

# Special Supplement

## The Diocesan Messenger

A Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria September 2014



## Diocese Welcomes Bishop Gary Michael Gordon as the Seventeenth Bishop of Victoria

The Most Reverend Gary Michael Gordon was born on June 10, 1957, in Vancouver, British Columbia. He attended Christ the King Seminary in Mission, British Columbia; Resurrection College in Waterloo, Ontario; and St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario, where he graduated in 1982.

Bishop Gary was ordained to the priesthood on May 22, 1982, by Archbishop James Carney at his home parish, St. Francis de Sales, Burnaby. During his almost 24 years working as the Pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Chilliwack and St. Joseph's Parish in Mission, British Columbia, he was very involved with First Nations Peoples. On May 6, 2006, shortly after being named Bishop of Whitehorse, Bishop Gary was invited to the Richard Malloway Longhouse in Chilliwack for a naming ceremony and received the name 'Xyolhmetoxw', which means 'taking care of the people' in Halq'eméylem, the language of the Stó:lō Nation.

“The mission is so much greater than we can even imagine.”

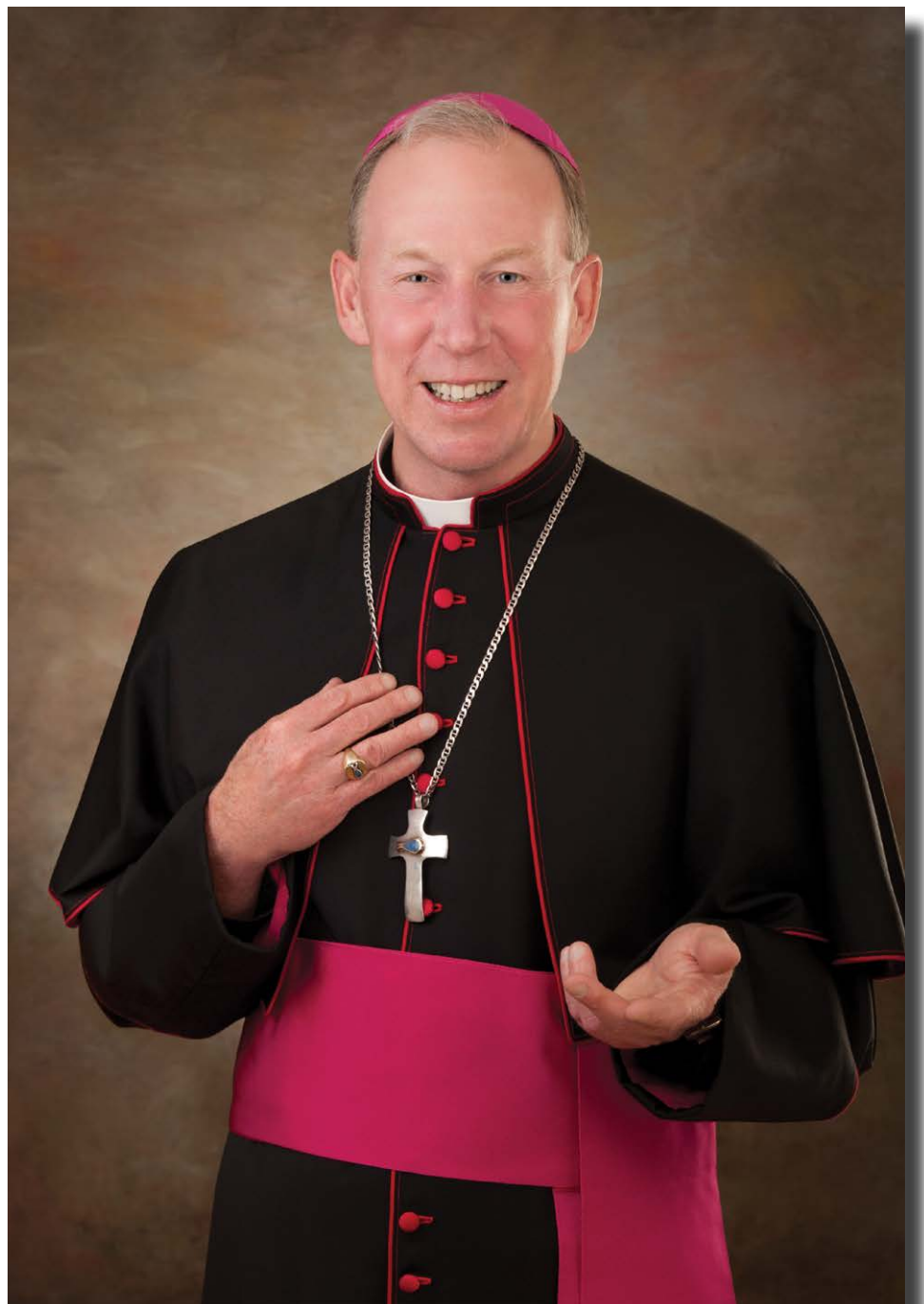
~ Bishop Gary Gordon

He continued working in this ministry when, on January 5, 2006, he was appointed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI as Bishop of the Diocese of Whitehorse; an event described by Bishop Gary as “hearing a call from God to go to the great white north,” which he happily followed. He was ordained and installed as the 5<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Whitehorse on March 22, 2006.

Bishop Gary also served as the Pacific Regional Representative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) with the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy of the Correctional Service of Canada (1994-2006), and was the CCCC Principal Liaison and spokesperson on the Interfaith Committee (2002-2006).

Since 2007, Bishop Gordon has served as the CCCC Bishop ponens for Catholics involved in prison chaplaincy and pastoral services. In addition, he has served as Chairman of the CCCC Standing Committee for Relations with Movements and Associations since 2011, after previously serving on the former Episcopal Commission for Relations with Associations of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity (2007-2008). He has been a member of the Anglican/Roman Catholic Bishops' Dialogue since 2007, and has served as its Co-Chairman since 2009. Bishop Gordon is the Liaison Bishop to Serra International in Canada (Serra International promotes and supports vocations to the priesthood and religious life), a post he has held since 2011.

On June 14, 2014, Pope Francis appointed Most Reverend Gary Gordon as the 17<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Victoria. Bishop Gordon succeeds the Most Reverend Richard Gagnon who was appointed Archbishop of Winnipeg on October 28, 2013. ✠



AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!

May Our Lord Jesus Christ bless Bishop Gary Gordon as he is installed Bishop of Victoria for Roman Catholics!

Bishop Ken and the Clergy & Lay-Faithful  
of the Eparchy of New Westminster  
For Ukrainian Catholics  
in British Columbia & Yukon

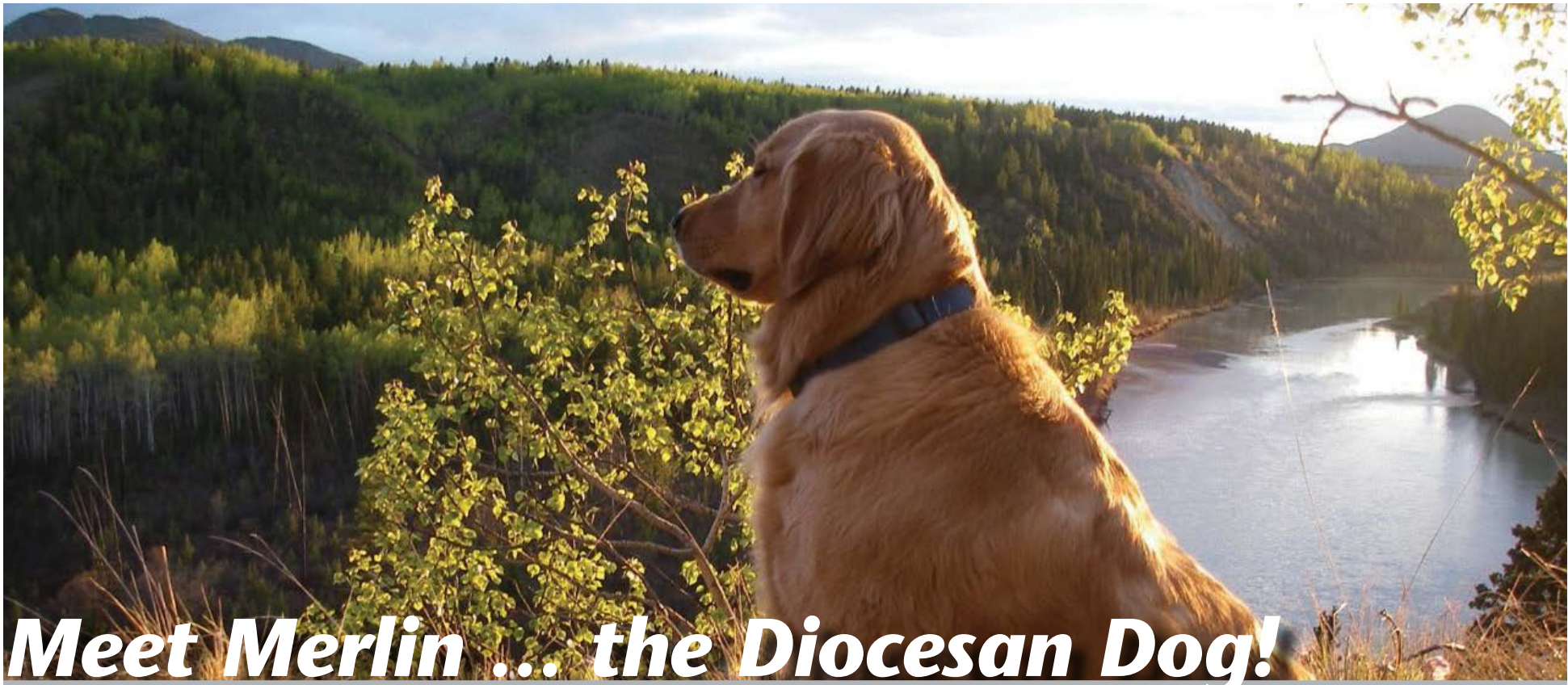


Mount St. Mary  
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

BISHOP GORDON,  
THE COMMUNITY OF  
MOUNT ST. MARY  
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION  
WELCOMES  
YOU  
TO THE FOUNDATION'S  
FAMILY,  
OUR CARING HEARTS,  
AND TO THE DIOCESE.  
OF VICTORIA.

HABEMUS EPISCOPUM NOVUM!!  
We have a Bishop - Bishop Gary Gordon





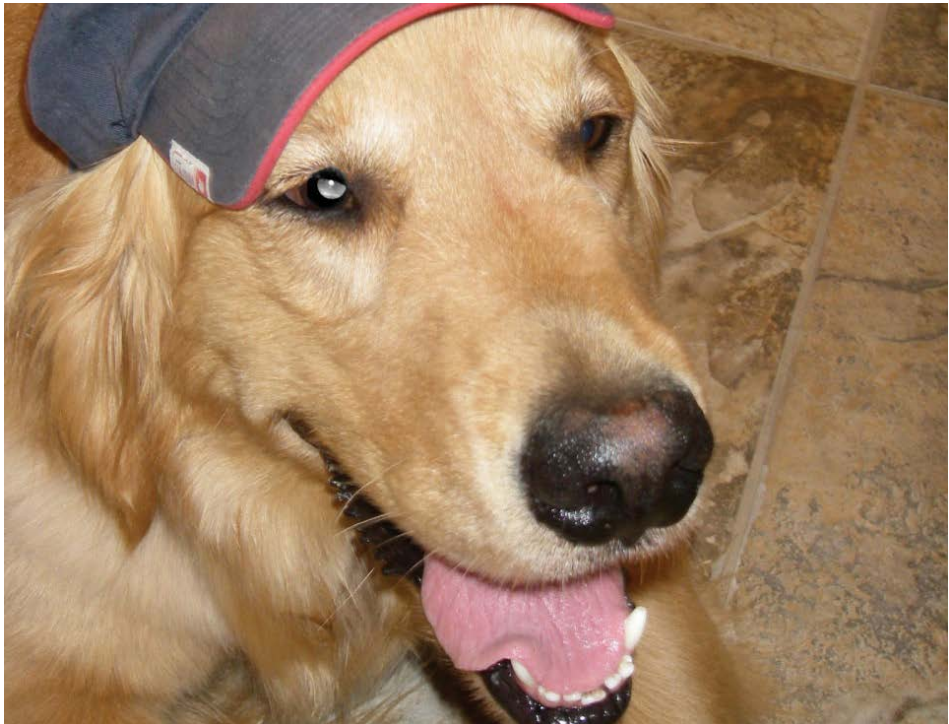
# Meet Merlin ... the Diocesan Dog!

by Connie Dunwoody

When we learned Bishop Gordon was appointed to the Diocese of Victoria, we had as many different reactions as there are staff at the Pastoral Centre—all of them positive! But when then-Bishop-Elect Gary came for his first visit to meet with members of the Pastoral Centre Staff, we all had the same burning question: *Are you bringing the dog?*

We didn't know his name, but his reputation preceded him. Credited with saving the life of the Bishop from bears no less than three times—two grizzlies and one black bear—including on the Tuesday before Bishop Gary left Whitehorse. Not normally known for ferocity, yet more than willing to charge beasts much larger than him to protect the Bishop, this brave boy has been the toast of the Whitehorse community. Bishop Gary recounted a tale of Merlin going “walkabouts” one night when a trip to the airport to pick up visiting CSA students was required. It was late at night, and the Bishop searched the neighbourhood, looking for the errant canine. “Merlin!” he hollered repeatedly, to no avail, in a crescendo of concern and frustration. “*Merlin!*” From the alleyway across from the church came a similarly hollered response, “Bishop! You gotta go to bed!!” The dog was found that evening in the local bar (possibly a throw-back to his time as a movie star), and returned safely to his home.

We welcome Merlin with his exuberant and lovely personality to the Diocese of Victoria. We can't promise repeated encounters with black bears, but we're certain he will find a warm and loving home here. ✂





# A Missionary Priest and Bishop

by Claire Caudle, Parishioner, Diocese of Whitehorse

Bishop Gary Gordon of the Diocese of Victoria came full circle with his work in the Diocese of Whitehorse. “The program of the church in Canada is the North because this is where you learn how to be a missionary,” he told well-wishers at his farewell gathering on July 18. Indeed, the North is the land of missions, be they the small communities that dot the enormous landscape or the more abstract missions of turning frozen hearts toward Christ. Bishop Gary has been equally passionate about both, despite the unexpected calling that brought him here.

When he woke up Christmas morning, 2005, and received the news that Pope Benedict XVI had appointed him Bishop of the Diocese of Whitehorse, he was nothing less than shocked. He had trouble imagining that anyone in Rome knew who he was. Moreover, his knowledge of Whitehorse was limited to its location on a map. He knew no one here and had no idea what would await him. But in the true missionary spirit he accepted the will of God with a happy heart.

“I didn’t ever want to become a priest, I just wanted to be a missionary.”

What Bishop Gary would soon discover is that the Diocese of Whitehorse comprises the top northern quarter of British Columbia as well as the entire Yukon Territory. In a diocese geographically larger than France, the population is approximately 40,000 and the Catholic population sits at around 7,500 spread across 23 parishes and missions.

He also discovered that he would be the first bishop-elect of the Diocese of Whitehorse in over six years after the accidental death in 2000 of Most Reverend Thomas Lobsinger OMI. Perhaps more challenging than filling large shoes is filling no shoes. But Bishop Gary is always game for an adventure and, in retrospect, that is exactly what he had during his eight years in the North.

When asked about the greatest success of his time in Whitehorse, he immediately mentions the Holy Family Apostolate: a program he founded to support Catholic families as they try to live the Gospel and discern God’s missionary call for their lives.

“The family is absolutely the crucial centre of any society. There is no better place children and their mothers and fathers can learn goodness, love, and respect but in the family.” Bishop Gary asserts this belief with authority; he has spent much of his priesthood in prison ministry and has seen firsthand the effects of the degradation of “the authentic family in God’s plan.”

“It’s hard to be a Catholic family. The world is so much against commitment and sacrifice. The Holy Family Apostolate is meant to be a support for families in their efforts to live the Gospel.”

Mary House, a branch of the Combermere Madonna House, provides the meeting place and spiritual support for the monthly gatherings. The group of families from a variety of communities and missions across the Diocese meet for a potluck lunch, Adoration, the Rosary, and a guided discussion while children aged three to twelve participate in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based catechism program facilitated by one of the Mary House staff.

Many of these families are in the North and serving in missions because of Bishop Gary’s initiative. He plans to “encourage, support, and bless” any Diocese

of Victoria families who consider the call to serve the missions in the North. “There are so many possibilities for ministry. They will have an opportunity to live somewhere with real silence and real missionary adventure.”

On that note, one of Bishop Gary’s greatest Northern challenges was finding and keeping a committed pastoral staff. He surmised that “overarching urbanization is not equipping people to deal with the radically rural.” A shortage of clergy to celebrate the Sacraments for all of the people of the diocese beyond the urban centre of Whitehorse is one challenge that awaits his successor.

As always, the challenge became a vision for Bishop Gary. “If you’re a great church, a healthy church, you look after yourself. The Cathedral has the resources and personnel to assist in shepherding every community in this diocese. Whitehorse could be a place of formation. It should be serving the rest of the diocese. There are vocations in Whitehorse, there are missionaries, but it would take many years of work to create the sense that Whitehorse is responsible for the rest of the diocese.” While he will not be around to see that vision fulfilled, he has set the ball rolling and in many ways, his greatest success is the answer to his greatest challenge.

Reflecting on what he will take from his role in the North to his new role in Victoria, Bishop Gary has learned that, “Bishophood is much like parenthood. You do lots of nurturing, you clean up some messes, you pay the bills, and you try to love everyone. A sense of humour and trust in the providence of God is imperative. It’s a journey, it’s an adventure, it’s in God’s hands.”

Bishop Gary’s farewell gathering in Whitehorse—a family friendly dessert night with live music, a make-your-own sundae station, and a game of “pin the Bishop on the Diocese” was well attended. The children, who will miss him greatly, sang him a song, and gleefully sprinkled him with holy water using wildflowers. He was presented with gifts from the different communities and Fr. Kieran, a Mary House priest, spoke of his lesser known contributions and work toward the promotion of the Church in the North. The Bishop ended the evening with these words:

“The spirit of the mission of the church is really here. When you have the spirit of the mission of Jesus Christ ... you know what you can do? You can walk on water.”

He made note that the Diocese of Victoria is surrounded by water. ✠



## The Good News of Bishop Gary Gordon

(Continued from page 1)

“Taking care of the people” is something Bishop Gary wears daily. I asked him about his First Nations name, *Xyolhmetoxw*, and stumbled a little over the unfamiliar syllables: *Hy-oth-meh-took*. “I got that shortly after I was named Bishop,” he related. “I’d been in Stó:lō territory since I was a seminarian, since 2nd year university, I was involved with people in the Stó:lō Nation, and in 1983 the Archbishop sent me to Chilliwack. He told me I had to be an apostle for First Nations out there. So I went out to the nine different reserves, communities, chiefs and bands. I started hanging out; you know, you just *do ministry*. You take care of the people. I’d visit at the hospital, do funerals, and I’d go to the longhouse ceremonies. I just became part of the family. I felt affirmed and I was affirming for our People, with their struggles and difficulties. So when I got appointed Bishop of Whitehorse, this was going to be a huge loss for our People, but they wanted me to have a name so that I’d know where I was from, or what I’d learned, or what I had been given from the Territory, from the People. In May of 2006, there was a naming ceremony for me in the Richard Malloway Memorial Longhouse in Chilliwack. They put a blanket on me and gave me this name, which means “Taking Care of the People” in Halq’eméylem, the language of the Stó:lō Nation.”

Bishop Gary’s interaction with the First Nations is something he can’t quite put into words, but has greatly impacted his life and heart. “For me, I will never be able to explain or tell people all that I have received from the people in Stó:lō Territory. There are no words that would ever be able to explain all I have received. It was not without challenges, and with some rocky roads for sure, but I just know a whole different side of our First Nations people.”

He pauses to reflect, then continues, “I experienced something similar in the North, when I took the Apostolic Nuncio to visit. I remember one of the ladies remarked to the Nuncio, ‘Well, we thought Pope Francis was doing a pretty good job until this happened.’” We chuckled ruefully, enjoying the poignant humour and empathizing with her sadness at losing her pastor.

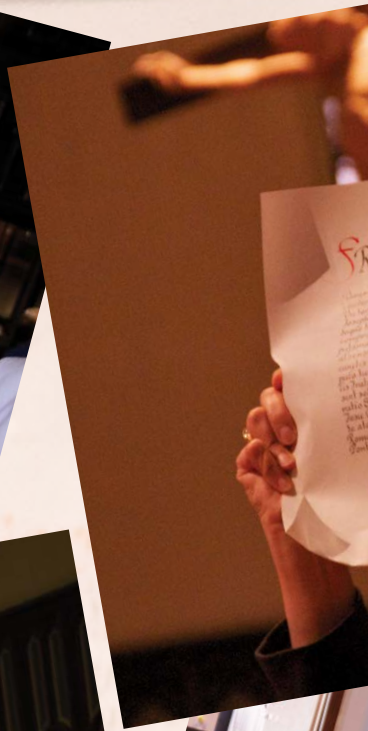
One thing is clear: this is a man who proclaims the Gospel with his vocation, his words and his life. He tirelessly walks the talk (often with the Diocesan Dog, Merlin—see story, left) with simple honesty, taking care of the people. His homily at his Installation Mass demonstrated clearly that his priorities are to minister to people in the peripheries; to show up for people even if they don’t show up for us, to teach them to “say thanks, and then try to give it away,” because, “Maybe a bishop is someone that can help people just say, ‘thank you’ and try and give it away, because we’ve got it. And there is no life like this. When you have a job description which is to simply say ‘thank you’ and get everybody else saying ‘thank you’ in a holy way through the Sacraments, and then to give it away, what better vocation is there?”

“We’re all working hard for the mission.” Bishop Gary smiles gently. “It’s always made a difference to me. I don’t know that I ever really wanted to be a priest, but I knew I wanted to be a missionary. Because there was something about the Christ message that got me right from first year university, that this had the answers to the mass of questions that we’ve got, and then becoming a priest has engaged me in peoples’ lives on the big issue questions, on what’s really important. And I guess maybe that’s just been part of my own style, I like hanging out and doing ordinary stuff. For me, the end game is really what it’s about—what’s this all about, and where am I going? I don’t have all the answers; it’s up to God. But as a priest, as a bishop, I’ve been privileged to be involved in the struggle of that question in peoples’ lives, and I can’t imagine anything more worthwhile.”

Good News, indeed, for the Diocese of Victoria and for our ongoing mission. We look forward with hope, eager to see where God and Bishop Gary will take us. Our prayers are for him and for ourselves, as we journey down this new road together, as a family and as a church. ✠



# Most Reverend George Installation 17<sup>th</sup> Bishop





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*The Church of the Ascension  
(Parksville)*  
*Heartily Welcomes*  
*Most Rev. Gary Gordon*  
*New Bishop of Victoria*



*Welcome Bishop Gary Gordon  
and Congratulations*

Our Lady Queen of Peace parishioners look forward to meeting with you.  
 May the Holy Spirit guide and protect you.

*Our Lady of the Rosary Parish welcomes  
Bishop Gary Gordon  
to the Diocese of Victoria.*

May Mary, Our Mother,  
guide you and all of us in our way to meet our Lord.

*Sacred Heart Catholic Church*  
 4040 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria BC, V8X 2A1 | [sacredheartchurch@shaw.ca](mailto:sacredheartchurch@shaw.ca)  
 P: 250-479-1611 | F: 250-479-9350



*The Community of Sacred Heart  
wishes to extend a joyful welcome to  
Bishop Gary Gordon.*

*We look forward to your  
Spiritual Guidance in our faith journey.*



**Help a just world  
take root**

**Victoria Diocesan Council of Development and Peace  
welcomes Bishop Gary Gordon  
to the Diocese of Victoria.**  
 Our prayers and best wishes are with him.  
 We look forward to working together to build peace and justice  
in the world.



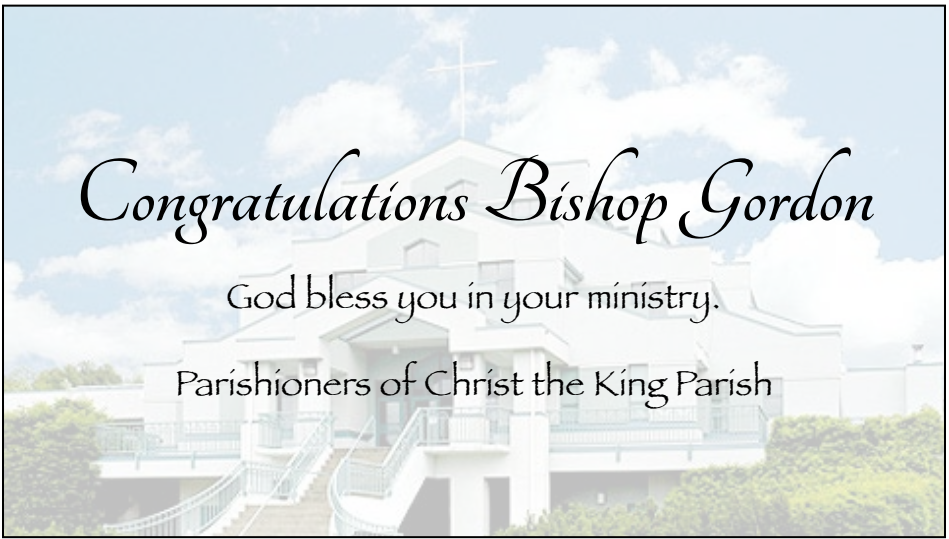
**A VOICE FOR  
JUSTICE**



**CONGRATULATIONS**  
*St. Joseph's General Hospital congratulates the  
Most Reverend Gary Michael Gordon on his  
Installation as Bishop of Victoria.*

St. Joseph's General Hospital, Comox, owned by the  
Diocese of Victoria, looks forward to working with  
Bishop Gordon as we continue in our mission in the  
Catholic tradition of the Healing Ministry, to provide  
"care with compassion" to meet the needs of the people  
we serve.

*Congratulations Bishop Gordon*  
 God bless you in your ministry.  
 Parishioners of Christ the King Parish



**ST. PATRICK'S PARISH  
welcomes Bishop Gary Gordon!**




2060 Haultain Street, Victoria, BC  
*Celebrating over 100 Years of Faith*



*In appreciation of his friendship and support, we offer our congratulations and prayerful best wishes to Bishop Gary Gordon as he continues his episcopal ministry in the Diocese of Victoria.*



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*Bishop Gary Gordon preaching in his former Diocese of Whitehorse, Yukon and Northern British Columbia.*

“The reality is that you are the pastor of the whole people, whether they’re Catholic or not, because when you come from the place of the Good News of Jesus Christ, then everything is always an evangelizing moment, and everybody needs good news.

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

Congratulations to Bishop Gary Gordon on the occasion of his installation as Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria



The Catholic Women’s League of Canada  
Diocese of Victoria Council



“I suppose the most important role for a bishop is to somehow be a pastor in the image of Christ.

~ Bishop Gary Gordon



**Bishop Stephen Jensen and the clergy, religious and faithful of the Diocese of Prince George offer Most Reverend Gary Gordon prayerful best wishes on the occasion of his installation as Bishop of Victoria.**



