



See Page 2

We did it!



See Page 12

*Celebration of
Jubilee Year of
Mercy*



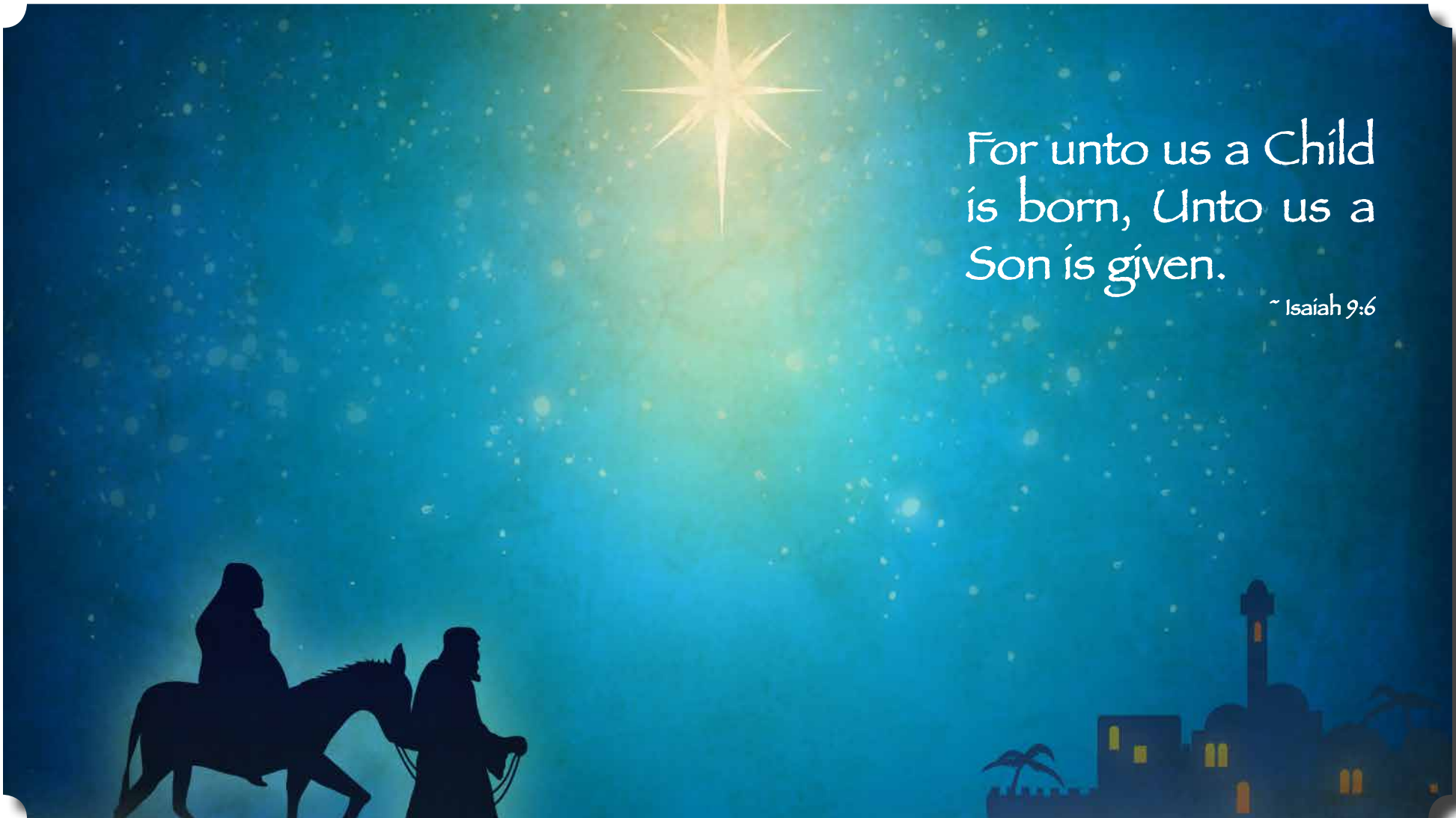
See Page 20

*First Bishop
named to
Ordinariate*



The Diocesan Messenger

A Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria December 2015



For unto us a Child
is born, Unto us a
Son is given.

~ Isaiah 9:6

Blessed are the eyes that see

by Bishop Gary Gordon

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shone.”

~ Isaiah 9:2

These words of the prophet Isaiah from the first reading for Christmas Eve Mass are a hopeful message for hundreds of thousands of displaced people roaming our planet in search of security and a place to call home. We may even wonder if such a light can exist, and if there can be a place of peace, justice and love. Yes, even in our own country the homeless wonder if there can be such a light.

The light of a Saviour born for us is a great contrast to the darkness; it is Jesus’ light that exposes the darkness of sin and grave crimes against people and this garden called earth—our home. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy the light of Christ will shine out showing us new paths and ways to live in tenderness, compassion and covenant with all people and everything created in God’s garden.

Continued on page 3

Inside

Calendar of Events	4
Connections.....	17
Diocesan News & Events	5
Face the Day	9
Faith Matters.....	18
Island Catholic Schools	10
National/International	20
Out of the Archives.....	16
Pastoral Itinerary	4
The Campus Mission	17
Vocations.....	15



GOAL ACHIEVED!

\$836,280 in pledges has been received as at press time.

*Congratulations to parishes who exceeded their goals,
and thank you to all!*

RESULTS AS AT DECEMBER 9, 2015

YEAR	TOTAL PLEDGED	TOTAL PAID	# OF PLEDGES	AVERAGE PLEDGE
2015	\$836,280	\$637,964	2,459	\$340

THERE IS STILL TIME TO SUPPORT THE APPEAL AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS YOUR PARISH'S GOAL.
ALL DONATIONS RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 31, 2015 WILL GENERATE A 2015 INCOME TAX RECEIPT

2015 DIOCESAN GOAL: \$750,000



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND
FAITH FORMATION
\$50,000

APPEAL COSTS
\$50,000



ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:
GROWING FUTURE LEADERS
\$325,000

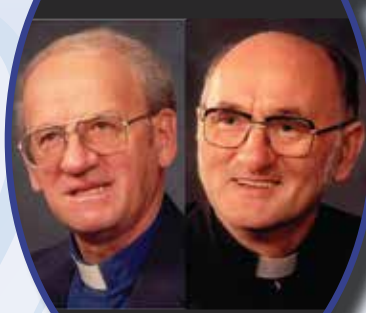


HOME MISSIONS
\$75,000



PARISH SHARE
\$150,000

RETIRED CLERGY PENSION
SUPPORT
\$100,000



MAKE A DONATION

MY INFORMATION

Name _____
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City _____
Postal Code _____
Phone _____
Parish _____

AMOUNT I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE

☐ \$_____/month for ____ months
☐ One Time Gift of
\$ _____

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☐ Cash/Cheque \$ _____
(Payable to **Annual Diocesan Appeal**)
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X _____

PLANNED GIVING

☐ Please contact me with information about
Planned Giving

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There is a significant tax advantage to donating securities rather than selling them and donating the proceeds. Please contact Leah MacKenzie at (250) 479-1331 or email leahm@rcdvictoria.org to make a gift of stock, or for more information.

The Diocese of Victoria complies with BC's privacy legislation and collects information to process your receipt and to maintain a mailing list of parishioners throughout the Diocese. We do not sell, distribute or share your information with outside organizations.

Blessed are the eyes that see

Continued from page 1

Psalm 96 from the lectionary for Christmas Eve Mass announces a Saviour for all and every bit of creation:

“Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy!

Our Saviour is so full of mercy that even the darkest depths of any human heart cannot escape the penetrating gaze of Love incarnate. The light of Christ enables us to see and behold the blessed hope that dawned in the birth of Jesus, and continues in the saving grace of his death and resurrection, made present for us in the Holy Eucharist.

Recognizing the Saviour and his light dispelling all darkness is something I have experienced profoundly in my own life and among the many people with whom I’ve been privileged to journey over the years. I would like to share one such grace when the light of Christ’s mercy, love and salvation dispelled darkness.

It was Christmas 1977. I was a second-year university student and a very active mountaineer. I and a couple of other outdoor enthusiasts decided to do a winter ascent of Goat Peak in the North Cascades, close to Mt. Baker. It was not the biggest or most demanding mountain, however winter conditions can change everything.

We set out from Twin Lakes Road carrying our skis only a short distance before reaching the snow line. With our skis on we continued upward on a trail in the dark. The shorter days of Christmas time meant a longer opportunity for night skiing, which became quite interesting—especially crossing a number of avalanche slopes with fresh signs of snow slippage. Needless to say we were on high alert, proceeding cautiously and quickly through the zones.

We arrived at a well-protected, forested clearing on the trail at 11 PM, after seven hours of uphill slogging. We stopped for the night, completely exhausted but happy to have covered so much ground safely, and looking forward to some food and then slipping into our sleeping bags. But there was one question burning in the heart of one of our party, Fr. Damasus Payne, our priest mountain climbing mentor and seminary teacher. “I think we should celebrate Mass,” he said, and I remember protesting that God would understand our tiredness and would want us to pray while sleeping. But without further discussion, the portable Mass kit was pulled from Fr. Damasus’ backpack, and I found myself building a kind of snow bench to serve as the altar.

We sat in the snow with every bit of clothing on to prevent the cold night air from turning sweat-filled clothing into lumps of frozen slush. Mass began with a beautiful rendition of *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*. The Scripture readings were barely audible as the silent majesty of our winter wonderland quieted our voices lest we be roused from the utter peace of mountain stillness.

The offertory rite and preparing the wine and bread for the Eucharist began by placing the frozen wine inside a deep pocket to bring it back to consumable temperature, and continuing with the Eucharistic prayer.

During the elevation of the consecrated Host, my climbing buddy nudged me and whispered, “Look into the forest.” I peered intently outward, looking around the



circle of trees about two meters away. I had to rub my tired eyes more than once, as my vision awoke to an incredible sight. There were myriads of eyes peering at our dimly lit forest cathedral and little snow bank altar—little pin-point eyes and big green and brown eyes!

“The Scripture readings were barely audible as the silent majesty of our winter wonderland quieted our voices lest we be roused from the utter peace of mountain stillness.

After the elevation of the Precious Blood we sat for an eternal moment looking away from the flickering candle and flashlight on the altar. We stared in amazement and maybe some fear at what was presented before us: the surrounding forest was full of eyes, staring directly at the centre of our camp. We never even moved our hunched bodies, even though we knew that wolves and mountain lions were a normal part of our environment. Mass ended with the final blessing and silently and carefully we crawled into our sleeping bags whispering to each other, “Did you see what I saw?”

The next morning dawned clear, bright and very cold, but we quickly got up at first light, tugging on our frozen boots, knowing that our feet would become painful blocks of ice until an hour or so of moving would bring the warmth back. With a kind of stumbling jostle we all ventured to the edges of our camp, each wanting to check out the pristine snow for animal prints. And there in the snowy forest circle were every kind of print: little bird feet, squirrels, bears, mountain lions, wolves, deer, fox, raccoon and lots of rabbit prints.

Before anyone thinks I may have been dreaming or suffering from hypothermic delirium on a frozen mountainside, I would like to offer a quote from Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’*: “The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things.” (LS, 83) Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si’*, has indeed given a theological and biblical voice to my own experiences in the grandeur of God’s garden, and to the power of Christ’s light to dispel all darkness. “Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (LS, 92)

Yes, the forest creatures drew near that wondrous night to behold him, for “all things have been created through him and for him.” (Col 1:16) The light of Christ dispelled the darkness during our Christmas season climb, and the forest creatures were awakened to behold Jesus, Prince of Peace, and their eyes, like ours, reflected the twinkling lights of the altar—his light that is our privilege to carry to a world in need.

I pray that the light of Christ will dawn for all of us this Christmas season and throughout the Jubilee Year of Mercy; that you and your families grow in communion of love and peace; and that all our relations and actions on our pilgrim journey on earth may bring a true justice, peace and love to this earth we call home.

A blessed Christmas to you all. ✂



Each year at the commencement of Advent, St. Joseph’s Hospital displays its beautiful Nativity scene in the hospital lobby for all to revere and admire. Patients, visitors and staff pause to rejoice in the glory of the birth of Jesus and the beauty of Christmas. Wishing you a blessed Christmas and New Year.

Calendar of events

December

- 21 Theology on Tap:** 7 – 8:30 PM, The Guild, 1250 Wharf St, Victoria. More info: www.totvic.ca.
- 22 St. Joseph's Friary, Victoria:** *Christmas is a season, not a day*, 10 AM – 4 PM. Franciscans and Friends Youth Group. Please bring a donation for Anawim House. Lunch will be potluck style. More info: franciscansandfriends@gmail.com

January 2016

- 10 Our Lady of the Rosary, Victoria:** 3:30 – 8 PM, Holy Family Group. Doors open at 3:30pm, the discussion starts at 4pm, and potluck dinner begins at 5:30pm. For more information contact Kristy de Bree at (250) 590-7004 or email her at debree@gmail.com.
- 18 Theology on Tap:** 7 – 8:30 PM, The Guild, 1250 Wharf St, Victoria. More info: www.totvic.ca.
- 23 Women's Faith and Fellowship Breakfast, Victoria:** Horseshoe Club of Victoria, 620 Kenneth Street, 8 – 10 AM. For more information, contact Jennifer Smith at (250) 479-7413.
- 29-31 Catholic Students Association Winter Retreat:** Come to the CSA Winter Retreat at Mt. Washington. Bishop Gary will speak on 'Being Merciful: Lessons from the Good Samaritan'. For more information email Fr. Dean Henderson: catholic@uvic.ca.
- 30 Men's Faith and Fellowship Forum, Victoria:** 8 – 10 AM. Horseshoe Club of Victoria, 620 Kenneth Street. Breakfast, followed by a presentation. Visit www.ffaf.org for more information.

February 2016

- 5-7 Camp Homewood Retreat:** Grades 7-12. For more information contact: broset@telus.net.
- 7 Our Lady of the Rosary, Victoria:** 3:30 – 8 PM, Holy Family Group. Doors open at 3:30pm, the discussion starts at 4pm, and potluck dinner begins at 5:30pm. For more information contact Kristy de Bree at (250) 590-7004 or email her at bedevil.debree@gmail.com.
- 13 Holy Cross, Victoria:** Pastoral Care Outreach Training session 1: *Healing Ministry of Christ*. 9 AM – 2 PM. Fr. William Hann will be the morning presenter. For registration, please call the parish office 250-477-5321 or email: office@holycrossvictoria.org
- 15 Theology on Tap:** 7 – 8:30 PM, The Guild, 1250 Wharf St, Victoria. More info: www.totvic.ca.
- 27 Men's Faith and Fellowship Forum, Victoria:** 8 – 10 AM. Horseshoe Club of Victoria, 620 Kenneth Street. Breakfast, followed by a presentation. Visit www.ffaf.org for more information.

Pastoral itinerary

December

- 13 Victoria:** Solemn opening of the Holy Door of Mercy at St. Andrew's Cathedral (11 AM)
- 24 Port Renfrew:** Christmas Eve Mass – First Nations community (4 PM)
Sooke: Christmas Eve Mass – St. Rose of Lima Parish (8 PM)
Victoria: Christmas Eve Mass – St. Andrew's Cathedral (11 PM)
- 25 Metchosin:** Christmas Day Mass – William Head Institution (10 AM)
- 26 Port Alberni:** Mass – Feast of the Holy Family – Holy Family/Notre Dame Parish (5 PM)
- 27 Port Alberni:** Mass – Feast of the Holy Family – Holy Family/Notre Dame Parish (10 AM)

January 2016

- 1 Victoria:** Mass – Solemnity of Mary – St. Andrew's Cathedral (10:30 AM)
- 11-15 Mission:** Retreat with Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops
- 17 Victoria:** Opening Service for Week of Christian Unity – Christ Church Cathedral (4:30 PM)

Weekly events

- Wednesdays**
- St. Patrick's, Victoria:** Moms and Tots (Dads are also welcome) meets from 9:30 – 11 AM in our Parish Centre. Children are kept busy while the parents gather in a separate room to talk about parenting and lots of other things in a faith-based environment. If you are interested in joining the group which starts in September, or want more information, please contact Pauline Scherr at 250-592-9424 or email at pischerr@shaw.ca
- Fridays**
- Our Lady Queen of Peace, Victoria:** Traditional Latin Mass, 9 AM.
- Our Lady of the Rosary, Victoria:** 9:30 – 11 AM, Moms & Tots Group. All mothers with children 6 years and under are welcome. For more information contact Rosemarie Urbanson at (250) 391-6618; no registration is required.
- Our Lady of the Rosary, Victoria:** *YDisciple* is a Catholic program to help teenagers take ownership of their faith. We meet from 7 – 8:30 PM in the parish hall. Youth leader is Jose Mendez. More info: olor@shaw.ca or call (250) 478-3482.
- Saturdays**
- St. Joseph the Worker Parish:** 3 – 4:30 PM, Jesus Youth at SJTW Parish invites youth in high school to come out to the Jesus Youth Prayer meeting! Jesus Youth is an international Catholic youth movement with a charismatic spirituality. For more information contact: mr.georgephilip@gmail.com.
- At the Cathedral:** 4th Saturday of each month the 9:30 AM Mass is offered for the sanctity of human life and for the intentions of those who support Respect Life Ministry. All are welcome to participate.

- Our Lady of Fatima, Victoria:** Victoria Chinese Catholic Community (VCCC) regular meetings with faith sharing, prayers, potluck, Mass or special presentations by expert speakers, 3:30 PM. Please note meeting dates may not fall on First Saturdays of the month; please contact Ben for more information. Meetings will conclude with a potluck supper. For more information phone (250) 893-9938 or email Ben Chow at benchow@shaw.ca.
- Catholic Underground at St. Patrick's Parish:** Catholic Underground is an initiative which engages youth in both their culture and their faith, held in the basement at St. Patrick's at 7 PM on the 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month. Grades 10 – 12. For more information, contact Julie at: ygcatholicunderground@gmail.com

- 24 Victoria:** Closing Mass, Week of Christian Unity – St. Andrew's Cathedral (3 PM)
- 29-30 Comox:** Retreat Master for Catholic Students Association Retreat

February 2016

- 1 Victoria:** Mass and Reception – Celebration of Consecrated Life – St. Andrew's Cathedral (3 PM)
- 4-5 Vancouver:** FISA (Federation of Independent Schools Association) 50th Anniversary Conference
- 5 Vancouver:** Mass – FISA Anniversary – Holy Rosary Cathedral (2 PM)
- 6-8 Whitehorse:** Ordination and Installation of Bishop-Elect Hector Vila
- 10 Victoria:** Mass – Ash Wednesday – St. Andrew's Cathedral (7 PM)
- 21 Victoria:** Rite of Election – St. Andrew's Cathedral (2 PM)
Mass – St. Andrew's Cathedral (5 PM)
- 23-25 Victoria:** Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops' Conference

- Sundays**
- Our Lady Queen of Peace, Victoria:** Traditional Latin Mass, 12 noon with Gregorian Chant and Sacred Hymns.

To have your event included in the Diocesan Calendar of Events on the website, please email the details to editor@rcdvictoria.org

Pastoral Centre Maintenance Volunteers Needed

Please consider sharing your time and talents a few hours every week (or two) to assist with general maintenance tasks at the Pastoral Centre. Please forward your resume, along with an endorsement from your pastor, to:

Cynthia Bouchard
Pastoral Centre
4044 Nelthorpe Street
Victoria V8X 2A1
or via email to chancery@rcdvictoria.org

Your generosity would be greatly appreciated and eternal benefits are guaranteed!



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Diocesan News & Events



Soup kitchen returns home

by Michael Fox

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

~ Matthew 25: 35-36

After an absence of just over a year, in March 2015 the 9-10 Club Soup Kitchen returned to its home below St. Andrew’s Cathedral.

After some 32 years of operation in the sub-basement of the Cathedral, the Soup Kitchen was required to relocate temporarily to accommodate the major renovation that resulted in the creation of Seghers Hall from which they now operate.

During the relocation the kitchen was able to maintain operations through the generosity of Our Place Society who shared their facilities to allow the kitchen to keep serving its clients.

The 9-10 Club Serving Soup to the Hungry Society was started in 1982 by Murray and Edna Black who observed poor people foraging in a dumpster and decided to do something about it. The kitchen has been in continuous operation ever since, serving soup to between 150 and 200 people each day Monday to Friday every week of the year. The sole exception is Christmas Day, when there are many others providing sustenance.

The transition back to View Street has been very smooth and all are very pleased with and admiring of the new, absolutely first-class facilities for cooking and serving in Seghers Hall.

The kitchen has benefitted from generous support in the community, including St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Cob’s Bakery, The Dutch Bakery, Thrifty Foods, The Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island, The Charlton Smith Foundation, The Victoria Foundation, a number of private donors and over 100 volunteers who donate their time.

The kitchen continues to be challenged by the ever-increasing cost of food items which makes up the bulk of costs. If anyone wishes to support the Soup Kitchen, please send donations to 740 View Street in Victoria, V8W 1J8 or visit www.thesoupkitchen.ca. ✕



The Soup Kitchen

since 1982 — the heart of the 9-10 Club

St. Patrick’s Victoria opens ‘24/7’ Eucharistic Adoration Chapel for Year of Mercy

by Edward Camilleri

St. Patrick’s Parish in Victoria has prepared for the Jubilee of Mercy by opening the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel that people can access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Bishop Gary Gordon blessed the new chapel on Sunday, December 6, 2015.

Present in the chapel were Fr. Alfred Alilio, Parish Priest; Parish staff; Chairs of Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Committee and Maintenance Committee; Coordinators of Different Ministries; St. Patrick’s School Principal; and representatives of the Filipino and Vietnamese communities. The remainder of the congregation participated via a live video feed shown in the church. Immediately after the blessing, the 10:30 AM Eucharistic Celebration was celebrated. It was concluded with the procession of The Blessed Sacrament around the church to the chapel. A potluck luncheon followed at Our Lady of Lourdes Hall.

The chapel will allow members of the parish and anybody from the Diocese to visit and pray 24/7 before the Blessed Sacrament. It will allow quiet intimacy with and reflection in the presence of Christ.

The chapel can be accessed through the Parish Centre between 8 AM and 4 PM from Monday to Friday. For visits after office hours, a person must register with the parish office to be assigned a unique code which will allow entry through the door at the back of the church. Access to the back of the church is from Carrick Street.

Mother Theresa said: “The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time you will spend on Earth.” Pope Francis stated: “Jesus speaks in the silence of the mystery of the Eucharist and reminds us each time that following him means going out of ourselves and making our lives not something we ‘possess’, but a gift to him and to others.” ✕



Providing home to Greater Victoria’s most vulnerable

by Colin Tessier

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Vancouver Island (SVDP) is honoured to have been awarded the 2015 Housing Provider of the Year Award from the British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association. This award is given to recognize a non-profit organization that has achieved innovative solutions to the community’s housing needs, and has demonstrated outside-the-box thinking to offer services that go beyond housing.

This award was an acknowledgement of the current housing offered by the Society as well as the upcoming developments that will add innovative housing solutions for some of Victoria’s most vulnerable. The society currently operates three housing projects totalling 90 units of affordable housing for vulnerable populations including the elderly and people exiting homelessness. Currently under construction, Rosalie’s Village, envisioned in 2005, is a 42-unit development for single mothers and children, and older women who are currently under-provided for in subsidized housing. Included in the project is an onsite licensed daycare for 37 infant to school-age children, offered without charge to residents. Children living at Rosalie’s Village will be given priority for filling spaces, with remaining spaces available to at-risk children from the local community. There will be onsite supports to provide assistance as required by tenants, including a Women’s Day Program, work training programs, life skills training, emergency relief, vouchers and workshops. All of these supports combined will offer each resident and her family the opportunity to find health, stability and a safe place to call home.

With the addition of Rosalie’s Village, SVDP will be able to offer 132 warm and safe homes for people who would otherwise have very few options.

This is an incredible blessing for the Society and we want to acknowledge all the stakeholders and supporters who have made this possible. We are supported by 13 Conferences, 2 particular Councils and an outstanding Board of Directors. Additionally, there are dozens of volunteers and staff who serve tirelessly on the frontlines every day to support people toward brighter futures.

Rosalie’s Village is named after Blessed Rosalie Rendu (1786-1856), a Sister of the religious Order The Daughters of Charity, who gave 20-year-old Frederic Ozanam and his friends guidance and direction in their work of charity. ✕

For more information or to donate please contact SVDP at 250-727-0007 or go to the website—www.svdpvictoria.com. Visit www.rcdvictoria.org to view the Jubilee Year of Mercy video featuring Rosalie’s Village



L to R: Stuart Andrie, Housing Manager; Angela Hudson, Executive Director; Barb Webster, Controller; and Grant Laprade, Project Manager



O que o natal significa para mim?

by Fr. Marinaldo Batista

Para mim Natal é pausa. Pausa para me permitir. Permitir-me a prática de virtudes. Permitir-me voltar a ser criança. E acreditar na magia do mistério. Mistério da beleza da vida que se manifesta no nascimento de uma criança.

Essa criança é o sol que ilumina toda a humanidade. Essa criança que ao chegar ao mundo já inicia uma missão, a missão de fazer-me sorrir. Porque outra não é a missão da criança senão fazer sorrir e tornar tudo tão belo, tão leve, tão possível. Tão radiante...

Natal para mim é permissão para ser alegre, para ser pacífico!

O Natal me permite, me impele e me convida à generosidade, ao perdão, à paz, ao recomeço.

Natal para mim é uma oportunidade para nascer de novo, para recomeçar, para voltar a ser criança. Para começar tudo de novo, de forma nova. É tempo de fé, esperança e de amor.

É tempo de abandonar o velho obsoleto que está em mim e aceitar a criança que espera com olhos brilhantes as surpresas que a vida em sua riqueza imensa oferece. É pausa de inverno. É pausa aconchegante que nutre para a explosão da primavera. É já início de renascimento.

É tempo de reencontro, de retorno à casa paterna e estreitamento dos laços. É tempo de entender que é preciso estar junto com o outro enquanto é possível, é tempo de reconciliação, de comunhão e de voltar às raízes para viver a intensidade da vida.

Natal para mim é tempo de generosamente presentear o próximo com o Cristo que foi gerado em mim. É permitir-me viver o que acredito: deixar-me guiar por uma criança que me conduz por caminhos planos e estradas abertas... Essa criança que todos os anos volta a me visitar e não desiste de mim, nem de me ensinar a amar.

For me Christmas is a break. A pause that allow me to practice virtues. Time that allows me to go back to my childhood, and to believe in the mystery of magic. It's the mystery of the beauty of life that manifests itself in a Child's birth.

This Child is the sun that illuminates all mankind. This Child to come into the world already begins with a mission, the mission to make me smile—because a child's mission is none other than to make you smile and make it so beautiful, so light, so possible. So radiant ...

Christmas for me is permission to be cheerful, and to be peaceful!

Christmas pushes me and invites me to practice generosity, forgiveness, peace, and provides an opportunity for a new beginning—to be born again, to start over, to become a child again. To start anew. It is time for faith, hope and love.

It is time to abandon the obsolete that is in me and accept the child waiting with bright eyes, accept the surprises that life offers in its immense wealth. It's a winter break, a cozy break that nourishes the explosion of spring. It is already the beginning of rebirth.

It is time for reunion, returning to the paternal home and closer ties. It is time to understand that we need to be together as much as possible, it is time for reconciliation, communion and returning to our roots, to live the intensity of life.

Christmas for me is generously gifting others with the Christ that was generated in me. It allows me to live what I believe: to let myself be guided by a Child that leads me down plain paths and open roads ... this Child that every year is back to visit me, Who does not give up on me and Who teaches me to love. ✕





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Ascension CWL welcomes new members

by Sandi Digras, Communications Chair

On Thursday September 19, 2015, Nancy Horsfield, Chair of the Council, and Mary Sheil, Membership Chair, were thrilled with the attendance at our annual Fall Membership Tea. “We now have 92 paid members, and many still waiting to pay, for a total of 147 members,” said Sheil.

What was so special this year was the former members who rejoined because they wanted to be part of the largest Catholic Women’s organization in Canada—a group that has a clear voice to Government.

We were also pleased to present a 40-year pin to Jane Brown. The strawberry shortcake and tea were also well received, and Past President Tina Hanlon received many compliments. As our President said, “We have many activities and challenges for 2016 and we hope all our existing and new members will take an active role.” ✕



L to R: Jane Brown, with her 40-year pin, and Fr. Karam Albaran

Remembering Sr. Mary Sharon SSA

One of four children, Kathleen Ann (Sr. Mary Sharon) was born September 6, 1931 in St. Boniface, Manitoba and died November 25, 2015, at Mount St. Mary Hospital in Victoria, BC.

She entered the Sisters of St. Ann on August 2, 1949 and pronounced her vows on August 6, 1951. Sr. Mary Sharon’s teaching and child care ministries for more than 20 years took her to St. Augustine’s, Vancouver and the Indian Residential Schools of Kuper Island, Kamloops, Mission City and Lower Post. She served as teacher and principal at St. James Elementary School in Vernon, and for ten years at Little Flower Academy High School in Vancouver.

Eager to excel in her service of others, Sr. Sharon studied at Seattle University (BA), the University of Victoria and in Mexico and Bolivia. A missionary at heart, in 1980 Sr. Sharon embarked on a 30-year journey of ministry in Chile, teaching, providing pastoral ministry and doing home visits in Antofagasta, Villa Alegre and Santiago.

Sister Sharon returned to Victoria, BC in 2011 where she resided at St. Ann’s Residence and later at Mount St. Mary Hospital. We will miss her gentle and caring presence.

Predeceased by her parents, John Mathew and Anne Josephine Doore, (Griffin), siblings Daniel and Dermot Doore, Dorothy Moore. She is survived by her sister-in-law Margaret Doore (Dermot), her nieces Daleah Whitehead, Deborah Johnson, Dianne Kelly, nephew Daniel Doore, nieces Della Henry, Lavonne Doore, Karen Jervis, Margaret-Anne Howes, Kim Christenson, Alanna Schlatter, Monica Sager, Shannon Moore, nephew Charlie (Chas) Moore; cousin Stewart Thomas, great nieces and nephews as well as her own community of Sisters of St. Ann. ✕



Sr. Mary Sharon SSA

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Authentic CATHOLIC Information
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For More Sites Click On Link
CATHOLIC SITES

“If catechesis is done well, Christians will be eager to bear witness to their faith, to hand it on to their children, to make it known to others, and to serve the human community in every way.”
Words of Pope John Paul II - ‘Catechesi Tradendae’

Sharing the blessings

Press Release

The St. Edwards Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada (CWL) has donated \$2,000 to two local organizations, the Cowichan Valley Hospice Society and the Cowichan Valley District Hospital Foundation. In addition, a \$7,500 donation to the Diocese of Victoria will help in the resettlement of a Middle East refugee family.

Leanne Forest, President of the Council said, "It is through the tireless, year-long efforts of the 96 members of the St. Edward's Council that we are able to share our blessings with the community and hope to make a difference."

The Duncan-based Council of the CWL is part of one of the largest organizations of women in Canada, founded in 1920, whose members regularly meet with the various levels of government to present Resolutions that address issues such as missing indigenous women, human trafficking, and pornography. With this common voice and action, the CWL works diligently to help make life better for others.

For further information, please contact Leanne Forest at (250) 597-4450 or email lforest@shaw.ca ✕



A heart for Africa

by Paul Redchurch. Photo courtesy of Paul Redchurch

The stars finally all came into alignment on Thursday, September 3, 2015, thus providing Holly Redchurch with an opportunity to share her Third World volunteer experiences with the members of St. Patrick's Council 7934 (Oak Bay) Knights of Columbus. Unfortunately, much to Holly's regret, time and scheduling did not afford her an opportunity to invite or address a wider audience.

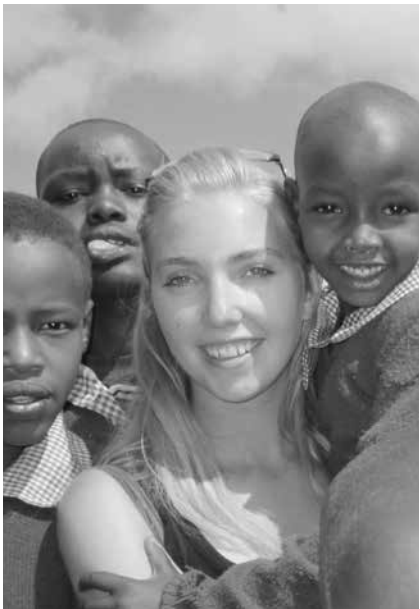
A graduate of both St. Patrick's Elementary School and Oak Bay High School, Holly received both moral and financial support from not only St. Pat's Knights and Catholic Women's League but also family, friends and some motivated parishioners. All of this support augmented the funds she had been able to raise from her various part-time jobs.

At the age of 18, and after copious research and the selection of an NGO agency with which she wished to partner, Holly travelled to Kenya on a mostly self-funded, volunteering odyssey. During her five months in Kenya, Holly's activities included regularly visiting and helping residents of Africa's largest slum—Kibera in Nairobi—and assisting at a clinic that provided HIV testing and health education. Holly, a fair-skinned, petite blonde, became a familiar and readily recognizable sight in the area of Saikeri in Maasailand, where she also taught in a rural school. She was invited to participate in a Maasai right-of-passage by receiving burn tattoos. She also participated in traditional drinking fresh cow's blood, obtained by nicking the jugular vein of a living cow. This Maasai tradition, which is becoming less common, provides protein for their diet without killing the cow.

Holly's recent photo presentation was able to depict the extreme contrasts that she witnessed, showing the beauty and resilience of the people and the severe health, education, housing and nutritional challenges they face on a daily basis.

This adventure followed Holly's earlier high school volunteering with fellow Oak Bay students in Mexico.

Currently, Holly is studying International Relations at the University of British Columbia and recently represented that institution at a Model United Nations forum in Montreal. ✕



Holly Redchurch, centre

St. Joseph's Hospital employee wins Safety & Quality Council Award

by Jane Murphy, President & CEO, St. Joseph's Hospital

It is with great pleasure that I announce that Leesa Lyster, Director Quality & Risk Management at St. Joseph's General Hospital, Comox, has been awarded the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council's 2016 Quality Award in the category of 'Quality Culture Trailblazer'.

Leesa was nominated for this award for her leadership role in empowering a cultural shift at St. Joseph's in patient safety and quality improvement. Leesa was hired in 2010 as an Accreditation Consultant and became Director of Quality & Risk Management in 2012. Since Leesa joined the organization, she has worked to develop relationships with the staff and physicians, to establish trust and a patient safety and quality improvement culture that is driven by every employee and physician and is supported by leadership and governance.

Leesa ensures that frontline staff and physicians are engaged in quality reviews, develops annual clinical improvement goals with each department and has developed and facilitated quality workshops.

In May 2015 Leesa was qualified as a Patient Safety Training Officer through the Canadian Patient Safety Quality Institute. Leesa has created a robust quality structure to support ongoing improvement.

As part of Leesa's role she is personally involved in many activities including rapid response reviews to address immediate issues when there is a serious incident, investigations and recommendations, and disclosure to patients and families. Furthermore, Leesa has supported and provided advice to many quality improvement projects in our organization including: work in reducing polypharmacy in acute care and residential care (at The Views at St. Joseph's); development of an antimicrobial stewardship program to ensure effective and appropriate antibiotic use; and the Home Intravenous Outpatient Therapy program.

The BC Quality Awards celebrate extraordinary work in our health care system and recognize individuals, teams and facilities that have improved the quality of care in BC. This year, the Council introduced the new award category 'Quality Culture Trailblazer'. A Quality Culture Trailblazer creates an environment where staff are empowered and encouraged to innovate. An environment where teamwork and open communication are the norm. An environment where team members work hard, but also have fun and passion while doing so. A Quality Culture Trailblazer creates a workplace culture that helps their teams thrive and helps patients receive the best possible care.

Leesa will be presented her award during the 2016 Quality Forum held February 24 – 26 at the Hyatt Regency, Vancouver. A delegation of Leesa's colleagues and peers look forward to attending the ceremony to support and honour Leesa as a recipient of this esteemed award. ✕



Leesa Lyster, Director Quality & Risk Management, St. Joseph's Hospital Comox—BC Patient Safety & Quality Council's 2016 "Quality Culture Trailblazer" Award Winner



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‘Glen Lions’ visit St. Andrew’s Cathedral

by Carol Ball and Jurek Romaniec. Photos courtesy of Robert Marthaller

One of the blessings in disguise that has come our way is the opportunity to conduct tours at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. With the exception of one tour for a conference of Diocesan financial officers, most of the remainder have been for visits by students from Catholic Schools.

Because these students either practice the faith or have been exposed to it through their schooling, these tours focus on the role of the cathedral in the Diocese: its history, architecture, decorative art windows, and, often a favourite with younger students, a visit to the crypt.

And then came the ‘Glen Lions’, the grade 8 students of Glenlyon Norfolk School, whose teacher, Robert Marthaler, is leading them through a social studies program on the Abrahamic religions; that is, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In other words, this tour group included students who do not necessarily have any background in Christianity, or any other faith, and possibly many who have never set foot in a Christian church.

The tour was made more daunting for us than some others; the “Glen Lions” teacher indicated the students would be seeking answers to questions about [the origin of] the faith (geographical and approximate date range); religious text(s); basic tenets/pillars of the faith; organizational structure; places of worship; the afterlife; and a few others.

So, basically, the request was for a course in the theology of Christianity to be delivered in the immensity and visually stimulating décor of St. Andrew’s Cathedral to young people who may have never had anything to do with either Christianity or the Cathedral—in a time constraint of 45 minutes!

As always, God had prepared a solution for us; it just had to be discovered. The secret in responding to this challenge lay in explaining the very basic fundamentals of our faith through the architecture and décor of the Cathedral. For example, the origins of our faith are found at the Ambo (lectern) which portrays the crucified and risen Christ and from which we hear God’s Word; in the windows portraying the annunciation and nativity. The tenets of the Catholicism are found: in the King David Window which links us to Judaism (did you ever wonder what the Harp strings represent? Hint: count them next time you are there); in the *Nicene Creed*, readily found in the music bulletins and the *Catholic Book of Worship* in the pews. The organizational structure is represented by the *Kathedra*, the chair of the bishop; and the living God is ever present in the Tabernacle.

During these tours many participants will often describe the sense of awe they feel on entering the Cathedral, that they ‘feel small’ or that it ‘feels different’ or ‘special’.



Students from Glenlyon Norfolk School pose their questions to Jurek Romaniec

Of course, this makes sense given that the Cathedral is a sacred place, a location in which we can encounter something beyond ourselves. From our Catechism (1180), “They (churches) are the houses of God, a symbol of the Church that lives in that place as well as of the heavenly Jerusalem.”

As often occurs during these tours, the group arrived late, reducing the time available. After a 20-minute discourse, an estimate of the time Grade 8 students are willing to sit still, the ‘Glen Lions’ were given the opportunity to explore the Cathedral guided by a set of questions. For example: on which stained glass windows can you find a bishop’s mitre (hat)? They were also invited to discuss their own questions with either the tour guides, teachers or accompanying parents.

By fortunate happenstance, many of the visiting students from Glenlyon Norfolk School were able to watch and listen to the incredible acoustics as Jean Pearce practiced on the Cathedral’s (Casavant Freres) organ on the second balcony (see photo, below).

After visiting the Cathedral the students dashed off with their faith study questions to the Congregation Emanu-El Synagogue and the Masjid Al-Iman Mosque.

At the synagogue the students heard about Hillel the Elder, a Jewish rabbi who never got angry, so some Romans challenged him to tell them the entire Torah—the equivalent of half the Old Testament—while standing on one foot. While standing on one leg, Hillel responded by stating, “Do not do to others what would be hateful if done to you. That is the whole of the Torah. All the rest is commentary. Now go and study.”

At the mosque the students learned that Islam began in Mecca, which was an area in which idols were worshipped. The goal of the prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, was to refocus worship to God. They also learned about some of the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. For example, the Muslims believe in one God who alone must be worshipped but do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God; rather Jesus was one in a line of prophets.

Was the ‘Glen Lions’ visit a success? In the words of their teacher Robert Marthaller, MS Language & Literature and Humanities, Glenlyon Norfolk School, “Thank you once again for providing such a wonderful experience for our students. We had great feedback all day today from students and parents alike. I know this will give them a good point of reference as we delve deeper into studying each faith throughout the year.” ✂



Jean Pearce at the Casavant Freres pipe organ, with Glenlyon Norfolk School students

Celebrating a spirit warrior

by Yvonne Zarowny

On November 11, 2015, I had the privilege of attending a joyous celebration of life for a true ‘spirit warrior’. Sister Bettie J. Wilms was a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement. I didn’t know until later that she was part of my life from age 6, as she served in missions in Cranbrook and Greenwood, BC. Decades later we were both at Church of the Ascension in Parksville, BC.

Given Bettie’s personality and mine, we had numerous heartfelt encounters. These were usually passionate, always mutually respectful while being both heart- and mind-expanding. Bettie was open to growing her soul while nudging others to do the same mostly by example, and occasionally by word.

Bettie was a constant in our community, always showing up or taking on the huge task of organizing World Days of Prayer for Peace; World Days of Prayer for Christian Unity; an anchor for Ecological and Social Justice as well as outreach to the marginalized both within our parish and the greater community. She lived the Franciscan Atonement motto: *That All May Be One*.

As Marianne Rohrer SA stated in her eulogy, in Bettie we lost a faithful veteran. As with all veterans, the task falls to us to continue the work to co-create sustainable worlds where all God’s Creation has life with dignity and peace.

Thank you, Bettie, for being a dedicated spirit warrior who modelled another ‘way’. As we go forth inspired by Bettie’s impish grin and steadfast faith, may we also give thanks for all the other ‘spirit warriors’ in our midst. ✂



Sr. Bettie Wilms SA



Face the Day

by Bonnie Landry



☺ Peace comes with docility and a deep breath.

Don't even talk to me about the Christmas issue of the *Messenger*. I'm not there. I'm still in September. Or June, even. I can't keep up. Not this year.

Time.

It speeds up and slows down according to our age, our circumstances, or the events in our lives. It's weird. And yet, it's the gift we've all been given to make the most of here on earth. What we do with our time can make or break our 'quality of life', or the quality of the lives of those around us. The great trick of Satan is keep us thinking that we've got lots of time. To fix *this*, or better *that*; to forgive him or understand her.

How do we learn, in the often noisy and hectic business of living, how to make the most of our time?

Perhaps we need to learn to listen.

I'm reading a remarkable little book right now, *In The School of the Holy Spirit* by Fr. Jacques Philippe. Fr. Philippe teaches us how to listen. His primary focus is honing our listening skills to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Yup. He teaches us to recognize when the Holy Spirit is addressing us, to understand what he might be asking of us, and to increase our capacity to receive and respond to what the Holy Spirit might be asking of us in our lives.

Listening is both passive and active. In passivity, we make ourselves available to hear something. We 'zip it' for awhile. Instead of participating in the cacophony that bubbles incessantly around us, we are simply quiet. Fr. Philippe urges us to learn to be docile to the will of God through the events of life. Events occur daily that we are not anticipating and not happy about. We can rail against that which happens and frustrates us, or we can ignore it. But the best use of our time is to see an event that God has allowed to occur and choose to grow from it.

Church of the Ascension Annual Bazaar a big success

by Sandi Digras, Communications Chair

Preparation for the Annual Bazaar begins at least six months in advance, when the Council's bakers and chefs take to the kitchen preparing perogies, cabbage rolls, cakes, pies and other wonderful goodies. The crafty ladies were busy with their sewing machines, knitting needles and other tools to make everything from prayer book covers to baby clothes.

New this year was Granny's Treasures, which featured a room filled with beautifully displayed items from the past, including crystal, china, handmade linen and lace and a cherished collection of teacups. The entire collection was purchased by one lady whose granddaughter wants to start her own collection. The book room and cookie room were a must for adults and children alike, and everyone enjoyed either breakfast or lunch served in the tea room.

Convenor Eloise Morrison was thrilled with the crowds and the raffle tickets were all sold for two beautiful paintings from well-known artists Therese Johnston and Elena Travanut. All the funds raised will go back into the local community and to special bursaries awarded each year. ✂



The craft table



L to R: The 'Granny's Treasure' team of Rosemary Fontenla, Sandi Digras and Carmen Segui

Docility to circumstances does not mean 'not doing anything'. It means acceptance, adapting, and finding peace in the incident that upset our own agenda. Peace is not something that comes of nothingness. We don't become peaceful people because our lives are dull or uneventful. We become peaceful people because we learn to respond peacefully to the errors, lateness or inefficiencies of others, the stumbling blocks, the traffic, the misbehaviour. The spilled juice, the lost document, the lineup at the bank. Our own tempers. Our own desires. Our own errors, lateness or inefficiencies. Peace comes with docility and a deep breath.

All those things that seem to be eating up our time ... they represent the best of what we can do with our time. All the stumbling blocks in the world are not the time wasters. Our lack of peace is the only true waste of time.

Active listening is an awareness of what the other is saying; it's a desire to understand and to deepen our own knowledge or wisdom by what is offered to us. Listening with awareness allows a framework for the prompting of the Holy Spirit to operate more effectively in our lives. Desiring to know or understand increases our capacity to hear, to grow and to become an effective conduit for the great work of evangelization. Fr. Philippe explains that our active desire for the grace of the prompting of the Holy Spirit actually increases God's providence in supplying those graces. To listen actively requires time. Time well spent, when we consider the opportunity to draw closer to God.

Time is precious. We can't earn it and we can't get it back. But it can be our tool, our ability, our efficacy as human beings—for each other and for our eternal life.

The time to spend it well is now. ✂

Year of Consecrated Life closes February 1, 2016

by Sr. Kathleen OSC

The Year of Consecrated Life started at the beginning of Advent last year. It will close on February 2, 2016, the World Day of Consecrated Life. We, the religious of the Island, began in the early Spring of 2015 with a day of prayer at the Monastery of Poor Clares in Duncan. Later in the Spring we came together at the Friary in Victoria for another retreat day. In October we had a conference on consecrated life hosted by the Sisters of St Ann. In early November, in Nanaimo, at the House of Bread Monastery, we had a prayer experience with the Benedictine Sisters.

Throughout the year, on these special days, various aspects of our consecrated, communal life were unfolded before us. Through the gathering of so many different Religious from all parts of the Diocese we experienced the grace of joyous renewal and hope.

We will close the year with a Mass at St. Andrew's Cathedral with Bishop Gary Gordon on Monday, February 1, 2016, at 3 PM. All are welcome. ✂



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Greater Victoria Councils

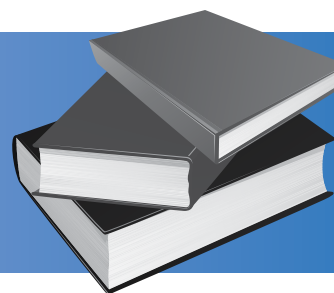
Victoria Council 1256 serving Victoria and Esquimalt
St Patrick's Council 7934 serving Oak Bay and Saanich East
Langford Council 8394 serving Western Communities and Sooke
Saanich Peninsula Council 9703 serving Saanich Peninsula & Gulf Is.
St. Joseph the Worker Council 13356 serving Saanich West
Sacred Heart Council 15445 serving Sacred Heart Parish—Saanich North and East
Fr. Brabant 4th Degree Assembly serving Greater Victoria
Bishop Demers 4th Degree Assembly serving Greater Victoria

For information about the Knights of Columbus in your area please contact your parish office or visit our web site at:

www.kofcvictoria.bc.ca



Island Catholic Schools



Communities of Shalom and Mercy

by Beverly Pulyk, Superintendent of Schools

On November 13, 2015, Fr. Ray Carey from the Archdiocese of Portland spoke to employees in our schools and parishes on the topic *Proclaiming Jesus Through Communities of Shalom and Mercy*. The information presented by Fr. Carey can be applied to any community (schools, parishes, families, work environments, volunteer organizations, teams, and so on).

“Shalom doesn’t just mean ‘peace’. It means ‘perfection, wholeness, balance. When you have all these things, you have peace.’”

~ Fr. Ray Carey

Fr. Carey shared what *Shalom* means, why it is important, and how to sustain and create a community of Shalom. He also provided practical ideas on how we each can impact that sense of community with others.

Shalom is perfect totality, harmony, wholeness and peace. According to Fr. Carey, we experience Shalom in four main ways: at the levels of self, neighbour, environment and God.

Upon hearing his presentation, it caused me to reflect on the following questions and I invite you to ponder the questions for yourselves:

- Am I in Shalom with self—personally and professionally? If yes, how do I sustain that sense of Shalom? If no, why not? What do I need to change?
- Am I in Shalom with my neighbours (neighbour meaning family members, coworkers, others I come into contact with)? Do I accept my neighbours as they are? Am I intentionally courteous to my neighbour? How might I come to be in Shalom with a neighbour that I struggle with?
- Am I in Shalom with the environment? Do I make my home and work environment a place of hospitality?
- Am I in Shalom with God? Do I feel unconditionally loved by God? Do I help others to feel unconditionally loved by God?

May we each consider the above questions as we work to create a Diocese of Shalom and Mercy! ✠



Laudato Si’ and Advent Hope

by Glen Palahicky, Director of Religious Education

“Our time has a great need for hope!”
~ Pope Francis

We are now celebrating the Advent season of the liturgical year that calls us to wait in joyful expectation with renewed hope! The great theological virtue of ‘hope’ is particularly important for us to reflect upon in light of *Laudato Si’*. Hope is about trust and confidence in our future even when it looks shaky and dim. It is deeper than mere optimism. It is based on God’s promises. In this Advent season the Church is calling us to look forward to our personal and collective future and be comforted; Christ is on the move. God’s promised coming will break into our personal lives in a special way. But there is more. God’s promised coming will ultimately break into our planet’s life. Our earth is also experiencing a type of Advent!

“For all of creation is waiting, yearning for the time when the children of God will be revealed.”

~ Romans 8:19

Pope Francis, in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si’*, calls us to be aware of the cry of the earth and her yearning for wholeness. He recognizes how difficult it is to picture a brighter future, socially and environmentally, in the midst of all the brokenness and crises. He says:

There is also the fact that people no longer seem to believe in a happy future; they no longer have blind trust in a better tomorrow based on the present state of the world and our technical abilities.

In spite of the many problems facing our planet, Pope Francis’ message in *Laudato Si’* is one of hope and trust in the future. It really is the message of Advent. God’s promises will ultimately be fulfilled with us, through us and in spite of us.

Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. ... No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to His grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours.

May our Advent be joined with the earth’s as we worship, work and wait with hope for our Saviour! ✠



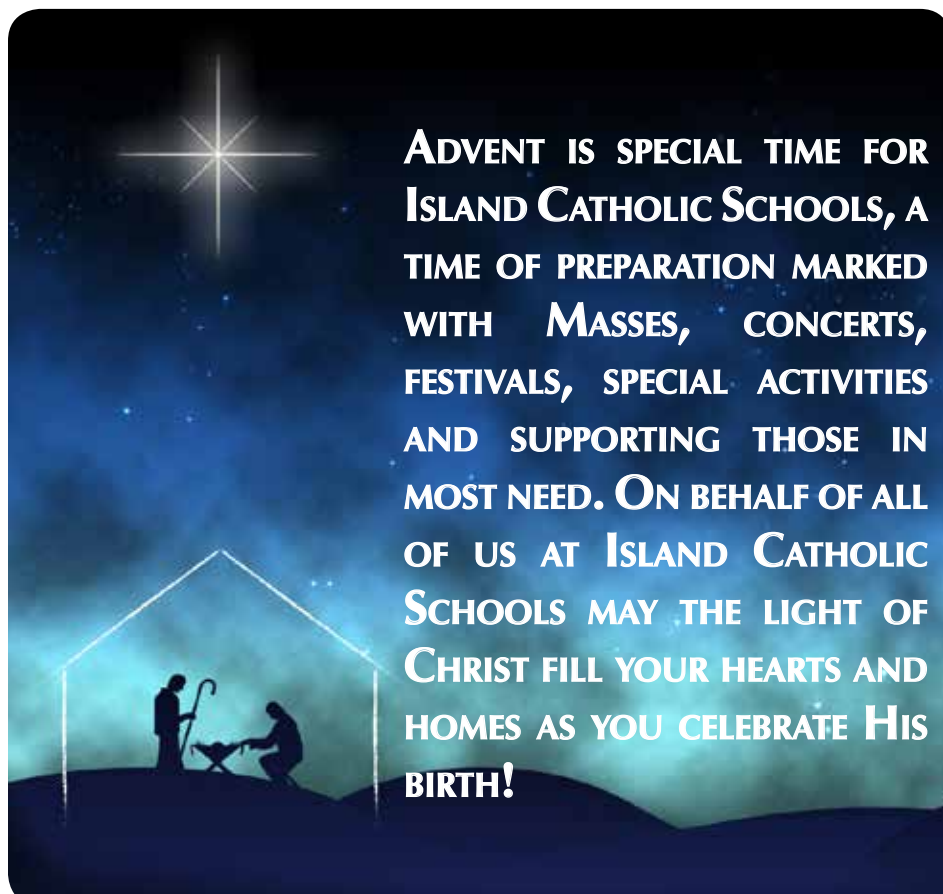
Employment with Island Catholic Schools

There is a need for relief Educational Assistants as well as Early Learning and Before and After School workers required within Island Catholic Schools.

Preference will be given to candidates with the following qualifications:

- Identification with and participation in the life of a Catholic parish
- Commitment to Catholic Education
- Valid training and/or certificate relative to the position
- Successful school experience
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with others.

Interested persons are invited to view our website for application forms and application requirements. <http://cisdv.bc.ca/employment-opportunities.php>



ADVENT IS SPECIAL TIME FOR ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, A TIME OF PREPARATION MARKED WITH MASSES, CONCERTS, FESTIVALS, SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORTING THOSE IN MOST NEED. ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US AT ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MAY THE LIGHT OF CHRIST FILL YOUR HEARTS AND HOMES AS YOU CELEBRATE HIS BIRTH!



A challenge to sustain

by Simon Di Castri, Principal, St. Joseph's Elementary School, Victoria

As I write this, we are barely past Remembrance Day and the Christmas advertising, music, and general consumer assault has begun. It seems to begin earlier and earlier every year! Christmas has been so thoroughly coopted for commercial gain that the original meaning has largely been lost, at least in popular perception.

We in Catholic schools and the Catholic community have the special privilege of being able to encounter the reality of Christmas head-on, and embrace, in joy, the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and share that transforming truth with our children, students and each other. We revel in the Advent season, waiting in joyful anticipation of the Lord's coming.

“The challenge ultimately is to sustain our awareness, compassion, and generosity toward the less fortunate, the poor, the marginalized, year round, and being in Catholic schools helps us do so by being in tune with the liturgical seasons and year.

We are able to celebrate Advent with our students at Mass with Fr. Alfredo, as well as biweekly Liturgies of the Word in our school gym. During Religion classes, students become familiar with and explore the story of Christ's coming and the associated stories that come from this awesome intervention of a loving God into the history of His creation.

At St. Joseph's we celebrate Advent in a number of ways. We support the St. Vincent de Paul's 'Socks, Toques & Mitts' drive through December to aid Victoria's homeless, marginalized, and poor. We celebrate with our families at two Christmas Concerts that reminds us of the Nativity story and how it changed forever the relationship between the Creator and His people.

As Catholic schools, however, we are challenged to keep the spirit of Christmas alive and active throughout the year. During the Christmas season it is easy, and we are naturally aware of the many blessings we enjoy. We know that many families and individuals in our city, province and country do not enjoy the plenty we take almost for granted. We are moved by the plight of the poor at this time of year, but the real challenge is sustaining our sense of social justice and action throughout the year.

Again, this is an area where Catholic schools shine. We continue to be engaged in outreach work and drives for those less fortunate. We support the World Food Day food drive held in October, and our students across the region bring in a phenomenal amount of food for St. Vincent de Paul's Social Concerns office.

Our students are twinned with those of the Diocese of Marionhill, South Africa, sharing letters with students there, raising funds, and working in solidarity in our garden at the school, where we harvested hundreds of pounds of potatoes, donating them as well. This makes concrete to students the practical application of our faith in action. It is not enough to simply discuss world issues, justice, and tolerance in the classroom—we are called to act, to reach out and interact with those at the margins, and share our wealth.

Our students continue to reach out to the broader community and to the global village by raising funds for orphans in Haiti every February, something St. Joseph's students have done continuously for more than thirty years. While the earthquake there in 2010 briefly brought the dire circumstances of the Haitian people to worldwide attention, St. Joseph's students enjoyed a personal connection to the orphans through Madame Morton, our retired Music teacher, who started the Hike for Haiti in response to seeing first-hand the desperate situation many Haitians, and particularly orphaned Haitians, lived in. Our students could relate and got behind this fundraiser in a big way every year, collecting pledges from friends and family for the annual Hike.

In Lent, our students are again challenged to collect non-perishable food donations for St. Vincent de Paul. Here the focus is on almsgiving, in keeping with the spirit of Lent. Students are asked to reflect on the abundance in their lives, and consider ways that they can contribute from the surfeit food, clothing, and other extras they enjoy, and to realize just what privileged lives they lead.

It is through such endeavors as Food and Toiletries Drives, Christmas Hampers for needy families, the Hike for Haiti, the Socks, Toques, & Mitts Drive, Cops for Cancer's Tour de Rock, among others, that students really become enlivened in their faith, seeing many possible ways of concretely living out the call of the Beatitudes Jesus tasks us all with. They see their faith as more than just an activity that takes place in church on Sunday mornings—they begin to see and understand their faith as a call to action, a call to be stewards and servants of the poor, the needy. Indeed, of all creation!

Which brings us back to Advent and the travels of the Holy family as they journey toward Bethlehem, toward Emmanuel—God with us—born poor and on the margins, with nowhere to go but a smelly, damp stable. This is a truth worth sharing, a truth that inspires and moves us to action, and transforms us to “walk the talk”. The challenge ultimately is to sustain our awareness, compassion, and generosity toward the less fortunate, the poor, the marginalized, year round, and being in Catholic schools helps us do so by being in tune with the liturgical seasons and year.

What a privilege! ✂

Recently a class of students at St. Joseph's Elementary School in Victoria did a 'Leaf Tromp' courtesy of a gift from the City of Saanich! We aimed to spread them all around the garden.

But then we realized that what goes up ...



MERCIFUL LIKE

Jubilee Year

December 8, 2015 –

Witnessing Mercy

by Sandi Digras, Church of the Ascension

“The Jubilee Year of Mercy begins on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and our Gospel for today’s Feast is the announcement of the Angel Gabriel to Mary that God will become man: the God of creation, our God of covenants and promises, will become the clay of the earth. Mercy in all its many faces becomes incarnate in Jesus.”

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

~ Luke 6: 37 – 38

“No longer can we hide in the forest like Adam and Eve because of fear of God or shame for sin. God never tires of searching for us, and never tires of forgiving us.

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

Our Pastor, Fr. Karam Alraban, answered the invitation of Bishop Gary Gordon to come and celebrate the Mass of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the liturgical celebration of the Year of Mercy at the Cathedral and 50th Anniversary of the closing of Vatican II on December 8, 2015. Many wanted to come but all felt the driving was too risky, so Pat Cypak suggested we rent a bus. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of our parish, 50 seats were filled in no time! We boarded the bus, full of faith and fun, and enjoyed fellowship with each other. We sang songs, led by Jean Kelly; Pat provided snacks and water; and Fr. Karam kept us motivated with stories and prayers before we ate our supper. The youngest members on the bus were the Jainshaw family: Athira and Aaron with parents Kanrunakaram and Mini.

The lovely surprise was being met at the Cathedral by Bishop Gary Gordon, and Merlin, his lovable dog. We had a photo taken in front of the bus and then the courtesy continued when we entered the Cathedral and discovered seats for Church of the Ascension were reserved and waiting for us to sit together as a parish family.

The pre-Mass ceremony was conducted by First Nations members and included blessings and the laying of a beautiful red and black blanket with a symbolic salmon design. The members said prayers in their own language and witnessed to the Jubilee of Mercy Mass. Some of the highlights of the Mass were the sight of the priests of the Diocese circling the altar, and the moving ‘fireside chat’ between Bishop Gary Gordon and Bishop Emeritus Remi De Roo, dressed in First Nations headbands. Bishop De Roo is one of two Bishops in Canada who was present at Vatican II, and he spoke about the connection of the Second Vatican Council with the theme ‘mercy’. At the closing of the Mass a First Nations elder asked us to be “witnesses to the work that had happened” for those who were unable to come to Mass and share our blessings.

Following Mass we met in the Seghers Hall for refreshments, then joyfully boarded the bus for the return trip home. We all spoke about this most moving experience and how it touched us in different ways. Fr. Karam was very pleased so many of his parish family came together and was proud we had the chance to witness the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. ✕



BE THE FACE OF THE FATHER

Year of Mercy

November 20, 2016

Mercy in Action

by James E. O'Reilly, Office of Religious Education

The Face of Mercy is most powerfully captured in the image of Christ on Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 24)

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has opened the Holy Door, the "Door of Mercy, through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope." He has invited the whole Church "to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us."

Shelter the homeless, and comfort the sorrowful have resonated in the hearts of parishes throughout the Diocese of Victoria. The call throughout the Diocese to assist with the Refugee Crisis has been met by nearly half our parishes involved directly or indirectly in forming Refugee Sponsorship Committees.

At least six parish committees have been or are in the process of being formed (a number including smaller parishes partnering with larger parishes, and some partnering with other denominations and community groups). Two parishes already have raised the required funds to support prospective families). One parish has already seen a refugee family supported and established on the Island and is eager and ready to assist a second family.

Earnest fundraising efforts have been underway for the last four months at all parishes. More than \$100,000 has been collected throughout the Diocese, and the funds continue to come in and are being forwarded on to Aid to the Church in Need – Canada (ACN), Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP).

Throughout this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, as we continue our efforts of opening our hearts and doors to be the face of mercy for others, we are sure to be opened to encounter God's Love and God's boundless Mercy—beyond measure! ✠

“Mary, the highly favoured one, puts all humanity on a new path by her decisive ‘yes’ to be the mother of Jesus, to participate in the saving mercy of God’s plan.”

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

“‘How do we obtain mercy in a world of tragedy and pain?’ we ask. Mary, too, was uncomprehending. ‘How can this be?’ she wondered. The Angel Gabriel’s message to her is relevant for us today: ‘The Holy Spirit will overshadow you and the spirit of the Most High will sustain you.’”

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

“There is new ground, a new path set before us in the Year of Mercy. It is the path of tenderness and forgiveness.

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

Photos courtesy of Connie Dunwoody



World Youth Day 2016—you know you wanna ...

by Kayla Hart. Photos courtesy of Nadia Cornejo

Chaplains Fr. Dean Henderson and Fr. Paul Szczur SDS would like you all to know that they, and a group of about 30 young adults, will embark on a pilgrimage to Poland for World Youth Day 2016. The trip will take place the last two weeks of July and will include visits to many holy sites throughout Poland. It begins with a week's worth of 'Days in the Diocese', where we will be hosted by families in the city of Wroclaw. We will use this time to strengthen our group fellowship, as well as meet fellow international pilgrims in smaller groups before the estimated 2.5 million of us gather in Krakow for the second week. These two weeks culminate in a giant, unforgettable outdoor Mass with Pope Francis.

Our group spans much of the official age range of World Youth Day, with the youngest pilgrims turning 19 shortly before the trip, while the oldest (excluding chaplains) will be 32. We come from 13 parishes throughout Victoria, Campbell River, Port Alberni and Vancouver. We'll even be joined by two former members of the UVic Catholic Students Association who are travelling separately from Saskatchewan and Germany.

Some are attending partially because of Polish heritage. One pilgrim, Natalia Zapotoczny, put it beautifully, saying, "It will be interesting to view Poland through the eyes of my fellow pilgrims, and feel like both a guide and a visitor to a country I hold very close to me." Many are attracted to the Polish saints—Saints Faustina, Maximillian Kolbe and Pope John Paul II—who will be our spiritual guides. Personally, I am particularly fond of the devotion to the Divine Mercy. Most of us are attracted to the travel, and for some, this will be their first trip outside of North America. Others are excited for the spiritual fellowship—to

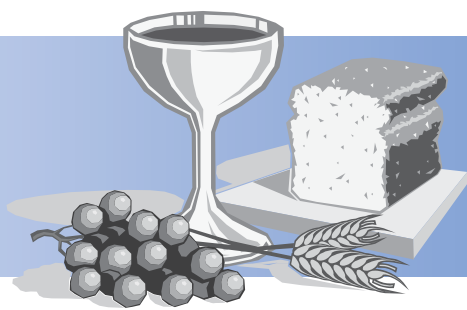
make new friends, and to strengthen relationships with existing ones. Marleis Bowering, a former UVic student travelling from Vancouver says, "It will be the first trip I'll be taking with my best friend. I'm so happy to be going with her on a pilgrimage of the faith that has been at the centre of our friendship from the beginning." Of course, we're all excited to see—and maybe even meet?—the ever-lovable Pope Francis.

For most of us, it will be our first World Youth Day, and for some, the second or more. Between Fr. Dean and Fr. Paul, the two chaplains have attended every World Youth Day since 2002 except one. This will be Fr. Dean's third, with experiences in Toronto in 2002 and Madrid in 2011. More interestingly, this will be Fr. Paul's third World Youth Day as a chaplain, but fourth overall, having attended in Czestochowa, Poland as a student in 1991. How exciting, that 25 years later, as the event makes its way back to Poland, he will get to lead us on our own pilgrimage!

With many of our flights purchased recently, the faraway trip is feeling particularly real. Fundraising efforts have already begun, with the first organized in late November: a Polish dinner at Our Lady of Fatima spearheaded by Nathaniel Wynans. Nathaniel is this year's fundraising coordinator for the Diocesan Youth Conference and a fellow World Youth Day pilgrim. Through his involvement in both, it was a logical decision to do something big to combine efforts for both initiatives. In the end, more than 200 attended, and contributed to the overall proceeds through ticket sales, a silent auction, a 50/50 draw, and CD sales of the local White Eagle Band, who also provided the entertainment for the evening. ✂



Vocations



by Fr. Dean Henderson

Fides, Fecunditas, Hilaritas!

Two vocation teams serve under Bishop Gary for the good of the people of God in the Diocese of Victoria. Recently, after appointment as Vocation Director, I pulled together a team for the promotion of vocation awareness and availability to assist those with a sense of God's loving call to surrender themselves for total service in his Church. Planting seeds for all vocations: lay single service; holy marriage and family life; consecrated religious life; and holy orders, all come within the scope of this team's mandate. At their first meeting the team determined they would, by God's grace, be faithful to the Church's mission and teaching, have fun in the joyful witness of their own vocation, and seek to be fruitful in their efforts; faithful, fruitful and fun! *Fides, Fecunditas, Hilaritas!*

The team comprises Danny and Philomena Brock of Victoria, both of whom have long been associated with our Catholic Schools; Sr. Vinda Ochoa RVM, who is serving with Sr. Elisa Lavarias RVM among the Cowichan People of St. Ann's Duncan, and a sixteen-year-old from Nanaimo who is enthused to reach her generation of youth with the good news of the Gospel, Anela Nicholson. All of these people are available to assist people discerning vocation, but the first contact after one's personal and prayerful encounter with the Lord, would be one's local pastor.

After some spiritual direction, a person could be in touch with a member of the team for further consultation and direction depending upon their particular 'call'. Should a man be interested in discernment of a call to priesthood or the diaconate, Fr. Paul Szczur would be consulted as the Director of Formation, particularly for those called to the order of priest. Fr. Paul maintains contact with our current three seminarians and their own Seminary formation teams.

For the current preparation of the men preparing for the permanent diaconate, and their wives who support their call, we have another team now in the second year of a formation process: Fr. John Laszczyk, Fr. David Hogman and me, along with Deacon Daniel Lavoie and his wife Diane from the Comox Valley. The whole Diocese, parents, priests, teachers, youth ministers—everyone—is encouraged to promote vocations for the sake of the mission of the Gospel of truth and mercy.

A recent gathering for all the Religious Communities of the Diocese was hosted by the Sisters of St. Ann in celebration of the Year of the Consecrated Life. A bookmark given to all included the names of communities represented in the Diocese and a beautiful prayer for vocations by Pope Francis, which is printed below. Perhaps it could be cut out and prayed regularly by the faithful. All queries about vocations are welcomed by all members of the vocations teams, but will be directed by Fr. Dean, who can be reached at catholic@uvic.ca. ✕

Prayer for Priests

Loving God,

I ask for a special blessing on all the priests of my Diocesan presbyterate. Help them to remember always that they do not work alone, but that they are an "intimate sacramental brotherhood" under the leadership of our Bishop, a ministry team for which they are all responsible. For the sake of their unified and coherent ministry, help them to remember that the ministry they do is not theirs alone, but a share in our bishop's ministry. For that reason, keep them always respectful of and obedient to his leadership. Help them to be diligent in their ministry, absorbed in it, so that their commitment may be evident and their service helpful. Inspire them to take good care of themselves and help them be attentive to becoming more effective in their service. Show my fellow Catholics and me ways to encourage our priests—those who offer priestly service to us in the Church. Help them to set a good example for us in all that they do. Support our sick, retired and absent priests with your loving care.

I ask this in the name of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Diaconal Formation Team

Fr. John Laszczyk—Director

Fr. Dean Henderson

Fr. David Hogman

Deacon Daniel Lavoie and Diane
(from the Comox Valley)

Vocations Awareness Team

Fr. Dean Henderson—Director

Danny and Philomena Brock

Sr. Vinda Ochoa RVM

Anela Nicholson

Seminarian Formation Director

Fr. Paul Szczur SDS

Lord of the Harvest,

Bless young people with the gift of courage
To respond to your call.

Open their hearts to great ideals,
To great things.

Inspire all of your disciples to mutual love
And giving – for vocations blossom in
The good soil of faithful people.

Instill those in religious life, parish ministries,
And families with the confidence and grace
To invite others to embrace the bold
And noble path of a life consecrated to you.

Unite us with Jesus through prayer
And Sacrament, so that we may cooperate with
You in building your reign of mercy and truth,
Of justice and peace.

Amen

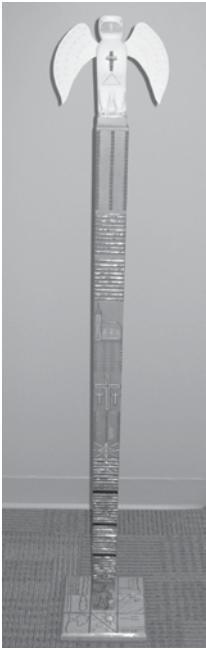


Out of the Archives

by Theresa Vogel

Keepers of the Archives often rely on their patron, St. Lawrence of Rome (Keeper of Treasures), but an email correspondent over the past month is a modern day ‘patron saint’ in answer to the challenge for November. The item depicted in the November issue is a ‘sahale stick’, a teaching and story-telling aid used throughout the history of development of the church in early Canada. This particular sahale stick was presented to Bishop Emeritus Remi De Roo on February 14, 1963, in the welcome and acceptance of the Bishop as a faithful collaborator with Native people in the Diocese. Thanks to my knowledgeable email correspondent, I learned that the full name bestowed on Bishop De Roo was ‘*Siem Le Pleet Schoo-Kun*’, which is roughly translated as ‘High Priest Swan’, a reference to the good omen of the first swan seen overhead; a sign that spring will come soon.

If you wish more information on this unique event, you can visit the Archives of Algoma University (Ontario) as this site: http://archives.algomau.ca/main/sites/default/files/2012-33_001_020_pdf2.pdf and look at the newspaper article on line.



A bit of a reprieve from the questioning as a Christmas gift to you all and an explanation of a large and exciting project currently being undertaken by volunteers in the Archives. For the fifteen months I have been at the site, the incredible collection of priestly vestments has been of interest to me, with a little frustration on the side. Very few of the items have any provenance attached to them (the ones which do are fascinating—more about that in coming issues) but the materials remaining are a marvelous collection of rich fabrics and unique designs. The members in attendance at the Canadian Catholic Archivists’ Group’s annual convention in September were treated to an in-depth seminar by a fabric artist who has brought her creativity to the new cathedral in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. From a similar collection of vestments, with due acknowledgement of the holiness of these blessed garments, the artist has produced a wide variety of artistic and functional items to enhance the décor in the new building, by depicting the liturgical colors, seasons, and themes of the church year. So, in Victoria, we have assembled a bit of a ‘Seam Dream Team’ to design and develop materials made from these marvelous fabrics. Stay tuned to this column for more information on these creative designs, each of which contains a little piece of our history! Blessings to you and yours at Christmas! ✂



Knights of Columbus ‘flip’ for charity

Photos and text courtesy George Weiss, Financial Secretary, Knights of Columbus Council 4582



On November 15, cheques were presented to representatives from the Ladysmith Food Bank and the Crossroads Crisis Pregnancy Centre – Nanaimo. The funds came from last year’s Knights of Columbus Charity Appeal fund. Cheques were presented after our monthly pancake breakfast.



On November 22, a cheque was presented to Bern Muller, the Principal of St. Joseph’s Catholic School in Chemainus. The cheque was presented by Grand Knight Ross Lubben. The funds came from two Knights of Columbus pancake breakfasts.



On October 27, a cheque was presented to a representative of the Ladysmith Refugee Sponsorship 2015/2016 program by Grand Knight Ross Lubben. The funds came from the largest Knights of Columbus pancake breakfast ever held in our Diocese.

Family Records Guide and Estate Planning Materials

“I am going to prepare a place for you and when it is prepared I will come to take you with me so that where I am you may be also.”

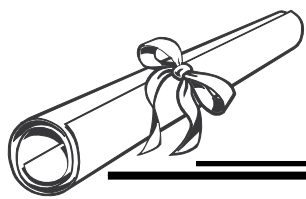
“Graciously grant peace in our days that by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress as we await the blessed hope and coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” At every Mass we pray these words just after saying the Lord’s Prayer.

The Diocese is pleased to offer tools to assist with estate planning, so as to be free from distress and joyfully provide a faithful legacy. The *Family Records Guide* and other estate planning tools are available now from the Diocese of Victoria.

A gift of love ... a living faith.

To obtain copies, please phone (250) 479-1331 or email chancery@rcdvictoria.org.





The Campus Mission

by Fr. Dean Henderson

Recently the clergy of the Diocese had a wonderful occasion for instruction and refreshment as a presbyterate (the fellowship of priests serving within the Diocese) under the leadership of Fr. Ronald Knott of Kentucky. He quoted the Vatican II document on priestly formation that I thought summarized and encapsulated our two days together. “Let the priest attract the hearts of young men to the priesthood by his own humble and energetic life, joyfully pursued, and by love for his fellow priests and brotherly collaboration with them.” Sounds like it could have been written by Pope Francis in the *Joy of the Gospel*.

“Let the priest attract the hearts of young men to the priesthood by his own humble and energetic life, joyfully pursued, and by love for his fellow priests and brotherly collaboration with them.”

The effective attraction of a genuine and joyful faithful Catholic community of clergy is certainly true for our mission on campus, the ministry of vocation awareness, and the foundation for the upcoming Year of Mercy. At our recent post-Sunday Campus Mass Coffee House, I met a visiting overseas student who came looking for positive friendship in the midst of his loneliness, culture shock and sadness. The extraordinary thing is that he has absolutely no Christian or Catholic background and queried of our Catholic Student Association president if he could join us after finding our presence on the web! He was met by a genuinely joyful Catholic community and I’m certain will be visiting again as trust builds, unconditional acceptance is confirmed, and the gentle prodding of the Holy Spirit works in his heart and mind.

While not directly under the umbrella of Campus Mission, Fr. Paul Szczur and I have been gathering with 15 – 20 of our Krakow World Youth Day (WYD) pilgrims after the Campus Sunday Soup and Soul fellowship. These meetings are helpful for building up our pilgrim identity, planning our travel to and from Europe in July, and were helpful to address the practical issues to support the joint Diocesan Youth Conference/WYD fundraising Polish Dinner. In total we have about 30 pilgrims from throughout the Diocese and beyond; some have elected to join us because of friendship connections through their history here. It will be my third WYD, following Toronto in 2002, and Madrid in 2011. These experiences are life changers for many. As one poster promoting a previous WYD stated: *Blazing heat, long lines, endless walking; you’ll love every minute of it!* God’s joy is really present at a WYD!

As the Christian faithful gear up for our celebrations of the incarnation of God in the Saviour babe of Bethlehem, the campus ministry winds down with the end of exams in December and the majority of our students heading home for Christmas. We’ve had a great term with solid sacramental foundations, terrific fellowship in small CCO faith studies, occasions for service and connecting with the Diocesan family. We’ve enjoyed visits from Development and Peace and Respect Life Ministries, as well as Vocation visits from the Poor Clares, Blessed Virgin Mary sisters, and two married couples. We experienced a great performance of Fr. Damien the Leper priest of Molokai by Fr. Edward Evanko, and are looking forward to a visit from the representative of Peace Quest (an initiative of the Sisters of St. Ann) and an annual occasion to sing carols at Mount St. Mary hospital.

With the Catholic Student Association student leaders, the CCO mission team, my Academic Advisory Board and our whole campus Community, may the peace, simplicity and joy of Jesus be yours this Advent and Christmas Season. ✕



Connections

by Raya MacKenzie

Watch. Prepare. These messages in the first two weeks of Advent often caused me a great deal of concern as a child. I learned from my parents and teachers that during this season of the liturgical year we are meant to stay alert in preparing our souls for Christ. I never felt I had enough time to fully prepare myself before Christmas. I didn’t even know what I should do to prepare. Generally, I proscribed myself a certain amount of obligatory prayers and another equally arbitrary amount of good deeds. While other kids grew more and more excited with each newly lit advent candle, I felt pangs of guilt—despite my attempts at preparation, I did not feel any more spiritually ready than I had the week before.

Moving into my adult life, I continue to carry this limited and flawed understanding of preparation, whether I am preparing for God, for a change in my life, for an unknown future, for anything. My greatest fear is that I will fail to prepare for all circumstances and as a result I will cause myself suffering. So I over-plan. I make sure that if Plan A fails then I have Plan B and C and (hopefully) D waiting in the wings.

The modern world encourages this kind of fearful preparation in us. It drives stores to release Christmas wares on November 1 and prompts parents to view Christmas as a deadline rather than a celebration. I have heard countless radio advertisements this year in which the announcers actively wish Christmas wasn’t approaching because of the stress they feel. Much of our greed, I believe, stems from this fear. We collect material goods—cars, houses, lines of credit—in order to feel prepared and secured from the risks inherent in life. I often cannot see past the plans I believe will keep me safe to find the richer and deeper purposes that God has for my fulfillment.

Ironically, it is our constant, fearful drive to prepare that directs our attention away from the true watchfulness of love that Advent really speaks of. Our plans put us in a waking sleep, un-alert to God’s presence in the world.

My misguided worries about Advent emphasized the deadline—*by Christmas you must be spiritually prepared*. But no matter how many prayers I made myself say I never felt I had truly awakened the way the Advent readings enjoined me to. I see now that the deadline was, and continues to be, the problem. Matthew 24:44 specifically tells us there is no deadline: “So then, you also must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him.” This verse applies on a cosmic scale—we do not know the hour of the end of the universe, or of our world, or of our own individual lives. But I believe this message

also applies to the minute details in our everyday lives. If we cannot know the hour when the Lord is coming, he could come at any time on any day and on every day. He could arrive in the sudden beam of light filtering through the clouds. He could be present in a conversation between two old friends or in a quiet moment alone. He may come on a Wednesday night while I am doing the dishes, elbow-deep in greasy bubbles. In fact, Matthew 24:41 indicates Christ is likely to come during the ancient equivalent of doing the dishes, grinding grain into flour.

“Then I heard him in the soft tones of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, I saw him in the face of a homeless man when my dad suddenly stopped and offered three mandarin oranges, so shockingly orange against the slate-grey of the winter and the city. God brings not deadlines but gifts ...

But if I am thinking, as I do the dishes, of my fear, then I will miss him. If I am considering whether Plan C should really move up to become Plan B and wringing my hands over whether Plan A is possibly at risk, then I will not see him. Through all those Advents of my youth, I never found God in the prayers or deeds I had assigned myself. I only found him when I allowed myself to be startled by his unexpected presence. Then I heard him in the soft tones of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, I saw him in the face of a homeless man when my dad suddenly stopped and offered three mandarin oranges, so shockingly orange against the slate-grey of the winter and the city. God brings not deadlines but gifts—unexpected sparks of Divine Love that we cannot prepare for except by letting go of our fear and opening our hearts to their possibilities, to God’s unfailing arrival wherever and whenever we happen to be. ✕

“And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

~ John 1:14



Faith Matters



by James E. O'Reilly, Office of Religious Education

Have Faith!

How many times have we heard those two words, ‘have faith!’? What does ‘have faith’ really mean? Don’t worry? Everything will be all right? We’ve all had experiences where we’ve really had no choice but to hold our breath, trust and ‘have faith’ that somehow things would work out, and they did. Maybe they have been situations of ‘eleventh hour’ repentances, storming heaven for divine intervention to get bailed out from our own poor planning—to pass that math or physics or (fill in the blank) test.

“Having faith in God is not really about us, rather it’s about God’s faith in, trust and love for us—a faith, a trust, a love that was definitively demonstrated by enduring the cross for us—the place He chose to go for our sake, for love of us.

We can get in the habit of typecasting God into the Divine Daddy who’ll make it all right as we persist in avoiding taking responsibility. Or maybe we have really inexplicably ‘dodged a bullet’ knowing full well that it was only by God’s grace that we had been spared some terrible disaster. Apart from some momentary relief and a gulp of gratitude, where does such an experience leave us? A sobering awareness of a power greater than our self certainly is something to hold on to, and is a start. But deep down we know to ‘have faith’ means so much more.

We need to ask ourselves, ‘have faith’ in what or whom? Being first and foremost relational beings, we know that someone we have utter faith in is someone we cherish and honour. As people of faith we know that God gives us everything we have that is good and above all calls us into a loving relationship—a relationship of cherishing and honouring that love that has first been shown to us by God. On a day-to-day level there are four aspects of life we can and need to honour and have faith in: our self, our neighbours (others), our God and where we find ourselves—in a word, our environment.

Faith in our self begins by recognizing the unique dignity with which God has endowed us. Made in God’s image and likeness to exercise God-given, God-like gifts, we are both beloved and equipped by God to be agents of love, forgiveness and justice. We are, each of us, precious in the heart of God and given His life—

A living Nativity

by Anela Nicholson

When we think of Christmas, many familiar things and pleasant memories may come to mind. There are numerous traditional symbols of Christmas, but as Catholics, perhaps no other has quite so much symbolism as the familiar Nativity scene.

First created in 1223 by the beloved Franciscan friar St. Francis of Assisi, Nativity scenes, or Crèches, have become one of the strongest symbols of Christ’s lowly birth on that Christmas night so many years ago. The Blessed Mother and St. Joseph gaze lovingly at the newborn Saviour, surrounded by the humble animals and lowly shepherds who have come to pay homage to their King and Creator. This moment in time has been recreated in so many ways, on so many occasions, yet it continues to have deep meaning.

“It is easy to find at least one character in the Nativity story with whom you identify personally this holiday season. Everyone can see themselves somewhere among the story characters, and can find a sense of peace, joy, and hope in the stable that will carry over into their Christmas celebrations.

While admiring my own Nativity scene, I realized that this familiar image holds even more meaning than I had previously given it credit for. While the arrangement, appearance, and use of artistic license may differ from scene to scene, the same basic characters are always present. Each of these characters, I found, can represent each of us at some point in our life, and each can teach us a truth about being a Christian child of God. By pondering the Nativity in this way, we begin to personally identify with the characters, and become our own sort of living Nativity—truly present in the long ago moment.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is a radiant example of humility, obedience to the will of God, and love. She loved God so much that she was willing to do anything He asked of her, even if she didn’t understand. Our love for God should drive us to follow Him everywhere, and as well, bring His love to all those whom we meet, just as Mary did.

His grace—to be His presence in the world for others. To affirm this each day is to affirm God’s love and it urges us to respond to God with gratitude and deeper commitment.

Faith in others is made real in caring for and sharing with all those we encounter—family, friends, and particularly those in need. All of these, like ourselves, are beloved and made in the image and likeness of God. And yes, some people, sometimes (also like us), have days when shortcomings, failings, (yes, sin) overshadow. Recognizing this, particularly in ourselves, and turning back to God is of course a grace, a gift from God. This correcting, turning and ‘having faith’ in God’s forgiveness is the point where His healing love is made real and becomes a deeper part of our lived experience and knowledge of God.

Having faith in God is not really about us, rather it’s about God’s faith in, trust and love for us—a faith, a trust, a love that was definitively demonstrated by enduring the cross for us—the place He chose to go for our sake, for love of us.

To have faith in the environment is to recognize and honour the gift that every place we find ourselves in is itself a gift from God—our homes, workplaces, vacation places (not much of a stretch there!) even, and perhaps most importantly, the places which challenge us.

It is true that some places are more easily identifiable as ‘gift’ than others, but we have been given them all as privileged places—each and every place is full of potential for encountering God, whether it’s our planet or a particular part of it where we find ourselves at this moment. We experience God in ‘mountain top’ experiences, but also (and most typically in retrospect) those experiences, times and places which have really challenged our faith in God.

So on all levels, with the self, with neighbour, with God and with the environment, we experience the constant day-to-day struggle to be the best version of ourselves that we can be: intentionally working to correct ourselves, being patient with ourselves, being patient with others, being patient with God or being patient with our situation—all of this calls us to honour the generous gift of love we have all been given—to ‘have faith’! ✕

St. Joseph was also asked by God to do something that he didn’t understand. Although he was briefly hesitant, he allowed himself to be lead by God, trusting that all would turn out right in the end. Trusting in God can be difficult at times, but God rewards obedience.

The donkey lends himself to our story in order to teach us something very valuable. While donkeys are notorious for being stubborn animals, this donkey travelled many, many miles to safely deliver Mary to Bethlehem. It was his stubbornness that enabled him to continue on the harsh trek, even when the journey seemed endless. God can use even the most stubborn person to do His will, because stubbornness, when put to the right use, becomes the most unshakeable determination.

We can also relate to the humble shepherds abiding in the neighbouring fields. They remind us that every one of us, no matter if we are rich or poor, well known or simple, is worthy to be loved by God. Shepherds weren’t the most well-liked members of society, yet they were some of the first people to come face to face with Christ.

The sheep that were being tended to can also represent us as Christians. We all need to be led by a shepherd, someone who can help us go through life safely and reach our final destination, that is, heaven. Christ is the Good Shepherd who waits with open arms to lead us to his Father.

Many Nativity scenes also include an angel, who brings the glad tidings of the Messiah’s birth. The angels are God’s messengers, but they also serve to give glory to God and adore Him. In our busy world, it is often times necessary to simply sit and spend time with God, adoring Him and drawing closer to Him in the silence of our hearts.

It is easy to find at least one character in the Nativity story with whom you identify personally this holiday season. Everyone can see themselves somewhere among the story characters, and can find a sense of peace, joy, and hope in the stable that will carry over into their Christmas celebrations.

During this special and holy time of year, may we take extra time to ponder the beautiful miracle of Christ’s birth out of love for us, and then carry that joy and good cheer to all those whom we meet. ✕



Para mi la Navidad es...

by Maria Campos

Navidad es ese tiempo cuando encontramos una razón para celebrar. Algunas personas hacen de la Navidad la razón para celebrar su amor, otras celebraran su amistad y organizaran una fiesta o una comida dando a la Navidad la razón para estar juntos. En las oficinas y demás lugares de trabajo, los empleados son invitados a comer y algún tipo de intercambio de regalos tiene lugar con pretexto de la Navidad. Yo misma he tenido la oportunidad de ser parte de todos estos motivos para celebrar la Navidad pero la razón que más he disfrutado es la de celebrar al Niño Jesús en mi propia familia.

De niña vivía en la Ciudad de México y la Navidad por supuesto era un tiempo de mucha felicidad para mí, así como para muchas personas, y siendo pequeña, la venida de Santa Claus por supuesto era un gran motivo de felicidad aunado a que no había escuela y si muchas fiestas, sobre todo fiestas en familia.

En mi familia, las fiestas decembrinas empezaban el 12 de Diciembre, celebrando a las Lupitas de mi familia, seguida esta fiesta por las posadas del 16 al 23 de diciembre, bueno no es que fuera a una fiesta cada noche, pero si iba a varias posadas, sin embargo la que todavía recuerdo con mucha alegría y cariño era la posada familiar.

Nuestra posada familiar era tan divertida, todos teníamos que ir disfrazados, pero no como los disfraces de Halloween, oh no! Esos son de muertos, no. Nuestros disfraces eran chistosos, teníamos que ir vestidos en harapos, todos descosidos, en unas fachas que lo hacían todo muy divertido. Y ahí estábamos desde mi abuela, tías, padres, hermanos, hermanas, primos. Nos poníamos a cantar los villancicos de Navidad, prendíamos nuestras velitas (y jajaja a veces alguien salía con cabellos quemados), le pegábamos a las piñatas y comíamos. Éramos unas 70 personas juntas disfrutando nuestra familia de la más sana y divertida manera y por supuesto orábamos juntos. Mi abuela dirigía la oración familiar, no era una oración muy larga, pero siempre hubo oración en cada reunión familiar. Creo que así aprendí que la oración familiar tal vez no tiene que ser muy larga, pero si tiene que haber una oración en cada familia y en cada reunión familiar y que sobre todo que esta oración es el motivo de nuestra reunión familiar.

Así crecí y las fiestas familiares continuaron, ahora traíamos a los novios, novias, esposos, esposas y hasta nuestros propios hijos. Éramos las mismas personas celebrando a Dios que nace cada Navidad, cantando las mismas canciones y recitando las mismas oraciones. Y así un día llegué a Canadá y mi celebración de la navidad cambió. De una fiesta de 70 personas, ahora éramos solamente 5, mi esposo, mis hijos y yo; cambiamos la cena Mexicana por la cena Navideña estilo Canadiense, las canciones que cantábamos en español ahora las cantamos en inglés; pero lo más hermoso es que nuestras oraciones son las mismas y la razón para celebrar es la misma, el Niño Jesús que nace en nuestras familias. Y estos pensamientos volcaron en mi corazón sentimientos de agradecimiento a nuestro Señor Jesucristo por haber fundado la Santa Iglesia Católica, porque es la misma, la única iglesia Católica en todas partes donde vamos y esto es celebrar la Navidad, el celebrar el nacimiento del Nino Jesús en nuestro corazón y así poder compartir su amor y su gozo con los demás.

Feliz Navidad!

Christmas is that time of the year when people find a reason to celebrate together in many different ways. Some people celebrate their love, others find their reason for a celebration in their friendships; at the workplace employees are invited to a lunch or dinner and on many of these occasions there is an exchange of gifts. I have been part of all these kinds of celebrations, but there's only one and true celebration and it is the one I enjoy the most: it is the celebration of Jesus in our families.

When I was growing up in Mexico City I remember that Christmas was a time of joy and happiness for me, as for many people. When I was young Santa Claus used to bring me gifts and that was a big reason for my happiness, of course, adding to the fact that there was no school and there were many family parties.

In my family, we used to start the parties in December with the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, followed by many posadas (Mexican Advent parties). In Mexico there is a posada every night from December 16th to the 23rd of each year. Of course I did not have a party to go to every night, but I had a posada or two with friends and family.

The one I remember the most is the family posada. Oh, that was fun! We had to wear a costume, but not like the ones for Halloween—oh no, those are deadly. My family used to dress for this family posada in the shaggiest way—actually, there was a prize for the shaggiest person. Surrounded by my grandmother, aunts, cousins, parents, brothers and sisters, we sang songs, lit candles, broke the piñatas, and had dinner together. There were about 70 people having the best time; and of course among all that fun, we always prayed. Maybe there was a short prayer of a few minutes, but the most important fact is that we always brought the Baby Jesus into our family celebration. I learned that family prayer does not have to be long, but there has to be one in each family.

As I grew up the family parties continued every year, adding to these celebrations our fiancés, spouses, and eventually our own children. We were the same people, celebrating the same God whose birth is remembered every Christmas, singing the same songs every year, and saying the same prayers.

Then one day I found myself in Canada and my Christmas celebration changed. The number of partygoers changed from 70 to just five: my husband, children and myself; from a Mexican dinner to the Canadian style; from songs in Spanish to songs in English; yet most graciously, the prayers and the reason to celebrate is still the same. We celebrate Baby Jesus, now, in my own family. I thank Jesus for the Holy Catholic Church he founded, because it is the same wherever we go, and that is what Christmas is about, to celebrate Jesus in our hearts and to share him with others.

Merry Christmas! ✂

Keynote speaker announced for Diocesan Family Conference

by Marnie Wynans

It is a great pleasure to announce that the Keynote speaker for next summer's Diocesan Family Conference is the beloved Fr. Clair Watrin!

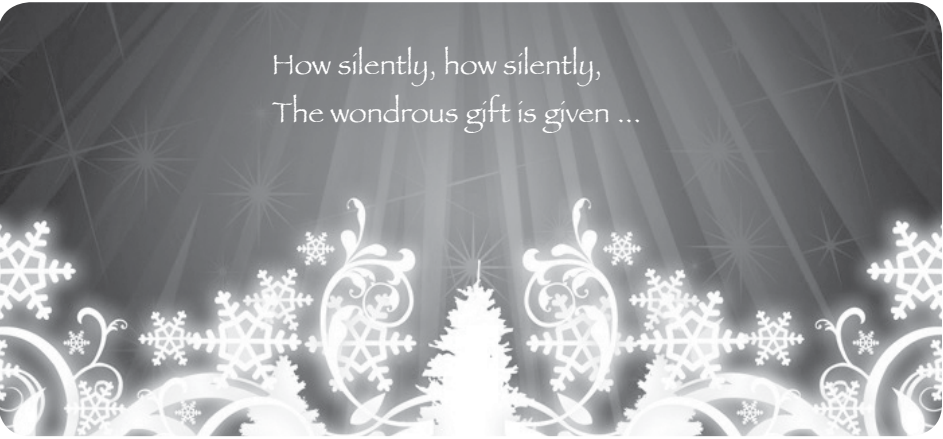



Fr. Clair Watrin CSB

Fr. Clair Watrin CSB is the resident chaplain of the Way of Holiness, a prayer retreat west of Hinton, AB. Fr. Clair was ordained in 1959 for the Congregation of St. Basil. As a Basilian he has served in many roles and locations, including parish work, many years as a teacher at the secondary and post secondary levels, and 15 years as a pastor and missionary in St. Lucia, a Caribbean island. He is the founder of the Live-In retreat movement which was originally developed as a result of his work with youth in the Search program. Fr. Clair also helped in the establishment of CCO (Catholic Christian Outreach) at the University of Saskatchewan, which has spread to campuses across Canada including our own UVIC campus. Fr. Clair is a gifted priest who is in demand as a speaker across Canada. He has given countless missions and retreats over his lifetime of service. Fr. Clair currently serves as the chaplain and spiritual advisor at the Way of Holiness.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Fr. Clair radiates God's love and mercy. He is excited to speak to families on the mission given to them, and will inspire parents, grandparents, youth and children to "like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour." (1 Peter 1:16)

Save August 12 – 14, 2016 on your calendars now for an unforgettable weekend at the beautiful ocean side of Nanoose Bay. Registrations will open early in the new year. ✂






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Fr Lombardi: 'Vatileaks 2' Trial Will Be Fair

The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ, has published a statement concerning the ongoing trial concerning the leaking of confidential documents - the so-called 'Vatileaks 2': 'In recent weeks, since the opening of the trial for the dissemination of reserved documents commonly known as 'Vatileaks 2', many observations and evaluations have been written regarding the judicial system of Vatican City State and in particular on the Tribunal where this trial and its related procedures are taking place. Since many of these observations are inappropriate, or at times entirely unjustified, it would appear opportune to offer some considerations enabling a clearer view and a more just evaluation of this fundamental aspect of the situation.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28979>

What Does 'Ecological Conversion' Look Like?

What does 'ecological conversion' look like? It's an important question for Catholics in the light of *Laudato Si'*, the environment papal encyclical. During my last visit today to the venue of the UN Climate conference - COP21 - it was on my mind, particularly since the conference focus is turning very specifically to action responses to climate change.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28969>

EU Churches on Frontline of Integration

The European Commission convened a Dialogue Seminar on Wednesday, focused on looking beyond the immediate humanitarian crisis provoked by the recent influx of migrants and refugees on European soil. COMECE, CEC, and CCME gathered experts and Church leaders from across Europe to discuss models of integration, best practices, and the fundamental values that guide integration within the European Union. Welcoming migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees became an urgent challenge, especially for Member States with an external border of the EU. The crisis became acute during the summer of 2015 and moved migration issues to the top of the EU political agenda.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28967>

Bishop appointed for the Diocese of Whitehorse

Press Release

His Holiness Pope Francis on November 27, 2015, named the Reverend Héctor Felipe Vila as Bishop of the Diocese of Whitehorse. At the time of his appointment, he was Rector of Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Toronto. Bishop-elect Vila succeeds the Most Reverend Gary Gordon who was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Victoria on June 14, 2014. Bishop Gordon had served as Apostolic Administrator of Whitehorse until he was installed as Bishop of Victoria on August 28, 2014. Since then, the Reverend Kieran Kilcommons MHA, has been Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Whitehorse.

Born on September 17, 1962, in Lima, Peru, Bishop-elect Vila did his primary studies and part of his secondary education in his homeland before immigrating to Canada in 1979. He graduated in Mechanical Engineering in 1986 from George Brown College in Toronto. In 1987, he joined the Neocatechumenal Way. He began his studies in philosophy and theology at the University of Toronto and in 1989 continued his studies at the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Rome and at the Gregorian University. Subsequently, he obtained a licentiate in patristic studies from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. Bishop-elect Vila was ordained to the priesthood by Saint John Paul II on May 14, 1995, for the Diocese of Rome where he ministered until 1998.

In 1998, upon his return to Canada, he was appointed administrator of St. Norbert's Parish in Toronto. In 2000, he was then appointed Rector of Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Toronto.

According to the CCCB 2015 Directory, the Diocese of Whitehorse has 22 parishes and missions, with a Catholic population of 8,150, served by seven diocesan priests, three priests who are members of religious communities, two Sisters who are also members of religious communities, and seven lay pastoral assistants. ✠



Bishop-elect Héctor Vila

Pope Francis names first bishop to lead Catholics nurtured in the Anglican tradition

by Fr. Carl Reid

On November 24, 2015, Pope Francis has named the Rev. Monsignor Steven J. Lopes to be the first bishop of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter: a structure equivalent to a diocese for Roman Catholics who were nurtured in the Anglican tradition.

With this appointment, Pope Francis affirms and amplifies Pope Benedict's vision for Christian unity, in which diverse expressions of one faith are joined together in the Church. By naming Bishop-elect Lopes, the Pope has confirmed that the Ordinariate is a permanent, enduring part of the Catholic Church, like any other diocese—one that is now given a bishop so that it may deepen its contribution to the life of the Church and the world.

Bishop Lopes' appointment came just five days before the Ordinariate began using *Divine Worship: The Missal*, a new book of liturgical texts for the celebration of Mass in the Personal Ordinariates around the globe. The texts were approved by the Vatican for use beginning the first Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2015.

Bishop-elect Lopes was directly involved in developing these texts for worship; since 2011, he has served as the executive coordinator of the Vatican commission, *Anglicanae Traditiones*, which produced the new texts.

The new missal is a milestone in the life of the Ordinariate, since the Ordinariate's mission is particularly expressed through the reverence and beauty of its worship, which shares the treasury of the Anglican liturgical and musical traditions with the wider Catholic community.

Bishop-elect Lopes was born and raised in Fremont, California. The only child of Dr. José de Oliveira Lopes (deceased) and Barbara Jane Lopes, he attended Catholic schools in the Golden State, including the St. Ignatius Institute at the University of San Francisco. He earned licentiate and doctoral degrees in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

He was ordained a priest in June 2001 and spent the first several years of his priesthood as an associate pastor at two parishes: St. Patrick Catholic Church in San Francisco and St. Anselm Catholic Church in Ross, California.

Since 2005, he has served as an official of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office responsible for promoting and preserving Catholic teaching. He was named a monsignor in 2010.

Bishop-elect Lopes follows in the footsteps of Msgr. Jeffrey N. Steenson, who was named the first Ordinary (or head) of the Ordinariate when it was established in 2012. Msgr. Steenson's retirement from his position as Ordinary is effective today, upon Pope Francis' appointment of Bishop-elect Lopes. However, Msgr. Steenson has been appointed Administrator of the Ordinariate and will continue to oversee its day-to-day activities until February 2, 2016.

Bishop-elect Lopes is the first bishop to be named for any of the three Personal Ordinariates in the world: Our Lady of Walsingham in the United Kingdom; the Chair of Saint Peter in the United States and Canada; and Our Lady of the Southern Cross in Australia.

The Fellowship of Blessed John Henry Newman is the Ordinariate's community in Victoria. On Saturday, December 5, they introduced us to *Divine Worship: The Missal* at a special Mass at St. Andrew's Cathedral. ✠



Bishop-elect Steven J. Lopes



Useful information regarding the implementation of the Jubilee

Extracted from www.im.va, Official Webpage of the Jubilee of Mercy

The Jubilee of Mercy was announced by Pope Francis as a year to be lived intensely in each particular Church, allowing every person to encounter the mercy of God the Father through diligent labor for the Church’s mission there. The most evident sign of this pastoral care is the chance to open a Door of Mercy in every diocese. These doors, analogous to the Holy Doors of the Papal Basilicas in Rome, will permit even people who cannot travel to Rome to make a Jubilee pilgrimage.

Doors of Mercy

It will be the responsibility of the local Ordinary to decide in which church of the diocese the Door of Mercy will be opened. There should be a Door of Mercy opened in every diocese and eparchy of the world (cfr. MV 3). *In the Diocese of Victoria, this Door was opened at St. Andrew’s Cathedral on December 13, 2015.*

It is good for the extraordinary possibility for the Jubilee indulgence to be recognized by the faithful precisely as an opportunity out of the ordinary, so that they may live it as a time particularly fitting for embarking on the path of conversion. Fostering the proper appreciation for the special sign of the Door of Mercy will facilitate this invitation to conversion.

The Opening of the Doors of Mercy

After the solemn inauguration of the Holy Year—marked by the opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter’s Basilica [on] December 8—all the particular Churches [opened] their own Doors of Mercy in communion with the Church of Rome as part of the Eucharistic celebration of the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday, December 13, 2015). As a matter of fact, the Holy Father will open the Holy Door of the Cathedral of Rome, the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, on that Sunday. Every particular Church will also open any other Doors of Mercy, namely those designated at important Shrines, during the celebration of the Eucharist for the Third Sunday of Advent, which may be presided at by a delegate of the Bishop.

Jubilee Churches

Each of the four Papal Basilicas in Rome (Saint Peter’s in the Vatican, Saint John Lateran, Saint Mary Major, and Saint Paul Outside the Walls) has a Holy Door. These are Jubilee Churches; one can obtain the Jubilee indulgence by making a pilgrimage to one of them and fulfilling the other necessary conditions. The Basilicas of the Holy Land are also traditionally Jubilee Churches. In the rest of the world, the Jubilee Churches will be the diocesan church and any shrines in which the local Ordinary decides to open a Door of Mercy.

For more information about the Jubilee Year of Mercy, visit www.rcdvictoria.org/jubilee-year-of-mercy.php

In Rome, in addition to the four Papal Basilicas, there will be three other Jubilee Churches. They are Saint Lawrence Outside the Walls (San Lorenzo fuori le Mura), The Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (Santa Croce in Gerusalemme), and Saint Sebastian Outside the Walls (San Sebastiano fuori le Mura). These churches, with the Papal Basilicas, make up the traditional ‘Seven Church Walk’. The importance of pilgrimages for the Jubilee suggests that the faithful rediscover and undertake this penitential itinerary left to the Romans by Saint Philip Neri in the 1500s. Therefore, pilgrimages to any one of these three additional churches will also be an occasion to gain the Jubilee Indulgence.

The diocese of Rome is home to many other churches and important shrines as well, pilgrimage destinations for many of the faithful, who always find priests in these places ready to welcome them in the mercy of the Father. During the Holy Year, the Shrine of Divine Love (Santuario del Divino Amore) and the Church of Santo Spirito in Sassia, also known as the ‘Shrine of Divine Mercy’ will be designated as additional Jubilee Churches, where pilgrims can go to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence.

Finally, churches that already regularly have the possibility to grant indulgences to the faithful who devotedly fulfill the prescribed conditions in them will remain places in which to obtain an indulgence during the Jubilee of Mercy, according to the conditions already determined for each of these places.

Having Crossed the Doorway

Once they have crossed through the Holy Door or Door of Mercy, or have fulfilled one of the other conditions under which Pope Francis has granted the Jubilee Indulgence (for example, for the sick, for the imprisoned, or for anyone who carries out in person a work of mercy), in addition to the usual conditions which require a heart well-disposed for the grace to bring its desired fruits, the faithful should stop in prayer to fulfill the final actions asked for: the profession of faith, and prayer for the Holy Father and his intentions. The latter should be at least an *Our Father*—the prayer in which Jesus himself taught us to turn as children to the Father—but it could possibly be more. In particular, taking into consideration the spirit of this Holy Year, it is suggested that pilgrims recite the lovely prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee, and that they conclude the time of prayer with an invocation to the merciful Lord Jesus (for example, “Merciful Jesus, I trust in You”). ✠

“Were sin the only thing that mattered, we would be the most desperate of creatures. But the promised triumph of Christ’s love enfolds everything in the Father’s mercy...The Immaculate Virgin stands before us as a privileged witness of this promise and its fulfilment.”
~ Pope Francis, December 8, 2015

Prayer of Pope Francis for the Jubilee

Lord Jesus Christ,

You have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: “If you knew the gift of God!”


You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.



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Bishop Gary Gordon and the Pastoral Centre Staff
wish you a very Merry Christmas,
with the blessings of the Child whose hope fills our hearts.
May the God of Mercy be ever present in our lives.

Love is a flame
that burns in the night. . .



Lyrics from *Hope is a Star* by Brian Wren and Joan Fogg

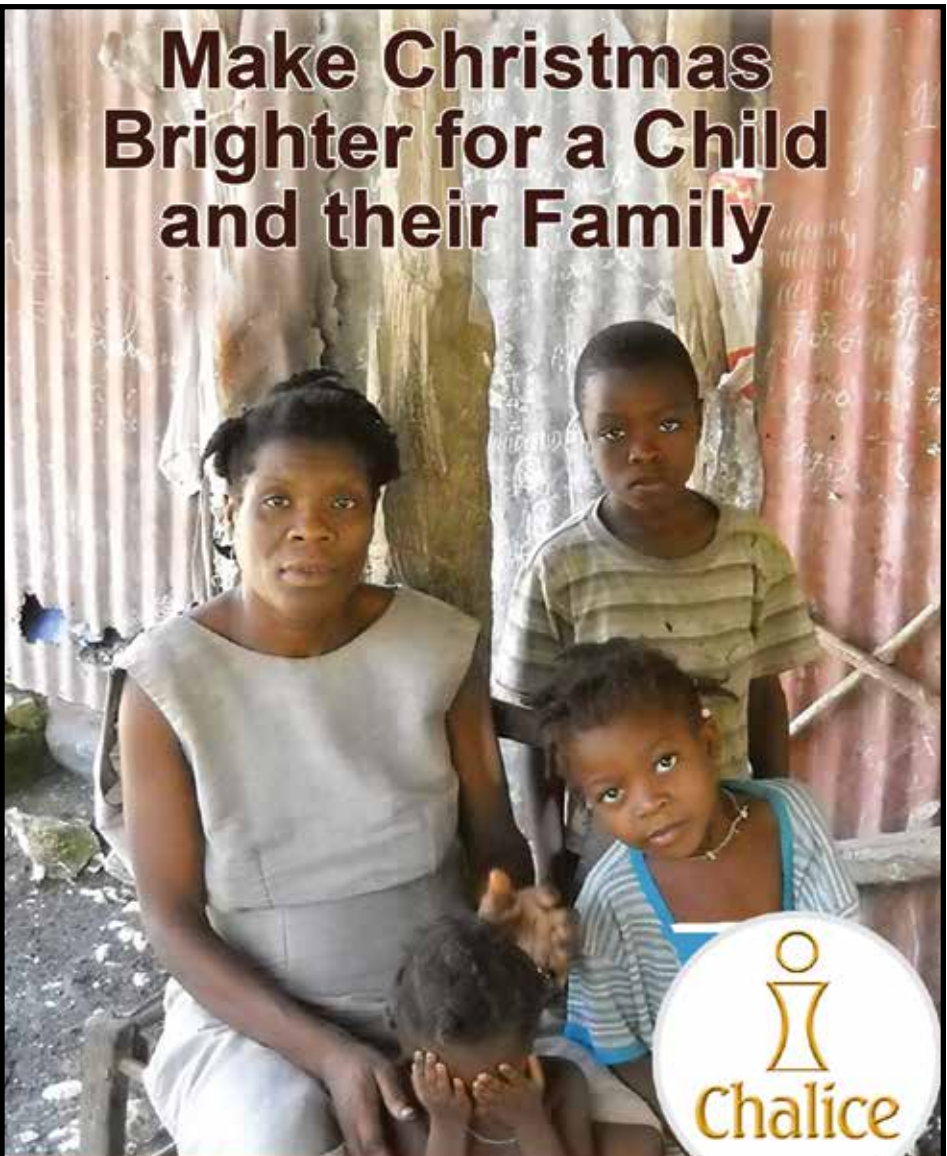
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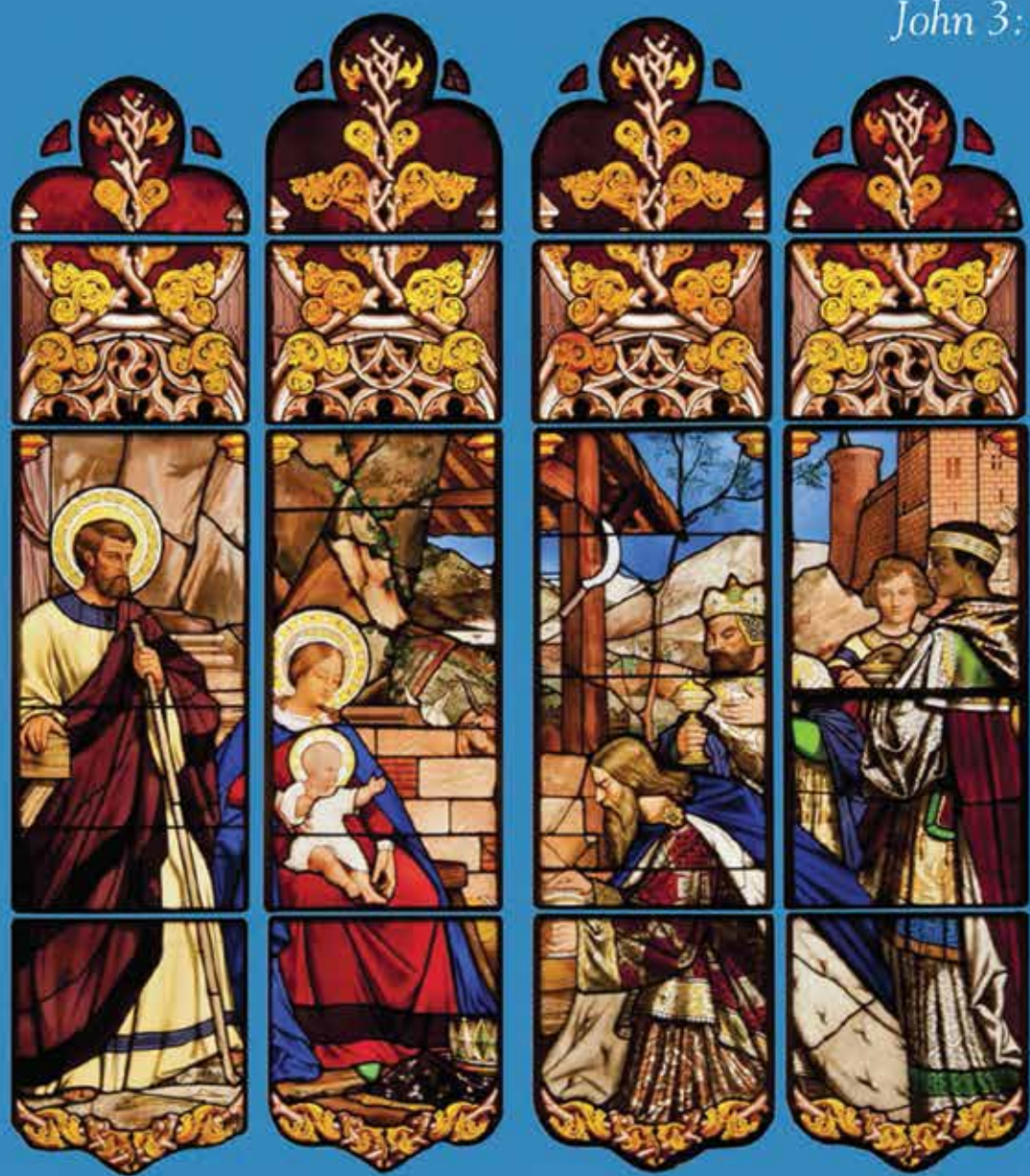
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“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”

John 3:16



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2015 Mass Schedule

Parish	December 24 Christmas Eve	December 25 Christmas Day	December 31 New Year's Eve	January 1 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
St. Andrew's Cathedral, Victoria Please note: the 11 pm Christmas Eve service will be very full; please arrive early to ensure you get a seat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3:45 PM doors open for 4:40 PM Carols and Children's Pageant; 5 PM Mass7:30 PM Carols; 8 PM Mass*10 PM Carols; 11 PM Solemn Mass of Christmas Night*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM11 AM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM*
Christ the King, Courtenay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4:30 PM Carols; 5 PM Mass7:30 PM Carols; 8 PM Mass11:30 PM Carols; 12 Midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM Carols; 10:30 AM Mass2 PM (Hornby Island)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM
Church of the Ascension, Parksville	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5:30 PM9 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM
Fellowship of Blessed John Henry Newman (at St. Columba's), Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM
Holy Cross, Gordon Head	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM8 PM12 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM
Holy Family/Notre Dame, Port Alberni	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM8 PM12 Midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM		<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM
North Island (Our Lady of Assumption, Alert Bay; St. Bonaventure, Port Hardy; St. Mary's, Port McNeill; St. Theresa's, Port Alice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM (Port Alice)9 PM Mass (Port McNeill)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 AM (Port Hardy)		<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM (Port McNeill)11 AM (Port Hardy)
Our Lady of Fatima, Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8 PM (English)*12 Midnight (Portuguese)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11:30 AM (Bilingual)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM (English)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11:30 AM (Portuguese)*
Our Lady of the Rosary, Langford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7:30 PM*10:30 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM*12 Midnight Traditional Latin*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM*12 PM Traditional Latin*
Sacred Heart, Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM Pageant followed with Mass8 PM (English)*10 PM (Korean)*12 AM (Polish)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM (English)3 PM (Korean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM (English)10 PM (Korean)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM (English)12:30 PM (Polish)3 PM (Korean)
Salt Spring Island (Our Lady of Grace, Ganges; St. Paul's, Fulford Harbour; St. Teresa's, Pender Island; St. Joseph's Mission, Mayne Island)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6:30 PM Carols; 7 PM Mass (OLOG)7 PM (Pender Island)9:30 PM (Mayne Island)10:30 PM Carols; 11 PM Mass (St. Paul's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM (Pender Island) Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion10 AM (OLOG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM (OLOG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM (Pender Island) Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion10 AM (OLOG)
Sidney (Services are at St. Elizabeth's unless otherwise noted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM Carols; 6:30 PM Mass8:30 PM (Our Lady of the Assumption)10 PM Carols; 10:30 PM Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 PM
St. Ann's, Duncan December 20, 3 PM Mass at Snuneymuxw Longhouse Kitchen, Nanaimo Reserve 4; December 22, 3 PM Mass at Si-Em Heights, Lantzville	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 PM Carols; 11:45 PM Mass*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 AM*		<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 AM*
St. Edward's, Duncan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4:30 PM Carols; 5 PM Mass*8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM Carols; 10 AM Mass
St. Francis Xavier, Mill Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM12 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM11 AM		<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM11 AM
St. Joseph the Worker, Saanich	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM8:30 PM11:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM
St. Jean Baptiste	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM		
St. Joseph's, Chemainus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:45 AM		<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:45 AM
St. Leopold Mandic (various locations, Croatian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">12 Midnight (St. Leopold's, Victoria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 AM (St. Leopold's, Victoria)2:30 PM (Trinity, Nanaimo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM (St. Leopold's, Victoria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">12 PM (St. Leopold's, Victoria)5 PM (Trinity, Nanaimo)
St. Louis de Montfort Church, Lake Cowichan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass		<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM	
St. Mary's, Ladysmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM		<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM
St. Patrick's, Campbell River St. Peter & St. Paul, Gold River St. Joseph's, Tahsis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4:30 PM Carols; 5 PM Mass*6 PM (Tahsis)7 PM Carols; 7:30 PM Mass10 PM (Gold River)11:30 PM Carols; 12 AM Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM*11 AM
St. Patrick's, Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM Pageant followed with Mass8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM1 PM (Vietnamese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM1 PM (Vietnamese)
St. Peter's, Nanaimo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM8 PM12 Midnight*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10:30 AM2:30 PM (Gabriola)7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM12 Midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8:30 AM10:30 AM2:30 PM (Gabriola Island)
St. Rose of Lima, Sooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4 PM8 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9 AM
Trinity Catholic Church, Nanaimo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3 PM5 PM Children's Pageant9:30 PM Carols; 10 PM Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">9:30 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM
West Coast (Holy Family, Ucluelet; St. Francis of Assisi, Tofino; St. Lawrence, Ahousaht)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 PM(Tofino)9:30 PM (Ucluelet)10 PM (Ahousaht)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">10 AM (Ahousaht)11 AM (Ucluelet)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5 PM (Tofino)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11 AM (Ucluelet)

* Incense will be used