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NORTHERN LIGHT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
GROUARD-MCLENNAN



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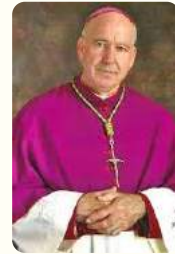


FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

SAYING 'I LOVE YOU'

A reflection from Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R

August 2021



Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R

My dad never said “I love you.”

Not long ago I was in one of the communities of our archdiocese that has a majority of Indigenous members. I got into a conversation with one gentleman about ... Indian Residential Schools, of course. It was a good conversation, long and challenging. Some soul-searching questions, as you might imagine.

He raised an issue that I had heard of before - parenting of children. In the case of girls especially, the experience was that if someone attended a residential school, they were absent from their parents for many months of the year. They did not have a family experience of being raised. They were raised by teachers, in our case priests and nuns who were not themselves married or parents, and would not necessarily know how to parent a child. So when those children grew up, not having been properly raised themselves, they wouldn't know instinctively how to raise their own children. This was especially painful when it came to expressing love to a child. If I was not told by my parents how much they loved and cherished me, I wouldn't necessarily realize how important it is to say that to my own children. This has the potential to create a vicious circle of children and adults who are unsure how to express love and receive it. Unless the chain is broken, this basic and necessary need goes unmet, for generations.

This got me thinking about my own life experience. My mother was a warm and affectionate Mom, and could tell us often each day how much we were loved and cherished. Even amid scolding for misdeeds and mishaps, we knew of Mom's affection. My father was different. He was a military man. He enlisted in the Canadian navy during World War II. When the war was over, he re-enlisted in the RCAF and remained a uniformed airman all my growing up years.

I never heard him say to me, “I love you.” This does not upset me, because I knew that he loved me. I accepted that he just couldn't say it. Lots of men are like that. They feel awkward about raw, positive feelings. I didn't follow Dad into the military, but I think it's an environment that might seek to “toughen you up”. I imagine that declarations of fondness would be frowned upon in those ranks. You might be quick to tell your sweetheart that you love her, but you wouldn't dare say it to another guy. Not even your son. At the Mass when I was ordained a priest, at the kiss of peace Mom slobbered all over me. Dad shook my hand. But there were tears rolling down his cheek. I knew he loved me.

Getting back to the conversation with my Indigenous friend. He suggested that it would be a small but helpful action on my part, as a bishop, to encourage people to tell one another how much they love each other. Especially in the family. We all need that assurance that we are loved, that others truly care about us. So here's my line: if you love someone, tell them up front, to their face. Don't hesitate; don't be shy about it. It will make their day, and it most likely will make yours as well.



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

NEWS BULLETIN

Mass for Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage

Archbishop Gerard Pettipas celebrated Mass for this year's virtual **Lac St Anne pilgrimage on July 27th**. The Mass was recorded at the historic **St Bernard Mission Church in Grouard**, and streamed on our Facebook page, as well as on the official website for the Lac Ste. Anne pilgrimage and the Archdiocese of Edmonton's Facebook page.

All events from this year's virtual pilgrimage can be viewed at www.lacsteannepilgrimage.ca

Eleske Pilgrimage returns

For the first time since 2019, the annual pilgrimage in the northern community of **Eleske** was celebrated on **July 31st**. More than 100 people attended.

The pilgrimage included a feeding of the fire with tobacco, drumming and smudging, blessing of the water, a candlelight procession and an evening Mass at the grotto in Eleske.

It was a welcomed opportunity for our northern communities to share their faith and offer thanksgiving to the Creator.



Fire at Little Flower Mission Church

It is with great sadness we learned that our **Little Flower Mission Church in Fox Lake** was significantly burned by a fire on **August 7th**.

The people of Fox Lake are very devout in their Catholicism. We ask you to please pray for them at this time, for we know they are deeply devastated by the loss of their church. This photo was taken earlier this summer, when more than two dozen young people in Fox Lake were confirmed into the Church. Here they gather after their confirmation just outside of Little Flower Mission Church.



NEWS BULLETIN

Building bridges of reconciliation in Grouard



July 26 marked another positive step in fostering strong and trustful relations between Indigenous peoples and the Catholic Church within the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. At the **Kapawe'no First Nation band office in Grouard**, Father Bernard Akum and Archbishop Pettipas met with Chief Sydney Halcrow, his councillors and members of his staff. The group came together to discuss a variety of issues and matters of truth and reconciliation, at the invitation of Chief Halcrow.

One main topic of discussion was the recent discoveries of unmarked graves near the sites of former Indian Residential Schools across Canada. There was a residential school in Grouard, operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of Providence, that ran until 1962. The building subsequently became Northern Lakes College. The history of this school, and the complex history of Indian Residential Schools in general, were discussed.

It was a cordial, frank, sincere and enlightened conversation. The chief handed a file of pictures and documents to Archbishop Pettipas, who in turn committed to sharing related documentation from the archives of the archdiocese. Going forward, all parties involved agreed to fostering an open and trusting relationship, and to be in support of one another in whatever ways possible.

If there was one topic that summarized their conversation, it was the undeniable impacts of history on our present reality.



At the same time, this meeting was itself creating history sure to impact our future reality. At noon, the group shared a well-prepared lunch around the council table. One and all shook hands on the strengthening relationship between the Kapawe'no Nation and the Catholic Church in Grouard.



FEATURE STORY

Revitalizing the Girouxville Pilgrimage

With new dynamics as an archdiocesan event, locals hope to see a strong future for historic pilgrimage

The light of the sun slowly departed and was replaced by the light of the candlelit procession.

As the people sauntered through the woods behind the Our Lady of Lourdes shrine and grotto, the reflection of the candles slowly panned across the gravestone of Father Clement Desrochers – the priest who dedicated much of his spirit and energy to growing this very pilgrimage.



The gravestone of Father Clement Desrochers, an Oblates of Mary Immaculate priest who was vital in growing the Girouxville parish and community.

For many long-time attendees, honouring the legacy of Father Desrochers is a vital part of the annual pilgrimage in Girouxville, held on August 15th, the feast of Our Lady's Assumption. The dynamic, energetic and devoted priest was a true mover and shaker of the area, and the pilgrimage is just one example of the permanent legacy he has left behind.

In his efforts to expand the pilgrimage, it was Father Desrochers who initiated the creation of the Our Lady of Lourdes shrine. He travelled throughout Europe to gather relics, the statues of the Blessed Mother and St. Bernadette, and a church bell that came directly from Lourdes, France.



“The heyday for this pilgrimage, for this local area, was with Father Desrochers. He’s that one that, you might say, ‘made it happen’,” said Maurice Blanchette, who was born and raised in Girouxville. “It began before him, but he’s the one who really made an event out of it. He went overseas and got relics. The idea for the shrine – that was his baby. And he did it all with little money, and it turned out so wonderfully. He made something quite big for this area, and a lot of this pilgrimage is honouring his legacy as well.



“Some of the local people have already canonized him in their hearts. We look back and see how he was a saint, how the Holy Spirit was with him in all he did.”

For Blanchette, the candles and crowds of the night vigil and procession always stand out as the highlight of the pilgrimage. Having attended since he was a child, Blanchette says it is an event of great significance, not only for his family, but for the whole community.

The candlelight procession on the evening of Saturday, Aug. 14th



Maurice Blanchette

“This is an agricultural parish, so weather and crops are the main determiner of what happens in this place,” he said. “Typically the pilgrimage always comes shortly before harvest begins, so it was a pivotal point in community life. It always signified that harvest was just around the corner. The pilgrimage was our last kick at summer vacation before the harvest began and we entered a new chapter.”

The pilgrimage in Girouxville has a long history stretching back to the early 1940s. The first pilgrimage was held in 1941, just among the parish priests, parishioners and Sisters of the Holy Cross, and the following year it became a regional pilgrimage with many religious and faithful from surrounding communities. Father Desrochers erected the first grotto in 1942.

The event has remained a staple for the area ever since. Many grainy black and white photos have been collected over the years, showing the grotto grounds filled with families, priests and Holy Cross nuns in habits. Within Desrochers’s memoir, several miracles are recorded as having occurred at past pilgrimages, including Jean Lapierre, a lumberjack who had been left physically disabled by an accident, who was healed before everyone’s eyes during the pilgrimage’s healing service.



Father Desrochers outside the grotto grounds of Notre Dame de Lourdes Church in Girouxville. Photo taken in 1993

“I have beautiful memories of going to the pilgrimage,” said Helen Couillard, who has spent her life in Girouxville and today helps run the Girouxville Museum – another staple of the area created by Father Desrochers.

“My great grandfather lived in a house that was right across from the grotto, and we would go every year – my mom, my dad and the rest of us kids. There were people everywhere; hundreds of people came to the pilgrimage back then. For this community – it meant a sense of prayer and comfort. It helped everybody,” said Couillard.

But, like many rural communities in Alberta and across Canada, Girouxville has dealt with a dwindling population over the past few decades. Beginning in the 1960s, Blanchette says, Girouxville slowly began to lose its population as the dynamics of society changed. The young people moved on to bigger cities like Grande Prairie, Peace River and Edmonton. Religion also began to lose its influence in people’s day-to-day lives.



The pilgrimage in Girouxville has a long legacy for the area, going back to the early 1940s.



FEATURE STORY

“There was a lot going on here at one time,” Couillard recalled. “I grew up in Girouxville. I went to school right up to grade 12 at the convent here. We had the train. We had stores. But slowly everything went down. The roads came, and with that the school buses came, and soon we didn’t need the convent or school anymore. Slowly things went down, stores closed, and as the years went by there was less and less coming to the pilgrimage. And like a lot of little towns in this area, there was less and less people in general.”

While the pilgrimage could get more than 2,000 people in its earlier years, in recent times it typically sees around 200-300 people attend. Even though its pleasant to see this historic pilgrimage still living on, Blanchette says it can’t help but bring mixed feelings.



Helen Couillard

“The dynamics of the parish, of society, have changed very much. The life people have now is not what they could have had many years ago,” he said. “For locals like us the pilgrimage is memorabilia. The nice part is that it still exists, but it’s sad to see the pilgrimage whittle down to a small event.”

But there now stands a glimmer of hope and transformation, as the dynamics of the pilgrimage are changing once again. Archbishop Gerard Pettipas had been looking for a shrine within the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan to establish as the annual archdiocesan pilgrimage for several years. In late 2019, plans began to remake this historic pilgrimage in Girouxville as the annual archdiocesan pilgrimage.



Rev. Jean Cornelis Nkuanga celebrated a Mass in French the morning of Aug. 14th, honouring the French roots of the Girouxville community.

After delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 marked the first celebration of the Girouxville pilgrimage as an archdiocesan event. This year’s pilgrimage was a three-day event, that included daily Masses, adoration, processions, penitential and healing services, and other services in both English and French. Families from Girouxville, Falher, McLennan, Spirit River, Rycroft, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Edmonton and other areas attended. From its opening rosary to its closing Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a uniting sense of prayer and community was felt throughout. While it still remained small in attendance, there are hopes in time it will continue to grow and foster a renewed future for the pilgrimage and the local parish.

“We’re still in the beginnings of it, of making this an archdiocesan event. But I’m sure we’ll grow and develop it in that way over the coming years,” said Pettipas. “Any diocese would like to have special events that encourage people to come together, share their faith, express that faith, to be instructed and grow in that faith, to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. And that’s what we’re trying to do here.



Archbishop Gerard Pettipas delivered three homilies over the course of the three-day pilgrimage.



FEATURE STORY

“Because of COVID, people are still a bit reticent right now about coming to an event like this with a lot of people. But we are on our way - and we hope to see this more and more benefit the people of our archdiocese.”

Couillard believes Father Desrochers would be delighted that the museum he started and the pilgrimage he made flourish are still around today. They exist not only as landmarks of local history, but as a spark of hope and of renewal amid many rural communities that face an uncertain future.

Even with the sombre reflection of how much community and parish life has changed for places like Girouxville, Blanchette notes that the pilgrimage remains a link to the past that is still preserved today, and it may be the source for future growth.



Locals hope the pilgrimage will regrow over the coming years, as it more and more becomes an archdiocesan event.

“I visited Father Desrochers at the Lacombe residence in Edmonton shortly before he passed,” Blanchette recalled. “He was disappointed to see the community was getting smaller, that religion had lost its edge in the priorities of many people, that the church was not full like it was in his day. He expected this place to become another Grande Prairie, but he did not foresee that agriculture and society was going to change dramatically. It hurt him, but he knew it was all in God’s will.

“But the dynamics have changed once again with the archdiocese taking over the property. We’re not sure exactly what the future will hold and how this will develop. I’m sure we will always have a pilgrimage. As long as people are there to participate, it will keep going. What shape and size it will have – one can only guess.”



Pilgrims take part in adoration before the beginning of the candlelight procession.

The church steeple from the original Notre Dame de Lourdes church in Girouxville still sits amongst the trees of the grotto site today. Despite the fact that it has been sitting in the woods for more than 50 years, the steeple has miraculously been preserved from any wood rot or tarnish. Perhaps it is a sign that there is a bright future yet for the pilgrimage.

As the pilgrimage continues, we pray that, over the coming years, the Girouxville shrine will be an annual destination for all parishioners across our vast archdiocese and beyond, to celebrate and pray as one people. We pray for the intercession of Father Clement Desrochers and look forward to what the future holds.



The pilgrimage ended on Sunday, Aug. 15th, which included a procession for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother.

The Archdiocesan Pilgrimage in Girouxville

Aug. 13-15, 2021

Thank you for joining us!



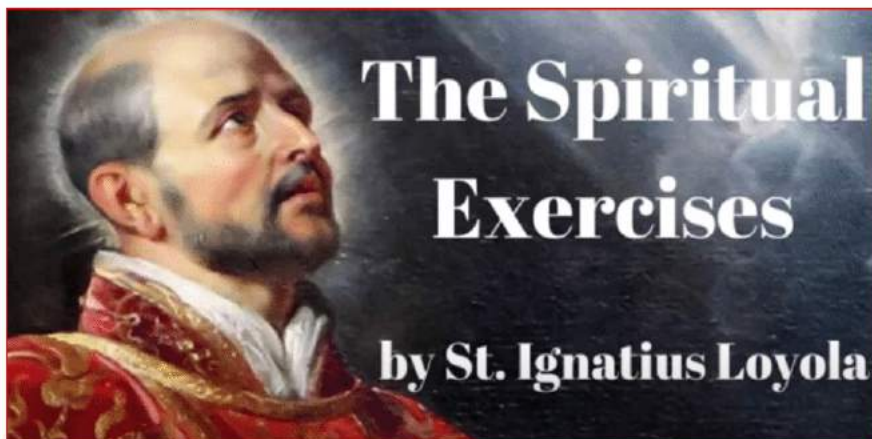
Visit our Facebook page - facebook.com/ArchGrouardMcLennan - to see a full five-minute video recap of this year's pilgrimage.

Peace Retreats Presents:

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

"An Information Session"

On Thursday, September 9 at 7:30 PM



What Are the Spiritual Exercises

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are powerful prayer exercises in the form of personal daily prayer. The exercises were written by St. Ignatius in the year 1548, and have proven to be a powerful way of growing in faith and the spiritual life ever since. Our program includes individual Spiritual Direction with an assigned Spiritual Director. They can be thought of as an 8-month, in-house, individual retreat. This retreat experience offers you:

- new and/or deeper prayer methods; &
- a group that supports and shares with you.

What you get out of it depends on what you put into it.

Peace Retreats has been offering the Ignatian Exercises for 14 years now, and will be offering them again, beginning in late September. This year participants from locations distant from Grande Prairie will be able to join us virtually, using our user friendly Zoom account. If you prefer, you can also join us in-person in the Sisters of Holy Cross room on the 2nd floor of St. Joseph Church.

Who We are

Peace Retreats is a relatively unknown non-profit, volunteer group that includes trained Spiritual Directors within our Archdiocese, who have been offering retreats, Spiritual Direction, and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius throughout our Archdiocese since 2007.

Registrations Are Limited

Register for the Information Session no later than Monday, September 7

We will send you a link to our Zoom account if you wish to attend virtually. If you wish to attend in-person we need to plan for how many will be in attendance.

Register for the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises no later than Sunday, September 19.

Contact us and we will send you a registration form.

Contacts

E-mail:

peaceretreatsgp@gmail.com

Phone or Text: (780) 532-7231

Sacramental Celebrations in Little Red River



In the first week of August, our faithful in the **Little Red River Cree Nation** communities celebrated a multitude of confirmations and first communions, in both **John D'or Prairie** and **Garden River**.

Thirty people were confirmed into the Church at St. Joseph's in John D'or Prairie. At St. Jean-Baptiste in Garden River, four people celebrated confirmation and six celebrated their first Holy Communion.

Congratulations and God's blessings to all of you!



Surprise visit for St. Bernard's feast day



Father Bill Bernard surprised parishioners with a short visit to **St. Bernard's Church** in **Grouard** in late August. He concelebrated Mass with Father Bernard Akum on **August 20th**, in honour of St. Bernard of Clairvoux's feast day.

In his homily, the former parish priest of Grouard stressed the importance of the love of God and neighbour that St. Bernard exemplified in his life.





FEATURE STORY

Intentional living

Young Catholics in archdiocese find their faith deeply nurtured at St. Therese Institute

After graduating high school three years ago, Emily Bourke was uncertain of what path her life should take.

She had competing thoughts - to either go to university or to follow in the footsteps of her older siblings and spend a year at the St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno, Saskatchewan.

When the Spirit River girl finally decided to go to St. Therese, she figured it would be a one-time experience before heading off to university and the so-called “real world”.

However, the experience ended up affecting her so deeply and profoundly, Emily is now going back for her third year at St. Therese this fall.

Looking back, Bourke had no idea that decision was bound to become a three-year journey, growing her faith in ever deeper and more intimate ways.

“At first it was just something my mom really wanted us to try for a year. So I said I’ll do it just for a year and then head off to university,” Emily recalled. “I never would have thought I’d be now going back for my third year. But I ended up loving it.

“I came to this place where I saw how good life could be when you’re close to God, and, through the teachings of the Church, seeing how nothing makes sense unless God is involved. Before this I was going to church, but I was not committed as I am now. Today I can no longer go back to that former life, living it more so just for myself.”

The St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission’s faith formation program offers young Catholics from across Canada and the world a chance to deepen their faith and form lifelong friendships and bonds with fellow Catholics, all rooted in the “little way” of St. Therese of Lisieux. Last year, seven young people from the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan attended.

Much like Bourke, spending a summer in St. Therese was also a tradition among Andrea Bator and her siblings. Bator is now heading back to St. Therese for her third year, leaving from her home in Grande Prairie.



Last year, seven young people from the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan took part in the St. Therese Institute's faith formation program; some are returning this fall. Photo by Andrea Bator



Emily Bourke



FEATURE STORY

What she enjoys most about St Therese is the intentionality of faith there, and how the program creates an environment of “prayer without ceasing.”

“I always dreamed of being formed in my faith and I tried to go to different things that would help with that, but nothing was really filling that desire in my heart,” Bator recalled. “So when I learned about St Therese, studying the Catholic faith around like-minded young people who are passionate about their faith - that really pulled at my heart and I knew I had to go.”



Andrea Bator is going back for her third year at the St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission this year.

“A big part of the community is the duty of the moment. Whether in class, washing dishes, whatever it is - it can all be made a prayer and a way to grow closer to God and encounter Him in whatever we’re doing. I found that very beautiful.”

Alongside this intentional living, St. Therese offers courses on Church history, Church teachings, philosophy and other subjects. The program’s prayer schedule includes morning prayer, daily Mass and adoration, praying with the Scriptures through Lectio Divina, prayer through journaling, contemplation and silent Ignatius retreats.

For Bator, this rigorous prayer schedule completely transformed her faith life.

Young Catholics from across Canada and the world attend St. Therese Institute’s faith formation program each year.

“I was very much a baby Catholic before going,” she said. “Growing up, I knew prayer was important but it was not really a priority for me. But I was so enveloped with the beauty of our faith; my prayer life really grew and blossomed.”

Bourke was particularly surprised by how much the academic side of St. Therese wholeheartedly impacted her faith.

“I was totally blown away by the depths of the Church’s teachings and how much there is to learn. It turned out to be really awesome and very interesting,” she said. “Everything from the philosophy courses, catechism courses, learning the historical critical method of interpreting Scripture, and just how faith and reason must work together - you can’t ascribe to just one or the other.”



The rigorous prayer life at St. Therese has left a major impact in the lives of both Emily Bourke and Andrea Bator.

In a country with a secular culture increasingly at odds with the Church's teaching, St. Therese also provided a way for young people like Andrea and Emily to nurture their faith alongside other young Catholics who want their faith to play a central role in their lives.

"It can often be difficult in the world, just hearing a lot of swearing, all of the common aspects of our secular culture. It is healing just to be in an environment that uplifts you constantly," said Bator.



Icon making at St. Therese Institute.



Andrea Bator

"Everyone there is so authentic and real in who they are and in their dignity as Catholics and children of God, and it just radiates. Just to know I'm not alone in this, no matter the struggles, it's so encouraging."

But there's no denying the experience also comes with great challenges. Not only with the tough and busy schedule, both Andrea and Emily struggled with this faith-heavy environment at first. Bator said it put her in a place where she had to come face-to-face with God in the most intimate and inescapable way.

"Being surrounded by God in such an intentional way is challenging," she said. "You can't just run away from Him. You're going to face the reality of your brokenness, but also the beauty that God wants to restore in your life."

But that challenge offers an opportunity for a serious and life-changing sense of fulfillment. If there is anything Bator could emphasise to other young Canadians interested in St. Therese, it would be this opportunity for fulfillment.

"I would probably talk to them about the ache in their hearts, this ache for something higher, and how challenging it can be to fill that ache," she said. "That ache is a God-sized hole, and only God can fill it. It is an infinite hole so only the Infinite can fill it."

"St. Therese is one of the best ways in Canada we can encounter God and can fill that hole. It's a place where we can encounter God in that deep and abiding way that is fulfilling and healing, and it will restore all the areas of your life."

As Bourke thinks about her life after she completes her third year at St. Therese next summer, whether it will be going to university or out into a career, she says this experience has given her the necessary tools to hold to her faith no matter where her future takes her.

"One of the reasons I didn't go straight to university after high school is I didn't think I quite had all the tools to go out into the world," she said. "I didn't quite know what that meant at the time, but now I realize what I really needed was a much more grounded faith before I went out into the world. Now I have that."



Confirmations in Joussard

Four confirmations were celebrated this August at **St Anne's Parish in Joussard.**

Please welcome Trevor Julian Carrier, Richard Gregory, Sabrina Niccole and Cameron Julian, as they fully complete their initiation into the Church!





Food drive at St. Joseph's

St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie hosted a food drive in their parking lot on **July 24th**, gathering non-perishable items for the Grande Prairie Food Bank.

Parishioners from Grande Prairie and surrounding communities donated items.

Mary back on display

Parishioners with **St. Mary's Church in Valleyview** have repainted and restored this metal statue of Mary, which is now back on display outside their church. Great work Yvonne and the Brochu family!



Back to the books

With the summer now over, our seminarians **Paul Edo-Aramunde** and **Thomas Wollis** are heading back to **St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton** for another year of studies. Seminarian **Ryan Beaupre** is heading to **St. Paul's Church in High Prairie** for a year of pastoral engagement.

Please pray for our seminarians and for more religious vocations within our archdiocese!

Send us photos from your parish and faith community!
e-mail: comdirector.agm@outlook.com



Fostering faith through Vacation Bible School

Parent-led initiative brings a joyful side of the Church to young children

Jamie Schoorlemmer looks over the grounds of Moonshine Lake Provincial Park, where some children are trekking through the woods, some are reciting the actions to faith-themed songs, others are making “Holy Spirit” campfires with cheese, pretzels and other food.

It’s a welcoming sight for the Rycroft parishioner, who played a leading role in bringing Vacation Bible School to the area this summer.

For the parents and more than 30 young people who attended, the experience was also a welcomed return.

“People are so anxious to be together and have fellowship with each other, and the kids are missing each other too,” said Schoorlemmer. “We decided if restrictions lifted this summer we would make sure this camp became a reality.”

For the past 17 years, Vacation Bible School has been a parent-led initiative offering a few days of fun, faith formation, and community to Catholic families in the archdiocese, and especially their young children. The program, filled with different faith-based crafts, music, and activities, is largely drawn from the Catholic Vacation Bible School program by CatChat.

Organized by the parishes of St. Joseph in Spirit River and St. Peter and Paul in Rycroft, the camp is typically attended by families from the area. Families from Silver Valley, Grande Prairie, Fairview, Dawson’s Creek and elsewhere have also participated.



Families from Spirit River, Rycroft, Silver Valley, Fairview, and elsewhere attended this year's Vacation Bible School.



Arts and crafts are a major part of the activities during the three-day Vacation Bible School, held this year from August 9-11.

What inspires Schoorlemmer most is the joy Vacation Bible School brings to young Catholics.

“It’s been a gift,” she said. “Seeing the smiles on their faces and the love of Jesus that is apparent through it all. And in helping others come closer to Christ – if it makes that difference for even one person, then that makes all of the efforts put into this worth it.”

Both Schoorlemmer and Rycroft parent Denise Beaupre have helped organize and volunteer with the camp over its 17 years. It was in 2004, when the Oblates of Mary Immaculate brought a 10-day mission to the area, that the Spirit River and Rycroft parishes were first encouraged to form a youth ministry team.



In 2007, the team decided to create an annual Vacation Bible School for Catholic families in the area and around the archdiocese. In the initial years, the school was held over five half-days at St. Joseph’s Church in Spirit River, but it was eventually moved into a three-day camping excursion at Moonshine Lake.

Sherry Bourke came to the camp this year with seven of her grandchildren, but over the years 10 of her own children have attended Vacation Bible School.

“I like that my children can meet others in their faith, and it builds a stronger sense of community through the parents as well. And it shows the kids that learning our faith can have fun elements too,” said Bourke.



Organizer Jamie Schoorlemmer



Parent and grandparent Sherry Bourke

“It’s been nice seeing my children who once participated now come back and lead as captains.”

Jill Yuha brought her four children from their home in Silver Valley, having heard about the camp in Spirit River’s parish bulletin. It’s been a joy not only to see the fun her children had, but also the opportunity it provided her to meet with other Catholic parents, who also want to see their families grow and thrive in the Faith.

“It’s great to talk to other like-minded parents and have conversations that are relatable,” she said. “We all have little kids; we’re all raising them in the Church. As a mom, it’s nice to have other faithful families around.”

Much of the programming focuses on making the faith accessible and tangible to small children, whether by music, arts and crafts, theatre and other demonstrations. This year the school is studying the seven sacraments, and as a way of teaching baptism, each family made a holy water font.



Parent Jill Yuha, with her youngest son Kyle



As Mass begins, the children and teenaged “captains” of Vacation Bible School perform the actions of some of the faith-based songs they’ve learned.



“It’s all intermingled – the faith station is what actually teaches us about our main subjects – whether it be the sacraments, the angels and saints, Mary – but what the little ones often remember most is the crafts they made, the songs they sang,” said Schoorlemmer.

“It’s education for the captains and parents too. It’s a refresher for things they learned in catechism that they can now pass on at a child’s level. And it gives parents the experience to see ways to pass on their faith to their children. Now they have the tools to teach their own kids as well.”



The Vacation Bible School is run by Catholic parents of the Spirit River, Rycroft and Silver Valley areas.

For the teenagers and young adults who volunteer with the school, Beaupre believes they particularly enjoy it as a place where they can fearlessly live out their faith.

“The kids don’t have to be afraid to share that they’re here for faith, whereas at school they may feel pressure to cover that up,” she said. “So to see their smiles, you can tell they just feel free here to be themselves. They can live the part of their life they have to cover up among peers and the world at large.”

Concerning the captains and leaders, Schoorlemmer adds,

“It makes my heart happy to see these young teens, who are out in that secular world where it’s not easy in this day and age, and they’re free to express their faith here. It gives them the courage to go beyond this campsite and move that faith out into the world.”



More than 30 children and teens attended the Vacation Bible School this year.

As parents who have devoted many years of time and effort to make this Vacation Bible School a reality each summer, both Schoorlemmer and Beaupre hope the Vacation Bible School will continue on into the next generation – as a staple event of fostering faith among Catholic families in the area.

“We heard one of the captain’s say ‘One day I’m going to run this camp,’ said Beaupre. “Hearing that is so encouraging – that we’re raising little leaders.”



The clergy, captains, parents and children of this year’s Vacation Bible School gather for a group photo.

HAVE YOU PLANNED YOUR ST JOSEPH PILGRIMAGE YET?

During the **Year of St. Joseph** (March 19, 2021-March 19, 2022) you are invited to take a pilgrimage in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan to our three churches dedicated to St. Joseph. The churches are:

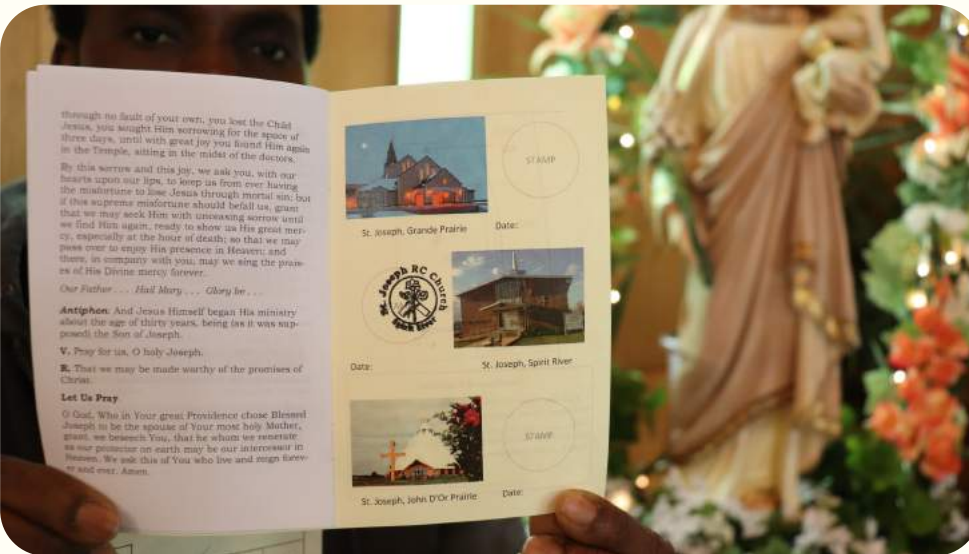
St. Joseph Church, 10404 102 Street, Grande Prairie

St. Joseph Church, 5019 43 Avenue, Spirit River

St. Joseph Church, John D'Or Prairie, Little Red River Cree Nation



Congratulations to Walter Chledowski and Thérèse Chauvin of Grande Prairie - the first people to complete the St. Joseph Pilgrimage!



Families and individuals are encouraged to visit the churches, and at each church pray **the Seven Sorrows and Joys of St. Joseph** (by Ven Januarius Sarnelli, C.Ss.R.)

The prayer can be found in the Pilgrim's Passport, copies of which are available at the three churches.

After visiting all of our St. Joseph churches and having your Pilgrim's Passport stamped at each, pilgrims can receive a **blessed olive-wood cross** at our chancery office in Grande Prairie. The crosses are made by Catholics in Palestine.

Archbishop Gerard Pettipas reminds us that the essence of this pilgrimage is to grow in our spiritual lives, and nurture our devotion to St. Joseph.

"The real focus here is the spiritual life - to reflect on St. Joseph and his life as a father and protector of the family," he said.

Please make sure when scheduling your pilgrimage to **contact each church (or the band office in John D'or Prairie) ahead of your visit.**

Learn more at: www.archgm.ca/pilgrimage-for-st-joseph



ST JOSEPH'S PILGRIMAGE



**Celebrate the Year of St. Joseph with this
once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage!**



**St. Joseph's Church in
Spirit River**



**St. Joseph's Church in
John D'or Prairie**



**St. Joseph's Church in
Grande Prairie**

More details at www.archgm.ca

Losing our lives for His sake

A reflection on the Gospel by Fr. Michael Dias

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

*Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel will save it. **Mark 8:27-35***

All the words of the Gospel are timely, but the dialogue of Caesarea Philippi is in an altogether special way. The situation has not changed today - people have very diverse opinions on Jesus. Is He a prophet, a great teacher, an interesting personality? We see He is all this and so much more. But having faith in Jesus of Nazareth as our Messiah - both glorious and suffering - is a kind of leap into darkness. A leap must be taken that does not come from the flesh or from the mind, but is a gift of God which must be accepted through the docility to an interior light - from which faith is born. Every day there are men and women who take this leap. Those who have taken this leap will not go back for anything in the world, and more than that, they are surprised to have been able to live for so long without the light and strength that comes from faith in Christ.



Fr. Michael Dias

This leap of faith in Jesus is not a welcoming one in the lives of millions of people. They see this identity of 'divinity' added to the mere human personality of a Jewish person, Mary's Son, as unrealistic and irrational. Even more, Christ indicated Himself as not only a 'Triumphant Messiah' but also a 'Suffering Messiah.' This is the main factor that keeps many people away from believing in Him. Jesus consistently showed his views about human sufferings by example. His own heart beat every moment of his life on earth with the same words uttered by Isaiah: "The Lord God opens my ears that may hear, and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting." (Isaiah 50:5)

Jesus was fully convinced that salvation would come from the sacrifice of Himself and from "giving his life in ransom for many." Regrettably we must state that Peter's error in not understanding why the Messiah must suffer has been repeated throughout history. Many inside the Church, from its beginnings until today, have acted at certain times as if the Kingdom of God is of this world, as if we should be affirmed by victory over our enemies instead of suffering and martyrdom. Our faith-leap in the hands of Jesus as our Messiah demands not only the acceptance and embracing of suffering, but also another heroic act - to go out of ourselves and do good works for the betterment of others. James writes about this in his letter: "If a brother or a sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, it is dead." (James 2:14)

Denying oneself, suffering with willingness, surrendering to God and going out of oneself to reach out to the needy and helping them - these are the demands from our Master Jesus if we wish to become part of His life and work. Not all would pay heed to such a hardliner's clarion call. Only persons of big heart, of generosity, openness and fortitude can listen and obey to Jesus.

God bless.

A deeper communion

A reflection from the editor

I want to thank everyone for the kind words so far on our magazine and your willingness to subscribe. This was a project that came about organically, but also a bit unexpectedly, so we are happy to see its success so far. As the first full-time communications director for the archdiocese, we wanted to start things off with a project that would really help get the word out on the rich history and many things happening across our parishes.



Kyle Greenham, editor

Along with an increased presence on social media with routine photos, videos and stories, we thought it would be important to launch some kind of effort that also reaches out physically to people. For many of our parishioners who do not have easy access to the Internet, this magazine is especially a helpful tool. And for people like myself who much prefer the physical book over the electronic screen, I hope it also a welcomed effort.

So many areas of our lives have been relegated to the digital world, so some were shocked that we would even try a printed magazine. This focus on the digital is of course a long fermenting trend, but one that increased exponentially with the COVID-19 pandemic, which, for all of us at a time and some of us still, relegated even the Sacrifice of the Mass to the digital sphere.

As a substitute this only goes so far. As my friend once said about watching Mass online, “you can’t download the Eucharist.” Our faith is incarnational. It requires physical presence. Our faith is one in which the Word of God becomes flesh. And we worship Him by eating His flesh and blood, under the auspices of the most customary of meals - bread and wine. Our souls are regenerated through baptism, and this most monumental and life changing of sacraments requires the most common of substances - water. Foundational to the Catholic faith is that we access the divine and we are transformed by the divine through the ordinary, physical world. We know, perhaps better than anyone else, that the world is truly a magical place.

The digital interface only goes so far in bringing us a sense of presence and communion. In many ways it can become the inversion of communion. How often are we enjoying the company of others, then we receive a text or notification, and once that phone is in our face we are suddenly no longer in company with them. Even if we remain physically present, our inner self has been transported elsewhere. This is something that has now become a stereotypical image of modern life – the group of people gathered around a dinner table, saying nothing to each other because their heads are buried in their phones.

Of course, a physical magazine is also no substitute for this type of presence. But it offers something tangible, that exists as its own thing apart from our gadgets. And because it comes as its own product, it is surely healthier for our attention span, which have suffered under the instantaneousness and endless deluge of information made available to us through the Internet and social media.

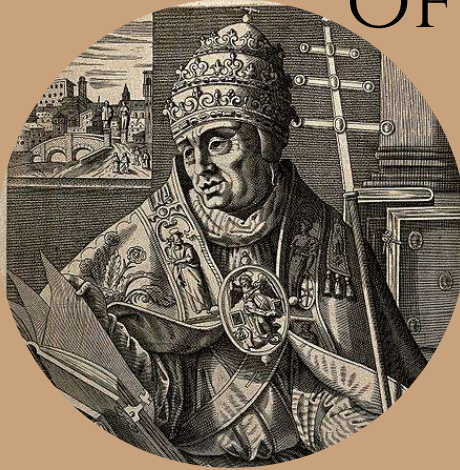
So I thank you again, in the midst of this content-filled digital age, for your willingness to support this effort and read our magazine, when I’m sure there’s a million other alternatives at your fingertips. My background is in journalism, and I’m often reminded of GK Chesterton’s saying, that journalism mostly consists of announcing “Lord James is dead!” to people who didn’t know Lord James was ever alive. So it’s always a gamble to know if your writings will ever find a readership, but thankfully we have earned enough support so far to make this magazine a viable reality.

We have many more ideas on the horizon, not only for upcoming features in Northern Light, but with many other communication initiatives. We hope this magazine is at least a good first step in building a stronger sense of connection and presence within the faith life and parish life of our archdiocese, that we feel bonded in an ever more tangible and physical way, together and in communion.



LITURGICAL NOTES FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

Written by Archbishop
Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R



Sept. 3: St. Gregory the Great: Gregory was bishop of Rome from 590 to his death in 604. From a noble Roman family, he is the first pope to have been a monk before being acclaimed as Vicar of Rome. He had great administrative skills and missioned to the Anglo-Saxons of England, which led to these and many other European tribes embracing Christianity. Gregory was highly instrumental in developing the liturgy of the western Church (Gregorian Chant bears his name). He is acclaimed as the “Father of Christian worship”.



Sept. 13: St. John Chrysostom: John Chrysostom lived from 347-407. He was the bishop of Constantinople, the centre of Eastern Christianity. A fine preacher, his very name is derived from the Greek words meaning “golden-mouthed”. He devised the ritual of the Eucharistic celebration that bears his name, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom - still used in Eastern Christian Churches. He is reputed to have led a crowd of people to destroy the Temple of Artemis; earning him the title “the destroyer of the demons and overthrower of the temple of Diana”.



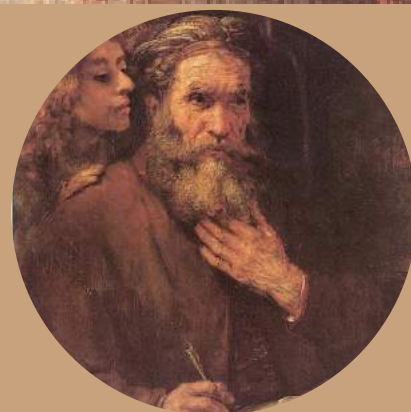
Sept. 8: Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: The Church celebrates the birth of the Blessed Virgin on 8 September, nine months after the Immaculate Conception (December 8th). Scripture tell us little about Mary’s origins; much of what we have comes from the Protoevangelium of St. James, an apocryphal document dating from the late second century, which identifies her parents as Joachim and Anne.



Sept. 15: Our Lady of Sorrows: Appropriately, the Church honours the sorrows of the Blessed Mother on the day following **the Feast of the Exultation of the Cross on Sept. 14**. The prophet Simeon had foretold her sufferings when Jesus was presented in the temple of Jerusalem. The seven sorrows of Mary are not all related to the events of Good Friday, they are: the Prophecy of Simeon, the Flight into Egypt, the Loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, Mary's meeting Jesus on the Via Dolorosa, the Crucifixion of Jesus on Mount Calvary, Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross, and the Burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea.



Sept. 20: Sts. Andrew Kim Tae-Gon: Andrew (1821-1846) was born into a family of converts in heavily Confucian Korea. After his baptism at age 15, Kim studied at a seminary in the Portuguese colony of Macau, near Hong Kong. He was ordained the first Korean Catholic priest in Shanghai by the French bishop of that diocese. He then returned to Korea to preach and evangelize. During the Joseon Dynasty which outlawed Christianity, Kim was one of several thousand Christians who were executed in 1846, at the age of 25.



Sept. 21: St. Matthew: St. Matthew the Apostle was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, as well as one of the four Evangelists, the author of the Gospel of Matthew. His gospel and Luke's are the only of the four to contain infancy narratives. The Gospel of Matthew is held to be written primarily for a Jewish audience. It has many references to the Old Testament, and is written in a very orderly style of chiasms, which relate incidents even within his gospel to one another. According to some accounts, he was martyred by the king of Ethiopia.



Sept. 23: Padre Pio: Padre Pio (Francesco Forgione) was born in 1887. He became a Capuchin Franciscan monk and priest. At the age of five, he had already decided that he wanted to give his life to God and at age 15 he entered the Capuchin novitiate. While often sickly in his life, he early showed signs of being unusually gifted spiritually, including the gifts of healing, bilocation, levitation, prophecy, miracles, extraordinary abstinence from both sleep and nourishment. What stood out most were his stigmata: the wounds in his hands that signaled the nail marks on the hands of Christ after the crucifixion. He was sought after by many for his spiritual guidance and wise counsel. He died on Sept. 23, 1968. He was both beatified (1999) and canonized (2002) by Pope John Paul II.



Sept. 27: St. Vincent de Paul: St. Vincent de Paul (1581 – 1660) was a French priest who dedicated himself to serving the poor. In 1622, he was appointed a chaplain to the galleys. After working for some time in Paris among imprisoned galley slaves, he became the superior of what is now known as the Congregation of the Mission, or the "Vincentians", a community of priests dedicated the spiritual care of people in smaller towns and villages. Vincent was zealous in conducting retreats for clergy at a time when there was great laxity, abuse, and ignorance among them. He was a pioneer in clerical training and was instrumental in establishing seminaries, as well as founding the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. Saint Vincent de Paul has a charity named after him by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He was canonized in 1737.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

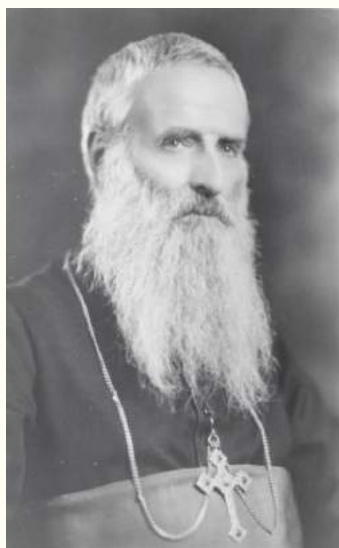
September 6th	Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
September 8th	Fr. Bernard Akum, SDV
September 11th	Fr. Joseph Jacobson
September 15th	Ryan Beaupré
September 29th	Fr. Henry (Harry) Kiggundu, FMH



Anniversary of Ordination

September 10th	Fr. Jayaraj 'Raj' Koppula , 24 years ordination
September 20th	Msgr Charles Lavoie PH , 30 years ordination

Congratulations and fraternal blessings to each one of you.



Bishop Celestin Jossard, OMI

Historical Dates

- September 18, 1953, death of **Bishop Ubald Langlois, OMI**,
3rd Apostolic Vicar of Grouard
- September 18, 1953, **Bishop Henri Routhier, OMI**,
Succeeds as 4th Apostolic Vicar of Grouard
- September 19, 1932, death of **Bishop Celestin Jossard, OMI**,
Co-adjutor to **Bishop Emile Grouard**
- September 19, 1989, death of **Archbishop Henri Routhier, OMI**,
1st Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan
- September 24, 1967, elevation of the See of the Vicariate of Grouard to **the status of Archdiocese**, naming **Bishop Henri Routhier, OMI**, the
1st Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan.
- September 24, 1996, Installation of **Archbishop Henri Goudreault, OMI**,
3rd Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan
- September 26, 1890, death of **Bishop Henri Faraud, OMI**,
Apostolic Vicar of MacKenzie



Canadian Blessed

- September 2nd, 1926 Beatified **Blessed André Grasset du Saint-Sauveur**,
Martyr.
- September 4th, 1993 Beatified **Blessed Dina Bélanger**,
Religious of Jesus-Mary of Sillery.
- September 23, 2001 Beatified **Blessed Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin**,
Foundress of the Sisters of Providence.

We want your contributions to this magazine!

To contact the editor for story ideas or to let us know what's happening in 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 **5th 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!



Social media



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To subscribe to our **monthly e-mail list** go to our website **archgm.ca** or contact **comdirector.agm@outlook.com**



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.