NORTHERN LIGHT

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF GROUARD-McLENNAN

APRIL 2022



...AND MUCH MORE



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TRULY, HE IS RISEN

A joyful Easter to you and your family from the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan



NEWS BULLETIN



Photos by Matthew Bodnarek, CCCB/Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Indigenous delegation meet with Pope Francis

The historic Indigenous Delegation to Rome met with Pope Francis from March 28-April 1st. The delegation includes elders, youth, knowledge keepers and former residential school students. Grande Prairie Metis elder Angie Crerar, pictured, gave her reflection and testimony as part of the delegation.

"He smiled at you with love, and when he touched my arm, I'll never forget it," Crerar said, in a video interview after meeting the Pope, filmed and edited by the **Archdiocese of Edmonton**.

"I remember how much my parents loved the Church, and I have come back too. I belong here now."

The bishops who accompanied the delegation were also visibly transformed by the experience. **Archbishop Richard Smith** of Edmonton noted that the Pope's words to the Indigenous peoples gathered there – "*The Church stands with you*" – were particularly moving.

In the closing ceremony of the delegation's visit on **April 1st**, Pope Francis expressed a **papal apology** and reflected on the many ways he was deeply touched by the delegates' stories. **He also confirmed his upcoming visit to Canada.** The Pope began his remarks by reflecting on the Indigenous people's attachment to the land, which has also been a strong theme of Francis's pontificate.

"Your care for the land, which you see not as a resource to be exploited, but as a gift of heaven," the Pope said of Canadian Indigenous traditions. "For you, the land preserves the memory of your ancestors who rest there; it is a vital setting making it possible to see each individual's life as part of a greater web of relationships, with the Creator, with the human community, with all living species and with the earth, our common home.

"In these days, a beautiful image kept coming up. You compared yourselves to the branches of a tree. ... Yet that tree, rich in fruit, has experienced a tragedy that you described to me in these past days: the tragedy of being uprooted."



Photos by Matthew Bodnarek, CCCB/Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

In the Pope's apology, he expressed a deep sorrow and shame, and emphasized that the faith can never be transmitted in a way that is contrary to the message of the Gospel itself.

"I feel shame – sorrow and shame – for the role that a number of Catholics, particularly those with educational responsibilities, have had in all these things that wounded you, in the abuses you suffered and in the lack of respect shown for your identity, your culture and even your spiritual values. All these things are contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the deplorable conduct of those members of the Catholic Church, I ask for God's forgiveness and I want to say to you with all my heart: *I am very sorry*... Clearly, the content of the faith cannot be transmitted in a way contrary to the faith itself. It is a frightening thing when, precisely in the name of the faith, counter-witness is rendered to the Gospel."

NEWS BULLETIN



Photos by Matthew Bodnarek, CCCB/Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Towards the close of his remarks, Pope Francis also acknowledged much of the good that has been brought about through the missionary activity and evangelization of Canada's Indigenous peoples. He expressed great appreciation for the strong Catholic faith of many of the delegates there, and his admiration that, even with such a contentious past, they have persevered in their love of the Church.

"I think with gratitude of all those good and decent believers who, in the name of the faith, and with respect, love and kindness, have enriched your history with the Gospel," Pope Francis continued. "I think with joy, for example, of the great veneration that many of you have for Saint Anne, the grandmother of Jesus. This year I would like to be with you on those days."

Angie Crerar offered a prayer shortly after the Pope's address, visibly moved by the experience. She expressed her hope to welcome Pope Francis in Canada as he had welcomed them in Rome.

"Today is a day I will never forget for the rest of my life," she said before her prayer. "My heart is so full I can hardly speak. When he comes home to our home, I know our family will welcome him as he did for us."

Archbishop joins consecration of Russia & Ukraine

Archbishop Pettipas, in communion with Pope Francis and bishops around the world, held a prayer service for the consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25th, the Feast of the Annunciation.

We livestreamed the consecration from our chancery chapel in **Grande Prairie**. The replay can be viewed on our **Facebook**. Many people joined with us in person and in spirit. One Grande Prairie parishioner kindly donated flowers in the colours of the Ukrainian flag.





Catholic Missions in Canada host fundraising night

Catholic Missions in Canada (CMIC) are hosting a **virtual fundraiser** on **April 28th**, to raise money for Catholic churches and missions in remote and poor communities across Canada.

CMIC have been an essential help in the mission churches of our **Archdiocese.** Learn more about the 'Taste of Heaven' fundraiser on their website - **cmic.info** - or contact us at the chancery office for more information.



THIS PAST MONTH IN...

ASK THE ARCHBISHOP

In our recent editions of 'Ask the Archbishop', His Grace tackles questions on proper practices during the Mass and the role Catholic schools should play in our role to evangelize and spread the Faith. In a three-part video, Archbishop Pettipas also tackled a list of questions he received from Grade 6 students at École Héritage School in Falher.

Here are some excerpts from recent videos. You can view the full videos and complete responses at archgm.ca/ask-the-archbishop

"What is the proper practice for laity during the Our Father?"

This person asked specifically about holding hands during the Our Father, or raising their hands up in the air during the Our Father. Like many of us, they've seen parishioners do a variety of practices during this prayer, and I understand that it can be difficult to know what practice is the most appropriate.

So let me begin by stating a basic principle. The sacraments and the Liturgy of Hours are the prayers and rituals that belong to the whole Church. They don't belong to me or any one person, or even any one community of the faithful; these belong to the whole Church, the whole believing community. Because these sacred rites belong to the whole Church, there are forms and directives from the Holy See that determine how they are to be celebrated. No one person or group of persons has the right to change these, or to do other than what the ritual books prescribe. I appreciate how Cardinal Arinze, a former prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, put it to us when I was at bishops' school. He said to us new bishops, "If it says in the ritual book to do it, then do it. If it doesn't say to do it, then don't do it." A simple formula to be sure, and it applies to many things.

To take part in this series, send your questions to comdirector.agm@outlook.com or contact Kyle at 780-532-9766.





You can view the latest videos in this series at **archgm.ca/ask-the-archbishop** or search "Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan" on YouTube.

The Missal says this just as we are about to pray the Our Father, quote: "He (that is, the priest) extends his hands and, together with the people, continues: Our Father ..." There is no instruction for the people to extend their hands in a similar fashion, or to hold one another's hands. So, if we follow the missal properly, parishioners shouldn't do these things.

As a final note, I'd like to speak of prayer services that are not part of the Church's official liturgy. Many of us may belong to or have experienced movements in the Church that are not part of the official liturgy. These movements are very important in the life of the Church, as they encourage prayer and piety, outreach and charity to the many thousands of their followers. It is in those contexts that more spontaneous actions and prayers take place. For the most part, these are fine and to be encouraged. But the Church's liturgy, namely the Sacrifice of the Mass, is for everyone. The Sacraments have been given to us by Christ and his Holy Spirit so that God's many graces may be strengthened among us. It is in these movements that particular practices take root, and some have found their way into the celebration of sacraments. I don't judge these to be bad as such, but they are not proper to the Sacraments that are the domain of the Church as a whole.



"To what extent should parishes rely on Catholic schools to fulfill our role in evangelization?"

I want to begin by pointing out a distinction between evangelization and catechesis. While we often hear these two terms in the same context, they are actually different faith activities. Evangelization has to do with bringing people to faith. If someone or some event impresses a person so much that they come to believe in Jesus and his Church, that is evangelization. 'Evangelion' is the Greek term for "good news". When this good news is shared with a person, in such a way that the person comes to believe in Jesus and wants to live their whole life immersed in that truth, that is evangelization.

Catechesis, on the other hand, refers to the content of teachings. In the process of catechesis, we learn about Jesus, his actions and his teachings; we learn about the 10 Commandments and the seven Sacraments, we're taught about the moral life, and the difference between vices and virtues. We can be taught these things, without necessarily believing what we're taught.

You could say, in a sense, catechesis is a matter of the mind, but evangelization is a matter of the heart. To be catechized is to understand the Faith, but to be evangelized is to believe the Faith, to live out the teachings of the Church because one loves them and knows them to be true.

There's a little formula I heard many years ago on this topic, namely that "Faith is caught, not taught." We can teach religion, but we can't teach faith. Faith is a relationship with Jesus Christ and with Christ's body that we call the Church. Any of us comes to faith when we have an encounter with Jesus Christ directly, as in a mystical experience, or by encountering an individual Christian or the Christian community, which touches us deeply by its authenticity. It is for this reason that I believe every Catholic school is called to be a genuine "Christian community", where not only the teachings of Jesus but also the way of behaving and treating one another are evidently Christian.

Let's bear in mind a few things about children and children's initiation into the faith. Most important is that parents are the first and greatest teachers of their children. We ignore this fact to our peril. Parents are indeed the first persons to raise and teach our children. This is equally true in evangelizing our children, bringing them to faith, and then educating them in that faith. Good Catholic schools can support children in their growth in faith, but we should not expect the Catholic school to do what the parents have not done. Fundamentally, Catholic children come from Catholic homes, not from Catholic schools.

Now please, don't get me wrong. I believe in Catholic schools. I believe strongly in the role that they play in the Catholic culture and environment. Catholic schools play a valuable and cherished role in presenting students with a catechesis about Jesus, His teachings and his Church. If we did not have Catholic schools, we would be missing a great deal.



But we cannot expect the school to do on its own what should be a trinity of Catholic home, Catholic parish and Catholic school. If you're up to date with the movement called *GrACE*: this brings together the home, school and parish in strengthening the Catholic environment in which we and our children live and grow.

So, to return to the question: To what extent should parishes rely on Catholic schools to fulfill our role in evangelization? We should all work together in the evangelization and catechesis of our young people. Don't say to yourself, "that's someone else's job". I'm not sure who said it first, but it is true: it takes a whole village to raise a child.

EATURESTORY

A deeper devotion

Pilgrimage and commemorative year help bring faithful closer to St. Joseph

Framed in an arch of lilies, the St. Joseph statue standing tall in Spirit River's Catholic Church has been greeted with many prayers and many pilgrims over this past year.

For March 19th, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, the statue was greeted by faithful from all across the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, joined together to celebrate and honour the past year devoted to this most treasured saint.

The occasion marked the closing Mass for the Archdiocese's "Year of St. Joseph", from March 19th, 2021 to March 19th, 2022, in celebration with the similar Year of St. Joseph declared by Pope Francis.



Priests and faithful from across the Archdiocese took part in the closing Mass for the Year of St. Joseph.

The status of St. Joseph at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Spirit Diversity

The statue of St. Joseph at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Spirit River.

"The spiritual path that Joseph traces for us is not one that explains, but accepts," Msgr. Charles Lavoie said in his homily on the life and example of St. Joseph. "Just as God told him, 'Son of David, do not be afraid,' so he says it to us as well today – 'Do not be afraid.' Do not be afraid to express your faith. Do not be afraid to live your Christian life. Do not be afraid to stand up for what is right and just.

"We need courage like Joseph, to get us through the difficult moments of life, and to rest assured that in the end we will get through. We will pull through and God will be there at the other side."

For Peace River resident Jenny Oslie, this Mass was not only an opportunity to celebrate the saint she has always held a special devotion to, it was also a chance to complete her pilgrimage for St. Joseph.

Over this past year, the Archdiocese has encouraged a pilgrimage to all three St. Joseph churches in our region, with a special "Pilgrim's Passport" and prayer to St. Joseph with it. Having travelled to St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie and to the northernly St. Joseph parish in John D'or Prairie last summer, Jenny's prayers before the statue at St. Joseph Church in Spirit River on March 19th meant the completion of her pilgrimage journey.

Oslie has always had a strong devotion to the foster father of Jesus, and this pilgrimage experience only further reaffirmed her devotion and love for the saint.



Jenny Oslie, in red on the right, took part in the St. Joseph Pilgrimage, beginning with a trip to John D'or Prairie with fellow Peace River parishioners and pastor Nel Esguerra last summer.

FEATURE STORY

"I've always loved St. Joseph. I actually chose Joseph as my confirmation name – Josephine," she said. "So my devotion to St. Joseph was not changed by the experience, it was just refreshed. It refreshed my faith and my loyalty to St. Joseph."

St. Joseph's life as a carpenter, father to Jesus and protector of the Holy Family are things that draw her very close to the saint. He also holds a special place for Oslie as Joseph reminds her of her own father.



Pilgrims Louise and Bernie Duval made their way to John D'or Prairie for their pilgrimage last summer as well.

A local woman was able to open up the church for them and let them in to complete their prayers to St. Joseph. Seeing this church for the first time was a stand out moment for Oslie and company.

"The church was so beautifully set up," she recalled. "The way it incorporated Indigenous culture, it just shows how the first missionaries did work together with the native people, understood their ways and sought to share our faith in a way they'd understand. It was really lovely."

This opportunity to experience Indigenous Catholic communities was a special part of their pilgrimage. On the way back from John D'or Prairie, the Peace River group was able to celebrate Mass at the shrine in Eleske. It was one of the most spiritually impactful moment in Jenny's pilgrimage.



Fr. Andrew Similyu, FMH, pastor of St. Joseph's Church in John D'or Prairie, made his way to Spirit River for the closing Mass.

"St. Joseph always makes me think of my dad and reminds me to pray for my dad at the same time," she said. "I just see him as a beautiful father, a working man and a wonderful example. St. Joseph was so loyal and so good, and it just makes me think of my own father and how good he was."

Perhaps the most memorable, and certainly most adventurous part of her pilgrimage was the trip she made with a group of Peace River parishioners to one of the most northernly communities in our archdiocese - St. Joseph's Church in the Cree community of John D'or Prairie.

It was after the feast of the Assumption, August 15th, that the group packed into Fr. Nel Esguerra's van and set off for John D'or Prairie. If the long hours of highway driving wasn't enough, it began raining during their drive into the Cree reserve. The already rough road to John D'or began to soften like mud due to the rain and it nearly swerved them off course. Still, under the protection of St. Joseph, they made it to John D'or Prairie's unique teepee-designed church safe and in tact.



Sister Mary Jeanne Davidson, Louise Lee, & Sister Connie Harkin visit St. Joseph's Church in Spirit River as part of their pilgrimage.

FEATURESTORY

"We went through the Eleske cemetery and learned about the history of the area. Someone had a key and let us into the church and we saw the old room where the priests used to stay. It was really interesting getting to picture how the missionary priests used to live," said Oslie.

"For me, the spiritual side of the pilgrimage really was in understanding the First Nations people and seeing how they shared their faith and their culture. I just found it very moving, very prayerful. Actually being in those churches, seeing first-hand how much faith these communities have, and how much they had appreciated the missionaries. It really comforted me, amidst all of the talk of the residential schools and all of the mistakes that were made, I see there was much good, that the missionary priests came with the best of intentions. I could sense that the local people respected them and loved them."



As part of Oslie's pilgrimage, they made a detour to the First Nations community of Eleske, which was another powerful moment for her.



All pilgrims were asked to do their prayer before the St. Joseph statue in each church named after the saint.

The unique chance the St. Joseph Pilgrimage provided for faithful from all across our archdiocese to visit communities like John D'or Prairie was a special and moving experience for many pilgrims. Grande Prairie-based couple Walter Chledowski and Therese Chauvin travelled there last July, and they were the first pilgrims to receive their crucifixes for completing the pilgrimage.

"Seeing the church in John D'or for the first time – it was so beautiful," said Chauvin. "And all the handmade tapestries in the church, I enjoyed that especially."

It could be said that pilgrimaging is in the blood of Chledowski and Chauvin. Therese grew up in Girouxville, where their annual Assumption Pilgrimage brought Catholics from around the area together each summer. Walter is from the Polish community of Webster, where the grotto grounds for their annual pilgrimage were a major part of his childhood.

So when it was announced during one Sunday Mass at St. Joseph's in Grande Prairie that a pilgrimage to all St. Joseph churches in the archdiocese was being prepared, the couple instantly knew they had to take part.

For them the beauty of a pilgrimage is the opportunity it provides for prayer. Having grown up in farming families, the chance to pray while watching the farmland and growing crops along the highway was something both Chauvin and Chledowski cherished.

"Pilgrimages are special for us. It's a beautiful way to pray for the needs of the time," said Therese. "Obviously that year we had the COVID pandemic, so we wanted to pray for a return to health and to get back to whatever normal life is. It was a time to reflect, to think of the struggles of those in our lives, and to especially pray for family and for the Holy Spirit to help us."



Therese Chauvin and Walter Chledowski were the first to receive their blessed cross for completing the St. Joseph pilgrimage.

FEATURESTORY

The experience has deepened their devotion to St. Joseph as well. The seven sorrows and joys of St. Joseph, the prayer contained within the "Pilgrim's Passport", were a new prayer for Walter and Therese - and for most pilgrims.

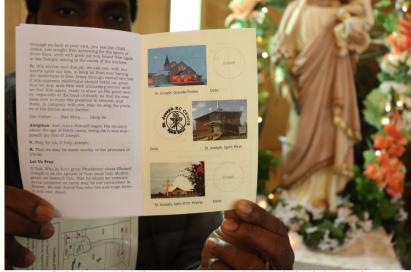
Since the experience Therese says she thinks of the saint much more now. And as a carpenter and electrician, St. Joseph is a saint Walter particularly identifies with.



Sr. Connie Harkin, Sr. Mary Jeanne Davidson and Louise Lee make their pilgrimage stop to St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie.

"As the foster father of Jesus, St Joseph shows us that the life of faith is filled with abundant grace and challenge," the priest said. "Continue to ask him for protection, as he protected Mary and the child Jesus, for courage to defend and to speak to the truth. Pray for the intercession of St. Joseph that you will find joy in living, joy in your work, acceptance in your responsibilities - men as husbands and fathers, women as wives and mothers.

"As we have prayed in the prayer of this past year: blessed Joseph show yourself a father to us, as well as a guide in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil."



Each pilgrim got their "Passport" stamped at each St. Joseph church they visited.

"He happens to be the patron saint of carpenters and contractors," said Walter. "I actually used to work for a carpenter who prayed a lot to St. Joseph - that was his favourite saint. He would say, 'St. Joseph was a carpenter like me. And when I have a construction program, I'd pray to St. Joseph and sure enough I would find the solution a moment later."

The Year of St. Joseph and the accompanying pilgrimage has certainly fostered a deeper devotion to St. Joseph for Catholics across the archdiocese. And with many getting to see communities like John D'or Prairie, Spirit River or Grande Prairie for the first time, it has further solidified the sense of connection and belonging across our vast region of parishes and mission churches.

In his homily closing out the Year of the St. Joseph, Msgr. Lavoie reminded faithful not to let the devotions, celebrations and prayers to St. Joseph this past year be forgotten, but to always carry the saint with them as an example of fatherhood, faithfulness and protection.



Msgr. Charles Lavoie and Spirit River pastor Fr. Arockiam Savarimuthu take a photo with fourth degree Knights of Columbus.

Closing Mass for the Year of St. Joseph







Our closing Mass for the Year of St. Joseph in Spirit River was a beautiful celebration, joined by priests and faithful from all across our Archdiocese.

A short video from the Mass can be viewed at **archgm.ca**, and more pictures can be seen on our **Facebook** and **Instagram**.





Fond farewell for Father John



It was a sad day in our Archdiocese as we said goodbye to **Fr. John Basiimwa**, who has served our communities of **Rainbow Lake** and **Chatch** for the past two years.

Fr. John has been asked by his order, the **Franciscan Missionaries** of **Hope**, to join his brother priests in **Long Island, New York**. The Franciscan Missionaries of Hope are hard at work preparing to send us another priest to take his place.

It has been a great joy to have you in our archdiocese, Fr. John! Despite the many challenges you have had to face in your ministry in northern Canada, your smile has never left your face! You will be deeply missed by the people of Chateh and Rainbow Lake.

Please say a prayer for Fr. John as he continues his ministry!





Irish dew in Valleyview





For **St. Patrick's feast day, March 17th**, the **Catholic Women's League** at **St. Rita's Church** in **Valleyview** hosted an Irish stew supper with plenty of delicious food.

A fundraiser for **humanitarian aid** in **Ukraine** was also a part of the festivities.







Facilitating an encounter with Christ

Peace Retreats continue a growing legacy of spiritual direction in the Peace Country

For more than 16 years, Peace Retreats has provided a space for encountering God.

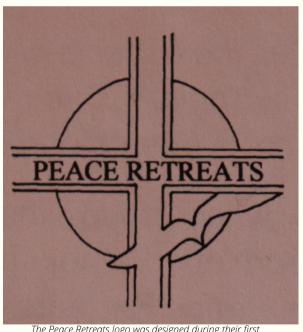
In all their years of offering retreats, spiritual direction and exercises, the essence of Peace Retreats has remained the same. Whether they are hosting from a church, a community centre or even their own homes, the members try to create an environment where the Holy Spirit can enter and touch the hearts of all present.

"I often say I am the facilitator, but the Holy Spirit is the director," said spiritual director Denise Laverdure-Sych. She has been a part of Peace Retreats for the past few years, and also offers French retreats through the group. "I'm just facilitating that encounter with God. The Holy Spirit is the one in charge."

It's a perspective all members agree on.



Peace Retreats members: (Top row, left to right) Denise Laverdure-Sych, Harold Imes, Cathy Morin, Louise Lee. (Bottom row, left to right) Larry Shepherd, Sheila Shepherd and Allan Forsberg



The Peace Retreats logo was designed during their first meetings in 2006.

"I just call myself God's servant," Larry Shepherd, treasurer of Peace Retreats, added. "Throughout each session I'm raising my eyes, calling for the Holy Spirit to speak through me. 'What is it you want me to say now?'"

Since its inception in early 2006, Peace Retreats have conducted retreats and spiritual exercises across the region - from Peace River, Fairview, High Prairie, High Level, Grande Prairie, Beaverlodge and even Dawson Creek. Their programs come about through a combination of spiritual directors developing their own retreats and offering them to parishes, and through church groups themselves requesting retreats.

Their programs vary, not only in location, but in style, theme and in the tools they use. Working within the skills and interests of both the director and the participants, the retreats often incorporate a diversity of elements. That can be audio and music, artwork, physical exercises, various forms of prayer and much more. All of these are incorporated into fulfilling one and the same mission – to provide a place for people to encounter God and to deepen their relationship with Him.

"We evoke presence - to create a place where God can come. That's what we try to do," said spiritual director and chair of Peace Retreats Allan Forsberg. "We ask, 'Where has God shown up in your life and what is He trying to do in your life through that?"

Peace Retreats traces its beginning to a retreat on women's spirituality given in Grande Prairie in April, 2005. It was a well received retreat, hosted by Sr. Louise Vanderploeg, SSND and spiritual director Arlene Logan, with 40 women in attendance. It confirmed the thought of Sr. Louise and Arlene that there was a clear desire for more retreats in the Peace Country, and work soon began to create a group that would help make that desire a reality.

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"When Sr. Louise started the lay formation program in Peace River, she knew people in the area were thirsting for the Lord and wanting to experience something more – a time to be together in a sacred space, in community and in silence. That's really what started this," said long-time Peace Retreats member Sheila Shepherd.

Over the following months the pair began developing a "retreat team" with other locals who had training in spiritual direction or were involved with the archdiocese's Cursillo Movement. Peace Retreats was officially formed in February of 2006. They were encouraged by Fr. Gerard Pettipas, who at the time was the pastor in Grande Prairie, to apply for a grant from the Redemptorist Growth Society, and that yearly grant has helped sustain Peace Retreats ever since.

From this foundation the group grew organically each year, with more people coming to retreats or feeling a calling to be spiritual directors themselves.



Peace Retreats hosts the St. Ignatian Spiritual Exercises every month at St. loseph's Church in Grande Prairie.

Through the years the members have helped others, and themselves, experience life-changing moments of faith, hope and forgiveness. Harold Imes once hosted a "Seventy Times Seven" retreat in Fairview, focusing on the theme of forgiveness. Only a handful of people were able to come to the retreat, but the impact it left on them was enormous.

"I had a member of my congregation who attended," Imes recalled, who is also a pastor with the United Church in Fairview. He is currently the only Protestant member of Peace Retreats. "She had a son who was paralyzed in an accident when he was 21 and she had never forgiven the driver. But that retreat just changed her life."

Louise Lee can fondly remember one powerful event she helped organize at a prison during Lent. Within the prison chapel she planned to gather the prisoners, read a Scripture passage and reflection, and then have the prisoners walk one by one up to a person dressed as Jesus and dip their fingers in holy water.

"We were looking for someone to play Jesus, and we had a guy at the local high school with long hair and a beard – he looked just like Jesus. But suddenly he was not available," Lee said. "Then I went down to the church to get the priest to stand in as Jesus and he wasn't there. So it was all falling apart. But in the church foyer there was this old man. He was just standing there and shaking because he had Parkinson's Disease."



Larry Shepherd

Lee pleaded with the man with a most peculiar request – to put on an altar server alb and come with her to the prison.

"I told him you just have to stand there and 'be Jesus'. Just be silent and if people look at you, you just look back at them. And he said 'Oh no, no, no..."

Lee recalled with a laugh. "He finally agreed and came. And he stood there – he's old, his hair is grey, he's standing there in his white robe shaking – and I said to the men and women in jail 'This is Jesus'.

"And you know, they saw Jesus. It was life changing. Some would come to him, look at him, and even the male prisoners would just start bawling. And soon everybody started crying. And that man - his faith really came alive from that experience."

Allan once gave a retreat with more than 50 members of the Catholic Women's League that stands out to him as a metamorphic moment in his ministry.

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"With 50 people, it was tough to reel them in with such a big group," he said. "But after the retreat, an elderly woman came to me and said, 'That's the first time I was ever able to tell someone what happened and had them listen to me.' And you realize from those moments this is exactly what we need. And since that time, that lady, whenever she saw me at church she hugged me."

For Larry Shepherd, the most important part of his years with Peace Retreats has been the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius, which have played a foundational role in his faith life. He is now in his fifth year of doing the exercises, hosting them with a group each month at St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie.

"I think the exercises really help you know Jesus more intimately, so that you can love him more intensely and follow him more closely," he said. "I love the exercises so much that I just want to help make them available for others. They've helped me to understand the Scriptures much better, to relate to them and better understand Christ's mission."



Opportunities to reflect on God's presence in our day-to-day life is a key part of much of Peace Retreat's work.

Peace Retreats has provided not only these opportunities for a deeper and more intimate faith life for people, it has also been a source of friendship and community. While much of their in-person retreats had to be suspended during the pandemic, the group continued hosting retreats online.

"For me, especially through the isolation of COVID, this group has been an anchor – a place where you belong," said member Cathy Morin. "It can be labour intensive sometimes, but it's all a labour of love. We value Christ and we want to share that with other people."

Today, there are eight members of Peace Retreats. Jennifer Wrzosek, who attended some of their earliest retreats in 2006 and later became a spiritual director herself, recently passed away. It has been a deeply felt loss for the group. Archbishop Pettipas attended Jennifer's final prayer workshop late last year.

The members plan to keep busy throughout 2022, with several retreats being planned for the coming months. Sheila Shepherd is currently offering a retreat called 'Pathways to Peace', based on both the Ignatian spiritual exercises and the 12 steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program. Lee is currently in discussion to give a retreat for widows in Beaverlodge, adapted from a similar retreat she gave in Peace River earlier this year.



Cathy Morin, right, shares at a recent Ignatian Spiritual Exercises event in Grande Prairie.

One particular hope and prayer the members share is to welcome new spiritual directors to the team. As many of them are now getting older, new members will ensure Peace Retreats remains an important spiritual resource for the region.

Whatever tomorrow holds, though their membership and retreats may change, so long as there are Christian faithful in the Peace Country seeking to come together and grow in their faith, the central mission of Peace Retreats will continue well into the future.

"What we do is all about fostering your relationship with God in everyday life," said Sheila. "You're journeying from what you're coming from to what you're going towards, and that is your relationship with God and coming to see God in all things."

To learn more about Peace Retreats, visit their Facebook page: facebook.com/peaceretereatsgp

AROUND DUR SCHOOLS

Crafts for St. Joseph





We love showcasing works
of faith and formation
around our Catholic
schools!

If you want to see your local
Catholic schools, staff and
students featured in *Northern*Light, contact **Kyle** at **780-532- 9766** or at
comdirector.agm@outlook.com

Students at **Ecole Providence School** in **McLennan** exhibited their woodwork, carpentry and art skills in honour of **St. Joseph** and his trade of carpentry. The crafts were part of the celebration of the **Solemnity of St. Joseph**, **March 19th**. In these photos, **Grade 3** students **Xandron Berntsen**, left, and **Kohen Beaver** show off their St. Joseph woodcrafts.



Grade 3 student **Jayden Dufresne** with his St. Joseph craft. A prayer to St. Joseph is displayed inside it.



Grade 1 student **Aubry Laboucan** shows off an art piece of St. Joseph, in his carpentry wear, he made.



Grade 4 student **Ilias Fowler** with his St. Joseph-themed piece.

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

Crafts for St. Joseph



Grade 2 student **Will** with his St. Joseph scapular.



Grade 3 student **Olivia** with her St Joseph wall hanging.

At **St. Stephen's Catholic School** in **Valleyview**, there were a variety of activities celebrated by students for the **Solemnity of St. Joseph**.

Kindergarten classes learned about

Kindergarten classes learned about St. Joseph through colouring and illustrations, the Grade 2 class learned about him through making scapulars, and the Grade 3 class learned about him through making "St. Joseph, pray for us" wall hangings. We hope these artistic endeavours brought a spark of Josephite devotion to these students!



Grade 2 student **Charlie** with his St. Joseph scapular.



Grade 3 student **Liam** with his St loseph wall hanging.



Grade 2 student **Sylver** with her St. Joseph scapular.

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

Amy McIntyre receives Excellence in Catholic Education Award



Teacher Amy McIntyre was awarded this year's Excellence in Catholic Education Award. Amy is a faith leader both in her school and community. She provides exemplary work in her role as Faith Coordinator at St. Andrew's School in High Prairie, is an active member of St. Paul's Parish, and is a member of the Archdiocesan Youth Committee.

The **Excellence** in **Catholic Education Award** is annually given to a certified Catholic teacher who has done an exemplary job in preparing our youth to grow into strong Catholic citizens. The award winner must be passionate about Catholic education and the students they teach, inspire their students, and demonstrate commitment to Catholic education and teaching excellence.

We asked Amy some questions in reaction to winning this prestigious award.

Q; How does it feel to be recognized for the Excellence in Catholic Education Award?

I am truly honored to be recognized for this award. It is certainly not anything I ever expected. I have been blessed to work with great educators all across the country and want to thank each and every one of them. My relationship with each of them has helped shape me as an educator.

Q: Tell us about your background in coming to be a teacher in Catholic education.

I was raised by a strong Catholic family. I would often attend mass on Saturday evening with my grandparents so that I could be an altar server and then attend again on Sunday mornings to be part of the children's choir. The church was the 'heart' of the community where I was raised. I was also part of an active youth group where many lifelong friendships were formed. When I was presented with an opportunity to teach in a Catholic School setting I jumped at the chance to work in an environment that focuses on the whole individual and in supporting their faith formation.

Q: What is it you love most about teaching?

There are so many great things about teaching, but I'd have to say that the thing I love most is the connections that I am able to make with students and their caregivers. My current teaching role is the interventions teacher for grades 1 through 3 at St. Andrew's School, where I work with a small group of students at a time on a specific learning goal. We get to know each other quite well and the students are so proud to tell me about what they did on the weekend or something exciting happening in their lives. I love when the students rush up to see me outside of the school and tell me about their day.

Q; How does your Catholic faith influence your teaching?

I enjoy sharing my personal experiences with the students. During preparation classes for Sacraments, I am able to show the students pictures of my First Communion or speak about why I choose my sponsor for my Confirmation. These talks help the students connect with their personal journeys.

I am often reminded of a professional development I once attended where the presenter asked a simple question: "What if that child in front of you was Jesus? How would you treat them?" This has not only shaped my perspective on how I treat my students but how I treat people in general.

Q; What do you think are the greatest challenges facing teachers in Catholic education today?

I think all teachers, not just Catholics, are seeing a number of increasing challenges today. The education system has changed over my time in the profession. Classrooms are becoming increasingly complex in student needs. However, I think first and foremost we are seeing an increase in needs for mental wellness and health support which concerns me most.



Raising up the community

NET team find a welcoming reception to the faith

The Catholic faith has been a solid source of strength for 19-year-old Christina Dunn. She says it's what kept her strong at times when she saw her peers struggling.

So after graduating high school, Dunn wanted to find a way to share that faith with others. NET Canada provided the opportunity to do so.

"I was one of the only really practicing Catholics at my Catholic high school," Dunn recalled. "And I was struggling with a lot of different things similar to my friends. But I think the reason I was able to do well and get through it was because of my faith.



Christina Dunn begins a retreat at the Tranquille Hall at St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie. Students from Mother Teresa Catholic School came to take part.



Christina Dunn

"So I wanted to share that faith with them, so that God could also help them and give them hope. But I didn't quite know how to share it.

"I found NET was just a great way to share my faith and to share this love of the Lord that has changed my life. So right out of Grade 12 I applied."

Dunn is part of the seven-member team of NET Canada who recently spent two weeks in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, March 14-25th, hosting retreats with students from Catholic schools in Grande Prairie, Sexsmith and Fairview.

NET (National Evangelization Team) is made up of young Catholic adults from around the world, who help engage young people in their Catholic faith through dynamic retreats and youth discipleship.

This team is part of a school ministry based in Vancouver, BC, working in two private Catholic schools until the end of the 2022 school year. With classes on pause for two weeks over spring break, they arranged a trip to our region to expand their missionary efforts. NET Canada has brought teams and hosted retreats in the archdiocese in many previous years as well.

Students in Catholic schools across Grande Prairie, including St. John Paul II, St. Joseph's, St. Clements, St. Kateri and Mother Teresa Catholic School, took part, as well as students at St. Thomas More Catholic School in Fairview and St. Mary's Catholic School in Sexsmith. The retreats were mainly directed for students from Grade 7-10.



The NET Team came to Grande Prairie from their current school ministry in Vancouver, BC.



Holding two retreats each day, the NET members warm up the students with music, ice-breakers and games. Then they dive into their main spiritual message - on identity and discovering a relationship with God - that they hope will resonate with the students.

Overall, the team has found the students very receptive.

"Especially in the Grade 8s, they've been really willing to participate and engage in these kinds of conversations," said Chris Pettapiece. Dunn and Pettapiece were the team leads for the NET group, which also included Theresa James, Gabby Douglas, Jessica Taylor, Gabriel Fortune and Monica Hartman.



Chris Pettapiece

"Part of that theme of 'The Underlying Truth' is that God loves you the way He made you, and not in the way that society tries to shape you. So in God you can find the real truth behind who you are. We hope in that message there's a spark for that journey towards faith and towards wanting a relationship with God."

Both team leads are from Ontario – Chris Pettapiece is from Ottawa and Christina Dunn is from Hamilton. Being from the city where NET is headquartered, Chris heard about NET a lot growing up and knew many people who had taken part in its missionary work. Despite this, the decision to join NET had never played big on his mind, but that changed unexpectedly two years ago. In fact, he is putting a pause on his mathematics degree to spend a year with NET.



NET Team members introduce themselves at the start of a retreat.

"The theme of our retreats is 'The Underlying Truth', which is to find your identity in God as opposed to what others say you are. To know that you're first a son or a daughter of God," Pettapiece continued. "They've been receiving it well. We have prayer time, when they have a chance to pray and we pray over them. And there's been some real, we call them 'mission moments', where the students have some kind of encounter with God through that. They thank us for praying over them, saying it brought them peace, joy, or whatever."

This gets to the heart of what the NET members hope the students gain from these retreats – an encounter with the Lord.

"We try and create a space where God can move," said Dunn. "We have group discussions about the faith that encourages them to think about the faith and their relationship with God in a way they might not often get to hear about. But we're not the ones causing the conversion, we just want to create that space where they can encounter the Lord.



The NET team saw hundreds of students over their two weeks in our archdiocese last March.



"It was very sudden for me," he said. "There is a youth Cursillo movement in Ottawa called Challenge that I had just gotten involved with. And with COVID they had moved their retreat online and only two people signed up. But we decided to go through with it, and the two of us that did sign up had big conversions. And I just thought, 'Wow, God can really work through anything.' And then NET came to mind, and I suddenly felt like I've got to do this."

For Christina, joining NET has been a long fermenting mission. She first began to feel a calling to join through a friendship with her brother-in-law.



The NET retreats begin with trivia and music games to warm up the students



Chris Pettapiece speaks with students during their group sessions.

"He had been a part of NET for six years," Dunn recalled. "He was someone who showed me what a brother is, and he was a really good friend at that time. And I just came to think NET is so cool. It creates these really great people and I've met so many amazing people through it."

Outside of the hustle of Vancouver city life for two weeks, the team have found one of the most unique parts of their experience in our archdiocese is how welcoming and community-oriented people are. The priests always make themselves available to them, and Pettapiece says nearly every parishioner the team meet ends up inviting them over for dinner.

"We feel so supported and really feel like a part of the community, even though we've only been here for two weeks," said Dunn. "People here seem very community-oriented. There's a real wanting for a generation of good Catholics, for missionaries and for raising up a community. It's been very beautiful."



NET Team members from left to right: Chris Pettapiece, Theresa James, Christina Dunn, Gabby Douglas, Jessica Taylor, Gabriel Fortune, Monica Hartman

Have you ever wanted a truly unique job, where you can grow in faith and community, where you can travel across the Peace Country, creating friendships and sharing your faith with others?

The Archdiocese is seeking a full-time Youth Minister to direct and coordinate a strong, faith-filled ministry aimed at helping young people grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.



The successful candidate will lead a core team in planning and coordinating programs, build communities of faith among youth and young adults, collaborate with clergy, chancery officers, and archdiocesan councils and committees, have some familiarity with Indigenous culture and history in Canada and be willing and able to travel to all communities in the Archdiocese. We are looking for that unique person who has the spirit and heart to organize and run an engaging youth ministry.

The Youth Minister's office is based in the Chancery office in Grande Prairie. Learn more at archgm.ca/job-opportunities. Resumes and applications can be sent to exec.agm@live.ca.

VOCATIONS

Called to serve

Our Archdiocese...

Archbishop:

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, CSsR

Vicar General:

Msgr. Charles Lavoie, PH

Priests:

30 priests in 23 parishes, churches and missions

Religious sisters:

Sr. Mary Jeanne Davidson, SSND Sr. Connie Harkin, SSND

Permanent Deacons:

Dcn. Gerald Logan Dcn. Reg Bouchard

Seminarians:

Paul Edo-Aramunde Thomas Wollis Ryan Beaupre



Our vocations committee consists of the Archbishop. Vicar General, Vocations Director, priests, sisters and lay people of the Archdiocese.

JESUS CALLS YOU

Do you want to follow?



"When I can offer a listening ear and an open mind to others - in those moments I love being a priest. One of my favourite Gospel passages is the encounter of Jesus with the woman at the well. Drawing from His example, I want to listen more and validate others on their journey of life. To hear and hold - to affirm others whatever their story is truly hard work and a great imperative of the Gospels.

Fr Richard Rohr says not everything can be fixed, however everything needs to be named. To sit and help create a trusted safe space for others to stand in the truth of their own lives is to do what Jesus Himself would do! Somewhere along the way I heard a quote that sums it all up succinctly: 'Speak in such a way that others love to listen and listen in such a way that others love to speak.'

Jesus help me to be a better listener."

-Fr. Leo English, CSsR, Grande Prairie Catholic Priest, Redemptorist

How you can help

- By praying
- · Getting involved
- Joining our vocations committee
- Encouraging vocations in your church community and among your family
- Organizing and joining parish youth groups
- Support Catholic Missions in Canada: www.cmic.info



For more information:

Contact **Fr. Michael Uso-Ereyi** Archdiocesan Vocation Director **780-532-9766**

e-mail: archgmvocations@gmail.com

'Let Him Easter in Us'

A reflection on the Gospel by Fr. Michael Dias

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

John 20:1-9

The hymn of praise, "The Exultet" (The Easter Proclamation), beautifully details what it is we celebrate on the night of the Resurrection, in those dark hours before Mary Magdalene arose at dawn to discover the empty tomb. It is the night, the Exultet states, when the Lord saved our fathers; the night that destroyed the darkness of sin; the night when Jesus Christ broke the chain of death and rose triumphantly from the grave; the night when the sin of Adam became a necessary sin to gain a redeemer for us, that fault which became a happy fault; that night that became our light and joy; the night that acquired the power to dispel all evil; the night when heaven was wedded to earth and man was reconciled to God.



Fr. Michael Dias

Such is the Night we celebrate, the night that rings us into Easter and gives us the joy and peace to last for eternity. Our Saviour rose from the dead, and now sin, Satan and death have no lasting power over us. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus, all of us are capable of experiencing true joy, true peace and true light. This night tells us that once again we can be free. Through this new freedom, we may experience a genuine and authentic interior transformation of our lives - one that changes all our thoughts, actions, decisions and our very being.

All of this is summarized in those triumphant words - 'Christ is Risen, Alleluia'. These words are to be the motivating light and energy of our life. For, as St. Paul said, we who have been baptized into Christ were baptized into his death. We were buried with him in baptism, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

This newness of life is revealed to us in the experience of the Apostles, recounted for us in Acts. Let us then consider two aspects of this newness, as seen in the transformation of these first disciples.



Firstly, the Apostles experienced a new kind of inner freedom. Often in the Gospels we see the Apostles' all too human struggles – their pride, fear, naivety, their inability to fully understand the mission for which Christ has come. Acts shows us a transformation in these men. Their words and actions reflect souls for whom attachments to this material world have been fully destroyed. Now the doors to their hearts and minds were open to a new kind of power. Their lives reflect a confident selflessness. They became totally unselfish in love and unconditional in forgiveness. They were ready to embrace enemies rather than hate or condemn them. They were ready to undergo suffering rather than flee it. Their life became an open book to all. They travelled wherever their sense of mission led them, reaching as many persons, tribes and nations as possible. Such was the new sense of freedom they experienced.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

From where does this new freedom come? The Resurrection threw a totally different light on the passion and death of Jesus. It created a very different understanding of what at first seemed to Jesus's followers a tragedy, disaster and failure. But the Resurrection strengthened their faith to entirely new heights. The Apostles now understood the words and deeds of Jesus anew. They obtained greater insight into the person and mission of Jesus, and became living witnesses to it. They began to form new Christian communities wherever they preached the Word of God. No more were they influenced by the values of this earthly world, they lived by the values uniquely brought into the world by the Gospel. Now no power on earth could prevent them in fulfilling their mission.

At the Passion the Apostles often showed great fear of dying or being persecuted for the Lord, now they were ready to give their lives for the preaching of the Word. Where once he denied the Lord three times, in Acts we see Peter, now a completely transformed man, bodily, courageously and convincingly giving witness to the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord. Surely the Apostles own transformation acted as further proof of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Of course the transformative power of Jesus's Resurrection is not to be limited only to the Apostles. Numerous persons throughout these 21 centuries have experienced it and thereby allowed themselves to be transformed with the newness of life that has prompted them to be exemplary witnesses of Jesus in this world. The Resurrection of Jesus is not an event in history that happened once-upon-a-time, it is an event to be experienced by everyone at all times. So what we must ask ourselves in this Easter season is whether we too have shared in this personal transformative experience of the Resurrection.



Painting of Jesus and Mary Magdalene

And if we feel we have not, why is this so? What prevents us from arriving at that experience all Christians are called to? What often holds us back is our own lack of will and openness to experience it, the inner obstacles that prevent us from going out of ourselves. Something of Mary Magdalene and the women who went to the tomb is in us. The men in dazzling apparel said to them "Why do you seek him among the dead?". We cannot have the experience of Jesus if we seek the living among the dead. For Jesus is not dead and gone. By dying he destroyed death and by rising he restored life. We need to look for the living Jesus.

Mary Magdalene was troubled not to find the body of Jesus in the tomb. She would have been satisfied at least if she saw him in the tomb. Like we so often do, Mary Magdalene was sticking to her past, to her past understanding and image of Jesus. In this she was missing that which is far more important, that is, the present state of Jesus, the living Jesus. We too may be like her. We too want to stick to our past, the memories of past sufferings, past grudges, our past sinfulness, past losses and missed opportunities, past acts of omission and commission. We brood over them and lose sight of today. But the moment we let them go we hear what Magdalene heard: 'Mary', said by the one she presumed to be the gardener. Mary then recognizes Jesus. She no more sticks to her past images and understanding. She listens to Jesus. She rushes to the disciples and communicates to them that Jesus is alive, that she has experienced him. She becomes the first communicator of the message of Resurrection. Now she experiences joy, peace, serenity, calmness and bliss.

Are we then, prepared to do likewise? Are we let ready to let go of our past? Are we ready to recognize Jesus, not as an image of the past, but as a living person who we can embrace as Magdalene did. Only then we will be able to hear our own name being called by Jesus. Only then do we truly realize he is speaking directly to us. Change, growth and transformation are possible only then.

An Ancient Christian symbol for Christ is the anchor. The anchor steadies the vessel; the anchor safely holds the vessel in place. Christ holds us steady when life gets rough. Christ holds us connected to God when the waves of life come crashing over us. Christ our Hope is Risen. As the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, "Let Him Easter in us."

Happy Easter.

LITURGICAL NOTES

LITURGICAL NOTES FOR MAY



Written by Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R



May 2: St. Athanasius (296-373): Athanasius was born of a fervent Catholic family in Alexandria, Egypt, who provided for his good education. The story is told that as a boy, he and friends were playing in the sea, Athanasius pretending to be a bishop baptizing his friends.

The bishop of Alexander observed this and calling them over, remarked that Athanasius had used the correct formula, so these were valid baptisms, but asked him to cease doing this because his friends had not been suitably catechised. Ordained a deacon, then priest, Athanasius himself became a bishop in 328. His ministry was marked by fierce battles with Roman emperors and Arian bishops.

Seventeen of his 45 years as bishop were spent in five successive exiles. Athanasius was a staunch defender of the Trinitarian doctrine which declared that Jesus is "consubstantial with the Father"; in this he did battle with the many bishops who professed the Arian heresy.

In his Easter letter of 367, Athanasius listed the 27 books that eventually became the canon of writings in the New Testament. In 366, Athanasius returned from his last exile, and spent his last years in writing many volumes on orthodox Christian teachings, which earned him the title Doctor of the Church. Athanasius was also noted for his biography of the hermit St. Anthony of the Desert.

May 6: St. François de Laval (1623-1708) was born in France to a noble but not wealthy family. In college, Francois learned about the Jesuit missions among the Hurons in Canada, and settled in his heart that he wanted to become a missionary. He was ordained a priest in 1647, at 24 years of age. His first years were spent ministering in his home diocese in France, but in 1658, on the recommendation of the Jesuits, the Holy See appointed him Vicar Apostolic of New France. Prior to this, the Church in New France was overseen by the archbishop of Rouen. Laval was ordained a bishop in Paris before heading across the ocean to Canada. He arrived a year later in Quebec City and took possession of his vast see: all of New France. He quickly locked horns with the local civil authorities in Quebec over the sale of alcohol to the Native peoples. Along with the continuous work of establishing parishes and charitable institutions throughout Quebec, he is recognized for founding the Séminaire de Québec, the first such institution in North America. His body is entombed in a side chapel at the Notre-Dame de Québec Cathedral in Quebec City. He was canonized by Pope Francis in 2014.



May 14: St. Matthias (died about AD 80) Acts 1:15-26 tells us of the selection of Matthias as an apostle, one of the twelve, to replace Judas Iscariot. It was important that he was with

Jesus from the beginning of his ministry. There is no further mention of Matthias by name in the rest of the New Testament. However, some traditions identify him as the founder of the churches in Cappadocia and Issus (on port on the Caspian Sea). He is also spoke n of as ministering in Judaea, Ethiopia, and Adjara (in Georgia).



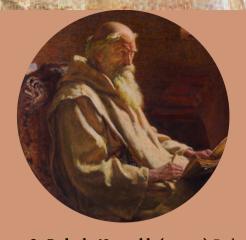
May 21: St. Eugene de Mazenod (1782-1861): Eugene was born into a rich and influential French family, which fled the French Revolution in 1790 (when he was 8) and lived as poor, itinerant refugees in Italy. His mother returned to France soon after and tried to regain some wealth; Eugene joined her there when he turned 20. He entered seminary in 1808, and was ordained a priest in 1811. He stayed on at that seminary as a formator after ordination, but later asked his bishop not to be appointed as a pastor, but to be free to reach out to the poor, prisoners and youth – anyone who was ignorant of the faith. In January 1816, he felt deeply inspired to invite other priests to join him in a new missionary venture, that eventually became the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The new community received papal approval on 17

Mary Immaculate. The new community received papal approval on 17
February 1826.
In October 1832, Eugene was ordained a bishop. In 1841, Bishop Bourget of

Montreal asked for the Oblates to come to Canada for missionary work in the

ever-growing new world Church. After that, they were requested in many other corners of the world: Asia, South Africa, and South America. Through his Oblate priests and brothers, he became the missionary he had dreamed of becoming. Eugene de Mazenod died in 1861. He was canonized in 1995.

ILITURGICAL NOTES



May 25: St. Bede the Venerable (673-735): Bede was born on lands that belonged to the monastery of Monkwearmouth where he was sent as a puer oblatus at the age of 7, to live and learn in the monastic tradition. He indeed became a monk, joining Abbot Ceolfrith at the Jarrow monastery; the two of them survived a plague that killed most of the population of that region. Bede went on to become a prolific author, teacher and scholar. He authored more than 60 books covering a wide range of interests: theology, history, Scripture, poetry -- even and notably the discipline of computus – the science of calculating calendar dates, the most intriguing being the date for celebrating Easter! His most notable work was The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, which earned him the title "The Father of English History". Bede died on the floor of his monastic cell on the feast of Ascension AD 735.



May 29: Ascension: The Ascension of Jesus is told in Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, and Acts 1:6-11. After spending forty days among the disciples, teaching them many things, he ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven. Along with that action was the promise to send an "advocate", the Holy Spirit, which took place on Pentecost, the Jewish feast of the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. In some countries around the world, the Solemnity of the Ascension is still celebrated on a Thursday, marking forty days since Easter; in many others, this feast has been transferred to the Sunday.



May 26: St. Philip Neri (1515-1595): Philip was born of a noble family, and educated by the Dominicans in his natal city of Florence. There were hopes that he would inherit and manage the family fortune, but Philip had a religious conversion and decided in 1535 to move to Rome. For 17 years, he lived as a layman in Rome studying and reaching out to the poor, the sick and prostitutes, leading them to a conversion of spiritual life. In 1548, along with his confessor, he founded the Confraternity of the Most holy Trinity of Pilgrims and Convalescents, which assisted pilgrims who had come to Rome, and those who had been released from hospitals but still needed care. In the year 1551, Philip was ordained a priest. His first desire was to be a missionary in India, but his friends convinced him that there was ample need for him in Rome. He settled in to the Hospital of San Giorlamo della Carità, where in 1553 he began a life and ministry that gathered diocesan priests for gatherings of prayer and song, study and refection of Scripture and spiritual writings of sacred authors. From there, they conducted pilgrimages and excursions to churches in Rome. Philip was asked to expand this ministry to other centers not only in Rome but elsewhere. This movement of establishing Oratories officially began in 1575. Philip was elected for life as superior general, but he wished any Oratories established outside of Rome to be independent. Philip died in 1595; he was canonised in 1622.



May 31: Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: This feast honours the visit that Mary made to her kinswoman Elizabeth, after she heard the news from the Archangel Gabriel that she would become the mother of the Messiah. This incident is told only in Luke's gospel chapter 1, verses 39-56. The last part of this passage quotes Mary's "Magnificat", or hymn of praise to God for having chosen her for such a role in salvation, despite her lowliness. In the City of David there is a church which stands on the site thought to be Elizabeth's home, with a life-sized mural of this meeting.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

3rd April Msgr Charles Lavoie PH

14th April Fr. Emmanuel Ekanem

14th April Fr. Hansel Nwachukwuoji SMMM

16th April Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI celebrates his 95th birthday.

Congratulations!

16th April Jocelyn Carrier, husband to Paulette, celebrates his birthday.

26th April Paul Edo-Aramunde, seminarian

Anniversaries & Annual Collections

On April 10th, Father Louis Saldanha celebrates the 42nd anniversary of his ordination. Congratulations!

Sunday April 3rd, collection for Development and Peace (annual collection) Friday April 15th, collection for the Needs of the Church in the Holy Land (annual collection)



St. Kateri Tekakwitha





Fr. Louis Saldanha

Canadian saints

April 17th St. Kateri Tekakwitha

April 18th Blessed Marie-Anne Blondin, Foundress of the Sisters

of Saint-Anne

April 30th St. Marie de l'Incarnation, Foundress of the Urselines Sisters of Québec



Birthdays and anniversaries content prepared by Msgr. Charles Lavoie, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

Website: www.archgm.ca Facebook: @ArchGrouardMcLennan Chancery Office: 1-780-532-9766 Contact editor: comdirector.agm@outlook.com

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**.

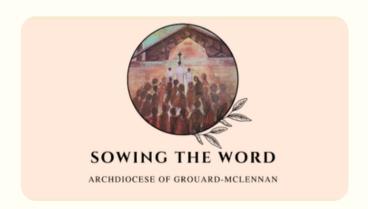
We also encourage submitted writings, letters to the editor and photos! All submissions for the next issue, whether of photos or written pieces, must be given by the **5th of each month**. Your input will be a great help in growing this magazine!



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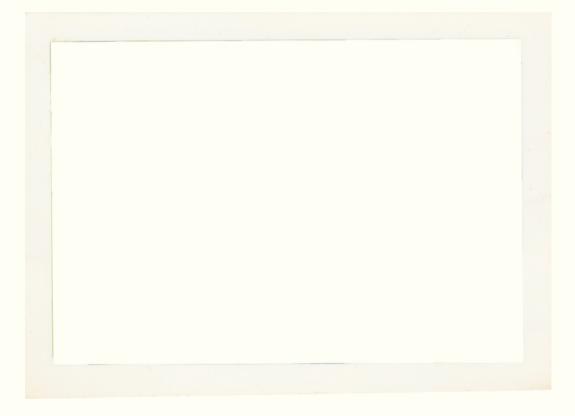


St. Martin of Tours, patron of our archdiocese,

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.

St. Martin of Tours, pray for us.



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