



4 October 2023

Dear Parishioners, Clergy and Religious,

While some parts of Canada are still predicting warm days and nights, we have started to get frost warnings in northwestern Alberta. It's a sign that colder days are ahead. At a time like this, I think of a different type of heat and cold: François Mauriac is quoted as saying that "the day you no longer burn with love, many others will die of the cold." Indeed.

Health Update

So many of you have offered prayers and support during the past several weeks of my radiation therapy for prostate cancer. I am deeply touched. If you've had the occasion to see me over these weeks, you will notice that I ~~seem~~ strong and in good spirits, if not good health. This all is largely true. I am without pain, except some discomfort I feel recently as a side-effect of the radiation. My last slated radiation therapy is on Friday October 6th. I will learn the results of this therapy-a few months.

New Secretary

I am pleased to share with you that we have hired a new secretary for me. I should say "for us", because many of us in the chancery office are already feeling the benefits of Julie Slade's skills. Julie is a parishioner of Immaculate Conception Parish in Sexsmith – close enough that it's only about a 20-commute to the office. Julie and her husband are proud parents of six boys. A warm welcome to our team, Julie!

Recently-Arrived Priests

As I've shared with you previously, we're facing a large turnover in priest personnel in our archdiocese. Some of the replacements have arrived, and these priests are offering a great help, even though some are awaiting preparations to be able to minister independently in our archdiocese.

Father Stanislaus Okonkwo arrived in July, early enough to assist me at the Little Red River Pilgrimage in early August. You may recall that the community of Fox Lake, in the Little Red River Nation, was greatly affected by wildfires this spring and summer. Their absence from their community had a great effect on the pilgrimage. I went north with Father Stan, Kyle Greenham and our driver, Ken Landry. What can I say? ... it was an adventure. Father Stan is presently assigned to St. Martin's in

Wabasca-Demarais, as well as St-Léon le Grand in Calling Lake. He is also guiding our seminarian Thomas Wollis in his internship year.

Father Victor Ezenwanne, SMMM, is presently living in High Level and providing sacramental service to the communities of Grouard, Atikameg, Gift Lake and Peavine. Father Lawrence Odoemena is the administrator of these church communities, while Father Victor goes each Sunday and as needed to provide sacraments.

Father Justin Prabhu is a member of a priestly society in India, the Society of the Holy Spirit. He is being prepared for eventual ministry in the archdiocese, while living with me in Grande Prairie.

Father Andrew Ononiwu, from the Diocese of Okigwe, Nigeria, is also living with me while getting ready to accept an assignment in the archdiocese.

I patiently await other priests who are getting their visa – not always an easy process.

Seminarians

We have no students this year at St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton. However, let us not forget those who are still in formation and preparing to be called to Orders: Thomas Wollis, as mentioned above, is engaged in his internship year in Wabasca-Desmarais. After this, he will return to the seminary for two more years.

Paul Edo-Aranmude is also engaged in an internship experience at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in High Level.

Along with this, two Filipino laymen who have been working with us doing the past couple of years are discerning a call to priesthood with our archdiocese:

RJ (Rudy-Jerome) Mallanao is working with Father Emmanuel Ekanem at the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

Brylle Buenaventura is engaged at St. Paul's Parish in High Prairie.

Please keep all these young men in your prayers.

Archbishop's Dinner

After the COVID-hiatus (we could call it that), we are ready to reinstate our annual Archbishop's Dinner as an in-person, eat-real-food, mingle-with-others event. This will be hosted by the McLennan Deanery 1 - at Ecole Providence School in McLennan itself. Given the location, my talk that evening is entitled, "What Makes a Church a Cathedral?" While the dinner takes place in Deanery One, the faithful from across the archdiocese are most welcome to purchase a ticket and join in the event.

Details about the dinner are available on the archdiocesan website, at

<https://www.archgm.ca/event/archbishops-dinner-deanery-1-ecole-providence-school-mclennan/>

Church Fully Alive! and Fiscal Health

Many of you may recall the initiative begun over a year ago, when Kevin Walker and I met with priests and parish representatives in all five deaneries, in a reflection on what a "Church Fully Alive" might look like. In the process, we also heard of many struggles that parishes were facing because of depleting resources at the same time as increasing prices. I and a group of the faithful have been working on an

archdiocesan video that we hope will make a difference in your parishes. This video and its message should be in our parishes in the coming weeks. Keep open your eye, your ears and your heart.

The month of October is one of the two months in the year when our devotion is focused on our Blessed Mother. There are many needs in our Church (the Synod, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Walking Together, the New Evangelization) and in our society (the environment, the plight of refugees, and armed conflict, especially in Ukraine) that are worthy intentions for intercession as we pray the holy rosary.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

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