as needing to be accompanied along their journey until they themselves become missionary disciples: whether it is through prayer, the proclamation of the kerygma, or their welcome and integration into a Christian community and formation to get involved in ministries.

Evangelization can seem complex at times. In fact, it can be as simple as creating bonds of service and friendship with the people around us. When bonds of trust are established, we can then talk about our faith or simply invite them to church or to a small faith group. Praying, seeking to meet new people, being of service and inviting them to read the Gospel or to participate in a church activity, this is a very concrete and achievable evangelization program for all of us.

To invite people to know Christ and to enter into an intimate relationship with Him is to offer the greatest treasure of all: God's forgiveness, peace, love and eternal life. To evangelize is, in fact, the greatest act of love. Pope John Paul II says that evangelization is "the first service that the Church can render to every man and to all humanity in the present world." The Redemption, achieved through the Cross, restores to humanity its dignity and the meaning of its existence.

Therefore, let us not hesitate to take the apron of the servant and put ourselves, out of love and with love, at the service of those who do not believe in Christ, by sharing the Gospel with them. Let us share the Word with our life, with great gentleness and with much listening so as to give hope to those who have lost it, to relieve those who are burdened (Matthew 11:28) and to enlighten their spiritual quest.

Our mission is, in short, the mission of Christ who "came to seek and to save those who are lost" (Luke 19:10). We do not need to wait until we are saints to embark on this path, for evangelization leads us to holiness and sanctifies us as much as it sanctifies the people we reach. By committing ourselves confidently to this path, seeking boldness, love and reconciliation, we will be configured to Christ and recognized as authentic witnesses of the Saviour of humanity.



The Four Evangelists: Matthew the Apostle, Mark the Evangelist, Luke the Evangelist, and John the Evangelist, circa 1620.

Jacob Jordaens, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

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Meet the Diocese of Pembroke Evangelization Team

David Afelskie



I work for RCCDSB as the Religious & Family Life Education Special Assignment Teacher. I have a real zeal and passion for evangelization, and I volunteered with NET Ministries of Canada on one of their travelling teams many moons ago. I am active in my home parish of St. Hedwig's, Barry's Bay, and currently assist with sacramental preparation. I have been married to my lovely wife, Elena, for 19 years. We reside on a farm with our nine children.

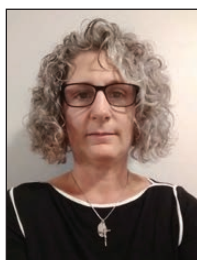
Deacon Chris Barrett



My wife, Anne, and I have been married for 42 years and have four children. We are proud grandparents of 11 grandchildren, three of whom were born last Fall. I worked in sales management and marketing for a paper company, E.B. Eddy/Domtar, for 32 years. After a period of discernment, study and training, I was ordained a deacon on July 7, 2018 by Bishop Mulhall. I currently serve as a deacon at St. John Chrysostom Parish in Arnprior where my ministry involves proclaiming the Gospel and preaching, assisting at Mass and distribution of Holy Communion, administering the Sacrament

of Baptism in the parish, and visiting and ministering to the homebound, those in retirement homes the local nursing home and hospital. I have a lifelong love for liturgical music and have been a church organist and choir director in several parishes including St. John Chrysostom. Anne and I have worked as parish catechists preparing children to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation for the last 10 years and have done sacramental preparation for parents of children to be baptized. We reside in Braeside, a small community just west of Arnprior.

Yvette Bourque



I was posted with my family to CFB Petawawa in 1986 at the age of 16 from Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. I finished high school and then attended Algonquin College in Pembroke, and graduated from the RN Program. I have worked as an RN in both the Arnprior Memorial and Pembroke Civic Hospital as well as 9 years in the Financial Services sector. I have been married to my husband, Mark, for 27 years, and we have 4 children and 1 granddaughter. We still live in Petawawa. It wasn't until I met Mark, at the age of 21, that I started

to learn about the Catholic faith and began practicing it... even though I was Catholic and had all the sacraments of initiation. A few years later, I became very involved with running the LIFE TEEN youth ministry program at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Petawawa, along with many other wonderful people. Bishop Richard Smith hired me in 2006, and I have worked for the Diocese of Pembroke as the Coordinator of the Family Life and Youth ministry Office for the last 15 years. It has been a wonderful opportunity to serve the people in the diocese, especially the young people, through pilgrimages, youth conferences, retreats, marriage preparation, the Diocesan Young Adult Ministry and working with the schools to teach the YOU program (Theology of the Body). I have been especially blessed by all those who have volunteered over the years to help me with all these endeavours. I could not have possibly done it on my own. Where would the Church be without those willing to serve? I thank the Lord for volunteers! The most uplifting moments over the years have been witnessing someone's light of Faith turn on, and you know that they have heard or seen the Truth. That moment gives me goose bumps, and I wish I could experience it every day.

Fr. John Burchat

I was born in 1966, the youngest of four siblings, and lived on a farm in Tramore on the Bonnechere River. As a member of the O.P.P, my father received various postings. Wherever we lived, our family always saw the parish community as our new home by participating in the various realities of parish life. Our family home was always welcoming of our parish priests. Having two aunts as Sisters of St. Joseph meant that the vocation of religious life was respected as a Christian way of life and always considered a personal possibility, if God called. Experiencing a religious awakening as a teenager, I gradually came to see the attractiveness of a life lived in Christ. These experiences proved overwhelming enough to compel me to consider the possibility that the Lord might be calling me to be a priest. Upon completion of high school, I decided to spend one year at Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere, attending the Spiritual Formation Program offered there for men discerning a vocation to the Priesthood. In the fall of 1985, I entered Saint Peter's Seminary in London. I was ordained a priest in 1993 in my home parish of St. Casimir's, Round Lake Centre. For the past 28 years, I have enjoyed working in the Lord's vineyard beside dedicated pastors, religious and lay faithful. The promise of obedience I first made to Bishop Windle has led me to new pastoral assignments that have both manifest the will of God for my life and become occasions of growth and joy.

Seminarist Lukas Časta



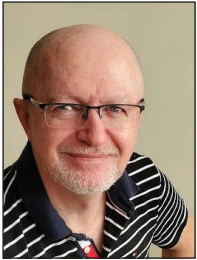
The third oldest of nine children, I grew up in Barry's Bay at St. Hedwig's Parish, serving as an altar boy there from the time I was eight years old. Upon finishing high school, I pursued my undergraduate degree at Seat of Wisdom College, after which I entered formation at St. Augustine's Seminary of Toronto in 2017. Since that time, I have completed various philosophy and theology studies, been a part of the spiritual and pastoral programs of seminary formation and worked several jobs over the summer months. Currently I am in my Pastoral-Internship year of formation and am currently assigned to assist at St. Columbkille's Cathedral Parish under the direction of Fr. Jim Beanish, until I re-enter classes next September.

Deacon Adrien Chaput

I am a permanent deacon, and I was ordained for the Diocese of Pembroke on May 10, 2008. I am married to my lovely wife Bernadette and we have just recently celebrated 39 years of marriage. We have one daughter named Mélanie and two grandsons Tristan and Théodore. After my ordination, I was assigned to St. Columbkille Cathedral, and I have enjoyed being here with the clergy and the faithful of our parish community. I have truly enjoyed all of my ministries, including the celebration of baptisms, marriages, as well as journeying with families during the loss of their loved ones as I preside at the service or assist in the Funeral Mass. I began my formation in 2004. A great part of my ministry, then and now, is working with the less fortunate, the marginalized and the most vulnerable in our community. I started in 2004 with the Salvation Army and then helped to form the St. Columbkille Conference of St. Vincent de Paul in 2007, and I continue to be involved. In the past two-and-a-half years, I have worked closely with The Grind Pembroke since the closure of the Salvation Army Pembroke in 2019. I was hired by Bishop Mulhall in 2013 as the Director of the Office of Faith Formation and Leadership Development for the Diocese of Pembroke, and I have enjoyed meeting and working with everyone in our diocese. I love to play my guitar and sing worship music, as well as gardening and being outdoors to soak up the hot sun. But, most of all, I love to share God's love with those whom I meet.



Pierre-Alain Giffard



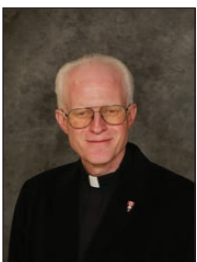
I am the father of two young teenage girls and the spouse of my wife Marie. I've been very recently hired by the diocese as director of pastoral work. Practically all my life has been devoted to theology and evangelization. I have worked with people with disabilities, both physical and mental. I am also a specialist in the Church mission, having studied and practiced extensively in the field. I hold a doctorate in practical theology and my research focuses on missional congregations. Why are some parishes growing while others are declining? This was one of the central questions of my dissertation. For the past 15 years, I have worked at the diocesan level in Quebec and Manitoba, and I have also been a professor at Saint Paul University. I am very enthusiastic about the renewal project of Bishop Guy Desrochers.

Fr. Réal Ouellette



Originally from the region of Mont-Laurier, Québec, I grew up since I was 6 in the parishes of Bonfield and Mattawa. I was an altar server in my parish, and then became organist for the French choir. Since my youth, I have sensed the call to priesthood, and so joined the diocese as a seminarian after high school. I studied Theology at the Grand Séminaire de Montréal. I was ordained in 2002. Most of my priestly ministry was in the Pontiac, especially in Fort-Coulonge and Otter Lake, and the parishes attached to them. I am now in Astorville-Bonfield-Corbeil. I have been involved in various diocesan ministries and administration tasks, Youth, Young Adult, and World Youth Day, Marriage Preparation, Faith Formation, Council of Priests, College of Consultors, Episcopal Vicar for the French Sector. Evangelization has always been at the heart of my life as a priest: how to proclaim Jesus Christ and his Gospel to today's people. I am grateful that Bishop Desrochers initiated this Evangelization Project in the Diocese and that he has asked me to be on the Team.

Fr. Michael Smith



I was born in Pembroke in 1958, at a time when my family lived in what was then called Camp Petawawa. When I was 10 years old, and after some more military moves, the family settled just outside of Renfrew. I graduated from St. Joseph's Catholic High School in 1977.

After studying at St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario, I was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph R. Windle on May 26, 1984, in Our Lady of Fatima Church, Renfrew.

How to summarize 37 years of priestly ministry? There has been much variety: parish work, seminary work, and helping with diocesan administration. It has been a rich experience. I have been privileged to witness the Lord at work in people's lives.

Patrick Sullivan



I am a Catholic speaker, author and the President of Evango, a Canadian Catholic media organization focused on the New Evangelization. To this end, I travel internationally to speak at parish missions and to lead workshops on evangelization for parishes, ministries and missionary organizations. My talks have been aired on trusted Catholic media platforms such as EWTN, Shalom World, and Formed. My newest book, *The 3 Languages of Evangelization*, looks to help us all communicate the Gospel in a simple and effective manner.

I live in beautiful Wilno with my loving wife, Kyla, and our nine children. When I'm not busy writing or evangelizing, you'll likely find me reading my way through the classics, learning a new language (most recently, Egyptian Hieroglyphics), or kayaking out on the lake with my kids.

Renée Sylvain



I am the daughter of Saskatchewan farmers. While at University, I was reborn in my faith through friends who invited me to daily Mass and a Life in the Spirit seminar. Boarding with religious sisters introduced me to prayer and communal life. Later, I joined the newly-formed campus group called Catholic Christian Outreach. I decided not to pursue my teaching career right away and joined the CCO staff. While serving with CCO, I bumped into my personal poverty and had many questions about how to apply my faith life to ordinary daily life. This

is when Madonna House Apostolate entered my life. I had always felt a call to serve the Church, and Madonna House was a perfect fit. I made my promises of poverty, chastity and obedience in 1999, and it has been an adventure every day. With Madonna House I have served in Combermere, ON, Winslow, AZ, and Vancouver, BC. I have done everything from handing out food boxes to leading Bible studies, but our general work is befriending people in a lonely world. My personal favourite was serving the 3-6 year olds in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based program. They taught me how to be present to and listen to the Holy Spirit and that nothing is impossible for God. It is all joy.

Lucile Tourigny



I have been a member of St-Jean-Baptiste Parish for 60 years. I have two children: a son and a daughter, and a grandson. I was a teacher for 35 years in the French schools of Pembroke, mostly in the area of special education. I am a member of the parish Liturgy Committee and I participate in various ministries: lector, commentator, and music. I have been a catechist for the past few years, helping to prepare young people for Confirmation. I have also been part of the baptism preparation teams and marriage preparation sessions. I

am now a member of the diocesan Faith Formation Committee (francophone) and I participate in the preparation of the diocesan newspaper, *Ecclesia*. I am committed to the development of my francophone community and am therefore involved in several associations such as the Centre Lajoie des aînées, aînés francophones, the Fédération des femmes canadiennes-françaises and the Centre culturel francophone de Pembroke.



Ecclesia

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June 4, 2021

Statement of Bishop Guy Desrochers following the discovery at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School

This week, the Federal Government published its report on the recommendations of the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. While this is important and necessary, it is overshadowed by the recent findings that 215 Indigenous children were buried in unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. The pain and loss all First Nations people in Canada are feeling following the news of these findings is immeasurable.

I express my deep regret, shame, and sorrow to you, all Indigenous Peoples of Canada. As genuine and simple as these words are, I understand that they ring hollow if not acted on appropriately. Our, and your, consolation is that truth can lead to reconciliation and healing. This truth, now brought to light, challenges us to seek ways to reconcile our hurtful past, with our present, in hopes for a brighter future - a tomorrow that will move us from this time of brokenness to building a new way to be trusted as worthy servants of 'The Great Spirit' who is God to all of us.

Our diocese will come together regularly, and, I hope, with some of you among us, continue to fulfill the Calls to Action laid out for us by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; that is, to find ways of healing our regrettable past and your painful history.

Sincerely yours,

+ Guy Desrochers, C.M.

+ Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Pembroke



Statement of Apology by the Catholic Bishops of Canada to the Indigenous Peoples of This Land

We, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, gathered in Plenary this week, take this opportunity to affirm to you, the Indigenous Peoples of this land, that we acknowledge the suffering experienced in Canada's Indian Residential Schools. Many Catholic religious communities and dioceses participated in this system, which led to the suppression of Indigenous languages, culture and spirituality, failing to respect the rich history, traditions and wisdom of Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the grave abuses that were committed by some members of our Catholic community; physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and sexual. We also sorrowfully acknowledge the historical and ongoing trauma and the legacy of suffering and challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples that continue to this day. Along with those Catholic entities which were directly involved in the operation of the schools and which have already offered their own heartfelt apologies¹, we², the Catholic Bishops of Canada, express our profound remorse and apologize unequivocally.

We are fully committed to the process of healing and reconciliation. Together with the many pastoral initiatives already underway in dioceses across the country, and as a further tangible expression of this ongoing commitment, we are pledging to undertake fundraising in each region of the country to support initiatives discerned locally with Indigenous partners. Furthermore, we invite the Indigenous Peoples to journey with us into a new era of reconciliation, helping us in each of our dioceses across the country to prioritize initiatives of healing, to listen to the experience of Indigenous Peoples, especially to the survivors of Indian Residential Schools, and to educate our clergy, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful, on Indigenous cultures and spirituality. We commit ourselves to continue the work of providing documentation or records that will assist in the memorialization of those buried in unmarked graves.

Having heard the requests to engage Pope Francis in this reconciliation process, a delegation of Indigenous survivors, Elders/knowledge keepers, and youth will meet with the Holy Father in Rome in December 2021. Pope Francis will encounter and listen to the Indigenous participants, so as to discern how he can support our common desire to renew relationships and walk together along the path of hope in the coming years. We pledge to work with the Holy See and our Indigenous partners on the possibility of a pastoral visit by the Pope to Canada as part of this healing journey.

We commit ourselves to continue accompanying you, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples of this land. Standing in respect of your resiliency, strength and wisdom, we look forward to listening to and learning from you as we walk in solidarity.

24 September 2021

¹ [Indian Residential Schools and TRC - Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops \(ccc.ca\)](https://www.cccb.ca/en/indian-residential-schools-and-trc)

² [The CCCB website has a link to several apologies previously offered by Catholic bishops, including those offered by bishops at national TRC events](#)



Official Opening of the Diocesan Synod

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The diocesan Catholic Churches of the world have now entered into a great process called “synod” a few weeks ago. Pope Francis officially launched this synodal process of the Catholic Church on Saturday and Sunday, 9 and 10 October 2021 in St Peter’s Basilica in Rome. He invites all the faithful, men and women, religious men and women and clergy to embark on this vast consultation movement which will reach its climax in two years.

But what exactly does the word “synod”, so dear to our Holy Father, mean? In Greek, the word sunodos (in Latin synodus) literally translates as “road-together.” In other words, when we speak of a synod in the Catholic Church, it refers to a consultative process between apostles and other disciples of Christ, the aim of which is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of ecclesial life at all levels. This dialogical process, in which we are to “walk together,” must begin with the organization of sincere fraternal meetings where we can exchange freely and without fear of being judged. The second step presupposes that we listen to each other not only with our ears, but above all with our hearts, as the Holy Father invites us to do. Without empathetic and affective listening, it is practically impossible to gain the trust of others. Finally, the synodal process should lead us to the third and last stage: that of common and divinely inspired discernment which will enable us to better understand and actualize the mission

of evangelization that Christ entrusts to his Church even today, despite the difficulties and opposition that we face.

At this point, I would like to stress that the creation of our new Evangelization Team a year ago has proven to be highly prophetic, in that its long-term goal is also based on the exact three principals (or steps) that the Holy Father is now proposing to all the Catholic Dioceses of the world. All past, present and future efforts of the Evangelization Team have, are and will be based on creating evangelization initiatives that require **encounters** and **consultation** with the priests, the parishes and the faithful. This should ultimately lead us to **discern** what needs to be done to beautify and to help rebuild the Church of Christ in our own Diocese. Consequently, this grace could even benefit the entire Catholic Church.

As some of you already know, the members of our new Evangelization Team are also actively working with a special committee created by the Diocese and the Renfrew County Catholic School Board (RCCDSB), in order to reflect and to find new ways to pursue the mission of evangelization that Jesus confides to all of his disciples. This ongoing project is also based on the 3 steps that are mentioned above, in regard to the synodal

process that was initiated by the Pope and for the good of the Universal Church.

Throughout our evangelization efforts, all disciples should indeed learn to walk together as a people, as we *encounter, listen and discern* together new ways to rediscover the loving and merciful presence of Jesus, who has promised that He will always be present in our midst... till the end of times!

I will conclude with a wish: that the three steps mentioned above in our synodal process may all be imbued with the life-giving anointing of the Holy Spirit. Let us now pray that our “road-together” (synod) will truly be lived according to the desires of the divine Heart of Jesus as we embark in the synodal process for the years to come. May all churches come to understand the need to become a true and lasting synodal Church.

+ Guy Desrochers, C.M.

Sincerely yours in Christ our Redeemer,

Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R., Bishop of Pembroke

Please see the diocesan website (<https://pembrokediocese.com/>) for details on the Synodal Process in the Diocese of Pembroke.

Blessed Catherine Starflower prayer initiative

By Renée Sylvain

When we are struggling with age or illness, we can be tempted to believe we no longer participate in the work of the Church. This is precisely the time when our real work can begin. Our lives become our act of prayer offered into Jesus’ crucified hands for the sake of others.

No work of evangelization will succeed without a strong base of prayer. In 1658, Blessed Catherine of St. Augustine offered her life and sickness for the salvation of souls in New France. Her prayers were a powerful force behind the missionary efforts of the time. This was while she did not travel far from her convent and was often ill. We honour her as co-founder of the Canadian Catholic Church.

Through her intercession, we invite you to offer your life with its joys, sicknesses, and struggles for the conversion of hearts in the Diocese of Pembroke. This fellowship of prayer will be called Blessed

Catherine’s Starflowers because just as the starflowers cover our forest floors, so will these intercessors cover our diocese with the fragrance of prayer. They will form the foundation and the power for all the evangelization efforts in the diocese.

All who wish will make a prayer of offering. They will be given the Blessed Catherine’s Starflower Prayer Booklet and a medal of Blessed Catherine of St. Augustine. Within the booklet, there is space to record the offering and a diagram of the starflower. Each petal represents an intercession for each day of the week radiating from the central desire for the salvation of souls in our diocese. Your pastor may include some specific intentions for the parish. There will also be some suggested prayers. Each month, a Mass will be celebrated for the fellowship of Blessed Catherine’s Starflowers.

Is God calling you to serve in this way? Maybe you know someone who might be interested? If so, please contact your parish office.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Do you know how very precious your life is? Have you ever thought that you have something immense to give to the Lord and to His people? Can you imagine the power that is released when you offer your life in all its littleness and ordinariness?

I invite you to experience a deep unity between your heart and Jesus’ heart through this offering of your daily life to Jesus. Under the patronage of Blessed Catherine of St. Augustine, your life with all its joys and sufferings becomes a powerful act of love burning for the salvation of souls in our diocese. Your offering becomes the base upon which we can renew and build our Church.

Love is a magnet. It draws out love. Your gift of love will draw out the hearts of others to Jesus’ heart. Please prayerfully consider serving the Diocese of Pembroke through this offering of self.

Sincerely yours in Christ our redeemer,
+Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Pembroke



The starflower grows in our woods and has seven petals. Each petal will represent a prayer intention for each day of the week. The central focus of the intentions is for the conversion of hearts in the Diocese of Pembroke.

Those who wish to join *Blessed Catherine’s Starflowers* will make a simple offering of their daily lives. They will receive a small booklet with a few suggested prayers and the prayer intentions as well as a medal of Blessed Catherine of St. Augustine. A monthly Mass will be offered for the Starflower members.

Peter Goring makes First Promises at Madonna House

Having seen God call his two older brothers to serve in the priesthood, Pembroke native Peter Goring is now beginning his own journey to serve God in the Madonna House Apostolate.

Goring made his First Promises on June 8 this year.

“First promises are the first public commitments: poverty, chastity and obedience of a new Madonna House member,” explained Goring.

“When making first promises, the new member receives the Madonna House cross with the words, *Pax Caritas* - Peace and Love (or Charity) - in Latin engraved on it. First promises are for one year and are later renewed three times for two years at a time before making Final Promises.”

He says his decision to join Madonna House happened gradually with several smaller steps.

“After I attended university, I worked in Ottawa for a high-tech company for a number of years. Life was pretty good. I had a good-paying job and I had good friends and family close by. But at the same time, I felt a certain amount of resistance in my life that I couldn't quite understand. I had always thought that I was called to marriage. But I started to consider that maybe marriage was not the only vocation for me.”

“When I started to think about other possibilities, Madonna House was an obvious fit for me, based on my previous visits. I decided to make a longer visit to Madonna House with all the vacation time that I could accumulate at one time. After that visit, I decided I would take the first step and become an applicant. Two years as an applicant gave me time to learn more about this way of life before making First Promises.

Peter first visited Madonna House in 2002 at Marian Centre, a field house, in Edmonton. Later, he made several visits to the motherhouse located in Combermere.

“Marian Centre is located in downtown Edmonton, and the Madonna House staff working there provide meals and clothing for the poor and homeless,” said Goring. “When I visited Marian Centre, I helped with preparing food and driving to different places to pick up food donations. It was wintertime, so I also helped with shovelling snow and various other jobs around the house, like painting and cleaning.”



Fr David Linder (DG of priests), Peter Goring, Elizabeth (DG of women), Daniel, Blanka, Larry (DG of men)



The names of the other two members (besides Peter Goring) who received their new crosses are: Blanka Pavlickova (from the Czech Republic), Daniel Wildish (from Oregon, USA)

What struck him most about his first visits to Madonna House was the warm welcome he received and the reverence for and the dignity of daily work seen in the light of serving God and neighbour.

He said the time at Marian Centre Edmonton gave him a glimpse of how the members live a life of poverty.

“For example, when we had prepared a hot meal for the poor, then we would also sit down together and share the same meal. The Madonna House staff would typically find clothing for their personal needs in the clothing donated for our clothing room for the poor. Cooking and menu planning for the household revolved mostly around foods that were donated to us. So, for example, the cooks would plan meals according to what ingredients we had available, which sometimes made for interesting combination of foods.”

Thus far, Goring has worked in a variety of roles with Madonna House.

“For my first assignment as a staff member, I am working in our auto shop. I assist our mechanic with various car repairs. I also work once a week in our Publications department, where I help out with our website and online sales of books by Madonna House authors,” said Goring.

Peter’s interest in a life of dedicated service mirrors that of his brothers: Father Michael Goring, a priest for the Diocese of Pembroke, and Father Mark Goring, a priest of the Companions of the Cross. Seeing his siblings place their trust in allowing God to guide them in their lives had a lasting impression.

“Yes, I would say that my brothers’ decisions to pursue the priesthood made a big impact in my life,” said Goring.

“I remember I was in high school when my brother Mark told our family that he wanted to become a priest. I was shocked. Up to that time, I remembered Mark was interested in motorcycles and sports and having a good time. I realized that my brother’s decision to abandon university studies and pursue the priesthood meant he was giving up many things. I found myself asking the question: where are my priorities? I think this also spurred me on to seek out God’s will for me and the realization that I would find the greatest happiness in doing His will.”



Profession of First Vows

The Diocese of Pembroke is blessed to see another member of the community answer the call to serve God through religious life.

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Sister Orianne Pietra René Dyck moved with her family to Deep River in 1997, and eventually settled in Pembroke.

Upon graduating from Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke, Sister Orianne attended Trent University in Peterborough for studies in international development and anthropology.

“I started volunteering with Big Brothers – Big Sisters while I was there. As a Big Sister, seeing where my Little Sister was coming from and the things she was experiencing right here at home in Canada, I decided to go into teaching so that I could work with kids who were not receiving as much love and attention as they needed.”

She went on to acquire her Bachelor of Education degree from Nipissing University in North Bay in 2013, and spent her first year teaching in the United Kingdom.

“I think it was there that I really started to realize that as much as I wanted to give myself to my students in a way that really helped to nurture them and to let them know they were loved and cared for, I had my own limitations,” said Sister Orianne.

“I also recognized they were spiritually starving for something I couldn’t quite give them, as much as I wanted to.”

She returned to our diocese to continue teaching for a while, with a renewed commitment to her faith. It was not long afterwards that discussions arose with others concerning religious life.

“There was a very short period of time where I had three people in a row ask me if I had ever considered religious life,” said Sister Orianne.

“At first, I was kind of put off by that. Like, ‘What do you think is wrong with me that you would ask me if I wanted to be a religious sister?’ But then I realized that maybe there was a little more to it.”

During a diocesan youth group trip to Toronto, Sister Orianne, again, was asked if she was meant to pursue religious life.

“I think that was the moment that I realized that God had been trying to get a hold of me all those other times.”

Thus began her search for the religious community that God had in mind for her, with some assistance from within our own diocese.

“It’s overwhelming at first,” said Sister Orianne.

“I spoke to my parish priest, Father Bill Kenney, whom I trust very much. He had been my parish priest since I was little. He actually moved to Pembroke when we moved to Pembroke. I trusted him with all my questions and he was very helpful.”

After conducting her own research, speaking with representatives from various religious communities, and an abundance of praying to God for guidance, Sister Orianne decided on the Daughters of St. Paul. Established in Italy in 1915, the congregation operates in 51 countries, and is dedicated to sharing the mystery of Christ’s love to others, especially through the media.

“I discerned with my community for a year,” said Sister Orianne.

“They were really great; there was no pressure. They want God’s will for you. I would drive to discernment retreats in Toronto and stay for a couple of days.”

Eventually she would have the opportunity to reside with the community for a time. It was during this period that she gained a deeper understanding of the community’s charism. A communal discernment would follow, involving further interviews to determine if both parties were in agreement that the community was the right fit for her.



Upon being accepted, Sister Orianne spent two years of postulancy (from the Latin word *postulare*, which means to ask), in St. Louis, Missouri, followed by two more years of novitiate in Boston, Massachusetts.

“Postulancy: those two years are where you are getting a real glimpse from an insider’s point of view,” said Sister Orianne.

“It’s testing out. I’m asking questions - ‘God, is this for me? Is this making me more free? Is it bringing me peace? Is it helping me to get to know and love you better?’ And if it is not, then you have your answer. It’s not your vocation.”

“But if it is, then you apply to enter novitiate. Novitiate is your first canonical entrance into a community, so you are called Sister. You are a member of the community, although you haven’t taken any vows. That period of training is really to prepare you to take your vows.”

In July of this year, Sister Orianne made her First Profession with the Daughters of St. Paul at their Provincial Motherhouse in Boston. She will continue to reside in Boston for now and carry out missionary outreach work, renewing her vows every year for the next five years, until her Perpetual Profession, or Final Vows, which will be binding for life.

“I went into it with a lot of certainty that this is what the Lord was asking of me, and that I wanted to do this,” said Sister Orianne in describing her emotional state during the First Profession ceremony.

“This is how I want to give myself to Jesus. It’s a really beautiful moment; you’re making your first vows to the person you love the most. There’s a real sense of the community rejoicing with you because they understand exactly what it is, with all the joys and sorrows that come with it.”

“It was really exciting and moving to know that the Lord has called me to be His in a unique way, but there’s also this understanding that we’re not done yet. We have a whole adventure to go on for many more years.”



1,500th Anniversary of the Birth of St. Columbkille, 520/21–2021

By Fr. Michael Smith

From December 7, 2020 to December 7, 2021, the Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches in the northwestern part of Ireland (including the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland) are celebrating the 1,500th anniversary of the birth of a local son, St. Columbkille (also known as Colmcille and Columba, “Dove of the Church”). The Catholic Diocese of Raphoe, in County Donegal, has made contact with our diocese, and will communicate with us as the celebrations progress.

Why, you may ask, are we celebrating the event here in Pembroke Diocese? After all, St. Columbkille is virtually unknown in Canada, and few of even the most devout Catholics have heard of him. In Ireland and Scotland, however, he is a saint of great significance. He is one of the three patron saints of Ireland, along with St. Patrick and St. Brigid of Kildare. St. Columbkille's importance to the Irish and Scottish people is the reason why some of the first European settlers in Pembroke named their parish after him. That parish would later become the cathedral of the Diocese of Pembroke, and St. Columbkille would be designated as patron saint of the diocese.

Bishop Desrochers has asked me to introduce you to St. Columbkille, which I am happy to do.

Biographical sketch

St. Columbkille was born on December 7, 520 or 521, in Gartan, in what is now County Donegal in the Republic of Ireland. His parents' names were Fedlimid and Eithne. He was baptized at Temple-Douglas, between Gartan and Letterkenny, the present episcopal see of the Diocese of Raphoe. The priest who baptized him was named Cruithnechán, his teacher and foster-uncle. Columbkille eventually became well educated, having spent much of his adolescence and young adulthood travelling throughout Ireland to various monastic schools in search of learning.

He was already a deacon by the age of twenty, and he would later become a monk and be ordained a priest. At Iona, he would become abbot, or head monk of the monastery.

There are a couple of dark chapters in Columbkille's life. Of interest to us, currently living under the shadow of the pandemic, is the fact that there was a pestilence in 544, which forced Columbkille to move out of the monastery where he was staying and to take refuge in another region.

An even darker chapter is a dispute, in about the year 560, between Columbkille and his mentor Finnian over the ownership of a manuscript which Columbkille had

copied. Sadly and tragically, a large number of people became involved in the conflict, which became violent, leading to the deaths of many of them.

Also, around this time, Columbkille was involved in a dispute between two kings, one of whom violated the right of sanctuary and killed Prince Curnan of Connacht, a fugitive and a relative of Columbkille, whom Columbkille was protecting.

In any case, about 563, Columbkille and twelve companions (later to be known as the “Twelve Apostles of Ireland”) moved to Scotland, eventually settling on the island of Iona, where St. Columbkille founded a monastery that would be the hub of evangelization efforts in Scotland, especially among the Picts, who at that time were pagan.

It would be useful, at this point, to mention a couple of details about monastic life at the time. ‘Pilgrimage’ was considered a form of penance because it deprived the person of the companionship of his or her own people. Unlike monks in the Benedictine tradition, who made a vow to spend their lives in the same monastery, Celtic monks would undertake a *peregrinatio pro Christo*, a pilgrimage for Christ, essentially committing themselves to be wanderers, at least for a time. That is what Columbkille did. One can surmise that he did so to remake himself and to amend for his being a cause of the violent struggles mentioned above.

Remake himself he did. He founded the monastery at Iona, which became a centre of evangelization and a school for missionaries. The Christianization of Scotland was in large part the work of Columbkille and his companion monks. Columbkille eventually became known as a holy man, and thus he was sought out to mediate conflicts among tribes in the region.

Columbkille was a founder and a builder. He founded several monasteries in Ireland, and then several churches in Scotland, both on the mainland and in the Hebrides.

St. Columbkille died at Iona on June 9, 597, although some scholars place his death as early as 593. His feast day is June 9.

Significance of St. Columbkille for our spiritual journey

Someone once wrote that a saint is not someone who has never sinned, but one who has accepted God's forgiveness many times. St. Columbkille had a checkered career in his early life, but with God's grace he was able to turn his life around, to the point of being a peacemaker and a holy man. This should fill us with hope. Whatever our past might be, God does not give up on us, and there is no telling the wonders that God can work through



us. This truth is very much in keeping with the biblical portrait of holy people. With the exception of Jesus and Mary, God's instruments in the Scriptures are invariably flawed people. The Lord was able to work wonders of conversion in them, and further wonders through them.

St. Columbkille is also a model for us in the work of evangelization. Much as St. Columbkille tirelessly announced the Gospel and built up the People of God in remote regions, so also are we called, each in his or her own way, to proclaim the Gospel and build up God's People wherever we might be.

For further reading and viewing

For more historical details about St. Columbkille's life, I recommend the Wikipedia article under the title ‘Columba’ (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columba>). Please note that St. Columbkille, or Columba, is not the same person as St. Columban or Columbanus, another Irish abbot.

Also, there is an excellent 20-minute YouTube video called *St. Columba at 1500*. It is narrated by Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian clergy and laypeople in the region where St. Columbkille was born. Here is the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8xj_51-F14



Translating, an act of tradition?

By Most Reverend Serge Poitras, Bishop of Timmins

A new translation is in itself an act of tradition of the mystery of faith, because it is part of a continuous history of the transmission of faith while testifying to the missionary and evangelical impulse of the Church, always anxious to make this mystery heard in contemporary cultures.

According to some studies, there are currently between 3,000 and 6,000 different living languages in the world, some of which—dead languages—have disappeared over the centuries. Such a profusion reflects the fundamental need for communication between human beings.

Each language is initially based on the physical ability to emit sounds, an ability that we share with animals, but which has been refined considerably. By recognized convention, these sounds acquire their own, increasingly complex meaning. Thus, when I hear the sound [so], different interpretations are possible, which the spelling and the context fortunately allow to distinguish: “bucket”, “jump”, “fool”, “seal”. The same sound [so] means “I know” in Italian and “so, so, so” in English. If I decided that the sound [o] in French meant not “water” but a table, the communication of a message would no longer be possible.

When we come into contact with a language that is not our own, we need translation. In this sense, we remember the gigantic work that Champollion did in the 19th century to decipher the hieroglyphs: thanks to the Rosetta Stone, which presented the same text in three different languages, he gave us access to the Egyptian world that had been closed to us for centuries.

Translation is a “tradition”, i.e. the transmission, the passage to another of a message expressed in a specific system. Such a process presupposes a thorough understanding of the initial message—what is to be translated—as well as that of the recipient, the person who receives the message.

For Christians, and especially for Catholics, translation is an essential part of the transmission of the faith. The biblical texts of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, but very early on, in order to be accessible to people living outside Jewish territory, they were translated into Greek, in a version called the Septuagint. The New Testament was written in Greek; some words or expressions—amen, hallelujah, abba, kyrie eleison—still recall this heritage. To reach the Roman world, the same texts were then translated into Latin, thanks to the work of Saint Jerome and his version of the Bible, the Vulgate. The same work of translation and transmission continues in today’s languages: the complete Bible is currently found in over 500 languages, and the New Testament in 1,300. Translators often point out that their work was done from the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts.

A translation can be literal—word for word—as is sometimes found on the Internet; this is certainly a starting point, but it cannot be relied upon too much, as some typical expressions are difficult to translate. In order to convey their proper meaning, the translator must find their correct correspondence in the language of translation.

Translations into modern languages have to be updated regularly, because the spoken language evolves a lot. For example, the long sentences used by Bossuet in the 17th century are less understandable to our contemporaries, who prefer shorter sentences. The imperfect tense of the subjunctive, very common until the 19th century, has almost disappeared from current usage.

For centuries, the Roman liturgy was celebrated only in Latin. The Second Vatican Council allowed the use of vernacular languages, while wishing to maintain some use of Latin to preserve a precious heritage and to provide a common language for international celebrations. For more than seventeen years, the Roman liturgy was celebrated in Latin.

For more than seventeen years, a team of specialists worked on a liturgical translation of the Bible, so that all the extracts of the Word of God proclaimed in the celebrations could be identical throughout the French-speaking world. This translation has been approved by the Holy See and has been in use since 2013.

For its part, the Missale Romanum is the normative text for the Eucharistic liturgy in the Latin Church. Its translation must be as careful as that of the Word of God. The saying goes: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, that is, “the manner of prayer must reflect the authentic faith of the Church.” The liturgy is not simply a private prayer, in which I personally address God; it is above all the prayer of the whole Church, in which each person is involved. Translators must therefore be careful to ensure that their translation faithfully renders the content of the faith that the Church expresses in her prayer, in a language that is accessible to contemporaries: double fidelity, therefore, so that the transmission of the faith can truly take place.

The texts of the Missal include different layers, revealing the two thousand year history of the Church. There are excerpts from the Word of God (opening and communion antiphons), prayers dating back to the earliest times of the Church (the Roman Canon is quoted in large part by St. Ambrose, who died in 397), orations and prefaces inspired by St. Leo the Great (pope from 440 to 461) and St. Thomas Aquinas (who died in 1274), as well as from the various councils. There are also contemporary prayers: Eucharistic prayers II, III, IV, those for reconciliation, for various circumstances, as well as the proper prayers for the recently canonized saints.

Thanks to the work of translation, the French-speaking faithful of our time have access in their own language to the precious heritage of the faith that the Church transmits in her living Tradition, proclaiming the word of God and celebrating the Holy Liturgy. A certain amount of initiation and catechesis is required to understand its content and discover its riches; in this sense, the specific notions of “grace”, “sacrifice”, and “Eucharist” must be explained to the faithful of different ages and cultures. Tradition is alive, it is not fixed. Contemporary times have brought their own accents to it, especially through homilies, times of silent prayer and the intercessions of the faithful.

May the implementation of the new French translation of the Roman Missal, which replaces the one done in the 1970s, help the French-speaking faithful to better understand the Catholic liturgy and to live it in the awareness of a precious heritage received and to be transmitted.

1. Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, art 36 and 54.

Text published in 2019 in *Découvrir la nouvelle traduction du Missel romain*, published by the Association épiscopale liturgique pour les pays francophones. Reproduced with the permission of Bishop Serge Poitras.



Parish profile

St. Mary's, Wilno

Overlooking the breathtaking natural splendor of Madawaska Valley, St. Mary's Parish in Wilno is not only a sanctuary for the local faithful, but a glowing testament to the devotion of early Polish settlers who made this area their home.

Fleeing persecution in their homeland, native Poles started to arrive in the area around 1860. Wilno itself is known as Canada's first Kashubian settlement, as settlers hailed from the Kashubia region in north-western Poland.

Without a church to call their own, community members walked some 12 miles to Brudenell for Sunday Mass. Despite the language barrier, clergy ensured that sacraments were provided to the Polish faithful.

A chapel was eventually constructed in 1875 on land donated by Mr. Jacob Norlock. Bishop Joseph-Thomas Duhamel, Archbishop of Ottawa, made his way to bless the log building, dedicated to St. Stanislaus Kostka.

Work on the interior of a new stone church and the construction of a nearby rectory was completed in 1895. It was overseen by Father Bronislaus Jankowski, who was parish priest in both Wilno and its missions for some 36 years.

On February 2, 1936, fire destroyed St. Stanislaus Church. Under the guidance of then parish priest, Father Edward Wilowski, members of the congregation quickly began construction of a new church. The blessing of the cornerstone by Bishop Patrick Ryan took place on July 1, 1936. The new structure would also include a large parish hall in the basement. Countless volunteers contributed to the building of the twinned tower church, bringing with them teams of horses to help complete their work.

By the summer of 1937, the grandeur of the church and surrounds was on full display, including landscaped grounds and a grotto dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. A presbytery was constructed around this time, and a new cemetery.

On May 25, 1939 a copy of the painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa was gifted to the parish by Dr. Ignacy Moscicki, then President of the Polish Republic. It was presented to Father Wilowski, blessed and set into the main altar of the church. Father Wilowski would go on to receive the Order of Poland in 1946 in recognition of his efforts in advancing Polish culture.

"The picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa, also called the Black Madonna, is one of the most recognizable images of Blessed Virgin Mary in the world," explained Father Roman Majek, who has served as parish priest at St. Mary's for the last three years. Originally from the town of Koden, Poland, Father Majek also serves at St. Casimir's in Round Lake Centre.

"It's also especially dear and close to the hearts of Polish people everywhere. Polish immigrants leaving their country to look for a better life were usually taking with them the picture of their Holy Mother. The presence of that picture is making them to feel like home and to face difficulties of life with greater courage."

A replica statue of the Blessed Mother of Sianowo, Queen of Kashubia also calls St. Mary's home. The original statue is located at The Sanctuary of The Queen of the Kashubs in Sianowo church in Poland.

"Similarly, the statue of Our Lady of Sianowo is dear and close to the hearts of Kashub people," said Father Majek.

"They were the first immigrants coming from Poland and settling down in this area in the second half of the nineteenth century. Their prayers and the intercession of Our Lady of Sianowo help them to maintain their Christian tradition and to prosper in the new country despite enormous difficulties and challenges they had to face here."



On May 3, 1975, a Mass of Thanksgiving was held to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the parish, led by Bishop Joseph R. Windle. Another centennial celebration was held on July 20, 1975.

For Father Majek, "Seeing the dedication and love of the people for Jesus and the parish during the difficult times of COVID-19," is what he enjoys most about serving at St. Mary's.

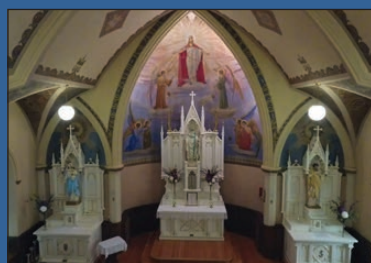
That devotion to their faith also carries forth in addressing the inevitable upkeep of St. Mary's church, a crucial investment for the benefit of future worshippers.

"There is always something that needs to be done for or around the church. There are actually many things that have been done for St. Mary's Church," said Father Majek.

"Only this year we were able to replace deteriorating bricks on the steeple of the church (a difficult and costly project), to build the protective shed for our tractor and other equipment and replace the heating furnace at the rectory—from wood to propane—plus many smaller projects."

Today, Masses are still held in Polish every Saturday at 5 pm, followed by an English/Polish Mass on Sundays at 11 a.m.

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



Parish anniversary

St. Anne's 175th anniversary is celebrated with joy and thanksgiving

By Hélène LaSalle

Since our 165th, we have been honoured that Providence has granted us the happiness of receiving several pastors who have devoted themselves with great heart to lead many celebrations: baptism, first communion, forgiveness, confirmation, and weddings as well as several funerals and especially the ordination of Justin Bertrand, a young man from our parish. We are happy that Father Justin was able to celebrate his first mass with us at St. Anne's.

Even though the number of parishioners has decreased in recent years (some due to age, relocation, illness), they still support the parish and we thank them for their generous donations. Our church remains alive and well thanks to the faith and dedication of those who volunteer their services for the survival of religious practice in this beautiful place facing the magnificent Ottawa River.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have experienced many changes: our church was closed, depriving parishioners of their 9 o'clock Mass, and then limiting the number of people who could attend Mass. These people had a lot of courage, and who would have thought that in 2021, we would need to make a reservation to attend Mass.

In spite of everything, people did not stop praying and did not give up. We have a strong religious community ready to take on many challenges while praying to Our Lord and the good St. Anne, patroness of our parish.

Since the summer, the 175th anniversary of our parish has been prepared by a group of people interested in putting this project in motion. We have had several fruitful meetings where we have enlisted the talents of each and every one.

Some of the activities organized include:

- sale of mugs representing St. Anne's church, the grotto and the image of the good St. Anne
- organizing volunteers to take care of a meal that was served to parishioners after the 10:30 a.m. Mass.
- work at the grotto by Pierre Jolicoeur who oversaw the renovation project.



The St. Anne anniversary celebration with Bishop Desrochers allowed for married couples to renew their commitment to each other. After Mass we had a blessing of the newly renovated grotto and there was a luncheon for a limited number of people.

Hello there,

Fr. Justin here, even though I am not able to be with you in person to celebrate this wonderful occasion, I wanted to offer my congratulations and a few brief words.

175 years, wow! Now that is a milestone indeed, and a beautiful one. 175 years of sharing the faith and love of the Gospel. 175 years of living as a community of faith and supporting one another throughout good times and bad. 175 years of living our community life. It is truly something beautiful to celebrate, and I know Good St. Ann looks down upon us today with her grandmotherly smile, rejoicing with us on this powerful day.

I know that even for my own vocation, our parish and our community of Sainte-Anne have played an essential and fundamental role. It was in this parish that I learned to pray, sing, serve and be present to the needs of the

community. I wouldn't be the same priest that I am today without Saint Anne and our beautiful parish community. A parish is not just a building, it is a people, and if we are still here today after 175 years, it is because our people of faith are strong and full of what is needed - the love of Jesus and the hope of the Gospel. As you all know, even though I am now away from you physically, my heart is still - and always will be in - in the Pontiac with you. And more so, deep down I will always be a boy from the island, and from the parish of Sainte-Anne. And for that I am grateful! Know that this parish, and each of you my friends, are in my prayers! Congratulations on celebrating this monumental occasion, and know that my thoughts and joy are shared with you today - even from all the way out here in Temiscamingue!

God Bless and Union of Prayer!

Fr. Justin Bertrand



Saint Profile

St. Anthony Mary Claret

Anthony Claret was the fifth child of John Claret and Josephine Claret. He was born on December 23, 1807, in Sallent, Spain.

God's calling upon Anthony's life to the priesthood became evident at a very young age. However, financial concerns prevented him from entering the seminary, since he worked closely with his father in the weavers' shop. Once the family no longer needed his assistance, he entered the local diocesan seminary and was ordained to the priesthood on June 13, 1835.

During his time in parish ministry, he never felt as though he was accomplishing all that he needed to. After preaching on a special occasion in his own diocese, he received invitations from Bishops of other diocese to preach there and he covered all of Spain and the Canary Islands. It was said that he had delivered as many as eight sermons in one day and often was present for the people to hear their confessions, and he stayed as long as ten hours without interruption.

From one area to another, as he shared the Gospel message, great miracles of conversion were recorded, and the people returned to the Catholic faith. As he continued his work, people were seeking him not only for spiritual support, but also for physical healings and needs. When this became too much for him, he called on the assistance of apostolic men and founded the Congregation of Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (The Clarentian Fathers) on July 16, 1849.

The news travelled fast of his great work, and at the suggestion of Queen Isabella II, the Holy Father named Anthony Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba. He was consecrated on October 6, 1850, taking for his motto, "The Charity of Christ urgeth us on" and adding the name of Mary to his own. For the next several years, he made pastoral visits, reorganized seminaries, boosted the morale and zeal of the clergy, preached against slavery, and regularized marriages. In doing this great work, he was frequently threatened and once an attempt was made on his life.

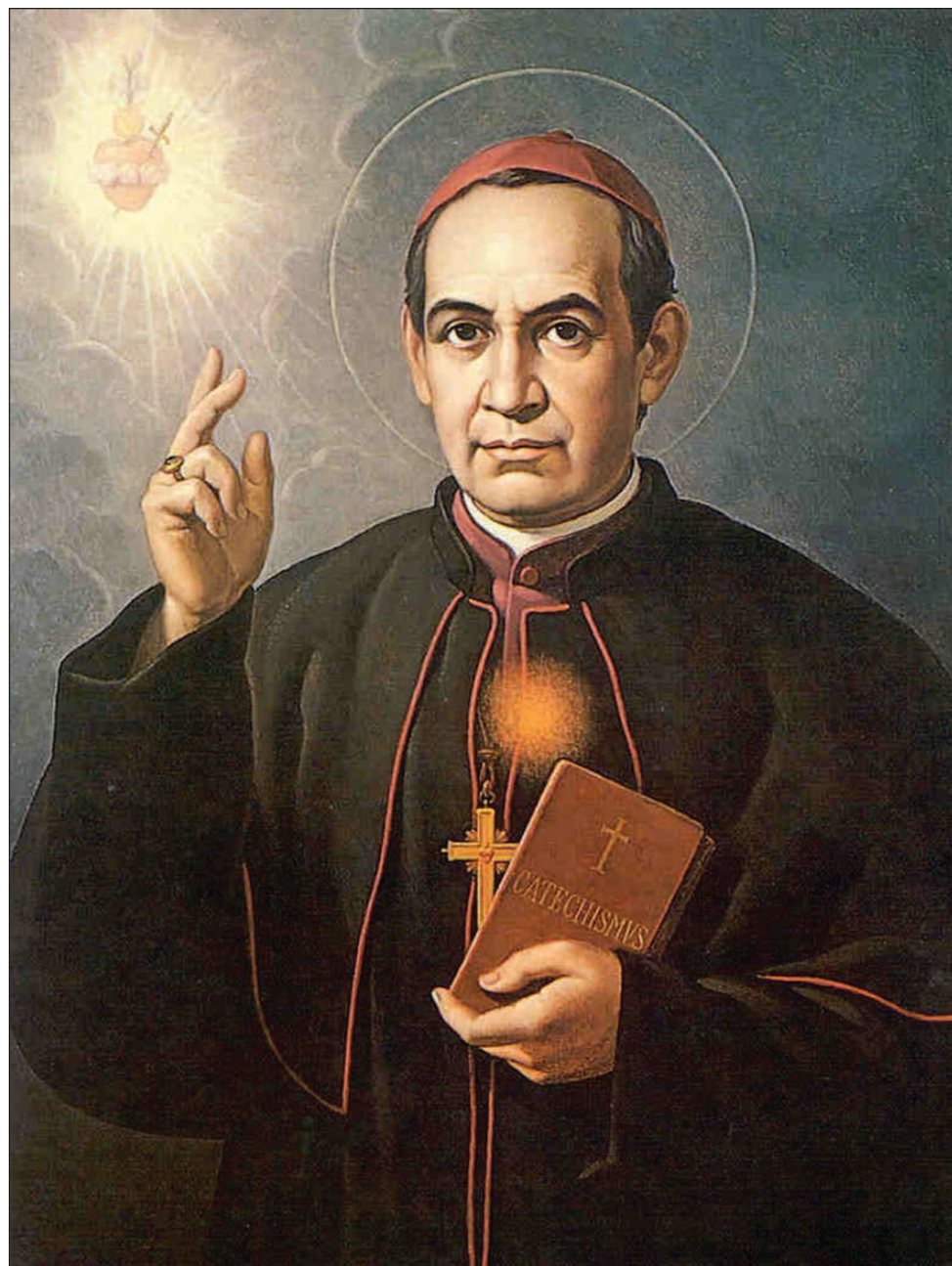
The Archbishop formed a Seminary for native clergy and founded an order of Sisters to help teach the faith. He wrote a simple illustrated catechism and developed a way of teaching religion which was later approved by the Vatican Council for the entire Church. He fought the injustices against the working class by wealthy European landowners, going as high as Her Majesty's government in Spain.

Queen Isabella II, the reigning sovereign in Spain, became deeply interested in the work and philosophy of the saintly archbishop of Santiago, and asked Pope Pius IX to appoint him as her confessor and spiritual director of the Royal Household in 1857.

It was during this period that the hostile forces unleashed their bitter attacks upon the Archbishop and all he stood for. Every available means was used to discredit and render him inactive. His enemies rested only when they had succeeded in having him banished from the country. Even then, their relentless persecution followed him into exile.

From his exile in Paris, the Archbishop travelled to Rome for the First Vatican Council, at which he took an active part. While in Rome, the Archbishop suffered a severe stroke and was moved back to France. He went home to meet the Lord on October 24, 1870.

There is a great devotion to Saint Anthony Mary Claret that is spreading throughout the world. Reports from all over the United States, Canada and Mexico attribute recent and wonderful graces received through his intercession. Twice during his lifetime, he was personally afflicted with malignancy and miraculously delivered from it through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



A PRAYER TO SAINT ANTHONY MARY CLARET

*St. Anthony Mary Claret,
during your life on earth
you often comforted the afflicted
and showed such tender love and compassion
for the sick and sinful.
Intercede for me now.
Look with pity on me
(or on the person afflicted with illness or whose conversion is desired)
and grant my prayer,
if such be the will of God.
Make my troubles your own.
Speak a word for me to the Immaculate Heart of Mary
to obtain by her powerful intercession
the grace I yearn for so ardently,
and a blessing to strengthen me during life,
assist me at the hour of death,
and lead me to a happy eternity. Amen.*



Family Life and Youth Ministry Office – UPDATE

By Yvette Bourque

This past June, I made the decision to homeschool my son, Jesse (age 10), for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year at his request. In order to do this, I needed to reduce my hours at the diocese and so it was decided that I would continue with 10 hrs/week and work primarily from home. This changed some of my responsibilities. I now have three areas of concentration; continue the Diocesan Young Adult Ministry program, collaborate with the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board (RCCDSB) on a renewed vision and initiative of evangelization, and continue to assist with the ongoing upkeep of the diocesan website.

Young Adult Ministry

The Diocesan Young Adult Ministry went through the challenges of lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions over the past 20 months or so, along with many other ministries. What was discovered is that face-to-face meetings are very much preferred by young adults. Although online platforms can work in a pinch, they are not the most popular with this age group. Young adults need and long for real connections with others. This was a challenging time for all, but there were actually more young people coming out than ever before, perhaps because the options of things to do was very minimal

and perhaps people of like mind just really needed to gather. This fall the group chose to begin a study on the *Book of Revelation* by Ascension Press with Jeff Cavins. Since we normally meet once a month, and this study has 10 sessions, we have stepped up our frequency and are meeting every second week. Each year in the fall, there are participants who have to say “goodbye for now” as they head off to College, University or accept jobs in other locations. This year was no different. However, the group was blessed to have a former participant, Sr. Orienne Dyck, join the August trek to High Falls in Algonquin park. It was a blessing to be outdoors and enjoying nature. Sr. Orienne’s journey into religious life is highlighted in another article in this issue. See page 7 for her story. Newcomers are always invited to join in and are welcomed by the faithful young adults who attend. Contact Yvette Bourque to be included in the e-mail list for further communication: yvettebourque@pembrokedioocese.com.

Evangelization in RCCDSB schools

Part of Bishop Desrochers’ overall plan for Evangelization in the diocese includes the Catholic schools that serve our youth throughout the diocese. There are three members of the Diocesan Evangelization Team—David Afelskie, the new Religious & Family Life Education Special Assignment Teacher, Pierre-Alain Giffard,



the new Director of Pastoral Work and myself—who work directly with Mark Searson, RCCDSB Director of Education, and a small pastoral team, to determine how to best tackle this large initiative. Our team is just in its early stages, but is blessed to have the full cooperation of the Director, who sees this as a welcome initiative and is looking forward to exploring the options for evangelization for the 21 schools he oversees in Renfrew County. The school board pastoral team is already looking into participating in a specific evangelization ministry themselves to determine if this could eventually be used across the Board. The evangelization initiative, if accepted, will begin with staff members. Your prayers for the evangelization project in the diocese are greatly appreciated.

Seminarian Lukas Časta

This past summer, another member of our community pursuing his religious studies returned to our diocese to not only provide some needed assistance in the maintenance of parishes, but also acquire invaluable mentoring in the administration of parish life.

A native of Kitchener, Ontario, Seminarian Lukas Časta and his family moved to Barry’s Bay in the year 2000. There, his family attended St. Hedwig’s Parish where Časta served as an altar boy.

As it turned out, Časta would answer God’s call to religious service and enter the seminary years later.

“I am attending St. Augustine’s Seminary in Toronto, and have been there for 4 years so far,” said Časta.

“I began with a Spiritual Year, then spent a year fulfilling my philosophy requirements, and for the last two years I have been a part of the Theology program.”

In his quest to seek summer employment, Časta was fortunate to acquire work with our diocese.

“I had been looking for a summer job and Father Scott (Murray) contacted me and offered me some part-time work at the parishes he is assigned to, just cutting the

grass at St. Alphonsus in Chapeau and doing some small maintenance work,” said Časta, noting how enlightening his work tenure was.

“With the summer over, I am starting to have a better idea of everything it takes to be a priest of the diocese, and much more about life in the day-to-day running of a parish, or a group of parishes.”

Časta is now in the city of Pembroke to acquire some time working directly in a parish environment.

“Currently, I am assigned to St. Columbkille Cathedral Parish under the direction of Father Jim Beanish, the Rector,” said Časta.

“The idea of the internship year is for seminarians to get some practical experience with parish life, and to learn and be mentored in that parish environment.”

With God’s grace and prayers from our diocesan members, Časta will hopefully return to our community to serve as a parish priest in the not too distant future. “So far, I have been blessed by having the opportunity to spend more time in the diocese and to get to know some of the people who I someday hope to have the privilege of serving and ministering to as a priest,” said Časta.





School Chaplain experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada, schools across the country, in our province and within our diocese have been closed, switched to online learning only, and reopened again. This has required flexibility and innovation in methods used for learning, teaching and connecting.

That includes the work that our school chaplains' carry out to support the emotional wellbeing of students and staff by providing pastoral care services and strategies.

Jason Dedo, Chaplain of St. Joseph High School (SJHS) in Renfrew, shares that during the pandemic, he has been acutely aware of the importance of prayer in our Catholic school community.

"Whether we have been in a situation of in-person learning or distance learning, we have maintained a prayerful atmosphere at SJHS. Every day we begin with morning prayer that includes one of the readings of the day for daily Mass. We also highlight any feasts on the liturgical calendar and reflect on the seasonal changes of the liturgical year. Incorporating the daily mass readings into our morning prayers alerts us to the various celebrations, rhythms and themes of the liturgical year and helps us to appreciate, experience and live these more fully."

Dedo notes that during times of distance learning, the daily prayers were posted on the school's Facebook page for students, parents and members of the community to access.

"We also were very fortunate to be able to work with Fr. Bill Kenney, who was appointed Chaplain of our Board's new St. Kateri Tekakwitha Virtual Catholic school, on creating weekly liturgy videos for the seasons of Advent and Lent."

The videos were used by the school community and were shared with the St. Kateri community as well as school principals.

"Having these Liturgy of the Word videos as a prayer and faith formation resource was welcomed at a time when it was not possible for us to gather for entire school celebrations of the Eucharist," says Dedo.

"It was also important for us, as staff members in a Catholic school to gather together for prayer during times of distance learning. When we were not able to gather for in-person learning, several staff members gathered virtually on Mondays and Fridays to pray Morning Prayer together. We also prayed the Novena to the Sacred Heart during the first days of the month of June and, as this is the Year of St. Joseph and St. Joseph is our patron saint, we ended the school year with the Novena to St. Joseph. Many staff members were very appreciative of these opportunities to pray together, share prayer intentions and to support each other in faith."

When the pandemic struck, Julie Bélec, Chaplain at Jeanne-Lajoie Catholic School Center, wondered how to ensure a modern pastoral presence with the limitations and restrictions.

"Everything went so fast that we didn't even have time to ask ourselves the question, we had to answer it and take action," she notes.

Fortunately, today's technology has allowed Jeanne-Lajoie to not be isolated from the other schools within the Conseil des Écoles Catholiques du Centre Est.

The Catholic leadership training meetings were moved to virtual, after school hours. Although there were doubts about the success of this transition, it was a pleasant surprise, says Bélec.



"Indeed, even though the students were tired of the virtual, participation did not decrease. The young people chose to help the facilitators by participating more in the organization, not only to help the 'old people' with the technology, but also for the content of the meetings. This was positive to the point that we will be offering the youth more training in facilitation to allow them to take their place even more," she says.

The students and the school staff also learned to do church differently.

"Our prayers and celebrations were done together virtually. On a positive note, this allowed us to deepen the meaning of the prayers, songs and moments of the celebration in small groups or individually," shares Bélec.

Meet the new RCCDSB Religious & Family Life Education Special Assignment Teacher

David Afelskie is the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board's new Religious & Family Life Education Special Assignment Teacher, taking over the role from Tony Cosentino.

The school board has been rolling out a new religion program called "*Gathered in Faith, Gathered in Christ*" for Grades 1-8.

This resource "reflects the content of faith expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, follows the rationale and methodology of the *General Directory for Catechesis* and is endorsed by our Canadian Catholic bishops," says Afelskie.

"Part of my job description entails providing resource and classroom support for our teachers as they deliver religious education classes."

Afelskie goes on to say that, "One beautiful aspect of my position is assisting our administrative team and school principals to lead their schools in prayer. Although we cannot host school assemblies or meetings due to COVID-19, I have created many virtual liturgies for our leadership team to use that keep us connected to the liturgical cycle of the Church. In particular, I have witnessed classrooms offer their daily intentions, in a virtual format, in front of the entire school community, and this brings home the point that we are all connected as the 'body of Christ'."

The school board has also been working diligently to provide adult faith formation opportunities for staff.

"Last year, we encouraged staff to develop and commit to a daily time of personal prayer. Our school board has also partnered with OECA to offer Additional Qualification

courses in Religious Education. I look forward to guiding several of our teachers in examining our Catholic Faith's beauty, richness, and historical foundations," notes Afelskie.

Since it is the 20th anniversary of our school board's mission statement, stakeholders (school board staff, parents, staff, priests) are also engaged in reflection and input around the following scripture verse: "*This is what Yahweh asks of you; only this, to act justly; to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.*" Mi 6.8

"These are a few examples of my daily work and the beautiful things happening at RCCDSB. Faith is alive and well, especially when we heed those powerful words of Jesus to Peter, 'Follow me!' Take it from me; it is a decision you will not regret."



Local charitable works adjust to the pandemic

The onset of the global pandemic has affected everyone in how we carry out our daily lives. This also includes the charitable groups linked to our diocesan family and how they deliver their services to those most in need.

Representatives from those groups say their services are needed now more than ever, and share how they have adapted to current circumstances.

St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) – Columbkille Conference – Soup Kitchen

St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP) had to discontinue offering in-house dining. But that did not stop members from providing fresh meals.

“We started a new program called The Brown Bag Believers, so we’re handing out brown bag lunches (115 to 125 meals per day) at the Cathedral door. We’re open Saturday, Sunday and Monday,” said President Muggsie Boland.

According to Boland, the demand for meals has tripled since the onset of the pandemic. “We are seeing lots of new faces,” said Boland.

Nonetheless, volunteers adapted to the increase, and health restrictions.

“We have a crew that comes in on Saturdays; three at the kitchen, two at the door. Then we have separate crews that come in on Sunday and Monday. There’s a shopping crew that comes in off-time when the kitchen isn’t being used.”

For a period of time, SSVP also hosted members from The Grind via the Cathedral kitchen facilities when The Grind was in the midst of relocating to its new facility.

“The Grind wasn’t able to use its kitchen until this September, so they were with us from of March 9 to September 9. They do a lunch Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,” said Boland.

In addition to feeding the hungry, SSVP engages in home visits (during COVID-19 by phone) in order to respond to critical situations, such as persons struggling with sickness, loss of employment or relationship breakdowns. This is done in co-operation with other agencies to avoid duplication of services.

“Our community is very generous,” said Boland, noting that donations, both individual and from the business community, increased during the pandemic.

“We also applied for COVID grants and were successful in receiving that.”

“We couldn’t do any of it unless we had strong, loyal volunteers,” said Boland. “The volunteers keep us going—there’s no paid staff.”

“I really have to stress we don’t let anyone go hungry. We’re there to provide service to those in need.”

The Grind

The Grind provides a wide range of services, including a coffee house, community kitchen, outreach ministry, transitional housing, and other services for those in need.

Originally located in the downtown core of Pembroke, it relocated to the former Pembroke Fire Station on Victoria Street.

While the outbreak of COVID-19 has altered how the organization operates, it remains dedicated to helping where it can.

“We’re still affected by COVID, so we don’t have our clients coming in,” said Executive Director Jerry Novak. “We’re currently just providing take-out meals, but we have seen an increase. It’s nice just to be able to see them face to face, give them a meal, and identify some other areas where we can help.”

Prior to the pandemic, The Grind served 60 meals a day during the lunch period. That has increased to 140-150 meals.

“I think it’s just the impact of COVID,” said Novak in explaining the rise in demand for their lunch service. “People are not able to get out, or the fear of going out especially in the early phase of the emergency. I think that’s just carried on.”

While indoor gatherings were no longer available, volunteers continued to remain mobile in helping their clients.

“We do have a mobile outreach service,” explained Novak, which includes delivering meals.

“We were doing wellness checks on the homeless population in our community, and we did that over the winter.”

Such dedication from their volunteers was essential to ensure they could continue to carry out their mission.

“Even though there was a lockdown we still served meals,” said Novak. “We still have a good, solid group of volunteers who believe in what we do and helping our community. We didn’t miss a step.”

First Step Options:

A pregnancy resource centre based in Pembroke, First Step Options continues to operate, though with adjustments in the delivery of its services.

“It’s made it a little more difficult to connect with clients, so we had to learn some new ways of doing things,” said Executive Director Donalee Loback, noting that lockdown periods during the pandemic prevented in-person appointments, such as pre-natal classes.

“So, we’ve offered our support services via Zoom or telephone. During the government-mandated lockdowns, staff worked from home. We went into the centre just to package items for clients when needed.”

Clients can also access the online BrightCourse video lessons program.

First Step Options also implemented a program called Porch Side Pickup.

“They (clients) would call and tell us what they need, and then we would place the items on the porch for them to come and pick it up,” said Loback.

Fundraising efforts have proven difficult in light of the restrictions on large gatherings.

“That’s been a challenge,” admitted Loback, though the organization has managed to continue to operate thanks to monetary donations and material donations, such as diapers, formula, and clothing.

“God has been faithful; God’s people have been faithful. We’ve been managing quite well, meeting our bills and goals.”

St. Joseph Food Bank

St. Joseph Food Bank continues to carry out its mission of providing food donations to those in need every Monday morning from 9:30 am until 12:30 pm. Adjustments were made to both expedite the donation process while protecting both clients and volunteers from possible infection.

Basic health rules, such as wearing mask and sanitizing hands, were enforced while implementing measures that minimized large numbers of persons from congregating onsite.

“We instituted a process where we pre-packed all of our non-perishable items,” said Chairperson John Kilborn, adding that coloured bags were used to distinguish between single or family clients.”

“When a client does come in, and let’s say they are a family of two, we just grab a two-bag.”

From there, clients can move forward to acquire perishable items which are quickly packed for them.

The food bank has also partnered with Carefor and Community Mental Health to assist with providing donations. Volunteers prepare orders for Monday morning, then hand off the items to delivery drivers from those two organizations.

Like fellow charities, the Food Bank saw an increase in demand for their services.

“We decided at the board level that clients could come twice a month to make sure they meet their nutritional needs,” said Kilborn, noting as recently as October the Food Bank saw 101 families in a span of three hours in a single day.

“That almost set a record for us. That’s quite an increase. Everybody is struggling; prices seem to be going up.”

Fortunately, the generosity from the public has carried on throughout the pandemic, but not in the traditional format the Food Bank is accustomed to.

continued on page 16...



“What we’ve seen is a shift away from food donations,” said Kilborn.

“The health department wanted us to shy away from food drives and rather we’ve asked for monetary donations. The public has really responded in that respect. It allows us to purchase what we really need and that works out well for us.”

Despite the risks working in a pandemic environment, volunteers at St. Joseph Food Bank continue to rise to the challenge of assisting the needy who come to their doorstep.

“We have a great core of volunteers, they’re just fantastic,” said Kilborn.

Reflecting on the devotion of the volunteers of all four organizations, Deacon Adrien Chaput told of how their commitment to help others was very much the embodiment of what Jesus Christ devoted his life to.

“As Jesus said ‘I came to serve, not to be served,’” said Deacon Chaput. “It really moves my heart to know, right from the depth of their hearts, they are concerned about our brothers and sisters and making sure their needs are met.”

He also believes that all members of our diocesan community must be ever conscious of needs of the less fortunate and strive to help whenever we can.

“There were always people in need,” said Deacon Chaput in noting that the pandemic has only highlighted that poverty very much exists in our region.

“This has brought a greater awareness, a greater dedication to work together in partnership to ensure that we continue to take care of everyone, that the needs of those looking for assistance are met each and every day,” said Deacon Adrien.

2021 Ecclesia Survey Preliminary Summary

Overall findings

Thank you to everyone who took the time to answer our survey about the *Ecclesia* newsletter. We received responses from across our diocese. The vast majority who filled out the survey reported that they read the paper often, would like it to continue in print, and are happy with two to three issues a year. A few said they would like to see it published three or four times per year.

Below we share a sampling of responses received as well as our responses to some of the suggestions that were made:

Comments received

Publication:

- many do not have internet, please print issues.
- much better than the former and much larger diocesan paper.
- gives us insight as to what goes on all over the diocese, keep up the good work.
- after reading this issue (Spring 2021), I will continue reading all other issues. It was informative, easy to read and enjoyable. Keep up the good work.
- senior teachers in Catholic Schools should use it in class.
- I find it very interesting, continue the good work! I appreciate all the work and not sure how to improve it.

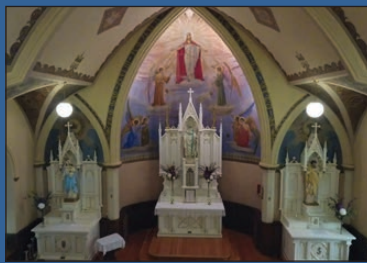
Content:

- really appreciate Bishop Guys’ words of wisdom.
- very good and wouldn’t change a thing.
- love the letters from Bishop Guy.
- it is a lot of work but it is the best way to keep people informed. We especially like any items to do with our Catholic school system, it is the best way to keep people involved with what is going on between the school and the church and the school board. We feel our school system is always vulnerable. We do not have enough of our people attending church functions, but thanks to items in *Ecclesia* that are picked up by parishioners attending Mass.
- I read it often (whenever I can find it available, usually Holy Name).
- it has always been a good way to keep in touch with the whole diocese, stretching us beyond our parish. Last issue was very well done, continue this format.
- continue to focus on parish profiles and events in various regions of the Diocese. It helps us feel connected to the Diocesan Church.

Suggestions (with answers from the Ecclesia committee where appropriate):

- could be more stuff from the Pope.
Good idea!
- perhaps a youth writer?
We would love to have a youth writer! Perhaps this comment will inspire a youth to come forward.
- interesting good news from a specific parish, enjoy the stories of our priests’ lives.
We do try to include parish events and information through our regular “Parish Profile” articles and Parish anniversary stories.
- perhaps simple teachings of Christ, i.e., what does love mean? It is not an excuse to do as you please.
Thanks for the suggestion. Father Michael O’Brien’s articles do cover similar topics.
- explanation of Cathedral tax – how is it determined, what each parish pays (is it a percentage of the Sunday collection?) How the funds used?
- keep people informed of plans for the Diocese.
- have a “letters to the Editor” section so we can have dialogue and ask questions.
This is a great suggestion. Our only concern is that with the newsletter only going out a couple of times per year (as opposed to weekly or monthly), it is not very conducive to discussion.
- staff/contacts at the Diocese (who are they?) and admin and structure.
Great timing for this suggestion, the Fall 2021 issue will include biographies of some of our teams.
- the articles on the various parishes are very interesting, adding stats such as size (# of families, average weekly attendance, efforts to be financially viable, etc., would be of interest.
- articles, info, pics about all the CWLs and the K of C in the Diocese.
We include these articles when/if they are submitted to us.
- organists/music (i.e., Leo Rochon, Gerald Laronde, etc.)
Great idea!

- it would be nice to know who the Pastor of each parish is. At least report the transfers.
We include the information when priests are reassigned. The Directory on the Diocesan website provides a list of parishes, priests and which parish they are currently assigned to.
- we love Ecclesia. Always be sure to announce the parish suppers as you have been good to do in the past. Covid should be history some time soon.
We miss the Parish supper list (and the suppers!) too and hope we will be able to include them again very soon, when COVID restrictions end.
- interview with the Bishop (varying topics).
- young people in from our diocese currently in Religious communities.
We cover this regularly through profiles on our seminarians and First Profession of Vows, etc.
- include a regular column featuring Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Colleges contributions in the diocese (plays, musical performances, conferences, catechetical certificate) so more people can learn about this unique Canadian Catholic post secondary institution that is in our diocese, or include a regular interest piece by faculty and learn more about a topic, theme, relevant to our faith or living as a Catholic in our world.
While we don’t cover OLSWC regularly, we include all submissions that they provide.
- more resources for Catholic Families.
Happy to do that! You can also check out the diocesan website under Family, Life and Youth Ministry office
- years ago, I remember seeing a map of the various zones and which parishes were in each zone, that would be helpful.
Thanks for the suggestion. Sounds like something that could be on the website permanently.
- History of residential schools, how they came to be, etc.
This is a good suggestion for a very current topic, however we, as a small, diocesan newsletter, don’t have the resources to cover something so ‘big’ and controversial. We could ask for permission to reprint articles from other publications that do have the resources.



Summary of Fr. Bob Bedard's book: *Evangelization, a challenge for the Catholic Church*

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

Fr. Bob Bedard, the founder of the Companions of the Cross, wrote an excellent book, *Evangelization, a challenge for the Catholic Church*. In it, he says that the task of proclaiming the Good News of salvation is the Church's number one mandate and that it should take precedence over everything else. Every Christian, he says, every Catholic, is called by the Lord to be an evangelizer. Unfortunately, we have forgotten how to practice it. We need to understand again what evangelization is and how it works.

So, what is evangelization? It is the process whereby a person hears the Gospel, embraces it fully, makes Jesus Lord of his life and gets involved in a lively, intimate and ongoing relationship with Him. People need a real encounter with the Lord, an encounter that touches them deeply and transforms their lives. Faith is a gift of God, but—and this is key in Fr. Bedard's thinking—it requires our response, a personal decision to follow Christ.

Fr. Bedard sees evangelization as a three-step process:

1. A proclamation of the Gospel in which the person being evangelized understands clearly that he is called to hand his life over totally to the Lord.
2. The evangelized is then invited and guided to make a personal and conscious decision to embrace the Gospel, to choose Jesus as Lord, to accept salvation and the Lord's design for his life.
3. Once a person has made that decision to place him/herself under the Lordship of Jesus, God supplies the power and makes his own sovereign move. The person's response opens the door to the Lord and frees Him to have His way with her, to move from within and transform him/her. The person is introduced to the realm of authentic spiritual and religious experience. Only then can he/she be said truly evangelized.

It was his participation in a Holy Spirit seminar that changed Fr. Bedard's approach to evangelization. He understood that the Gospel necessarily needs to be presented as an invitation to be responded to. A person's response allows her to experience the power of God, to be transformed by the Holy Spirit and to enter into an intimate relationship with the Lord.

As a schoolteacher, he began to confront his students with the notion that God could deal with them and would do so if they would move toward Him and leave Him to have His way in them. He quoted Pope John Paul II speaking to young people in Mexico: "Walk towards Christ. He alone is the solution to all your problems. He alone is the way, the truth, and the life; He alone is the real salvation of the world; He alone is the hope of

mankind" (January 30, 1979). He told them that God was tired of being a spectator in their lives and wanted very much to be a participant. He suggested they give the Lord a chance to reveal Himself to them. He presented the full challenge of the Gospel: "Step forward and hand over your lives to the Lord." It was an invitation to total surrender.

Having taught and explained all about the need to say "yes" to God's invitation, he then gave them a little printout with a short text, a prayer of dedication in which they could, having decided to do so, vocalize their commitment to Christ. Those who had chosen to make this conscious decision (and he told them to give it a lot of thought and prayer) would come to a celebration of the Eucharist scheduled to fit into their various timetables. Just before Communion time, they would come forward, kneel, and read the prayer together. Towards the end of the school year, there would be another special Eucharist to which were invited all of those who made a public consecration of their lives to the Lord.

Here are two texts for consecration that he used (the first one is simpler):

Dear Lord, I bow before you as the great God of heaven and earth and the loving Father of us all. Thank you for calling us to an eternal life of joy with you, made possible for us by the death of Jesus your divine Son, whom you have made King and Lord of all creation.

Lord Jesus, I want to follow you completely. I want to turn away from all sinful patterns in my life. Help me to do this. I choose you as the only Lord and Saviour of my life and surrender everything to you—body and soul, mind and will, past, present and future, priorities and plans, and all my possessions. Deal with me in whatever way you wish. Come, Holy Spirit. Confirm me in my decision. Glory be...

The second one is somewhat longer and makes it possible to do more reflecting on some of the implications of handing one's life over to God.

Father, I place myself in your presence now as I make this commitment that I believe your Son, Jesus, is calling me to make. Send your Holy Spirit upon me to help me to pray. I worship you as Creator, God of heaven and earth, and I want to give you all the praise you expect from me.

My Lord Jesus, I want to follow your call. You have accomplished my salvation, and that of all the world, upon the Cross by the shedding of your blood. I accept that salvation. You have died to take away the sins of the world. On the cross, you bore all of my sins, and your forgiveness is available to me. I confess my sinfulness. I claim that forgiveness, and I forgive all those who have ever offended me.

Jesus, it was out of love for all of us that you gave up your life. And you would have given it up out of love for me alone. I now accept that love. I want you to be the Lord of my life in every possible way.

I give you my understanding, my will, my spirit, my physical being, my possessions, my desires, and my plans. I want to surrender to you completely. I desire a personal relationship with you as my Lord and Saviour. I give you my cares, my worries, my fears, my hang-ups, all my difficulties, and I ask you to set me free.

Father, my faith is weak. I want to believe, but doubts cause me to hesitate. Grant me, I pray, through Jesus, your Son, the gift of divine faith. Sweep away all my doubts and give me that assurance that only your gift of faith can impart. Father, your Son, Jesus, said that if we asked you anything in his name, you would faithfully grant it. I ask you now in Jesus' name to answer my prayer.

May all glory, all praise be to you, Father, all worship and honour, homage, and blessing, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, reigning with you, one God, now and forever; Amen.

Evangelization works; it's dynamic, it's simple. Our task is nothing more than to put the Word out there and let the Lord go to work. He's the one who touches people's lives and turns them around. It's real, it's powerful and it lasts.

For Father Bedard, our priests and deacons should all be evangelists in the pulpit who call the listeners to open their hearts to the Lord and allow Him to deal with them in a way that only He can. Every homily should be a call to say "yes" to the Lord, to whatever He wants. Until we do this, Catholics will tend to be unevangelized and occasional churchgoers or, at best, uninvolved spectators.

In Fr. Bedard's experience, it was not until he began to evangelize in this way that he saw his students touched deeply by the Lord. Before that, the reality was that many, many of them stopped practising their faith entirely when they left the school. But the turning point in their lives was the day they made a conscious choice for Jesus and his Gospel.

A word of wisdom from Fr. Bedard: He explains that when we evangelize, we need the Lord's sensitivity. Not every person is ready at all times to hear the Lord's word. We should not make the mistake of prying open the door to people's lives. Not every situation is made for evangelizing. The Lord's timing and ours are not always the same. The Lord has a timing we must tune into.



Pembroke Diocesan Catholic Women's League News: Faith, Service, Social Justice

By Bev Drouin, Diocesan Communications Chair

The Pembroke Diocesan council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada celebrated its 100th Anniversary in March 2021 and is commemorating the event by updating the Council's History Booklet. A dedicated team has been working on this project with a planned October publication.

COVID-19 has brought changes to our daily lives as well as those of the Diocesan Council members. Elected officers extended their two-year term to three on request by National Council. President Joan Lemay has called us into action to plan this year's events. Fall activities included a Day of Reflection in Eganville with a presentation entitled, "Give Peace a Chance". The Diocesan fall meeting, scheduled for October 30 in Deep River, was both in person and virtual.

Many CWL members learned how to meet virtually when in-person meetings were not possible. Annual meetings

at all levels, diocesan, provincial and national, were held virtually this summer with many diocesan CWL members in attendance. Meetings combined both last year's and this year's business sessions because of the cancellation of all conventions in 2020. Cancellations last year also involved the 100th anniversary celebrations of National Council planned for the National Convention in Montreal.

At the National Annual Meeting of the CWL in August 2021, His Eminence Cardinal Gerald Lacroix, ISPX, Archbishop of Québec and the Primate of Canada, welcomed CWL attendees with words of appreciation, encouragement and hope for the future. He affirmed the League as an organization that builds without destroying and serves through its love to heal and take action. Encouraging members to celebrate the League's centenary with joy, he asked them to continue protecting creation and to renew their spirit in service "For God and Canada".

The National theme, *Care for our Common Home*, continues through 2021. CWL Councils have been diligently working to raise awareness of the need for everyone to address the care of God's creation. Beginning in 2022, the new theme will be *Catholic and Living It!* This was announced by new National President Fran Lucas.

The Ontario provincial theme continues to be *Loneliness*. CWL members have been active in addressing loneliness, especially during COVID lockdowns, by reaching out through phone calls, drive-by birthday celebrations, grocery shopping and other acts of kindness. We continue to pray for all who are lonely.

Pembroke Diocesan Council draws members together across the diocese to grow in faith, build leadership skills so members can better serve their parishes and communities, and be an advocate of Catholic values for the larger society under the guidance of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Student Crafts Crucifix to Aid with Prayer

Last spring, some students with special needs from the Life Skills Class at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew had the opportunity to experience some in-person learning when most students were required to shift to online learning for classes. Students in Steven Gravelle's construction technology class were invited to complete some hands-on projects. Nathan Ripmeester, one of the students, was very eager to begin a project in the class.

"Nathan wanted to make a cross first thing when he came into the shop Day 1," said Mr. Gravelle. "He asked me right away if he could make a cross so that he can pray to God." Moved by Nathan's request, Mr. Gravelle gave Nathan the opportunity to begin the creation of the cross and assisted him to bring it to completion. Once the cross was completed, a corpus of Our Lord was affixed to the cross to make it a crucifix.

When asked why he decided to create a crucifix, Nathan stated that "it was my project and I wanted to have a cross in my bedroom." Nathan added that he was "very happy with my cross."

The project was a meaningful experience for Mr. Gravelle as well. "I reflected on my own faith and blessings I have

received as I helped Nathan to create the cross. I also thought about Joseph and Jesus who were carpenters, as my middle name is Joseph and Jesus was a teacher."

Fr. Kerry Brennan, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew, was invited to visit the construction classroom and bless the crucifix for Nathan. After the blessing, Nathan added, "I feel very happy and lucky to have my crucifix blessed by Fr. Brennan, with all my friends and caring adults around."

Lisa Guyea, an educational assistant who works with students in the Life Skills program, shared the following reflection:

"Nathan is a student with strong faith. He put a lot of time and effort into the cross, as you can see with the quality of the work. I think Nathan was impressed with how it turned out. When he started the project, it was going to be just a cross, so adding the corpus was quite exciting to him. He is truly a genuine young man, very appreciative of having the crucifix blessed with the staff and his peers present."

Jane O'Gorman, program leader for special education at St. Joseph's, added, "We, as a Board, believe in integration,



and this is a beautiful example of what can happen when we create inclusive classrooms."

Nathan's creation of the crucifix and the sharing of his personal faith journey has been a blessing to all involved. This experience highlights the part of the Board's Vision Statement, which states that as an inclusive Catholic educational community, we strive to 'facilitate an active faith journey rooted in prayer and the sacraments.'



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