



# Ecclesia

The Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of Pembroke

November 2022

## A historic papal visit to Canada

Dear faithful and clergy of the Diocese of Pembroke,

Just a few months ago, I had the honour and privilege of participating in two unforgettable and historic events that took place for the first time on our planet, and this on Canadian soil! I am talking about the long-awaited arrival of the papal visit on Canadian soil, which was then supported and sustained by the pressing invitation that the Canadian bishops wished to present in all humility to His Holiness Pope Francis. Some of the Canadian bishops went to Rome to meet privately with him and to express the desire of all the Canadian bishops: to ask him to visit some of the important Indigenous nations of Canada to publicly ask for forgiveness for the abuses and sufferings that many Catholic religious, leaders and formators had committed in the past when they were in charge of residential schools.

In the interest of transparency and truth at this crucial time when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are trying to 'walk together' towards eventual reconciliation, it would be useful to recall that it was the federal government that originally conceived the plan to educate and assimilate Indigenous nations by building residential schools across Canada in the early 1900s. The goal was to 'reform' the Indigenous people by assimilating them into the pan-Canadian culture. Certain Catholic religious communities and other Protestant churches and denominations were then invited by the Canadian government to help implement and complete this great educational and reform project that is so controversial today.

During their private visit to Rome, the Canadian bishop delegates finally received the Holy Father's response, which certainly caused a great deal of media buzz at the time: Pope Francis would soon be coming to Canada to meet with Indigenous communities and their leaders and representatives in order to officially ask for forgiveness, and to help take a first step, however small, towards a difficult but possible reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The first announcement of the departure of a delegation of Indigenous representatives accompanied by some Canadian bishops to Roman soil, as you will recall, aroused great joy and hope in the Indigenous communities of the country. The intention was not only to express to the Holy Father the suffering experienced by many of the members of the delegation, but also testify to the fact that subsequent generations of Indigenous people were still suffering from the negative consequences of their stay in the residential schools.

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Evidently, a portion of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population remained sceptical about the benefits that might flow from the papal visit. Some believed that reconciliation would never be possible between our nations and that the Pope's words would not be enough to begin the process of reconciliation. This was to ignore the power and grace of God at work in our midst despite our human weaknesses and frailties!

The official delegation of 32 members from the three Indigenous nations of Canada, accompanied by the three delegate bishops, finally had their audience at the end of March 2022. On April 1, Pope Francis officially declared that he would visit them soon in Canada. It was a euphoric moment not only for the Indigenous people of Canada, but also for the non-Indigenous. Two categories of people, however, received the news very differently: the first were the sceptics and detractors who said that no good would come of the visit and that it would be far too expensive. The second was the group of organizers of the Head of State's visit: they began to fear the worst, thinking that they had only four months to prepare for such a large-scale visit, which normally requires about two years of intense planning and organization. Some did not believe in the possibility of such a miracle, but the miracle happened anyway, thanks to all sorts of providential interventions and collaborations that finally contributed to the great success of the Pope's visit in July. Moreover, the speed with which the visit was organized and the involvement of many volunteers in key positions meant that the costs were well below the initial forecasts.

I described the Pope's visit as «historic» because, for the first time in history, the Pope described it primarily as a genuine «penitential pilgrimage» rather than a diplomatic and apostolic visit. As the head and representative of the universal Church, Francis was willing to make the long journey from Rome, despite his poor health. I had the opportunity to see him up close at the Basilica of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré on the morning of July 28, 2022, and that same evening at the Cathedral Basilica of Quebec for Evening Prayer (Vespers). I saw him suffering but smiling at the same time from his wheelchair; and when he had to stand up, I saw him grimace while trying to hide the intense pain that invaded him when his bodyguard helped him up. His suffering was secondary to the importance of delivering his message of love, forgiveness and reconciliation to those who appeared to be suffering more than he was. He would greet or extend his hand to anyone he met on his way into the procession to the Cathedral Basilica of Quebec.

I share with you here a brief anecdote that will make some of you smile. During this historic papal pilgrimage, I was accompanied by Deacon Adrien Chaput who regularly serves at my Cathedral of St. Columbkille in Pembroke. During the Vespers prayer at the Cathedral Basilica in Quebec City, I invited him to sit with me in the last section normally reserved for bishops. He was told that he should go to the deacons' section. I intervene through a friend who is in charge of security and he was immediately given permission to stay by my side, since I mentioned to this friend that a bishop had assured me that he would not be present at the Vespers prayer. So, I said to my fellow deacon: «Adrien, when the Pope passes through the main aisle during the entrance procession, don't just wave to him, reach out to him. Who knows? You have nothing to lose! Sitting at the end of the pew, he would thus have

the opportunity to reach out to him personally. As a matter of fact, not only did he have the opportunity to shake hands with the Pope when he entered the procession, but also when he left it! Twice rather than once! Deacon Adrien was rightly overwhelmed by the unforgettable encounter he had just had with Pope Francis. Back in the car, with the utmost seriousness, I presented him with a small bottle of liquid to purify the hands. His response was immediate: «No, no, Monsignor! I will never wash my right hand again!» And I burst out laughing!

To conclude, I will share with you some of the strong elements that marked me during this visit of Pope Francis to Canada: first, his attitude of listening to the Indigenous people he met everywhere he went. Even when some individuals did not want to shake his hand in return, he accepted this annoyance with a pacifying smile. Secondly, his human frailty and his courage to travel so far despite the limitations of the infirmity that afflicted him at that moment; and thirdly, the speeches he gave throughout the country appeared to me as a slow crescendo in which the topics and words he spoke gradually formed a well-articulated whole, while being imbued with an evangelical spirit that was both challenging and humbling in the face of the still-difficult road to reconciliation between the country's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As he himself wrote in the guest book of the Archdiocese of Quebec before his departure for Iqaluit, and at the request of Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix: «Reconciliation is certainly difficult... but possible!»

Yes, reconciliation is possible if we agree, on both sides, to listen to each other in this pilgrimage of reconciliation to which the Lord God invites us and invites all to follow in these difficult times we are living. A way of the cross, but a way that always leads, we are certain, to the resurrection on the third day. Pope Francis has, in my opinion, exceeded all the expectations I had before his arrival on Canadian soil. This is the conclusion I have also heard from many people who followed his penitential pilgrimage through television or other media, or who had the good fortune and grace, like me, Deacon Adrien and three other priests and another deacon of the diocese, to participate in one or another of the historic events that took place here and for the first time on Canadian soil.

Thank you, Pope Francis, for your eloquent testimony and comforting words that challenged us to live more hopefully and confidently in the ever-present grace of the God of Love who lives in our midst, and who lives within us all! Your penitential pilgrimage to Canada became a message of grace to all the members of the Catholic Church in the world, as well as to all the Indigenous nations of the planet who have known or are still knowing oppression or rejection, for all of them had their eyes fixed on you and your words during your historic visit to us.

*+ Guy Desrochers, C.M.*

**Most Reverend Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.  
Bishop of Pembroke**





## Excerpts from the Address by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Apostolic Nuncio to the Plenary Assembly of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on September 26, 2022

Dear brothers in the episcopate,

I am honoured to have been invited to address you on this first day of your Plenary Assembly. (...)

### I. Reflections on the Pope's Visit

As we reflect on the Pope's recent pastoral visit to Canada, there are many things to consider and many lessons to learn. In many ways, both great and small, the Holy Father's words touched us. But it is his actions and encounters that have had the greatest impact. He himself admitted that he was deeply moved by the accounts and testimonies of the survivors of the residential schools, as well as those of their children and grandchildren. As he explained at the general audience on the Wednesday, following his return from Canada, "the pain of these people was like a slap in the face. Elderly people who have lost sight of their children, not knowing where they are! All this is the result of an assimilation policy. It was a very painful moment. We have to face the situation and acknowledge our mistakes and errors.

As leaders of the Church of God, we know very well that the exercise of our episcopal ministry requires us to take responsibility for some of the sins and failings of our predecessors, as well as those of some religious and clerics. It follows that we are called to take responsibility for these faults of others, even as we seek to heal the wounds and create a safe environment for the future. Like Our Lord Himself, who had to bear the burden of our sins, the Church's pastors must sometimes bear the burden of past mistakes. This is what the Holy Father, as Servant of the servants of God, wanted to do during his visit. Among other things, he said: "[...] on the one hand, some men and women of the Church were among the most staunch and courageous defenders of the dignity of indigenous peoples, ensuring their protection and helping to raise awareness of the value of their languages and cultures [...] But, at the same time [...] one could not ignore the fact that many Christians [...] participated in programmes which today seem unacceptable and contrary to the Gospel."

Throughout his visit, Pope Francis asked for forgiveness for these faults and failings.

### II. A process that will require time and patience

The Holy Father reminded us that healing and reconciliation are a long and arduous journey. It was fitting that the theme of the visit was "Walking Together." The Aboriginal delegation that visited Rome last March presented the Holy Father with two pairs of moccasins, symbolic of the suffering experienced by children enrolled in residential schools who never returned home; during his visit in July, the Pope returned the moccasins to the Aboriginal communities, saying his gesture symbolized the Church's determination to walk with them.

To those who claim that healing and reconciliation are impossible or despair of achieving their goals, the Pope reminded them that reconciliation cannot be the result of human effort alone since it is a gift and grace from God. He said: "Our own efforts are not enough to bring about healing and reconciliation. We need the grace of God. We need the quiet and powerful wisdom of the Spirit, the tender love of the Comforter. It is in this spirit that we will continue on the path on which we have embarked.

The Holy Father also stressed that the process of reconciliation and healing requires time and effort. I quote: "Asking for forgiveness is not the end point [...]. As we look to the future, we must seek first and foremost to create a culture that can prevent the recurrence of such situations [...]. An important part of this process will be to find out what happened, to investigate the facts in depth and to support the survivors in their healing.... As part of this process, Pope Francis has committed to writing an Apostolic Exhortation addressing many of the issues that came before him during his visit. He added that this "will require time and patience [...] since we are talking about processes that must penetrate hearts..."

### III. Wider Implications of the Holy Father's Visit

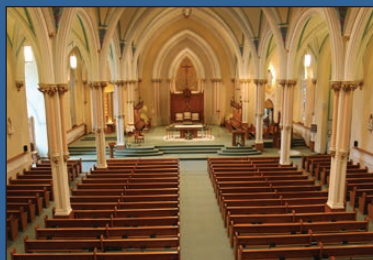
While the Holy Father's words and gestures were addressed to Canada, his message was not limited to the Canadian scene and experience. It resonated globally. Even the fact that he chose to speak in Spanish, not Italian ensured that the greater majority of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas heard message of healing and reconciliation addressed to their own situations. Judging from international coverage of the Pope's visit, Indigenous Peoples the world over were listening closely to what the Pope had to say. The Pope also drew attention to the fact that the abuses which we decry in history remain very much a part of our world today.

In his address at the Citadel in Québec City he noted how "the colonizing mentality is present today in various forms of ideological colonization, threatening the traditions, history and religious bonds of people, flattening out differences, focusing only on the present and often neglecting duties towards the weakest and most fragile."

In order to escape this ideological colonization, the Pope said it is "a matter of recovering a healthy balance, recovering harmony which is more than balance. It is something else. To recover harmony between modernity and ancestral cultures, between secularization and spiritual values. And this directly addresses the mission of the Church, sent all over the world to bear witness to and 'sow' a universal fraternity that respects and promotes the local dimension with its multiple riches."

*continued on page 4...*





#### IV. The Unity of the Bishops of Canada

Finally, as we reflect upon the Papal Visit, I wish to renew the gratitude of the Pope for the important and essential role played by the Bishops of Canada in making the visit not only possible, but also truly fruitful and efficacious. At Sacred Heart Church in Edmonton he stated: "I want to thank the Bishops for their work in making my visit possible, as well as your visit to Rome. A united Episcopal Conference is able to do great things and produce much fruit!" He reiterated the same theme at his General Audience upon his return to Rome: "I wish to thank the Bishops, above all for the unity of the episcopate: meeting the goals of the journey was made possible because the Bishops were united, and where there is unity, one can proceed."

This unity does not consist in unanimity, nor is it to be reduced to sameness of opinion and point of view. As St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us, "Concord is a union of wills, not of opinions... Concord is an effect of charity." I believe this is in keeping with the meaning of "synodality", a recognition that the

only way forward is by that charity which must exist between the brethren that helps overcome whatever differences or obstacles may stand in the way of reaching an understanding on the important pastoral challenges confronting the Church. Charity is necessary if we are to profess the Faith in sincerity and truth. To profess the faith while being estranged or in a relationship of antagonism with one another would be contradictory surely (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:2). Perhaps that is why, in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Greeting or Kiss of Peace precedes the recitation of the Creed: "Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Trinity one in essence and inseparable."

The fraternal charity and unity of the Bishops was very much in evidence both in the preparations for the Visit of Pope Francis, in the unfolding of that Visit, and in the many positive initiatives undertaken by the Bishops of Canada towards healing and reconciliation that are ongoing.

**His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurković, Apostolic Nuncio**

## Pastoral appointments

The Most Reverend Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R., announces the following appointment:

**Reverend Stephen HELFERTY** is assigned to graduate studies in Patristic Theology with the purview of serving as a teacher for St Augustine's Seminary, Toronto. Father Helferty will begin full-time studies in languages and other relevant topics at the University of Toronto this September in preparation for beginning his licentiate program in 2023.

Pastoral appointments to take effect September 1, 2022, unless otherwise noted.

**Reverend Mitchell BEACHEY** is appointed Pastor of Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, Pembroke and Paroisse St-Jean-Baptiste, Pembroke, with the additional assignment as Director of Vocations, missioned with the task of forming a supportive Vocational Team.

**Reverend Michael COYNE** is appointed Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Pembroke, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, LaPasse and Our Lady of Grace Mission, Westmeath.

**Reverend Ryan HOLLY**, while remaining Chancellor and Judicial Vicar, is appointed Moderator of the Curia.

**Reverend Dan KELLY** of the Archdiocese of Gatineau begins service in the Diocese of Pembroke and is appointed Administrator of St. Andrew Parish, Killaloe and Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell.

**Reverend Moses NWOSU, S.M.M.M.**, is appointed Pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Deep River and St. Anthony Parish, Chalk River.

**Reverend Fortunatus RUDAKEMWA** is appointed Parochial Vicar of Paroisse St-Thomas-d'Aquin, Astorville, Paroisse Ste-Bernadette, Bonfield and Sacred Heart Parish, Corbeil.

**Reverend Christopher SHALLA** has resigned as Pastor of St Andrew Parish, Killaloe and Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Brudenell, and has been granted an approved leave of absence from parish ministry.

**Reverend Michael SMITH**, while remaining Vicar General, is appointed Pastor of Paroisse St-Pierre, Fort-Coulonge, Paroisse St-Charles-Borromée, Otter Lake, St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Vinton and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Mission, Waltham.

# Ecclesia



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## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Father John Lacey

This past June 7 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of Father John Lacey to the priesthood.

Born in the Orillia region of Ontario, Father Lacey was raised in a military family, spending time in both Halifax and Pembroke during his youth. Throughout this time and into adulthood, he was active in the Roman Catholic Church as an altar server and parish council member, including the scheduling of lectors at the church.

“Always wondered, but was not sure if this was because of very positive experience of the Church and of our parish priests as a child,” said Father Lacey when asked when he knew God was calling him to serve as a priest.

“It took several years of discernment to finally enter the seminary and test the vocation in my adult years.”

He attended St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ontario, in 1990. He studied there for six years and acquired a Bachelor of Arts and Master’s Degree in Divinity.

He was ordained at St. Columbkille’s Cathedral on June 7 1997, a week prior to his class-mate, Father Jim Beanish, who was ordained at St. Hedwig Parish in Barry’s Bay.

Since then, he has served at numerous parishes throughout our diocese including: St. John Chrysostom (Arnprior), St. Francis Xavier (Renfrew), St. Ignatius Martyr (Maynooth) and St. Anthony of Padua (Haliburton), St. James (Eganville) and Our Lady of the Nativity (Pikwakanagan) and St. Ann (Cormac), Holy Canadian Martyrs (Combermere) and St. Francis de Sales (Latchford Bridge). He currently serves at Our Lady of Fatima (Renfrew) and St. Patrick (Mount St. Patrick).



“Celebrating the Sacramental life of the Church, meeting people, sharing my faith, accompanying people at pivotal moments in their life,” is what Father Lacey said when asked what he enjoys most about being a parish priest.

As for those deliberating on pursuing religious life, Father Lacey was direct in his advice.

“Go for it. If God is calling you, it is a wonderful experience.”

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Father Jim Beanish

This past June 14<sup>th</sup> marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of Father Jim Beanish to the priesthood.

Born in Pembroke, Father Beanish was raised in Barry’s Bay. Although not religious in his early years, it in no way deterred God from calling him to serve.

“God’s a pest. He just won’t let you go,” Father Beanish said jokingly when asked about answering God’s call to serve as a priest.

“He doesn’t care how you feel or what you look like. If He wants you, He wants you for whatever reason. I ignored it for as long as I could and finally gave in.”

But the journey to answering that call did not take the route typical of many of his peers. Post high school, Father Beanish worked both as a photographer in the journalism field and in the lumber industry, the latter of which brought him to locales in the Kitchener and Toronto area.

It was around this time that two events in his life would awaken him to God’s call.

“One of the things was I quit drinking,” said Father Beanish. “That was probably the most prominent change that I made in my life. As a result of that, I was probably more open to hearing what He was saying to me.”

The other experience was the death of a co-worker.

“He committed suicide,” said Father Beanish. “I thought to myself, ‘If I keep on going like he was

going, that’s going to be me, too.’ I give him credit for helping me do something about my life. He died so I could live. It was a real eye-opener.”

He attended St. Peter’s Seminary in London, Ontario, for eight years, studying Philosophy and Theology, which led him to acquiring a Master’s Degree in Divinity.

“It was simpler for me because I was a mature student,” said Father Beanish. “They (the seminary) were more open to accepting me. Of course, you had to send in your marks from high school. It was more based on where I was at when I was 30.”

“A lot of the people you’re mingling with are young kids out of high school,” added Father Beanish in discussing the age gap between himself and other seminarians he studied with.

“I think I had something to offer, being an older guy, being in the workforce.”

Father Beanish was ordained at St. Hedwig’s in Barry’s Bay on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

“If I was going to compare it to something, it would be like going into the army,” said Father Beanish in describing the ordination experience.

“They tear you down, and then they build you back up. That’s kind of what happens with ordinations; you start off flat on your face on the floor, then you’re picked up, you’re dressed up, given new garments and made new.”

He was first assigned to St. Columbkille’s Cathedral from 1997–2003, serving as an assistant to the late

Father Patrick Tait. From there, he served at both St. Matthew’s in Madawaska and St. Martin of Tours in Whitney. During this period, St. Ignatius in Maynooth was added to the diocese, and Father Beanish also served there. He returned once again to serve as Rector at St. Columbkille’s, and recently began serving at St. Andrews in Killaloe parish.

“My canonical purpose here (at St. Columbkille’s) is to ensure this property – this building – remains beautiful and maintain it,” said Father Beanish in explaining his role as a Rector.

“Bishops come and go, but the Rector stays for 18 years. That’s been the pattern. Because it is canonical, there’s a certain weight to your decisions here.”

As for what he enjoys most about being a priest, it is the opportunity to accompany parishioners through the various chapters of their lives.

“When I was first ordained, I was interviewed by the newspaper, and I think I said back then that I look forward to being with people during the happiest of times, as well as with them during the worst of times. It’s good to be in both,” said Father Beanish.

As for those contemplating religious life, he had one simple piece of advice to share.

“Do not be afraid,” said Father Beanish. “If God is calling you, listen to Him. He won’t lead you astray. Everything will be alright.”





## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Deacon Albert Benoit

This past September 9<sup>th</sup> marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Deacon Albert Benoit's ordination to the diaconate.

Born and raised in Bonfield, Ontario, he was baptized and confirmed at Paroisse Ste-Bernadette in his hometown. In time, he would become an entrepreneur, running both a beef farm and gravel business.

Despite his business and family commitments, his devotion to his faith eventually led him to join the diaconate.

"The diaconate was new at that time," recalled Deacon Benoit in discussing his decision to become a deacon.

"I always cared for the poor people, the sick people and those struggling in life."

His pursuit to join the ranks of diaconate would take three years to complete, involving both home study and attending the seminary located in Nicolet, Quebec, when needed. Upon completion, he was ordained at his home parish.

Critical to his success at that time was both the support of his family and then parish priest, Father Roch Gagnon. In addition, his ability to look inside himself and know what he had to offer to God ensured he was on the right path.

"To me, what I had to offer was my faith, and the love of the poor and the sick. That's what I have to share, and I'm still in it."

In addition to helping the poor of his community, Deacon Benoit was also assigned pastoral duties that included visiting the sick and the dying, something he still does to this day.

"You minister to them, but they minister to you back by the confidence they have, by the faith that they have," said Deacon Benoit. "That was one big thing I loved about it."

For a while, he was assigned as an administrator to Paroisse Ste-Bernadette when the parish priest at that time moved to Astorville. In this role, he was responsible for various pastoral duties and other assignments in managing the parish.

His passion for helping the less fortunate in his community motivated Deacon Benoit to help establish the Bonfield Family Life Centre in 1980, which he is still involved with to this day. The centre works in cohesion with both the parish and the township.

"First of all, we have a food bank, and we have a thrift store. We provide everything for free," said Deacon Benoit, who made special mention of the generosity of community members to support the centre during the COVID-19 outbreak.



"I was amazed to see how people responded. We received more money and more things to give away to help the people at that time. When there's a crisis going on, people get involved."

For those contemplating joining the ranks of the diaconate, Deacon Benoit suggested potential candidates need to ask themselves what they have to offer God, just as he did.

"If they can answer that question, then they can hear the call," said Deacon Benoit.

## News of the Synod on Synodality

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

In October 2021, Pope Francis launched the path of synodality, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission." From 2021 to 2023, the entire Church has embarked on a journey of sharing, reflecting and listening. Dioceses worldwide have been asked to pray and reflect on how to "journey together" to better accomplish the mission of the Church.

Mid-June, dioceses across Ontario submitted their synod reports to the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO), which synthesized what was heard from each of the 12 dioceses and produced a provincial report that was passed on to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB).

The CCCCBB also received reports prepared by Canada's three other Regional Episcopal Assemblies – Western, Quebec and Atlantic regions. It then wrote a national synthesis and submitted it to the General Secretariat of the Synod of the Holy See on August 15, 2022.

The next phase of the synodal process will involve the development of a "Document for the Continental Phase" by the General Secretariat of the Synod in Rome. Once complete, this document will serve as the source document for reflection during the continental phase. For this purpose, the CCCCBB will be working closely with the USCCB. In October, Pope Francis announced that the synod will be extended for an additional year to allow more time for discernment and a

better understanding of the concept of synodality as a key dimension of the Church's life. As it stands, the bishops and other participants will gather for a first meeting of the synod on October 4–29, 2023 in Rome, to be followed by a year of reflection and another closing meeting scheduled for October 2024.

Links to the synthesis report from the Diocese of Pembroke, from the Catholic Bishops of Ontario and from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops can all be found on our diocesan website at this address <https://pembrokediocese.com/synod/>. Parishioners who do not have access to the Internet can contact Mrs. Donna Biggs (613) 732-7933 and ask for a printed copy of our synthesis report.





## Indigenous Parishioners in the Parishes of the Diocese of Pembroke

Rarely do we have, in the Diocese of Pembroke, a parish that does not have some parishioners who are Indigenous, Metis, or Inuit. Indeed, with the trend toward greater ownership of our heritage, more and more parishioners are claiming their statuses.

Some geographical areas of the diocese have higher concentrations of Indigenous people. The Mattawa area, Des Joachims, Timiskaming and the surrounding area; Golden Lake and the Eganville area.

Two histories of the diocese have been written. Both authors cover the unique story of the development of each church and parish.

Fr. William C. O'Dwyer, in 1964, published his review of local church history, *Highways of Destiny*.

Fr. Joseph Legree published *Lift up Your Hearts* in 1986.

Both books were written at a time when sensitivity to the needs and spirituality of Indigenous persons was not an issue. They reflect somewhat on the relationships that developed between Indigenous peoples and our European cultures, be it French, Irish, or various English-speaking cultures. As well, the stories of missionaries who came from afar to minister to the needs of these developing communities are expanded upon by both authors.

As time passes, we see how the efforts of these two early missionaries unfolded. Their missionary outreach was to vast geographical areas highly inhabited by indigenous people. Through their missionary effort to construct chapels, and eventually churches, formed a well-integrated community of Indigenous, French and English settlers.

### Our Lady of The Lake, Kipawa



Firstly, let us look at the outreach and inclusion of the native peoples of the Timiskaming area. Fr. Dwyer recounts the arrival of "The War Canoe, paddled by two Indians carrying two missionaries, Fr. Reverend Louis Charles de Bellefeuille, serving the Indians of OKA, accompanied by Father J.B. Dupuis, at the request of Monsignor Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, journeyed to Timiskaming on missionary duties." So begins the outreach of the church to all in the area. Lumbermen and some First Nations peoples endeavor to harvest the trees and oversee the shipping of raw materials. The priests, fulfilling their mission to have a chapel built, begin their missionary work of conversion. Much effort goes in to building the Catholic community. It is 1836.

Subsequent missionaries settled in the area and outreach continues. The Oblate Missionaries are recorded in the 1880s to have had a mission at Hunters Point. A chapel was erected, and they had outreach, as well, to Grassy Lake. In time, more and more people would gravitate to the Kipawa area. And so, the centralization of the faith community moves to a newly formed chapel there. By now, these churches are well integrated from a cultural perspective. Catholicism is the choice of many First Nations peoples in the area. Missionaries would eventually be replaced by diocesan priests who ministered to Timiskaming, Tee Lake and Kipawa. Buildings are updated, eventually the chapel was sold, and the larger school converted into a more

suitable church. The third church at Kipawa was dedicated in 1943 by Bishop Smith as St. Williams. Eventually, with the amalgamation of the churches of Tee Lake and Kipawa, St. Williams became known as Our Lady of The Lake and continued to serve the blended community of parishioners.

Today, Our Lady of The Lake at Kipawa reflects the history of these French, English and Indigenous people who continue to come together in a spirit of cooperation that reflects their history.

### Nativity of Our Lady, Pikwakanagan



Along the shores of the Bonnechere River, between Golden Lake and Eganville, was a long-established Algonquin burial ground. This would lead to the creation of a reserve in this area for the Algonquin people. Irregular service was provided to the Algonquins by Fathers Labret and Poitras of the Missionary Oblate Order. Fr. Dwyer recounts that the Algonquins along the Bonnechere and Madawaska Rivers would trek annually to Fort William, Quebec to fulfill the 'Easter Duty'.





A newly assigned Father J.M. Nedelec addressed some needs. Mass was celebrated at the home of Chief Pezmedawate. But this wigwam was not large enough to accommodate the Algonquins and the few white people of the surrounding area who came to assist with the celebration. Mass was eventually celebrated in the open air.

With the support of Father Byrne of Eganville and aided by the Irish and French settlers, the Algonquin Band was able to construct a suitable chapel in 1872.

A visit from Bishop Duhamel found the mission placed under the protection of St. John the Baptist. Subsequent visits of Bishops and clergy saw ongoing development of the chapel. A bell was presented. A sacristy and bedroom for the priest was built. The chapel was able to meet the needs of the residents of the reserve and those who seasonally came to the area.

Time would see the building completely renovated. A building from the closed sawmill was relocated to behind the church and used to house the clergy. It was to be a summer home for the Grey Sisters as well. The services of the priest were provided by the priests at Eganville after the Oblates left to mission in other areas.

In 1953-1954, Fr. McNally would oversee the total reconstruction of the church building which, at its opening, was dedicated as 'Nativity of Our Lady.' The sense of community, built in the Algonquin tradition of sustaining their church and welcoming those who regularly join them, continued the custom of that first Mass celebrated at the Chief's home.

In 1972, Bishop William Smith and a collection of priests who had served the community at Golden Lake over the years gathered to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mass at the chapel at Golden Lake. Fr. Legree, in his book, gives a detailed review of the wonderful celebration. Of note from his book is the recognition of Mrs. Sarah Lavalley, a much-endearred Algonquin woman who, at the dinner on this occasion, received recognition for her work in the community from the National Office of Catholic Women's League.

Mrs. Lavalley would eventually receive The Good Citizen award of the Province of Ontario, followed by the Order of Canada. Bishop Windle was present when 600 people gathered for Mass in Eganville, a larger church, when the Papal Nuncio presented her with the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" medal recognizing her extraordinary love of her church. As well, that day, she was gifted a trip to Rome to meet the pope.

The efforts of 100 years continue today and, similar to the people in Kipawa, both native and non-native people come together to celebrate their faith in these churches with long and struggling histories.

## Truth and Reconciliation

Our current history sees us on the threshold of a new era. Challenged by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address our painful history, we must take ownership of our past. Pope Francis has walked our path with us and has expressed his sorrow, as he apologized to our Indigenous peoples for the way in which the Church has ill-treated them through our role in the Residential School reality.

Each of us leaves our church after Mass commissioned to go out into our world and build the Kingdom of God. Indigenous People are commissioned the same way we are. How can we do this together?

As we reflect on the life of these two church communities in our diocese, they have much to say to us about our future. We have always been welcome to journey with them along their way. Are we ready to welcome all first nations people in all our churches throughout the diocese today?

I close with a quote from Irvin Sarazin, a man who, with his wife Carrie, has done much in the Ottawa Valley area to teach about the blending of Native Culture and Spirituality with Catholicism, as they live the commission to build the Kingdom of God.

*"Since childhood, I found that being Indigenous and Catholic posed no problem. I grew up in Stonecliffe and Mattawa and had a good relationship with the priest. When our family was going through a hard time emotionally, I remember the late Fr. John Kenneth O'Brien coming in the evening to check on us. He would have to walk through the forest for many kilometers to reach us. My older brother also served as an altar boy. All seemed okay."*

*"My dad went to a residential school. He didn't talk about it much, but when he did, it wasn't good. I remember him saying that he went as a young boy. When I was young, I remember hearing him crying at night through the paper-thin walls. My dad died at the age of 55 years, and I believe it was due to the alcohol he drank brought on by bad memories."*

*"My hope for the future relationships between Indigenous People and the Catholic Church is one of forgiveness, apologies, and prayers for the souls who may still suffer."*

## 2023 is the 125th Anniversary of the Diocese of Pembroke

Mass of Thanksgiving for the 125th Anniversary of the Diocese of Pembroke  
Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 10:00 a.m., The Cathedral of St. Columbkille, Pembroke





## Madonna House celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Members of Madonna House Apostolate commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of their religious community this year, hosting several special events to celebrate this joyous milestone.

“We did have the celebration on May 17<sup>th</sup>. It was mainly an in-house commemoration at that time; we planted an apple tree in the orchard, for on that day in 1947, the original orchard was planted,” said Kathy McVady, a member of Madonna House for 54 years and currently overseer of the archives of Madonna House.

“On August 15<sup>th</sup>, we had a smaller commemoration while the local directors of our mission houses were gathered here for their annual meetings. At that time, we had the blessing of a newly-reinstalled commemorative water pump. It serves as a visual reminder of the simple yet arduous life embraced by Catherine and Eddie as they began here in 1947. August 15<sup>th</sup> marks the anniversary of Catherine’s birthday and baptismal day; of Eddie’s ordination to the priesthood in the Melkite Rite of the Catholic Church when he was 79 years old; and the official acceptance of Catherine’s Constitution, a foundation document for us, by Bishop Windle in 1978.”

In addition, this past Labour Day weekend saw a special open house held at the Combermere location, which included tours, displays, entertainment, games, and a potluck picnic supper.

It was on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1947, that Madonna House foundress, Catherine Doherty, and her husband, Edward, formerly established the apostolate community in Combermere. It should be noted that Catherine and Edward had visited the location in August 1945 for a delayed honeymoon (they were married in 1943). It was Edward who made a down payment on a house owned by an acquaintance on the very property where Madonna House is located.

From that humble beginning blossomed a movement where both laymen/laywomen and priests would come together to embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ and pledge themselves to a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. They have established field houses throughout North America and Europe where members share their love of Christ to others, partake in silent reflection known as poustinia and help the less fortunate.

### Serving at Madonna House

Father Bob Wild, ordained a priest for the Diocese of Buffalo in 1967, joined Madonna House in 1971.

He told of the difference between serving at a parish versus Madonna House.

“The big difference is that I live in a large community now, whereas in the parish, I lived only with two or three other priests,” said Father Wild.

“Some of the duties are the same: there is the daily liturgy, confessions and anointing of the sick, and counseling. Occasionally we help out in parishes in the diocese. I do a great deal of spiritual direction and counseling, which I would never do to such an extent in a parish,” said Father Wild.

“I’ve had the opportunity to write and edit books, again, not possible in a parish. I frequently have gone out to give retreats in North America and in different parts of the world. Living in a large community, I have many more personal relationships than would be possible in normal parish life. With 13 other priests in the community, there is a brotherhood that unfortunately is not present in parishes.”

### Impact of COVID-19

Madonna House was not immune to the impacts of the recent global pandemic and had to adjust how it carried out its duties.

“At the beginning of the pandemic, we entered a bubble in Combermere. We received no guests, as we normally would. The guests who were already with us at the time were given the option of leaving or of extending their stay with us,” said McVady.

“Quite a few decided to extend their visit. Within our larger bubble, we broke into smaller ones, thus hoping to protect our most vulnerable members. The priests were extremely generous in offering an extra Mass at the main house, as well as one at St. Benedict Acres, the farm, with a priest residing there at times, and one at the St. Mary’s part of our community. This meant that there were smaller congregations, enabling us to have the proper social distancing, and, with the bishop’s permission, we were able to participate in the Eucharist. During this time, we were very aware that we carried the needs and intentions of all those who were not able to participate in the Eucharist for long periods of time.”

“Our mission houses embraced the guidelines of their given dioceses and countries. This meant that for many of them, their participation in the Eucharist was through digital technology. Even our local mission house in Combermere, St. Joseph House, was limited to this, for they were outside our normal bubble. This did enable them to have outside contact with some people at a

designated distance, and to help with neighborly services as possible.”

The pandemic also impeded the ability of Madonna House to host those seeking spiritual fulfillment in person.

“One of the more challenging aspects was our inability to receive guests, for we knew that many were hungrily desiring to be able to live in the spiritually renewing atmosphere they seem to find among us,” said McVady.

“It was also difficult to suspend the normal annual gathering of the directors of our local field houses, of the annual gathering of our associate priests and deacons and their wives; of the family camp at Cana Colony. These are gradually resuming, more fine-tuned in some ways.”

Perhaps more importantly, the pandemic was time for Madonna House members to reflect on the path forward for their community and the inevitable challenges to come.

“Perhaps the pandemic has served to highlight challenges and concerns for us, as it has for most of the world,” said McVady.

“Even before the pandemic, we were aware of some of the major social shifts in society; during the pandemic, we were able to reflect on these more thoroughly. This doesn’t always provide practical answers, but it opens our vision to areas calling for us to reply with a gospel response.”

“We had also been aware of the challenges of aging in the community; thankfully, God continues to call younger people to our way of life, yet they themselves face societal challenges to which we are all called to listen. Some of our more elderly members have sensed a missionary call to live in a senior residence, to pray and serve there as they are able to do so.”

“Over seventy-five years, structures evolved that supported and sustained our communal life; but our life is not about maintaining structures that may be less effective and even burdensome. We continue to listen so as to be able to discern how the Holy Spirit desires to guide us in this.”

“It is no accident that Pope Francis is calling the Church to enter more deeply into the synodal process for continuing discernment. For us, of course, it becomes a call to enter more deeply into *Sobornost*, a Russian word for unity of mind and heart, which is the essential charism of our community. As we do so with much mutual listening and respect, the path to discernment for any needed decisions begins to open up.”





## St. Ann's Pilgrimage in Cormac resumes in 2022

After two long years, devotees of the annual St. Ann's Pilgrimage returned to the grounds of St. Ann's Parish in Cormac this past summer.

"There was much anticipation for the 2022 Cormac Pilgrimage. Each pilgrimage is an occasion for prayer, meditation and an opportunity to strengthen our faith, and pray to Blessed St. Ann, mother of Blessed Mary. Despite the pandemic, many people inquired when the pilgrimage would resume. This pilgrimage draws the faithful together, and unifies us in prayer," shared Father Ken O'Brien, pastor of St. Ann's Parish in Cormac and key organizer of the event, along with a very dedicated council.

The theme for this year's pilgrimage was the "History of the Devotion to St. Ann." Warm temperatures and clear skies greeted those who gathered for the outdoor Sunday Mass of Healing.

"Bishop Guy Desrochers spoke at the Triduum of the miraculous birth, childhood and marriage of the life of St. Ann and shared with pilgrims the wonderful miracles that took place when people from early ages prayed for her for intercession," noted Fr. O'Brien.

The event has a special connection to Bishop Desrochers. Ordained into the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists), he was previously assigned to the Shrine of Saint Anne-de-Beaupré.

The basilica holds three relics of the remains from St. Ann. Not only has this holy place become a centre of devotion, but it's also an epicentre for those who have been miraculously healed. Adorned on the front pillars inside the basilica are braces, canes and crutches testifying to the healing miracles provided by St. Ann.

"That's why when we celebrate St. Ann, it is always a healing mass," explained Bishop Desrochers during his homily. "I've done tours to promote the devotion of St. Ann for many, many years when I was with the Redemptorists community living at the Shrine of Saint Anne-de-Beaupré, and I've seen so many miracles."

He went on to tell of a miracle where a young girl from Newfoundland, who was afflicted with Crohn's disease. Having brought one of the relics with him to the parish, he allowed the girl to hold the relic, instructing her to ask St. Ann for a cure, while he prayed with the girl's family.

"But I told her: 'Make a promise to St. Ann. Don't forget about it,'" said Bishop Desrochers.

As he went on during the homily, Bishop Desrochers emphasized that all who ask for St. Ann's intervention must be prepared to make a promise to her.

"I always tell the faithful when I do my tours of the devotion of St. Ann; 'Have faith in her,'" said Bishop Desrochers.

"She's your grandmother. Why is she so powerful? Is she the one doing the miracles? No, Jesus is. But you know how grandchildren love their grandparents. I think grandparents tend to spoil them. Well, St. Ann probably spoiled the infant Jesus, too, her dear grandchild. And Jesus loves her so much that he can't refuse anything to her."

"So, when you ask something to St. Ann, she's not doing the miracles. She just turns around, looks at her grandson and smiles and says, 'You know what to do.'" And Jesus grants her so many, many beautiful graces for us. That's why he wanted special places in the world, and especially at Saint Anne-de-Beaupré, and all the places that bear the name St. Ann to become a beacon of



healing for the faithful. He loves her so much he wanted to honour her until the end of times."

From these miracles is also born a renewed devotion, whereby those who were healed pledge their gratitude and veneration of St. Ann for the rest of their lives.

"That's why so many people in the past have come to the shrine and brought their friends with them," said Bishop Desrochers.

"They have become a living testimony of the presence of our dear grandmother, St. Ann, who intercedes. That's why we call her 'Good St. Ann.' Her intercession is so powerful."

"Dare to invoke her, my friends. Dare to ask her for her special graces. And if you don't have enough faith, well, make the people around you pray for your lack of faith and you'll get that favour. But once you get it, you better keep your promise. St. Ann will see to it."

He also noted the importance of the Sacrament of Penance before asking for St. Ann's intervention.

"Many people who came to the shrine and spoke to me – I told them; 'Firstly, go to the confessional,'" said Bishop Desrochers.

"Why? Because when a child wants a special gift on their birthday, usually he's very obedient for the next couple of weeks. They want that beautiful bicycle, and they start helping you wash the dishes and they clean their room."

"So I say, clean your heart. Before you ask something to the Lord, show us that you truly want this healing or grace. Show Him your desire and start cleaning up inside."





## Getting Back on the Opeongo Line

By Father Scott Murray

Wittingly or unwittingly, we are all pilgrims. We each have a spiritual destination to which we are headed. For those who embrace the pilgrimage, the road on which they walk is difficult, but God offers all that is necessary to reach the destination. If we want to take the narrow path that leads to heaven, then the disciplines of the pilgrimage are necessary.

In his essay, *The Idea of a Pilgrimage*, Hillaire Belloc describes pilgrimage in this way, “A pilgrimage is, of course, an expedition to some venerated place to which a vivid memory of sacred things experienced, or a long and wonderful history of human experience in divine matters, or a personal attraction affecting the soul impels one. This is, I say, its essence.” This idea of a pilgrimage leaves the door open to variations. The cloistered nun meditating intently on images of Calvary places herself at the feet of Jesus, next to Mary, and so, despite what one might assume, she is able to journey thousands of kilometres without leaving her cell and make her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Whether the journey is on foot or bicycle, by car or bus, or even just in one’s imagination, it can participate in what it means to be a pilgrimage. We must simply set out on the road to which God calls us.

*Walk the Opeongo Line* is an ascetical type of pilgrimage. It is not the *most* ascetical type, but it does impose various challenges. Our pilgrims are not obliged to go barefoot, garbed in sackcloth and ashes or to climb the steps of the churches on their knees, though they could if they want



to. The distance, weather, bugs, perhaps other pilgrims, and various other things are all crosses that we willingly take up as we walk to St. Ann’s. Perhaps, for some, the prayer disciplines will be challenging: attending a Latin Mass, singing or reciting the Rosary, adoration, confession, and attending daily Mass are all moments in which we encounter God’s greatness and our own weakness. There are many moments during the pilgrimage in which we will recognize our weaknesses, and in those moments, we should remember the words of St. Paul, “For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10).

In the great pilgrimage that is the Christian life, the end is to know, love, and serve God in this

world and to be happy with Him forever in heaven (cf. *Baltimore Catechism*, 1). God, through Christ and His Church, has given us everything necessary to achieve that end.

This little pilgrimage from Barry’s Bay to Cormac was a concentrated dose of Christ and His Church. Over the course of three days, pilgrims experienced highs and lows of the spiritual life. They encountered Christ in the Sacraments, in Scripture, in their neighbor, in nature, and in themselves. At times, some pilgrims wanted to quit. At other times, they wished the pilgrimage would go on for a few more days. But, most importantly, when they walked the final metres up to the shrine and heard the heavenly bells of St. Ann ringing, they knew they were home.







## An Update on Blessed Catherine's Starflowers Prayer Initiative

These past months have been exciting as we heard from people and parishes around the diocese. Under the patronage of Blessed Catherine de St-Augustin, they are bringing all of us to the Source of grace and strength, Jesus Christ.

It is encouraging to hear how each parish is using the prayer booklets to fit their unique needs and abilities. Some have organized a weekly prayer time after one of their Sunday Masses. Some members meet one on one to share together. Others have brought it into the devotions used in care homes. Many people are daily making one or more of the prayers found in the booklet their practice.

Over and over, we have heard from you how joining this prayer initiative has made you feel a part of

the overall work of evangelization in the diocese. To quote one woman:

*"I really did not think that there was any way for me to join in the evangelization efforts in our diocese. Though I eagerly read the write-ups in the bulletins, I knew that I don't have the gifts or the energy. It made me sad. But when Father announced at Mass about the prayer initiative and then when I saw the beautiful prayer booklet, I knew this was how I could serve. Every day as I offer up my daily life for the diocese, I have a strong sense of being one with all in the diocese. I am giving fully to this work with the Bishop and with you. Thank you for providing me with a way for me to serve."*

We are covering the diocese in prayer like the small white starflowers dot our forest floors. And just like the star that led the wise men to Jesus at



his nativity, our prayers are great lights calling others to encounter the wonder and power of Jesus Christ. May Jesus reign in all our hearts. Amen.

**Interested in joining the prayer team? Contact your parish office or the diocesan website ([pembrokedioocese.com](http://pembrokedioocese.com)) for more details.**

## News from the Evangelization Team

By Pierre-Alain Giffard

A lot has happened with the evangelization team since the last edition of *Ecclesia*. The team worked on a number of subjects: parish missionary renewal, the Blessed Catherine's Starflowers initiative, the Alpha courses, evangelization in Catholic schools, the Unbound ministries, Catholic home missions, small evangelization groups, and the missionary use of media.

A major milestone was reached when the first version of a guide for parish missionary transformation was written. A draft of this guide has been handed over to priests for their comments. The finalized version will serve as a tool for parishes to "go forth" and make disciples. It is aimed primarily at clergy and lay leaders, as well as anyone who wishes to participate in the spiritual and missionary transformation of their communities. Parish Pastoral Councils will be asked to take this document seriously in order to engage their parishes in making disciples.

The communication aspects of the evangelization project will be handled by Fr. Réal Ouellette, Patrick Sullivan and Dcn. Chris Barrett. Videos will be produced to explain and communicate different aspects of evangelization and mission. Renée Sylvain and Lucille Tourigny continue to carry out the prayer component of the evangelization project. To date, around 200 people have signed up for the Blessed Catherine's Starflowers initiative.

As part of the Evangelization team initiatives, a subcommittee was formed to examine how missionary outposts will be established in the diocese. These outposts will be called Catholic home missions. They will be authentic missionary communities; not just small groups or substitutes for closed parishes. Rooted in the Word of God and the celebrations of the sacraments, its members will be driven by the mission to make new disciples.

The team has also been in contact with priests from other dioceses to learn from their missionary experiences. The first is Fr. Jean-Hubert Thieffry from the Communauté du Chemin Neuf in Montréal, and the second is Fr. Justin Huang from the diocese of Vancouver. Both are involved in parish renewal. We learned a lot from these exchanges and were able to shed light on various issues.

Since many missionary parishes are using the Alpha program, members of the evangelization team and a dean attended a summit in Toronto to learn more about it. Of the various evangelization programs that our diocese will use, this is an effective program and will be offered as one of the ways to reach those who do not know or follow Jesus.

As the partnership between the Evangelization team and the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board continues, some school board members have participated in CCO faith studies. In the upcoming school year, more school board employees will have the opportunity to take these studies. CCO's evangelization materials are simple and make it easy to share our faith with others. An emphasis is placed on a one-on-one approach to evangelization.

Finally, the Unbound ministry will begin in parishes interested in this service. Unbound is for those in need of spiritual liberation. Jesus came to free us from all forms of oppression: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The Unbound ministry assists in receiving this freedom through: 1) Repentance and Faith, 2) Forgiveness, 3) Renunciation, 4) Authority, and 5) the Father's Blessing. You can contact your pastor if you are interested in starting this ministry in your parish.

In closing, you will find many articles on evangelization and parish revitalization on the diocesan website at: <https://pembrokedioocese.com/new-evangelization>





## Supermom

Confraternity of Christian Mothers,  
St. Hedwig's Barry's Bay

Written by Maja Johnson, President of the  
Confraternity of Christian Mothers

*"In my deepest wound I saw your glory and it  
astounded me." – Saint Augustine*

This is hard for me to write. I feel uncomfortably vulnerable, but I also feel compelled to tell my story and witness what God has done for me.

Twelve years ago, my planned ideal of 'Supermom' was changed... great career, tidy home, no laundry piles, all home-cooked meals, excellent health, children enrolled in many activities, etc. After a major snowboarding accident, I suffered a life-changing concussion. I suffered so many health issues following the accident, but the greatest was a loss of purpose. At this point, I had a beautiful nine-month-old daughter and a wonderful husband and no hope!

Have you ladies ever been in that place where you don't feel anything? I didn't feel joy or happiness—physically, spiritually, sexually, or emotionally—of being a wife and mother. I was in deep spiritual pain, looking for help.

First, help came in the form of an old prayer book... the Latin English missal. The prayers in this book started to bring back hope and life! I cannot express the power of some of these beautiful prayers. I said a little prayer from that missal (St. Ignatius Loyola's "Suscipe") and asked God to break my heart of stone and heal me. Inch by inch I started to feel a change.

My Supermom plans of doing everything took another turn after we moved to Barry's Bay and I lost my baby late in the first trimester. Again, such a horrible experience and intense grief followed. I think every newly expecting mother knows loss is a possibility each time she says yes to life, but it's still so unreal, so unbelievable and unacceptable when it happens to you.



### Confraternity of Christian Mothers

With this missal in hand and frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament (thank you, Fr. Shalla, for having an Adoration chapel), I started trying to put myself back together. I ate a really clean diet, exercised consistently, went on date nights and girls' nights, and tried to restart a prayer and devotional life. With the gentleness and love of a wonderful friend, Katie Westen, who encouraged me, I went to my 'mothers prayer group' meeting about ten years ago.

This mothers' group is called the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. This group unites itself to the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary along with St. Joseph. These mothers "place their vows, cares and prayers together, so as to bring down the blessings from on high upon their children and families."

These groups were started during the French Revolution when the government was doing all it could to exclude the church from public life, and the government was trying hard to secularize women. These pious women started coming together to pray for their families and to discuss their problems. They prayed for their children, husbands and church. This is exactly what has been happening in Barry's Bay for the past 13 years, with more than 50 members.

Members have come and gone but remain a member wherever life has taken them. It has been a real blessing and honour to be able to pray united with other mothers and spiritual mothers

on a monthly basis. Thank you, thank you, thank you to all you beautiful ladies and witnesses to the faith! Thank you to my mom for her strong faith and support and to my husband for simply being in the small and big things of our life. Thank you to our past and present priest-directors, Fr. Shalla and Fr. Pawel. You have both been such a witness to faith, and we are eternally grateful!

So, as a mother, when life throws you crosses and blessings in disguise, I encourage you to snap a selfie or look in the mirror. Ladies, meet the real Supermom!

For more information about starting or joining the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, please contact me at [andrew.maja@gmail.com](mailto:andrew.maja@gmail.com)

### A Christian Mother's Daily Prayer for Children

*O Mary, Immaculate Virgin and Sorrowful Mother, commend our beloved children to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,*

*Who refuses nothing to His Mother. Holy Guardian Angels, pray for them.*

*St. Joseph, powerful patron, pray for them.*

*St. John, Beloved disciple of the Heart of Jesus, pray for them.*

*St. Augustine, pray for them. St. Anthony, pray for them. St. Aloysius, pray for them.*

*St. Anne, mother of Mary, pray for them.*

*St. Elizabeth, pray for them. St. Monica, pray for them.*





# Pregnancy Care Centres and the Reversal of Roe V. Wade

By Donalee Loback, Executive Director, First Step Options Pregnancy Resource Centre

## Introduction

It has been fascinating and frankly heartbreaking at times listening to the dialogue over this last year concerning Rode V. Wade, a decades-old court decision being overturned in the United States. A landmark ruling now returns the legal governance of abortion to the individual states.

There were comments and arguments on *both* sides of the debate, including those wondering what the ripple effect this decision will have on women and women's rights in the future.

Our proximity to our neighbours to the south can have an effect to varying degrees in Canada. However, with Canada not having any abortion law since 1988 and access to abortion paid for through provincial insurance, the influence within the political scope has taken a different approach on this side of the border.

## Effect in Canada post-Roe V. Wade

Amid the focus on the topic of abortion, Canadian media has increased pressure on our current government to follow through with its campaign promise to introduce amendments to the *Income Tax Act* to make anti-abortion organizations that provide dishonest counselling to pregnant women about their rights and options ineligible for charitable status. They especially name pregnancy care centres as targets for charitable status removal.

We stand in agreement with honest and ethical practices and would support a case-by-case evaluation of what the government calls "dishonest" work. However, we are very concerned that the attempt to address misinformation uses sweeping generalizations and mischaracterizes the good and charitable work of pregnancy care centres across Canada, including First Step Options in Renfrew County.

Removal of charitable status could be financially devastating to centres, causing many to close their doors and resulting in less support for women. We suggest that the government should address misinformation where it occurs, on a case-by-case basis, rather than targeting a category of charities based on their underlying beliefs.

## Our story

At times it feels like there are many versions of *our story* being told – who we are, what we do, and our motives for existing. Our critics may describe us as limiting a woman's choice regarding her unintended pregnancy. But the truth is that pregnancy care centres expand the support available to vulnerable women navigating their pregnancy decision and provide a safe place to work through their emotions and fears. We are proud of the work we do every day. Our story is about extending grace and expanding help and hope to women.

First Step Options is an affiliate of Pregnancy Care Canada, a national best practice organization with a network of over 80 pregnancy care centres across Canada. As an affiliate, we are required to compile and report yearly statistical information so Pregnancy Care Canada can produce a yearly national report capturing the impact pregnancy centres are having. As a result of this network of support, over the past twenty-four years, the following numbers speak to the value of pregnancy care work.

- **190,741 women and men** accessed help at Pregnancy Care Canada-affiliated pregnancy centres.
- **188,158 client visits** for material supplies, such as diapers, formula, and clothing.
- **33,000 clients** helped through parenting programs.
- **10,470 women requested** and received support after their abortion.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Do Pregnancy Resource Centres prevent women from having abortions?

No. Pregnancy resource centres offer a safe environment for a woman to make a pregnancy decision that is fully informed, evidence-based, consistent with her belief system, and free from external influence. Centres respect a woman's right to make her own decision and provide her with accurate information on all three options: abortion, adoption, and parenting.

## Why don't you talk women out of abortion?

We are faith-based, but we acknowledge that we cannot impose our worldview and values on others. In Canada, women have the option to terminate a pregnancy and have legal access to abortion. Our goal is not to change laws or limit abortion access but to care for the women who seek support at our affiliated centres.

We focus on ensuring women understand all their options and the alternatives to abortion that exist. We believe the most helpful thing we can do is provide a safe place where fears, pressures, values, and beliefs can be voiced, and ultimately a decision can be made – from a place of security and hope, not fear.

## If you don't refer for abortion, why do you give information on all options: abortion, adoption, and parenting?

We believe that every individual in Canada challenged by an unexpected pregnancy should have access to accurate, neutral information on all three options, compassionate support, and a safe place to work through all the emotions and thoughts to make a decision.

## Why don't you help clients get an abortion?

There are two reasons for this:

1. We are faith-based and, due to our beliefs, we cannot assist in arranging abortions.
2. Some women seek support after an abortion, and centres want to be a safe place for women to work through any negative emotions they may experience after an abortion – if a centre was part of the abortion process, it might no longer be viewed as a safe place for a healing and recovery journey.

## Are Pregnancy Care Centres legitimate charities?

Yes. First Step Options is a registered charity, compassionately caring for the vulnerable. We use our resources for charitable activities, we benefit the community we serve, and we add value to our society.





## What hasn't changed?

The realities of unintended pregnancy that cause women to believe their only options are abortion or overwhelming struggle still exist. Individuals will continue to need access to information and support. This means the need for pregnancy care centres will continue to exist – offering a safe place for women and men to work through their unique challenges and make life-impacting decisions.

As followers of Christ, we need a response to abortion that reflects God's Kingdom, not a political party. A Christ-like response that values the woman

and child equally and works for the dignity and welfare of both. Jesus gives us the freedom to see beyond the political and legalistic thinking of our culture to His grace- and love-centered Kingdom, in which all people are valued, respected, and cared for. Let us strive to live like this.

## Summary

I am so grateful for the privilege to work in a pregnancy care centre and be an effective support in our community. I'm even thankful for being misunderstood and mischaracterized, as it puts us in the same company as Jesus was when he walked

this earth. It also serves as an opportunity to educate and inform, continue to allow our actions of love and grace to speak loudly in all we do, and a chance for those that have benefitted from our help and support to testify to it. I am confident of this – what the enemy has meant for evil, God will bring good.

At the time of writing this article, we don't know for certain if our charitable status will be revoked. We will continue to trust in God, doing our best to love Him and be ambassadors of His love and grace in a broken world.

## Residence for retired priests, energy efficiency spur renovation of Cathedral rectory

A massive construction effort is underway on the grounds of St. Columbkille Cathedral in Pembroke that will see two whole buildings renovated and a third one demolished.

The Chancery Office, which was built in 1965 attached to the rectory, will be torn down to make way for more parking. The building would require a major overhaul to continue to be useable.

Parish staff of St. Columbkille have temporarily relocated in a portable facility on the Cathedral grounds, while the diocesan staff have relocated to another site on Pembroke Street West. A new location for the Chancery Office has yet to be determined.

The rectory and former convent will both be modernized and repurposed. As Father Jim Beanish explained, the need for this was motivated by providing accommodations to retired members of the clergy.

"The main driving force was the fact that our retired priests from Marianhill (nursing home) would have to move, or we would have to make arrangements with Marianhill to provide them with quarters there," said Father Beanish.

"When we looked at the amount of investment – the cost of it – we thought it would be just as wise for us to invest in our own building."

M. Sullivan & Son Limited is the contractor overseeing the renovation and were mobilized to begin work in October 2021. The first concern to be addressed was the removal of asbestos from the buildings.

"Once that was completed, we started doing a clean demo. So, now we are starting with framing, and we've built the elevator shaft," said Matt Cummins, superintendent with the company. The elevator will be located in the rectory building, and a ramp will be added for accessibility purposes.

The second and third floors of both the convent and rectory are where the retired priests will be quartered. The new home of the rector of the Cathedral will be on the third floor where the library used to be. The kitchen, dining room, staff room and washrooms will be located on the first floor.

Upgrades to the buildings will also provide energy savings to St. Columbkille parish.



"It's going to be really tight for controlling the temperature inside the building. It will be all new spray foam around all the exterior walls," said Cummins.

This will be a vast improvement from before, where portions of the buildings had no insulation of any kind. New double-pane windows will also be added, with room-controlled heating and cooling where none existed before.

However, some of the interior stonework will remain visible, ensuring touches of the original décor remain intact to merge with the new.

For buildings this old, it was inevitable that some issues would arise during the initial demo process.

"We knew we were going to find some structural issues, and we did in the Sister's residence," said Cummins. "But the rectory was in really good shape. We expected we would find some moisture problems, too. That was pretty much it."

At this time, no firm date could be provided as to when the renovations will be completed.





## Annual Retreat for Permanent Deacons and their spouses at Galilee Centre

By Deacon Christopher Barrett

The annual diocesan retreat for the Permanent Deacons and their wives was once again held in Arnprior at the Galilee Centre, August 22–24, 2022. This year's retreat director was Father Vincent Pereira, a priest of the Archdiocese of Ottawa-Cornwall and Judicial Vicar. He is also the parish priest for St. Theresa Church in Ottawa. I met Fr. Vincent during my formation to the permanent diaconate in Ottawa. He was the instructor on Canon Law, as it pertained to the sacraments where deacons would be involved. Fr. Vincent is a prayerful, thoughtful, and genuine person who uses wit and humour to engage his audience. The theme of the retreat this year was "Evangelization in our Communities Today," which is timely given Bishop Guy Desrochers' Evangelization Initiative.

The last time the deacons and spouses gathered together at Galilee for a retreat was in 2019. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the retreats in 2020 and 2021 were cancelled. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to gather again in fellowship, prayer and study.

During the retreat, there was daily Mass, praying of the Liturgy of the Hours in the morning and in the evening, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel, opportunity for Confessions, several talks given by the retreat director, and opportunities for friendship and community during meal times. An important aspect for any retreat is time set aside for silence: quiet meditation and personal prayer. Given the beautiful venue of Galilee Centre with its lovely grounds bordering the Gillies Grove (an expanse of old-growth forest) and overlooking the Ottawa River, there is ample opportunity to be alone with God and his creation.

Fr. Vincent introduced the theme of evangelization as a call for all baptized Christians to evangelize, to speak of Jesus Christ to everyone, especially to those for whom the Gospel has not taken root. Using Pope Francis' call to synodality, Fr. Vincent spoke of the connection between evangelization and synodality, that is, the journeying together with all those we encounter.

As we journey together, we listen to each other and we listen to the Holy Spirit. We must learn to listen to the voice of God. "Speak Lord, your



servant is listening." This is a prayer we can all pray throughout the day and in all our activities. In our postmodern age, we are sometimes overwhelmed by social media, which prevents us from listening to God. We can pass by God without noting him, or God passes by us in our neighbour and we don't pay attention. We need to shift from hearing to listening. We need to allow the Lord to expand our hearts. Our Blessed Mother has a special role in evangelization, as Mary is the listener of the Word of God, the Queen of Apostles, and the evangelist. We need to pray for evangelists, to pray for more evangelizers; we need to ask, to seek, and to knock. Evangelization and synodality demand listening, accompanying, but also a proactiveness. We are called not to sit back and watch, but we are compelled to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Victor, crucified and risen. Evangelization is active, action-oriented. We are sent out: "Go to all the nations and proclaim the Gospel." The Good News must be shared.

Fr. Vincent spoke of the importance of formation for evangelization. The basis for all effective evangelization is a solid formation in our faith. What you don't have, you can't share. If I am well informed, I can inform. Knowledge and understanding and prayerful reflection of Sacred Scripture are essential for evangelization. Jesus selected ordinary people to be his disciples and trained them for mission to teach, to heal, and to care for the poor. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, his disciples were ready to evangelize with courage, understanding and wisdom. Fr. Vincent spoke to us about the role

of the deacon in evangelization and pastoral ministry. There is a missionary identity to the diaconate with an emphasis on listening, the ability to "smell the sheep" and to work in whatever conditions they are found. Like the Good Shepherd, the deacon must leave the 99 and go after the one lost sheep.

The final section that Fr. Vincent spoke about was testimony to evangelization. In Sacred Scripture, God reveals the truth and God reveals himself in relationship to man. All come to know Christ in Sacred Scripture. The Word of God in Sacred Scripture must be our daily food. There is no one method of evangelization. In fact, there are many ways to evangelize with testimony and witness. There is communicating the Word to our children in prayer, in song, in bible stories, in videos, and in pictures. In the family, parents witness to their children in word and deed and in prayer and scripture reading. As long as we proclaim the Word of God at Mass, in small groups, in educational settings or even on social media, we are evangelizing and evangelization goes on until the end of time.

On behalf of all those present, I offer a sincere thank you to Fr. Vincent Pereira for leading us on this retreat. Also, we are grateful to our Bishop Guy Desrochers for sponsoring the annual retreat for the Pembroke Diocese's Permanent Deacons and their wives. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Deacon Adrien Chaput for organizing and facilitating the retreat and making it a great success.

All glory and praise be to our God!





## Family Life, Youth and Young Adult Ministry – Update

By Yvette Bourque

Many of you know that I reduced my hours for the 2021-2022 school year in order to homeschool my youngest son, Jesse. This was a fantastic experience and one that I never thought I would ever do. I never imagined myself being able to homeschool and often wondered what it would be like. To my surprise, it was easier than I thought in many ways and also harder than I expected in other ways. I never realized that fractions are so simple! It was a blessed year, and I am very grateful to have had this experience. This year, however, Jesse will be going back to school, as that is what we feel is best at this time. Who knows what the future holds besides the Lord Himself? For anyone who is thinking of homeschooling, there are many benefits to so many aspects of your life and your child's. It is a big step to take, but with prayer and discernment, the Lord guides each of us in ways that He knows best.

This year, I am still remaining on those reduced hours (12 hours/week), so my tasks this year are the Diocesan newsletter, *Ecclesia*, Young Adult Ministry, Marriage Preparation, Diocesan Evangelization team and some tasks on the Diocesan website. The great news is that I have some help. Patrick Sullivan, Lay Evangelist, parishioner at St. Mary's, Wilno, will be helping me out in the area of Young Adult Ministry to expand this in other areas of the diocese. Along with our regular Diocesan Young Adult Ministry group that runs in the Pembroke area once a month, but is open to all, Patrick and I are hosting *Image of God - Men's and Women's sessions* once a month in Renfrew at St. Francis Xavier parish for anyone age 18 and over. These monthly sessions began in October and will continue until June. From there, we will see how to move forward. The poster with all the dates and topics accompanying this article can also be found at parishes and on the website under Young Adult Ministry and the Upcoming Events section of the diocesan website.

### Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) and FAMILIES

In February 2021, following an extensive period of discussion, consultation and discernment by the CCCB in collaboration with other relevant organizations, bishops approved the creation of a new Office for Family and Life within the CCCB's current structure to better respond to the needs of families at the national and local levels. The new Office will undertake its mandate to grow the Conference's engagement with diocesan personnel for family and life issues, as well as to cultivate relationships with external organizations and individuals to promote formation, the exchange of ideas, network-building and advocacy focused on the pastoral care of families and the dignity of human life from conception until natural death. The Office is led by its first Director, Mrs. Michelle Dabrowski M.A Th., who joined the CCCB in September 2020 as Research and Resource Development Assistant for the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis, where she supported initiatives related to palliative care, youth consultations, and online resource development. In her new role as Director of the Office for Family and Life, she is responsible for the implementation of all national projects to be carried out by the Office in both official languages (Retrieved from ccb.ca and slightly adapted).

## IMAGE OF GOD

A MONTHLY EVENING FOR CATHOLIC MEN AND WOMEN TO GROW

Diocese of Pembroke

**“This is a unique opportunity in the Renfrew Deanery for women and men to find out more about their own spirituality.**

**I encourage you to avail yourself of this time of fellowship and discovery.**

*Fr. Brennan*

### DATES AND TOPICS

MEN'S SESSION (7-8 P.M.)	WOMEN'S SESSION (8-9 P.M.)
<b>Made in the Image of God</b> It's time to look at your spiritual life and your own family in a radically new way. Wed. October 19th	<b>A Powerful Culture</b> Your family is unique - it is time to own that. Wed. March 15th
<b>The Best Decision You Will Ever Make</b> God promised you this - it's time to claim it for your family. Wed. November 16th	<b>Signs &amp; Symbols</b> Our lives are dominated by signs and symbols - ignore them to your own peril. Wed. April 12th
<b>The Looks We Give</b> Reclaiming our eyes for God, our spouse and our kids. Wed. December 14th	<b>Home Grown Spiritual Guides</b> We're all walking a long and difficult journey - it's time to talk about who we have invited to walk with us. Wed. May 10th
<b>Do You Really Know Them?</b> Here's what's missing to dramatically improve the relationships in your life and family. Wed. January 11th	<b>When Life Gets Hard</b> A no nonsense look at the deserts in marriage, parenting and our spiritual lives. Wed. June 7th
<b>Ready For The World</b> Training, formation and catechesis - the difference will mean the world to your family. Wed. February 8th	

All evenings to be held at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Parish in Renfrew.

331 Plaut St S, Renfrew, ON, K7V 4A6

ENTER THROUGH THE SMALL HALL DOOR

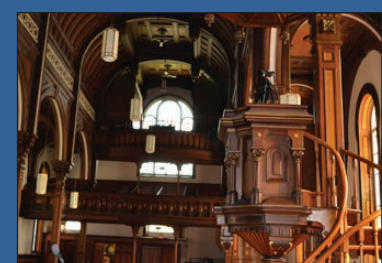
<https://pembrokediocese.com/young-adult/marriage-and-family/>

If you are a parent, parish leader, teacher, or pastor, I invite you to go to the CCCB website under the heading 'Evangelization, Catechesis and Catholic Education.' There you will find a section on Family and another on Children and Youth. There is an abundance of material on Family Catechesis. Here are some of the headings you will find:

- An explanation of "Why Family Catechesis?"
- Three Models of Parish Family Catechesis, including some videos explaining these
- Planning tips and strategies for getting started
- Resource bank of websites for catechists/parents who support family life.

There is much work to do in the area of family ministry. Please pray for leaders to have the courage to take on initiatives at the parish level and for families who work hard to intentionally form their families at home. For many more resources, check out the diocesan website ([www.pembrokediocese.com](http://www.pembrokediocese.com)) under "Resources."





## WYD 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal

By Julie Belec

Our diocese has a long history of offering pilgrimage opportunities to young people. In this post-pandemic era, young people are preparing to go on a very special pilgrimage, World Youth Day (WYD), which will be held in Lisbon in the summer of 2023. WYD is a “festival of faith,” where young people from all walks of life and all countries meet and experience the love of God.

The young pilgrims of the World Youth Day are first welcomed by the families of the host country for pre-WYD events in the dioceses of the whole country: these are the “Days in the Diocese.”

After this rich experience, the young people will move on to the actual WYD. It starts with a meeting between young people from the same country for a time of festive and spiritual reunion. The following three days are the youth festival. These days begin with a time of catechesis between young people speaking the same language and continue with opportunities for prayer, singing, celebration and discovery with young people from all over the world.

On the fourth day, the young pilgrims set off to the place of the great vigil with the Pope. This experience under the stars is very rich in encounters and emotions. After a night under the stars, the young people will experience the closing mass with the Pope and the announcement of the venue for the next WYD. As the 2023 WYD will be in Portugal, our group will stay a little longer to visit and pray in Fatima before returning home.

But, for the half-dozen young people from our diocese, the pilgrimage has already begun as they prepare not only financially, but also spiritually for this unique experience. The trip will cost each young person \$3,600, so don't be surprised if you see them fundraising in the coming weeks.

On the spiritual side, they have started strong with a Taizé prayer experience and will be discovering various other ways of living and expressing their faith even before they go to Lisbon. A minimum of one meeting per month is planned in order to learn to be Church with our differences, as well as to walk and pray together.

Here is a short testimony from Mona Mreiche, now Sister Mona, about her WYD experience: “For me, WYD was an opportunity to see that, despite the



**Delegates attending World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal, from the Diocese of Pembroke are: Top row left to right: Julien Dubois, Julie Bélec, Grace Duff, Doris Gagné, Jeannette Desforges, Nathalie Gagné. Front row, left to right: Kayla Bourne-Tanguay, Émilie Bourne-Tanguay, Quinn Downey, Jacob Poyli**

white hair in my parish, I was far from being the only young person who believed in God. As a young adult, I met a bold God who dreamed with me of a future of joy and peace. I met a God who was attentive to my desires, my joys, my sorrows... a God who understood me, who walked with me. I discovered that I also had a place in the Church.”

In Panama, during the last WYD, Pope Francis said to the young people, “Don't let people say that you are the future of the Church, because you are not the future of the Church, YOU ARE THE CHURCH TODAY.”

So, I'll hand over to Quinn who tells us why he wants to go to WYD. “I would like to go to WYD to meet the Pope, to explore the Portuguese culture and to have the experience of living different types of prayer and Masses as I have just experienced with Taizé.”

### World Youth Day

Pictured at right is a group of young people who travelled with Fr. Joe O'Malley (youth director of our Diocese), Fr. Doug Bridge and Fr. Howard Chabot and Grey Sisters to hear Mother Teresa (now St. Mother Teresa) at Massey Hall in Toronto on invitation of Fr. Tom McKillop, the Youth Director of the Archdiocese of Toronto in September, 1972 – 50 years ago.

One young man is now the organist from the Cathedral on the left end (standing). We flew from the Pembroke airport to the Toronto international airport and the flight was a gift from the owner(s) of the former Pem Air.

Lisbon, Portugal is the next venue for World Youth Day 2023 (postponed from 2022), August 1–6.







# What is a deanery?

By Father Réal Ouellette

Let's take a few steps back. The Catholic Church is universal, and the entire territory of the planet is divided into dioceses, even Antarctica, which has no permanent residents, is part of a diocese, Christchurch, of New Zealand.

In turn, dioceses are divided into the territories you know – parishes.

So what is a deanery? No more, no less, deaneries are another level of division of the territory of a diocese, bringing together in groups the different parishes of a diocese.

The term deanery is a term from Canon Law (Church Law). In Canon Law, the concept of deanery is clearly defined .... Among other things, it contains certain tasks that are incumbent on the dean (the person in charge of a deanery). For a while, from the mid-90s until recently, our diocese used the term «pastoral zone.» As the term «pastoral zone» is vague and not part of Canon Law, Mgr Desrochers preferred to reintroduce the concept of deanery shortly after his arrival in our diocese.

## How many deaneries do we have in the diocese?

The Diocese of Pembroke is divided into five deaneries:

- Pembroke, comprising the parishes between LaPasse and Deep River;
- Pontiac, comprising the parishes in the Quebec sector between Sheenboro and Quyon;
- Mattawa, comprising the parishes in the northwestern sector of the diocese, including Témiscaming;
- Renfrew, comprising the parishes between Cobden and Arnprior, including Eganville;
- Barry's Bay, comprising the parishes in the southern sector of the diocese, from Killaloe/Round Lake to Bancroft/Halliburton.

## Who are the members of the deanery and what are their roles?

The members of the deanery are, first of all, all the priests, diocesan or religious, active or retired, who live in the deanery territory. Permanent deacons are also part of the deanery and, depending on the circumstances, may be called upon to play a particular role.

In addition to the dean, to whom we will return, in each deanery there is a secretary who writes the minutes of the meetings. Also, there is a priest chosen to represent his deanery on the Council of Priests (of the diocese). Each role may be held by different priests and, depending on circumstances (and due to the decreasing number of priests), it may happen that a priest has more than one role.

The role of representative on the Council of Priests is for a period of two years, renewable. Therefore, this role, as well as that of secretary, may change at this frequency.

## What about the Dean?

The dean, also known as the «vicar forain,» is a priest chosen and mandated by the bishop following consultation with all the priests of the deanery. The dean has a term of office of three years and holds this role for that length of time as long as he resides in the deanery. In the event that the dean is assigned to a pastoral ministry outside the deanery, his or her term of office is immediately terminated, and a new dean is selected.

The dean's role is to support his fellow priests in their lives as priests, in their ministries, in the administration of parishes, and in new initiatives put in place by the diocese. In addition, in our diocese, the deans are part of the Personnel Office together with the Chancellor and the Vicar General to assist the bishop with pastoral appointments and other related matters.

Currently the deans in the Diocese of Pembroke are :

- Pembroke: Father Mitchell Beachey
- Pontiac: Father Michael Goring
- Mattawa: Father Cyril Okebanama
- Renfrew: Father Kerry Brennan
- Barry's Bay: Father John Burchat

## What does this mean to the average person?

For some time, and more in the future, we will be hearing about deaneries. With the initiatives that will be put forward by the Diocesan Evangelisation Project and with the pastoral restructuring that has been needed for a long time, it is at the deanery level that these things will be discussed, worked out and take shape.

Often we are victims of parochialism – we only think of our own parish. At best, we can perhaps accept to see the reality of the group of parishes served by our priest, but we have difficulty with the idea of seeing the bigger picture of the diocese and the universal Church. Certainly, looking at the bigger picture can bring anxiety and uncertainty. That is why I invite you to take a smaller piece of it. Look first at the reality of your deanery, its strengths and challenges, the priests who make it up, the faithful who attend Sunday Mass and who help support their parishes. In so doing, you will begin to develop a sense of the universality of the Church. In all circumstances, I invite you to keep all these reflections and projects in your daily prayer.





## Saint Profile

### Saint Luke the Evangelist

During this past year, we have been journeying in the year of Saint Luke, the Sunday Lectionary Cycle Year C in the Catholic Church. We can surely acknowledge that these have been beautiful scripture readings that we have heard proclaimed in the midst of our churches. Let us now take a closer look at this wonderful saint, evangelist and gospel writer.

Luke was born a Greek and a Gentile in Antioch, Syria. It is believed that he was a physician and that he was also a slave. In those days, it was not uncommon that the owner would have their slaves study medicine so they would have a doctor ready to take care of their family in case of sickness.

As a writer, Luke is the only Gentile to have written books in the Bible that have proven to be historically accurate. Luke emphasizes Christ's compassion for those who suffer, the poor, the oppressed and the less fortunate, drawing them closer to our Lord, as the true Shepherd who watches over His sheep.

Luke had a great desire to share the importance of evangelizing the Gentiles through many of the writings found in his Gospel. He also raised women and their importance as they journeyed with Jesus, such as Mary Magdalene, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna. Luke also highlights our Blessed Mother Mary in his writings of Mary's Annunciation and her visit to Elizabeth, where we learn the words spoken by the angel to Mary at the Annunciation, "Hail Mary full of grace," and Elizabeth's words to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" We also hear the beautiful words of the Magnificat in this Gospel, "My soul magnifies the Lord...."

Luke's exclusive perspective on our Lord Jesus can be seen in the six miracles and 18 parables not found in any of the other Gospels. Luke's Gospel is the one that acknowledges the poor and social justice. He is also the one who tells the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man who ignored him. He also is the one who chooses his wording carefully in his writings as he says, "Blessed are you who are poor" instead of "Blessed are the poor in Spirit" found in the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Mathew.

When we read St. Luke's Gospel, it gives us a good idea of his character as one who loved the poor, who wanted equality for all God's children, and the door to God's kingdom opened to all, as he saw hope in God's mercy for everyone.

In the introduction to his Gospel, Luke shares with us that his writings were inspired by close association with Paul and his companions. Luke not only wrote the Gospel of Saint Luke but also the Acts of the Apostles. It has been shared that Luke joined Paul at Troas in the year 51 and journeyed with him from Macedonia to Philippi. Luke's knowledge of medicine would have assisted him in taking great care of Paul when he had been beaten, stoned and nearly drowned while sharing the Good News with the Western Roman Empire. After some time there, Paul left Philippi, but Luke stayed to encourage the Church there. Then Luke left Philippi to rejoin Paul in Troas, where they first met in 51. They then travelled together through Miletus, Tyre, and Caesarea to Jerusalem.



Window in the parish church of SS Mary and Lambert, Stonham Aspal, Suffolk, with stained glass representing St Luke the Evangelist. By Kevin Wailes - flickr. Taken in the church of St Mary and St Lambert in Stonham Aspal, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9758639>

Luke is the devoted companion who stays with Paul while he is imprisoned in Rome in about the year 61. When everyone else deserts Paul in his final imprisonment and sufferings, it is Luke who remains with Paul to the very end. We read in 2 Timothy 4:11, "Only Luke is with me."

After the martyrdom of St. Paul in the year 67, St. Luke is said to have preached elsewhere throughout the Mediterranean and possibly died as a martyr.

Saint Luke is the patron saint of artists, physicians and surgeons.

During this great year of Saint Luke, let us ask him to intercede for us and our needs.

#### Prayer to Saint Luke

*Most charming and Saintly Physician, thou were animated by the heavenly Spirit of love. In faithfully detailing of the humanity of Jesus, thou also showed His Divinity and His genuine compassion for all human beings. Inspire our physicians with thine professionalism and with the divine compassion for their patients. Enable them to cure the ills of both body and spirit that afflict so many in our day. Amen*





## A new residence for the Bishop of Pembroke Diocese

The bishop has moved to a new location within the city of Pembroke.

It had become evident over time that the residence on Maple Street was not being utilized to its full potential, and current market conditions provided a great opportunity to place the house on the market.

“Some time ago, under the direction of Bishop Mulhall, the Diocesan Building and Property Committee had looked at and agreed on the possibility of selling the property at 307 Maple Street,” explained Deacon Adrien Chaput.

“When we had a change to a new bishop, we thought we would go ahead with the sale at a favourable time.”

The Maple Street property was sold via a lottery system, whereby local real estate agents interested in selling the property submitted their names. The eventual winner successfully sold the property in July of this year.

Bishop Guy Desrochers now resides at 544 Irving Street, across from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The property was already owned by the diocese, but the house needed major renovations.

“With the bishop’s approval, I undertook the management of the project in order to get contractors to renovate the whole place,” noted Deacon Adrien.

Work at the Irving Street location began in the summer of 2021. Upgrades to the property included landscaping, the demolition and rebuilding of a parking garage, and completely gutting the interior of the house, and



the addition of new electrical wiring, a new furnace and insulation. New cupboards, flooring and fixtures were also installed.

The Bishop officially moved into the property on June 1, 2022.

“I love my new place of residence: a great house with a beautiful view... and right in front of a beautiful church, Our Lady of Lourdes. Many thanks to Deacon Adrien for the incredible work he has done at the house and all the time and love he has put into this,” stated Bishop Desrochers.

“I was very blessed to have contractors that I previously worked with in the business world who do such great work,” said Deacon Adrien. “The pandemic caused many difficulties. There were times when we were waiting for materials to come in, but everybody pulled together for a successful project,” concluded Deacon Adrien.

## What is Purgatory?

By Fr. Michael Smith

*Ecclesia included a readers’ survey in its May 2021 issue. One reader requested an article on the doctrine of purgatory. The author is pleased to respond to the reader’s request.*

In Catholic theology, there is a Latin expression, “*Lex orandi, lex credendi*.” A literal translation is, “The law of praying is the law of believing.” It means that if we want to know what the Church, the People of God, believes, the best indication is what we say and do when we engage in public prayer.

How does this relate to purgatory? From the beginning of the Church’s history, Catholics have prayed and done penance for the faithful departed. In particular, we have offered the Eucharist for them.

Now, this age-old practice raises an interesting question. If someone is in heaven, that person is not in need of our prayers. If a person has definitively rejected the salvation brought about by Christ’s death and resurrection, then there would be no point in praying for that person. So, why do we pray for the deceased? It is because the Church’s faith holds that if someone has died in God’s grace and friendship, but is still in need of being freed from certain sinful tendencies or

unloving attitudes, then there is an intermediate state, a period or process of purification that occurs. The person is destined for heaven and will enter into union with God when that purification has been completed. The prayers and sacrifices of the Church on earth can help the person.

The Eastern Churches have not said much more than what I have just written. In the West, however, there has developed a teaching about “purgatory”, literally a “place of purgation” or purification. We have to be careful here not to use religious language as though there was a one-to-one correspondence between words in our language and objects in the physical world. The word ‘place’ is not to be understood as a geographical space. Also, references to the “fire” of purgation are not to be understood as a description of material phenomena. The core of the doctrine is that God’s grace purifies us, “burns away” our egoism and smallness of soul.

Does that happen in time as we know it? That is an open question. Purgatory is a process involving change, and in that sense, is somewhat like time. “Purgatory [...] is a process of undergoing final conversion, and, like deep therapy, it is a

painful process. We pray for those in this state because they are part of the family (remember the ‘communion of saints’ that we proclaim in the Creed), and because we are part of the world that helped to make them selfish or stubborn” (Michael T. Ryan, *In the Light of Faith*, p. 96).

### How is this good news?

The doctrine of purgatory is good news because none of us is perfect, and it is probably rare for a person to reach the end of earthly life completely free of selfishness, unforgiveness, or attachment to the things of this world. If we have accepted God’s grace, and if we are still in need of purification when we die, then we will be purified. We are beyond the grasp of the powers of evil at that point, and are in no danger of being lost. We are destined for eternal life and resurrection.

### Sources

2 Maccabees 12:38-45  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1030-1032  
“Purgatory” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds.). Oxford University Press, 1997  
Ryan, Michael T. *In the Light of Faith*. Woodslee ON: Solidarity Books, 2007





## Pontiac CWL celebrates 100 years

On Sunday, April 24, 2022, Bishop Guy Desrochers, Bishop of Pembroke; former parish priest, Fr. Basil Tanguay; and CWL members from Diocesan CWL and other parishes of Central Pontiac joined parish priest, Fr. Michael Goring, to offer Mass and congratulations on 100 years of the Catholic women's League in St. John the Evangelist Parish, Campbell's Bay QC. Following the Mass and presentation of pins, everyone enjoyed a reception at the Lion's Hall.

Like other councils, St. John the Evangelist members perform their duties earnestly and efficiently through service to the people of God. They were recognized for their years of service, from new members with less than five years of service to others with more than 60 years. Sadly, our most senior member, Eileen Morin, with 70 years of service, passed away the week before the celebration of our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



The Pontiac Women's League (CWL) celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday April 24th at St. John's Church, Campbell's Bay, Quebec. Photo credit: Wayne Maloney





## The CWL is Catholic and living it!

Prompted by the new National theme *Catholic and Living It!* and the new provincial theme *Go Make a Difference*, CWL members in Pembroke Diocese are finding ways to live out their lives in joyful service to their families, parishes, and communities.

Annual conventions at diocesan, provincial, and national levels marked the year's work with celebration and affirmation. Pembroke Diocesan Council held its annual convention on May 14 at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Renfrew. Certificates were presented to presidents of St. John Chrysostom Council of Arnprior, St. James the Less Council of Eganville, St. Columbkille's Cathedral Council of Pembroke, and St. Francis Xavier Council of Renfrew. These councils celebrated 100th anniversaries in 2021. Provincial President Colleen Perry addressed delegates with a talk that expressed the joys and struggles of CWL councils during and after the pandemic. A new diocesan executive was installed following the closing mass. The new executive consists of President Annette Chaplin, Past President Joan Lemay, Treasurer Julie Mallory, Administrative Assistant Bev Drouin, Spiritual Development Margaret Maloney, Education and Health Louise Rockburn, Community Life Terry Hodgson, Christian Family Life Donna Provost, Resolutions Irene Perrault, and Communications Pat Weller. Carmel Rumleskie has been appointed Diocesan Life Member Liaison. New Diocesan President Annette Chaplin described herself in her introduction to members as a retiree who "now work(s) directly for the "Big Guy," and His son Jesus....His mom often must clarify for (her), but the perks are enormous. Talk about a great pension plan – indexed and eternal!"

Twelve members from Pembroke Diocese attended the Provincial Convention held this year in Ottawa. Included in the delegation was Fr. Michael Coyne, Diocesan Spiritual Advisor. **Resolution ON.22.01 Improve Care in Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario**, gifted by Pembroke Diocese, was presented and passed at the convention. Congratulations to the team from Our Lady of Fatima Council, Renfrew, for their work in bringing this resolution to fruition.

Meetings and activities for League members in Pembroke Diocese for the year ahead have already started. A Day of Reflection was held on September 24 at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Deep River. The focus was Divine Mercy with prayer and reflection, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and a Service for Deceased Members and Spiritual Advisors. All women, regardless of their membership in The Catholic Women's League, were invited to attend.

Plans for the Diocesan Fall Meeting on November 5 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Hall in Lapasse include information on Blessed Catherine's Starflowers Prayer Outreach, a component of the evangelization mission of the Diocese of Pembroke. Also on the agenda are presentations on Development and Peace, on the "Travelling Mary" program currently underway in a local family of schools, the upcoming changes to the executive structure of the Catholic Women's League and the process for councils to transition to these changes.

Come and see what the Catholic Women's League is all about. Parish councils reach every corner of

## CATHOLIC and LIVING IT!

Pembroke Diocese in both Ontario and Quebec. It is a grassroots membership organization. Every member, regardless of the position she might hold at parish, diocesan, provincial, or national level, must belong to a parish council first. If a CWL council does not exist in your parish, consider joining a neighbouring parish council or starting one in your own parish. The Pembroke Diocesan CWL Council is always available for support and mentorship. All women, 16 years of age and older are welcome to become members. There are many levels of engagement in the League, ranging from fully active to prayerful. All members are valued for their own unique gifts. Your paid membership connects you to the 60,000 plus other members in the organization across Canada and gives a collective and influential voice when the League advocates provincial and federal governments on issues that bring a Catholic voice to society.

The opportunities are endless in the service that members can provide to their parishes, communities, and the larger world. Our reach is limited only by our members' imagination. The Catholic Women's League nurtures Catholic values in the home, in our communities, and in the wider society by being "Christ" centred, and with the help of core values of faith, service, and social justice, and the guidance of our Patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. To find out more about the CWL, browse the National website <https://cwl.ca>.

## New members in our faith

After a year of challenges with the pandemic, faithful candidates continued their journey with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

The RCIA team and participants met on a weekly basis with other Catholics to study, pray and discern, as they explored the Catholic Faith. This process of study and preparation, through which many others have chosen to enter into full Communion with the Catholic Church, takes place in many parishes throughout the Diocese of Pembroke.

On Saturday, April 16, 2022, the Most of Holy of Nights, at St. Columbkille's Cathedral in Pembroke, Bishop Guy Desrochers welcomed Michelle Alice Burgess as she received the Sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Communion.

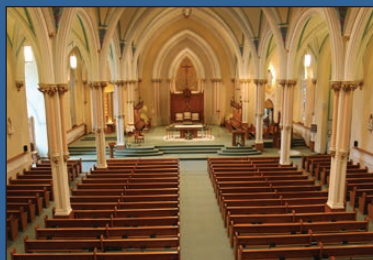
That same evening at Saint Francis Xavier Church in Renfrew, Father Kerry Brennan welcomed David Stanley Taylor, who received the Sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Communion as well in a beautiful celebration with the faithful who were present.

A little later in the season of the Church on the Feast of Pentecost, Kevin Dale MacWilliams also received the Sacrament of Confirmation and Holy Communion at St. Columbkille's Cathedral with Father Jim Beanish presiding, as Kevin was also part of our RCIA journey.

Congratulations to all our candidates and families. Please be assured of our continued prayers and support.

For more information about RCIA or interest in the Catholic Faith, please contact Deacon Adrien Chaput at 613-732-7933 ext. 206 or at [dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioecese.com](mailto:dcadrienchaput@pembrokedioecese.com)





## Remembering priests who served

By Father Mitchell Beachey

*I have done some reading on the contributions of the Pembroke Diocese to the Armed Forces of Canada, beginning with World War I and up to this present day. There is a long history of Pembroke priests serving for our country. One of our retired priests, Father J-P Rochefort, a native of St. Thomas d'Aquin in Astorville, served as a chaplain. This year, I wish to mention those priests who served during World War I that numbered about seven priests. There were Monsignor Francis L. French, Fathers M. J. O'Gorman, J.J. Sammon, Charles O'Gorman, Henry Letang, William Leo Murray, John Robert O'Gorman (a Renfrew native, ordained for the Pembroke Diocese but became part of the Vicariate of Haileybury when it was carved out of the Pembroke Diocese). I will highlight Msgr. Francis Lawrence French, and Fathers Henry Edward Letang and William Leo Murray.*



Monsignor Francis Lawrence French was the pastor at St. Francis Xavier, Renfrew, and left for the war as a chaplain. There were not many Catholic chaplains in the army at this time and so the need was great. He was the senior Catholic chaplain of the Canadian Forces and had the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

At a military dinner after the war, Lt. Col. McGreer spoke of "a very vivid picture he had in mind of Father French in August 1918, going on hands and knees from place to place under heavy fire to look for seriously wounded." He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order as an officer for his service during the war. He was also granted the highest title of Monsignor, that of Prothonotary Apostolic (PA), by His Holiness Pope Benedict XV.



Father Henry Letang was a native of St. Lawrence O'Toole parish in Barry's Bay. He was pastor at St. Joseph Parish, Allumette Island and Ste-Therese in Temiscaming. He was an honorary captain and chaplain during World War I. He received the "Medale d'honneur aux glaives en Vermeil" (Medal of Honour with silver-gilt bar) from the French government. This was the second highest of five grades of the Medal of Honour that was awarded only for the most intrepid acts of courage and devotion.



Father William Leo Murray was awarded the Military Cross, which was given to officers for exemplary gallantry. In addition to this, a bar was added. The addition of a bar was for those who performed a further act of gallantry on the battlefield.

"The late Father Murray won the 'bar' to the M.C. in front of Cambrai, in 1918, when his coat was riddled with machine-gun fire, as he attended to the dying on the field, though he came through untouched."<sup>2</sup> Here is the citation for his military cross and then the citation for the addition of the bar:

*On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1918, for great gallantry and devotion to duty. He went over with the Battalion in an attack, and when another unit attacked through his own, he went forward with the medical officer of that unit. He stayed with the latter when wounded and dressed his wounds and then carried him to a place of safety. He then continued advancing with the other unit, who had lost all their medical staff except one, dressing wounded in the open. He showed splendid devotion to duty under heavy fire.*

*For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an advance. He stayed with the battalion throughout the operations, attending to the wounded. Over ground exposed to artillery and machine-gun fire, he searched the ground for wounded and took them to the regimental aid post. He behaved splendidly.*

During the month of the Holy Souls, let us remember all those who died in the wars and conflicts for our country and let us say an Ave for these pioneers of Roman Catholic chaplaincy in the Armed Forces.

1 <http://www.cchahistory.ca/journal/CCHA1939-40/O%27Gorman.pdf>

2 Ibid.