



1 January 2012

Dear Pastors, Lay Pastoral Animators and Parishioners,

A new year has dawned. Over the past several days, the news networks have been reviewing the past year, and trying to predict what 2012 will bring. I hope that in the homes and parishes of our diocese, the experience of Christ's nativity has given you renewed hope for His Body (the Church) and for our world. There are some trouble spots that cry out for justice, and in many parts of the world, Christians are particularly susceptible to persecution. Let us keep up our prayers for the suffering persons across the globe.

### **Seminarian departures**

I want to share with you that two of our seminarians have left the seminary over the past several weeks. Daniel Hanrahan from Valleyview and Patrick Lepage from McLennan have both come to the conclusion that the diocesan priesthood and seminary formation is not where God is calling them. They are grateful for the prayer support they have received over the past years; please keep them in mind as they make decisions for their future.

Our four other seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton have completed their fall semester and look forward to returning to the formation program after the Christmas break: Travis Chabot, Daniel Jodoin, Kellyn Lieva and Michael Uso-Ereyi. The program of seminary formation is not only about studies; it is also a time for spiritual and personal formation, and for discerning God's call in their life. Over time and with much prayer, they are strengthened in their identity as future priests.

### **Sylvia Noel**

You may recall that we recently re-constituted the lay formation office in Peace River to be the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. We asked Sr. Louise Vanderploeg to take the leadership of this new office; we also committed ourselves to hire a part-time assistant, with particular responsibility for the catechesis of children. This would include sacramental preparation and other catechetical programs, at a diocesan level.

Having advertised for this position, I am glad to announce that we have hired Sylvia Noël, of Donnelly. Sylvia has experience as a classroom teacher at the elementary level, and brings some good insight to the office. She starts her new ministry at the beginning of this new year.

### **Silence and pace (rhythm)**

Last month I spoke about the role of the Word and its proclamation in the celebration of the Mass, and how the new GIRM (General Instruction of the Roman Missal) and new Missal emphasize this. I wish to reflect with you for a moment on the place of silence and pace in the celebration of the Mass.

GIRM §§45 and 56 have the most to say about the place for silence throughout the celebration of the Mass. There are times when a reading or an action is to be accompanied by quiet reflection or silent attention. This section highlights in a particular way the need for quiet in the church before the celebration of the Mass even begins.

Bearing in mind that one of the aims of the present reform is to restore a measure of dignity and reverence to our celebrations of the Mass, I believe the matter of silence and pace is very important. All of us, whether we are ministers serving around the altar or members of the faithful in our pew are called upon to be mindful of where we are, what we are doing, and the dignity of the Church's rituals. I call on each and every one of us to cultivate a prayerful spirit not only during the Mass, but as well from the moment we enter the sacred space of the nave.

Another expression of respect and reverence has to do with the pace, or rhythm, of what we do. This is not an easy matter to address or to regulate. How fast is too fast, as we speak our prayers or conduct ourselves at Mass? But while it's difficult to regulate, I know that I have been disturbed by a lector proclaiming the reading too quickly, not giving us time to hear each word, or gather the meaning of a sentence. There is a pace at which the Mass should be celebrated. We must all grow in our awareness of what that speed is. To proceed either too quickly or too slowly is to distract the assembly in its prayer.

### **Father Louis Saldanha**

Father Louis, presently the pastor in Beaverlodge and covering Rio Grande and Hythe as well, is taking early retirement due to health concerns and returning to his native India. Father Louis has served in this diocese for the past decade. I am grateful for his years of ministry with us, and wish him well in his retirement.

### **Archbishop's Dinner**

Deanery 2 (Peace River) is holding an Archbishop's Dinner in Manning on Friday evening, February 10th. My talk at this dinner will focus on the legacy of the many Sisters who have ministered in our diocese over the past 100+ years. Tickets for this dinner are available at the chancery office in McLennan, or at the parish office in Manning – 780.836.3125.

### **Nigeria**

You may recall that I was headed to Nigeria last summer, to ordain some young Redemptorists to the priesthood and to the diaconate. Due to a mistake in my travel documents, I was not able to go. So as to make use of the ticket I had purchased, I must use it within a year, so I am travelling to Nigeria from January 26<sup>th</sup> to February 6<sup>th</sup>. While there, I will be visiting the bishops and religious congregations who have priests serving in our diocese. After my return, I hope to have some insights to share with you about the Church in a very different culture than our own. Please pray for me on this venture.

+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan