

JUNE 2021

NORTHERN LIGHT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
GROUARD-MCLENNAN



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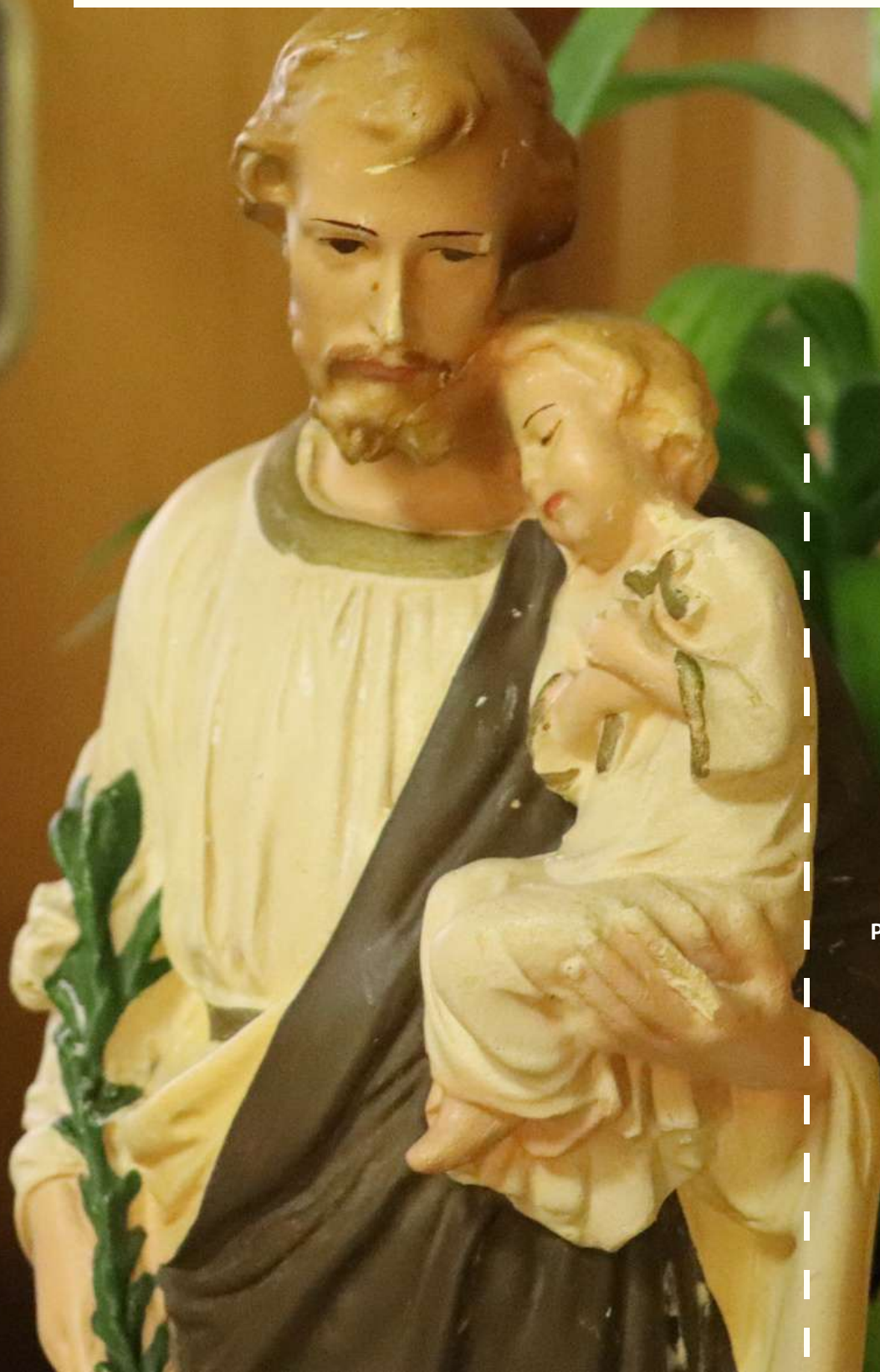


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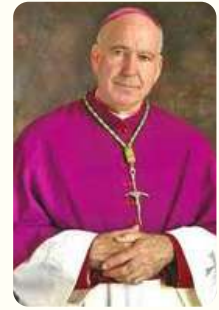




FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP - JUNE 4, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Fathers...



Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.

Over the past week, I have been following the news of the discovery of graves on the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, and pondering what I might possibly say that would help us all in this situation. I want to speak especially to you, the people of our diocese.

The news of the discovery of these unmarked graves has taken many Canadians by surprise. For those of you who attended residential schools, this news may bring up memories that you have been trying to heal, and the wounds are opened once more. For those who had no experience of the schools and their effects, such a discovery may raise many painful questions about the schools and how they were operated. As Canadians, we have to look honestly at how our government has related to Indigenous Canadians for generations. For those who cherish our Church and our faith, this raises questions about our role in operating these schools.

At this point in time, we still have no clear picture about these children and the circumstances of their death. Along with all Canadians, I am anxious to read a full report from those who are conducting the investigation.



Kamloops Indian Residential School on the
Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

I feel deeply the same grief and sorrow as many Canadians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I continue to journey forward in building respectful and positive relationships with the Indigenous communities and individuals in our diocese. I acknowledge and affirm the many gatherings and ceremonies that are taking place around our archdiocese to honour and pray for these lost children. I encourage not only prayer, but also our resolve to stand together in solidarity and compassion, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians alike. Please know that I hold all of you in my prayers and thoughts during these days of grief.



+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.

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

NEWS BULLETIN

Alberta Mass for Life



On May 13, in the midst of the some of the harshest provincial restrictions since the beginning of the pandemic, the annual Mass for Life was held at St. Joseph Basilica in Edmonton.

This Mass typically coincides with the Alberta March for Life on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature, and is attended by all Catholic bishops of the province. Due to the pandemic restrictions, the public march was not held and the Mass was solely celebrated by Archbishop Richard Smith, concelebrated by Bishop David Motiuk.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle hopes to see UN declaration enshrined in law

Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle, a coalition of Indigenous peoples and Catholic bishops, priests, religious and lay people hopes the Canadian government will adopt into law the recent United Nations declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Read their full letter at www.archgm.ca.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle

CCCB issue statement on Kamloops



The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops reflected on the heartrending discovery of the 215 graves found at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

"As we see ever more clearly the pain and suffering of the past, the Bishops of Canada pledge to continue walking side by side with Indigenous Peoples in the present, seeking greater healing and reconciliation for the future," the statement reads.

The statement, signed by Archbishop of Winnipeg and President of the CCCB, Richard Gagnon, can be viewed in full on our website: www.archgm.ca

NEWS BULLETIN



Pope Francis speaks on tragic discovery

Pope Francis also expressed sorrow and a hope for reconciliation and healing after the tragic discovery of 215 unmarked graves on the grounds of Kamloops Indian Residential School. The pope gave his remarks after the recitation of the Angelus on June 6.

“I join the Canadian bishops and the whole Catholic Church in Canada in expressing my sympathy to the Canadian people, who have been traumatized by the shocking news,” Pope Francis said. “These difficult times are a strong call for all to turn away from the colonizing model, and even the ideological colonisations of today, and walk side by side in dialogue, mutual respect, and recognition of the rights and cultural values of all the daughters and sons of Canada.”

Changes in Mass restrictions

As of June 10, Mass and other parish services across the archdiocese have returned to a limit of 1/3 (or 30%) of firecode capacity. Funerals are still restricted to a maximum of 20 attendants, and weddings at a maximum of 20 persons.



Alberta Premier Jason Kenney has stated that, if certain vaccination thresholds are met, most of the current restrictions may be lifted by the end of this summer. We pray and look forward to an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a full return to the celebration of our faith, with full church pews and the reinstatement of various parish events and programs.



Restored and renewed

Kenyan priest reflects on his tumultuous first months in Canada

As Fr. Charles Mungai, FMH, looks over the newly renovated and restored parish hall at St. Henri's Church, vivid and chaotic memories of the priest's initial months in Canada run through his mind.

The Franciscan Missionary of Hope arrived in Fort Vermillion from the Diocese of Nairobi, Kenya on January 29, 2020. He was about to begin a new chapter as the parish priest in Alberta's oldest settlement.

But little did he know, a world-shattering pandemic and a once-in-a-century flood were also on the horizon.



Fr. Charles looks over the newly restored parish hall at St. Henri's. All that's needed now is the tables, chairs and other items.

Coming to Canada in the midst of -50 degree weather, Mungai was sure his biggest challenge would be surviving these bitter cold temperatures. Then, just one month into his time as pastor, the initial COVID-19 lockdowns were ordered across Alberta and the world – closing churches, schools and businesses everywhere.

Mungai was no longer able to publicly celebrate Mass or share the Gospel with the students of St. Mary's Elementary School. In fact, nearly every aspect of daily life was brought to a halt.

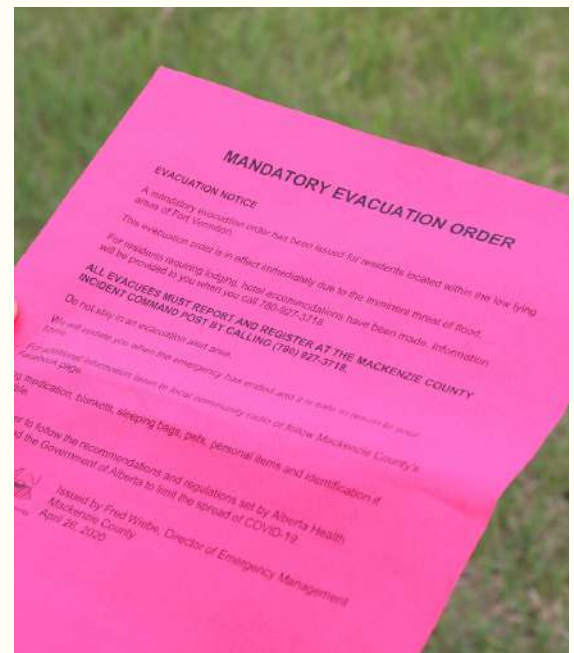
It was not the expected beginning to Father Charles' ministry in Canada.



Not long after the first COVID-19 lockdowns, the Peace River flooded Fort Vermillion in April 2020.

If that wasn't enough, only a few weeks later Mungai received a bright pink piece of paper on his doorstep. It was a mandatory evacuation notice for all residents in the low-lying areas of Fort Vermillion. It ordered them to immediately pack what they could and leave their homes, as the Peace River was now projected to flood the entire area.

On Sunday, April 26, the river began to do just that.



The evacuation order Fr. Charles Mungai received, telling him to immediately pack up and leave behind his parish and rectory.



The mighty Peace River is only a stone's throw from the doorsteps of St. Henri's Church. As large ice jams caused the water levels to rise, the Church's basement hall, as well as the cemetery and the basement of the neighbouring rectory, were quickly flooded.

"I was in a state of just total confusion," Mungai recalled. "I just couldn't understand these events playing out. As soon as I thought that I was about to settle down – something else came up.

"It's an experience I will never forget in my life time."



Flood damage to the parish rectory in Fort Vermillion.

Mungai stayed at a variety of places as he waited for the waters to recede, including the rectory in High Prairie and Archbishop Pettipas' home in Grande Prairie.

When Mungai finally returned to Fort Vermillion on May 12 to assess the situation, he discovered more than \$400,000 in damage to the church and rectory. As well, chunks of ice and driftwood floated into the town's Catholic cemetery, nearly flooding and covering the entire area. The church still had electricity, but its water lines and plumping all had to be replaced.

St. Mary's Elementary School, situated not far from the church, was also heavily damaged by the flood, and was subsequently demolished.



The parish hall at St. Henri's was heavily flooded.

"By the time we came back the flood had receded, but you could see the signs that the water had just wrecked total havoc," Mungai said. "The whole basement was full of water, nearly to the roof. Books, sacramental items, chairs, furniture, the kitchen appliances, everything was ruined."

By the beginning of July 2020, Mungai returned to Fort Vermillion to stay. Shortly after, St. Henri's celebrated its first public Mass since the flooding. The bathrooms and waterlines remained out of use, but parishioners were eager to return to the church.

Nearly 30 people showed up to that first public Mass, with COVID-19 restrictions still in place.



This statue of Mary was thankfully preserved from the 2020 flood.



“Those who were around were very hungry for the Mass,” said Mungai. “Although Fort Vermillion was still very much deserted at that time. Many had gone to High Level and elsewhere due to flood damage.”

Restoration work on the rectory and church began that July. Entirely new flooring, tiling, insulation, drywall and panelling were installed at both the rectory and parish hall. Many new appliances, toilets and other essentials were brought in. Heating and electrical units were all replaced.



Fr. Charles looks over the Catholic cemetery near St. Henri's, which also had to be restored after the flood.



Fr. Charles Mungai, FMH

As of this summer, the parish hall has never looked cleaner and more up-to-date – a far cry from when it was full of nothing but river water and floating chairs, textbooks and silt.

Now that the parish hall and rectory have been repaired, restored and recovered, some sense of normalcy has returned to Mungai's life. Like all of us, he is still reeling with the pandemic and its restrictions, and the hall still needs new chairs, tables and other items.

“After all of the chaos of the flood and the pandemic, now there's hope. There's calmness. It is good,” he said.

Mungai has kept some written notes from this experience, so that one day he can write his memoir and detail this most tumultuous of adventures – his first three months in Canada, and the global pandemic and the cataclysmic flood that greeted him upon arrival.

“One day I look forward to retelling this story of what happened to me when I came to Canada. When I was posted in St. Henri's in Fort Vermilion and all these crazy events that came with it.

“Hopefully I will age gracefully so I can tell the story.”



The parish hall at St. Henri's - in the immediate aftermath of the flood (left) and it's current renewed and restored status (right).

Walk for life in Beaverlodge



Parishioners at **St. Mary's Church in Beaverlodge** held their annual **St. Mary's Walk for Life** on **May 30**. Twelve people attended.

"When we march and pray for life we stand in solidarity with societies most vulnerable, with one voice, one message; 'you are not alone,'" parishioner **Ginny Letendre** said at the beginning of the walk. "And as Jesus said in today's Gospel; 'I am with you always!'"





Sexsmith teacher raises thousands for suicide prevention

Last April **Tyler Weber**, a Grade 9 teacher at **St. Mary's Catholic High School in Sexsmith**, completed a 225.8 kilometres bike ride to raise awareness and funds for suicide prevention. Weber raised **\$4,230** for the **Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention in Grande Prairie**.

Weber sparked this initiative in honour of his students and his late friend, Chris, who passed away to suicide last autumn. He completed his 225 km bike ride in just over nine hours. Photo courtesy of Grandin Media and Canadian Catholic News.

Seminarian summer

This summer **Paul Edo-Aranmude**, seminarian for the **Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan**, has been visiting parishes across northern Alberta with Archbishop Pettipas. Edo-Aranmude has just completed his first year of seminary at St. Joseph's in Edmonton, and will return in September to continue his studies in theology. He also had seminary formation in his home country of Nigeria.

Here he poses with a statue of Mary, a woman he loves dearly, at **Assumption Church** in the northern reserve **Chateh**.





FEATURE STORY

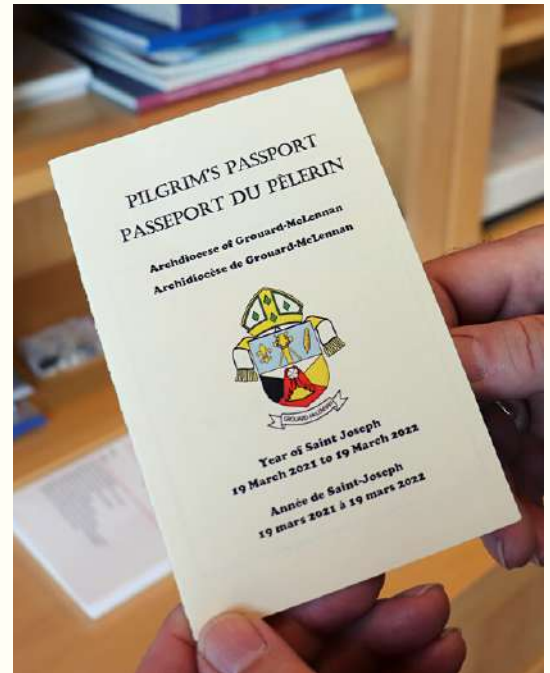
Pilgrimage for St. Joseph

St. Joseph pastors hope Catholics across archdiocese will take part in once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage

A unique spiritual adventure is underway for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.

As pandemic restrictions are expected to lessen this summer, a special pilgrimage to all three St. Joseph parishes in our archdiocese may soon begin.

This spiritual excursion, from the northern reaches of John D’or Prairie to the western plains of Spirit River and Grande Prairie, is in celebration of the Year of St. Joseph. This year marks the centennial anniversary of St. Joseph being named patron saint of the Catholic Church.



The "Pilgrim's Passport"

The St. Joseph pilgrimage is the brainchild of His Grace Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, CSsR. When Pope Francis announced 2021 as the Year of St. Joseph, Pettipas wanted to find a way to uniquely commemorate this year. With three parishes in the archdiocese honoured with the name St. Joseph, a pilgrimage seemed like the most fitting form of celebration.

“Like any spiritual exercise, a pilgrimage is about strengthening our spiritual life,” Pettipas said. “In the spirituality of the pilgrimage, the journey is as significant as the destination. The journey is a time of reflection, and hopefully just making the journey to each of these churches will feel like a spiritual experience for our people.”



Archbishop Pettipas holds up a olive-wood cross from the Holy Land. These crosses will be given as "mementos" of the St. Joseph Pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage protocol is quite simple. Pilgrims must travel to all three St. Joseph churches in the archdiocese – St. Joseph’s Church in Grande Prairie, Spirit River and John D’or Prairie.

At each parish, the prayer of the seven sorrows and seven joys of St. Joseph are prayed. These prayers are contained in a “pilgrim’s passport” that can be picked up at any of the three churches.

After you recite the prayers, your passport is stamped, and you can move on to the next destination.



FEATURE STORY

When all three parishes are “stamped”, the pilgrimage ends at the chancery office in Grande Prairie – where you must get your passport signed by Archbishop Pettipas. Then you will receive a blessed olive-wood cross from the Holy Land. Each cross is made by Catholics in Palestine.

“These poor Palestinians, because of the pandemic and the lack of pilgrims to the Holy Land, have made next to nothing this past year,” said Pettipas. “So we purchased some of these crosses and will offer them as a gift and memento to those who take part in the pilgrimage.

“But the real focus here is the spiritual life – to reflect on St. Joseph and his life as a father and protector of the family.”



The customized “stamps” pilgrims receive at each St. Joseph Parish.



Rev. Andrew Simiiyu, FMH

“Rev. Andrew Simiiyu, FMH, has been encouraging his parishioners in John D’or Prairie to pray the seven sorrows and joys of St. Joseph at home. It has already created a major impact in his parish community.

“People have phoned me and said, since they’ve started saying this prayer, their family’s faith and devotion has increased. They are getting much spiritual nourishment from these prayers,” he said. “It shows devotion to St. Joseph is not only important in the church, but in the home.”

If covid restrictions ease over the summer, Simiiyu hopes Catholics throughout our vast archdiocese will venture out for this once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage. It is important, however, that pilgrims call ahead to this parish to ensure the John D’or Prairie reserve is not on lockdown due to the pandemic.

“My message to the people of this archdiocese is to come out in a very special way for this pilgrimage, to honour and be blessed by the Year of St Joseph,” Simiiyu said.

“Our ‘teepee’ church is a great thing to come and see. It’s not like any other church. We have a very unique parish with a very unique culture.”

Father Remi Hebert, CSsR, also hopes people will take up the opportunity. The Grande Prairie pastor has already begun planning his own pilgrimage.



The most northerly destination on the pilgrimage - St. Joseph's Church in John D'or Prairie.

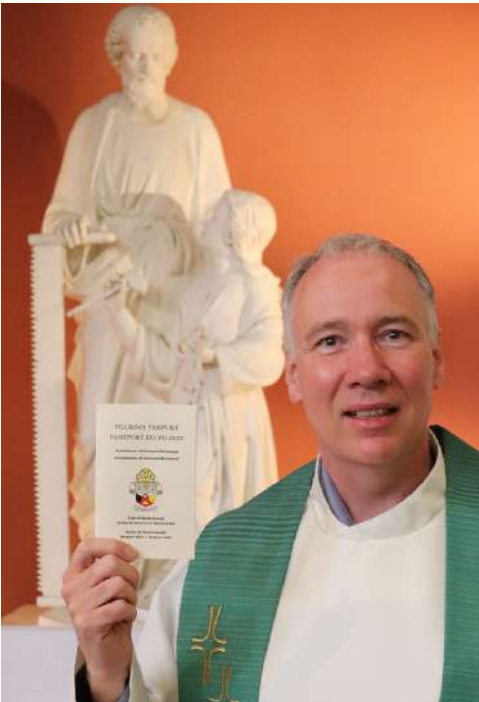


“As things open up this summer we can plan to do more, and a family pilgrimage is a great idea,” Hebert said. “The more we can do, especially as families, to honour this year will be a blessing for our spiritual lives.”

Rev. Arockiam Savarimuthu has already received one family of pilgrims to his parish – St. Joseph Church in Spirit River. He hopes to see many more pilgrims throughout the summer.

Father Arockiam is particularly inspired by St. Joseph’s immense respect and love for the Virgin Mary.

“St. Joseph is an outstanding, exemplary person in the respect he showed to our Blessed Mother,” he said. “He handled the situation around Mary’s pregnancy with so much dignity and respect.



Rev. Remi Hebert, CSSR



Rev. Arockiam Savarimuthu

“It’s something I admire much and would like to learn from him. He respected everyone extremely well, even if it offended his personal feelings.”

Father Remi is also inspired by St. Joseph’s role as a dedicated family man.

“We don’t know a whole lot about St. Joseph. But it’s clear in the Gospels that it was important for St. Joseph to always do what was best for his family.”

The St. Joseph pilgrimage continues until March 19, 2022. More information can be found at archgm.ca/pilgrimage-year-of-st-joseph/.

Remembering Hotel-Dieu

The legacy of early Catholic health care centre in Northern Alberta continues today

While it has now been closed for many decades, Marie Davies' life remains closely tied to Whitelaw's historic Hotel-Dieu nursing home.

The Hotel-Dieu of St. Joseph opened in the northern Alberta hamlet in 1952. More than just a nursing home for the area's seniors, it was a centre of faith, community and employment for all of Whitelaw.

For Davies, many of her most intimate childhood memories are intertwined with the Hotel-Dieu. As a girl she would spend her afternoons walking there to chat with seniors and visit her father, who worked there as an orderly and maintenance worker. When in school, she and her fellow classmates would go to the nursing home to sing carols and deliver Christmas cards to the seniors. On weekends, she would help the nuns clean and attend Mass at the Hotel-Dieu chapel.

"It was just a big gathering station for everybody," Davies recalled. "People got together there to visit their family, for Mass, for Christmas parties, to visit their solarium. One of the Hotel-Dieu nuns would come to the school and teach us catechism. There was a dugout behind the convent and all the kids in Whitelaw would go skating there in the winter time. It was intermingled with the community quite a bit."

This May the feast day of the founder of the Hotel-Dieu de Quebec, Blessed Catherine of St. Augustine, is celebrated. Whitelaw's Hotel-Dieu was the only one ever established in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.



Marie Davies with an article on some of the last nuns to be a part of the Hotel-Dieu in Whitelaw.



Sister Marie Roy, Sister Marie de La Ferse and Sister Blanche Garceau established the Hotel-Dieu in Whitelaw, arriving in September, 1949. Images via the book "Where the Cold Spring Flows."

The story began in the 1940s, with a search for a religious congregation who would be willing to bring their members to northern Alberta – where health care was desperately and urgently needed.

It was not until 1949 that the Alberta government finally approved the Diocese of Grouard's proposal. In the early spring of 1950, a group of Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph Sisters arrived in Whitelaw from Ontario to establish the nursing home. It was opened and operational by the summer of 1952.

Over the following decades the nursing home cared for generations of seniors in Whitelaw and surrounding communities. It's 35 beds were always full, and 23 nuns made up its staff of nurses and administrators.



HISTORY



Marie Davies at the former convent for the Hotel-Dieu, now used as a drop-in centre for local seniors.

Some of Davies' fondest memories of the Hotel-Dieu are her dad's stories of the many seniors he met there.

"I just remember Dad was so good with the seniors," said Davies. "Those who had dementia or Alzheimer's he was always good with. He would tell us stories about how he would go to the room of Mrs. So-and-so in the morning and she'd say 'Can you light the oven? My bread is rising, I got to put it in the oven soon.'

"My dad was a smoker so he would go to her nightstand, open the door, flick his lighter and say 'There you go, I lit it for you. Now give it time to warm up.' And she was so thankful," Davies recalled with a laugh.

But by the 1970s, major changes were on the way for the region and for Whitelaw's Hotel-Dieu. After 1977, there were not enough nuns to fill the vacancies. The decision was then made by the sisters' Provincial Superior to sell the Hotel-Dieu and neighbouring convent. It was purchased by the town of Fairview in early 1979, and new management took over.

By the early 1990s, the decision was made to sell the building and move the remaining seniors to neighbouring nursing homes in Fairview, Berwyn and Peace River.

Davies says the decision was not welcome amongst much of Whitelaw's community.



A group of nuns stand next to the statue of St. Joseph shortly after the Hotel-Dieu nursing home was opened. Images via the book "Where the Cold Spring Flows."

"Everybody was so sad when that happened. It wouldn't have taken much to fix it up to where it needed to be," she said. "It was one of Whitelaw's main employers. It was always full and it was a nice quiet and remote place for seniors. It was much more than just a nursing home."

But the Hotel-Dieu lives on in other ways. While the nursing home itself has been taken down, the neighbouring convent remains today as a seniors' drop-in centre. Much of the furniture and religious art inside is the same from the days it housed the Hotel-Dieu nuns.

As well, Davies still has a set of cabinets from the Hotel-Dieu's sowing room.

"We're just repainting those cabinets now," she said. "So we still have a piece of Hotel Dieu history in our shop."



Portraits of seniors at the Hotel-Dieu of St. Joseph are still archived at the convent.



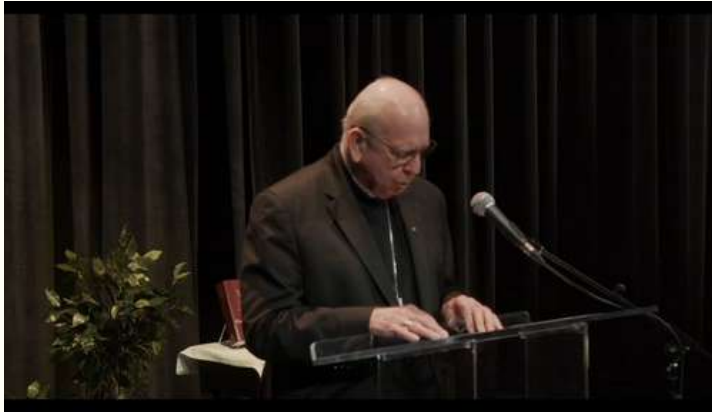
Confirmations in Fort Vermillion

Three young men were confirmed into the Catholic Church on **Sunday, May 30**, at **St. Henri's Church in Fort Vermillion**.

Archbishop Gerard Pettipas made the long six-hour journey from Grande Prairie to celebrate Sunday Mass and the confirmations.



His Grace attends Catholic Education Week



As part of **Catholic Education Week, May 10-14**, His Grace **Archbishop Gerard Pettipas** led a bilingual prayer of the 'Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph', with students from **Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools**.

The service was held over Zoom on **Tuesday, May 11**. Photo courtesy of Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools.

Flowers for Mary

On **Mother's Day, May 9**, a very thoughtful parishioner brought flowers to this shrine of the Blessed Mother at **St. Rita's Parish in Valleyview**.

The month of May is especially dedicated to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Adoration for Ordination

In the early morning hours of **Sunday, May 30**, **Fr. Henry Kiggundu** stepped into an empty **Our Lady of Good Counsel Church** and celebrated the 12th anniversary of his ordination to priesthood. Every May 30, he begins and honours this day with adoration.

Kiggundu, a Franciscan Missionary of Hope, has served Our Lady of Good Counsel in **High Level** for the past four years. A short video of this moment can be found on our new Instagram page: [instagram.com/archgm.news](https://www.instagram.com/archgm.news)



NORTHERN LIGHT



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Grouard-McLennan



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FEATURE STORY

‘It’s apocalyptic right now’

Local priest personally affected by India’s pandemic crisis hopes people will pray for recovery

Each day Father Michael Dias scrolls through his phone to see the latest devastating news from his home country of India, a nation brought to the brink by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is one harrowing story after another. His two nieces are front-line workers at the Manipal Hospital, working 24 hours a day with no opportunities to return home. The hospital’s 5000 beds are all filled with COVID patients.



In recent months, India has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Images provided via Caritas India

Dias’ home province of Karnataka in southern India is now reporting more than 500 deaths every 24 hours. Dias’ brother contracted the virus and has been hospitalized and on a ventilator for the past two weeks.

Catholic churches Dias visited as a boy have now been turned into isolation centres for COVID patients who were turned away from the hospitals. Most recently, Dias heard from a family member that 71 bodies were found dumped and floating in a river in eastern India.

It’s these stories that have kept Dias’ prayers with constant thoughts of India, his family and the thousands of COVID victims there.



Much of Fr. Michael Dias’s family in India have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He has served the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan for nearly three years.

“The situation is not good. It’s very scary. In my home province there were 39,000 cases and 517 deaths just in the past 24 hours,” Dias said in a May 12th interview. Dias has been a pastor with the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan for nearly three years, serving the parishes in Beaverlodge, Hythe and Rio Grande.

“My nieces working the frontlines seem very distressed,” the priest added. “They are working 24/7; they won’t even let them go home for a day to recuperate. Death rates are rising. People are suffocating. Many sick people are being turned away.”



FEATURE STORY

As for what parishioners in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan can do to help in this difficult and historic situation, Dias offers three words of advice.

“Pray, pray, pray,” he said. “Pray for the victims. Pray for the Indian government that their [leaders] will have the knowledge and wisdom to do what is right. And whatever people can contribute to Caritas India through Development and Peace, they should.”

The Catholic charity Development and Peace-Caritas Canada launched their appeal to combat the pandemic crisis in India on May 6. All donations go to Caritas India, and other Church-supported charities, who have launched several initiatives to help the Indian people get through this crisis, particularly in poorer regions of the country.

Mia Klein-Gebbinck, a representative with Development and Peace-Caritas Canada for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, says the help is desperately needed.



Rev. Michael Dias in India



“The need is so great. We all have to do whatever we’re able to do,” said Klein-Gebbinck, who is a parishioner of St. Mary’s Church in Beaverlodge and has worked with Development and Peace-Caritas Canada for more than 25 years.

“It’s a reliable avenue for the donations to go. Development and Peace is a Catholic charity supported by our bishops, and the Caritas network has been tried and tested for a long time. Donations are just drops in the bucket according to the great need that is there, but every drop in the bucket is helpful.”

Klein-Gebbinck has a sister who is a nun with the Medical Mission Sisters, a religious congregation dedicated to providing health care in poorer regions of the world.

The Medical Mission Sisters established several hospitals in the New Delhi area of India, which is currently heavily affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Klein-Gebbinck’s sister has told her that many of the nuns offering health care in that region are being worked to capacity, and some have fallen gravely ill with the virus themselves.



In May Development and Peace-Caritas Canada launched a campaign for donations to combat COVID-19 in India. Images provided via Caritas India



FEATURE STORY



Rev. Michael Dias celebrating Mass in his home country of India.

“It’s a desperate situation,” said Klein-Gebbinck. “In this over-crowded, dense populations the virus spreads like wildfire. It overwhelms you thinking of the number of things to be done. So we need to work with organizations like Caritas India who are on the ground and know where the needs are greatest.”

Some of Caritas India’s efforts include bringing food to distribution centres and to impoverished communities, as well as sanitizer and hygiene materials.

They also donate equipment and resources to Church-run clinics and hospitals in India. As well, they fund and organize public education campaigns to help people know where they can get vaccinated or access other health care resources.

“There’s shortages everywhere. Whether it’s medical supplies, oxygen, medications, beds – they’re all desperately needed. It’s apocalyptic right now,” said Klein-Gebbinck. “Even though it’s a hard time for us here in Canada, with the scope of the situation in India, the needs there are so great. We have no idea what it’s like.

“Whatever we can do to help, we need to do.”

Donations to Development and Peace-Caritas Canada’s efforts in India can be made at www.devp.org. Father Dias also proposed that parishes offer a Mass with intercessory prayers for the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic – not just in India, but around the world.



Father Michael celebrating Mass at St. Mary's Church in Beaverlodge, where he has been pastor the past three years.

Pray for all victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, in India and around the world



LITURGICAL NOTES FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

Written by Archbishop
Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R



The **month of June** is dedicated to the **Sacred Heart of Jesus**, celebrated this year on **June 11**. The human heart is often depicted as the source and expression of all love. In the Christian Church, Jesus' heart is honoured as the source of the Eucharist and Baptism, as blood and water flowed from his heart at the crucifixion. St. Margaret Mary Alacque, a French nun, received several apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



June 1: St. Justin Martyr: Justin, a philosopher in the time of the early Church of Rome, stated that all his philosophy study led him to the truth of the Christian faith. He was beheaded for refusing to worship the pagan gods in 165 AD.



June 5: St. Boniface: This English missionary worked tirelessly to spread the Christian faith in Germany and the Netherlands. He cut down what the pagans of the time considered a sacred tree, defying that any harm would come from doing so. He and several others were martyred on this day in 754 AD.



June 3 : St. Charles Lwanga and Companions: Charles and several other pages in the royal court of Uganda refused the sexual advances of the king, for which they were murdered, on this day in 1886. The Christian faith expanded greatly after this.



June 6: Corpus Christi: This feast highlights one of the great sacraments and mysteries of the Christian faith: the changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. St. Thomas Aquinas explained this action with the term “transubstantiation”, which doesn’t dispel the mystery that surrounds this deep truth.



June 12: The Immaculate Heart of Mary: This feast is always celebrated on the day following the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It speaks to the unity in love of Jesus and his Blessed Mother, and their dedication to all persons of the earth. Many nations have been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



June 24: St. John the Baptist: St. John the Baptist has two feasts: his birth on this day, and his martyrdom on August 29. The singular events surrounding his conception and birth are marked today. This is the “fête nationale” of the Province of Quebec.



June 29: Saints Peter and Paul: This feast honours the two “founders of the Church of Rome”. Both were martyred there: Peter was crucified upside down (as he felt unworthy to die exactly like Jesus), and Paul was beheaded in an area just outside the city called Tre Fontana. Each year on this feast the Pope blesses the pallia that are given to newly-named metropolitan archbishops.

THE LIGHT OF OUR FAITH

A reflection from the editor

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light.” Luke 11:33



Kyle Greenham, editor

This Gospel passage summarizes the entire motivation behind this magazine. The stories, history and people of our archdiocese cannot be hidden under a bushel. We must bring them out into the light for all to see.

I had the opportunity in the final days of May to travel through several communities of our archdiocese, some of which have been featured in this June issue. I travelled from Grande Prairie through Whitelaw and Friedenstahl, through Sexsmith, Spirit River, Grimshaw and Manning, and all the way north to Fort Vermillion, Chateh and High Level. I saw firsthand our bountiful landscape of farms, small towns and First Nation communities, and the unique way of life that accompanies them.

As a collective of faithful Catholics, the archdiocese seems small. Yet, geographically, it is one of the largest in western Canada. The churches are not all grand cathedrals, but our demographics are as diverse as those of major cities. As just a few examples: we have the strong devotion and enthusiasm of our Filipino communities and our Indigenous Catholics with their admirable ties to their culture and unique expressions of faith. We have the pious devotion of our largely African and Indian priesthood, and, of course, our faithful parishioners whose families have filled the pews of their local church for generations.

Today the faces filling the pews are few, but they continue a long legacy of evangelization and missionary work that is still necessary today.

For full disclosure, I myself am new to this archdiocese. I moved to Grande Prairie towards the end of March this year, after a short time working for the Archdiocese of Edmonton. I am originally from Twillingate Island in Newfoundland and I understand the realities of small-town, rural life very well. I know the tight-knit sense of belonging and relying on one another, and the intimate connections to our past. But with that also comes the worry that young people are moving away to larger urban centres and the community's future is uncertain. It seems a growing challenge to preserve what has been passed onto us. The only difference I see is there's just a few less codfish here.



Sacred Heart statue, near the grotto in Webster

So how do we overcome this central dilemma of our archdiocese? How do we unite a landscape so vast, with so many parishes, identities and customs, seemingly so far apart and isolated from each other?

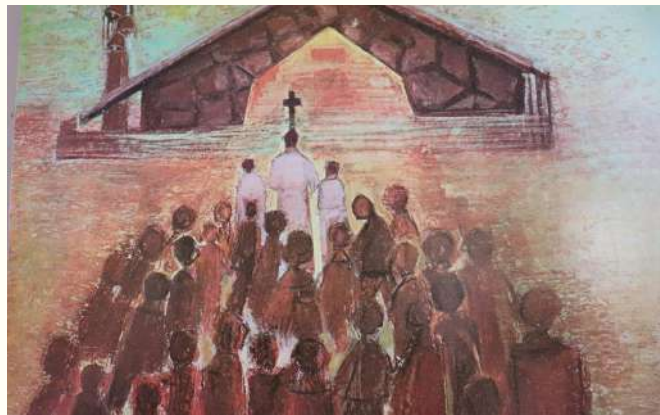
Add to this the COVID-19 pandemic that has left the world more closed-off than ever before. Scandals within the Church are amplified by social media, and people increasingly find themselves demoralized and separated from one another. A sense of unity seems desperately needed.

My hope is this monthly magazine can be one initial step in bridging this divide and bringing a bit of this 'light' into the reader's life. Each month, through the news, photos and history of our parishes, we can feel a part of something much greater than one hour each Sunday at the church down the road. We are part of a greater archdiocesan community, and of the history and development of the Church in western Canada, and of the entire 2000-year history of the Catholic Church. We are walking in those same footsteps.

For we know it's not easy being Catholic today. Our world seems more separated from its Christian foundation than ever before. Morals are inverted. Sins have become virtues. We are constantly berated with the scandals and darker sides of the Church's history, while the miraculous good the Church has brought into this world is hardly acknowledged – if not outright denied.

The reality is the Church is made up of fallen human beings, and any institution made up of fallen human beings is bound with the consequences of sinful people making sinful decisions. But we can't be complacent with the thought that these scandals are all the Church ever was or shall be.

Some of the greatest advancements in world history – from education, health care, the arts and onward – were brought about through the Catholic Church and its influence. Across the world we see the same story - the first hospitals, schools, orphanages, etc. were founded by Catholics. The Church is much more than the sins and mistakes of its members. It's also the courage and heroism of its saints, the humility and unending self-sacrifice of its religious, the genius of its theologians, and the striving for salvation that is reflected in all of its members. At heart, the Church is not its scandals. The Church is God's gift to mankind. Fallen human beings may have to steer this boat we call the Church, but it was the divine hands of God who crafted it.



Artwork at Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Chateh

And we must always remember, to paraphrase Catholic historian Hillaire Belloc, that at times there is no greater proof of the Church's divinity than the fact that no institution this corrupt and poorly managed could have survived 2,000 years unless God Himself was protecting it.

As we begin to discover, to know and to share our stories through this magazine, I hope its pages can play some small part in reminding us that our Catholic identity is not something to be hidden under the bushel, but placed out in the open, that all who enter may know this light, the guiding light of salvation for all the world - the Catholic Church.

Kyle Greenham
editor, Northern Light

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

June 3 Nel Esguerra
June 10 Dawn Strand
June 15 Isidore Onyeka
June 15 Raj Koppula
June 17 Reg Bouchard
June 26 Wanda Somerville



Anniversary of Ordination:

June 4 Fr. Remi Hebert CSsR celebrating 28 years
June 17 Fr. Rajmond Dorawa CSsR will celebrate 44 years
June 23 Fr. Albert Sterzer CSsR is celebrating his 58th anniversary.
June 24 Fr. Michael Uso-Ereyi celebrates his 6 year ordination
June 27th marks the 29th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Jorge Mario Bergoglio SJ, Pope Francis
June 29 Fr. Cyril Joseph will celebrate the 43rd anniversary of his ordination

Congratulations and fraternal blessings to each one of you.

Anniversaries of Recognition

June 19th would have marked the 55th wedding anniversary of Fr. Joseph and Carolyn Jacobson.

Always united in love.

June 29 56th wedding anniversary for Deacon Reg and Annette Bouchard.
40th wedding anniversary for Deacon Gerald and Marion Logan

Historical Anniversaries

1. On **June 3rd, 1930**, Bishop Joseph Guy OMI was named the second Apostolic Vicar of Grouard. However, on June 2nd, 1937, he was transferred to the Episcopal See of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan.
2. On **June 15th, 1945**, Fr. Henri Routhier OMI was named Coadjutor to Bishop Langlois OMI, 3rd Apostolic Vicar of Grouard.

Canadian Blessed

June 27 Blessed Vasyl Velychkovshy, Bishop and Martyr, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

Blessed Nykyta Budka, First Bishop for Ukrainian Catholics in Canada, named July 15, 1912.



Bishop Joseph Guy OMI



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10301 102 Street

Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 2W2

We welcome gifting subscriptions to friends, family members or organizations that would enjoy our content.

We want your contributions to this magazine!

To contact the editor for story ideas or to let us know what's going on your parish and faith community e-mail **Kyle Greenham** at:

comdirector.agm@outlook.com or reach us by phone at **780-532-9766**.

All submissions for the next issue, whether of photos or written pieces, must be given by the **9th of each month**. Your input will be a great help in growing this magazine!

There are also many other features we are working towards to make this magazine an essential resource in your faith life. Stay tuned!



OUR PATRON SAINT

St. Martin of Tours,
patron of our archdiocese,
you showed yourself open to the needs of the poor.
You cut in half what you had, your soldier's mantle, and shared it with a
needy beggar.
We ask your intercession for our local Church, that we may be brave as you
were brave in reaching out to others.
Give us the spiritual insight to see that the many gifts that are given to us
are not for us alone, but for the good of all.

Watch over us as we share our treasures with others, especially with
treasures that are our faith, hope and love.
Open our hearts to others' needs; give us the generosity of true disciples of
the Lord Jesus Christ, and lead us to the fullness of life that is the
inheritance of the pure of heart.

St. Martin of Tours, pray for us.