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Honouring Sr.  
Vinda Ochoa



# The Diocesan

# Messenger

A Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

Winter 2016

## Room in our hearts

By Bishop Gary Gordon

The grace and joyful news of the birth of a Saviour, announced by the Angel to the shepherds while they kept watch over their sheep at night, is the message of Christmas.

This news of great joy for all the people has propelled us onward in haste, just like the shepherds who went in haste to see the amazing event that took place.

It is astounding that God came to be born among us, without a reservation, and really, without even an invitation—except for a few hints from prophets and the hopeful, expectant poor living on the margins.

The inconvenient traveller without a reservation or credit card ... I recall a few winters ago returning home to Whitehorse from the south with a trailer loaded with roofing material for two parish churches. After driving into the wee hours of the morning, hoping to get home in 24 hours, I finally had to stop. Even Merlin was getting a little anxious about the snowy road conditions! About three in the morning I came upon an inn and gratefully parked. Upon request, I provided my credit card, and checked in.

Just as I was about to head to my room, a young couple also arrived, and came into the lobby. Stopping to get a bag of chips at the vending machine (for what passed for supper at that hour), I overheard a lively conversation between the clerk and the couple. "I'm sorry, sir, we don't accept cash. Only a credit card will get you a room."

"But I don't have a credit card. I will pay double with cash: my wife really needs some rest." "I'm so sorry sir, but those are the rules. Unless you have a credit card, you will have to leave."

“My prayer for you and your families this Christmas is that Jesus will fill your hearts with the most precious gift: his Peace.

I walked over, credit card in hand. "Will this do, my friend?" I asked the clerk. "Sure!" the happy proprietor replied, glad that a solution had presented itself. The relieved couple retired to their now-secure room. The rules had been followed, but I could not help wondering, *What has caused such indifference?*

Jesus was born at an inconvenient time. He was not invited, but he showed up anyway, in the most gentle and humble way, with a message of peace and mercy. As I muse and pray this Advent and Christmas season, I ponder: *Will there always be a 'No Vacancy' sign over our common home? Will there ever be room in the inn?*

The good news for our common home and for each of us is that God is coming to us without a reservation. God is arriving—in the tens of thousands who seek room in our country, in our cities, in our communities, in our hearts—without a credit card. I am so grateful that our parish communities and many people of goodwill are endeavoring to keep the 'Vacancy' sign always lit. Our parish refugee committees are beginning to realize that they will always be needed. That's the nature and the reality of being a Christian community in this day and age, when the numbers of refugees are higher than ever.

Yet against the conflicts and grave threats to life and our common home, it seems the personal and global tensions and fears we experience may be yielding to that great light which no darkness can overcome.

*When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy.*

~ Titus 3:4

My prayer for you and your families this Christmas is that Jesus will fill your hearts with the most precious gift: his Peace. ✠

Merry Christmas!

## Celebrating the hermitic life

by Joan Ripley

The remarkable life of hermit priest Fr. Charles Brandt ERM was honoured at St. Patrick's parish, Campbell River, on the evening of Saturday, November 5, 2016, at the 5 pm Mass, and afterwards at a catered dinner in the parish hall attended by 148 well-wishers. Bishop Gary Gordon presided at the Mass with Bishop Emeritus Remi J. De Roo, Fr. Brandt, Fr. Jan Grotkowski SDS, St. Patrick's pastor, and former St. Patrick's pastor, Fr. Vicente Borre.

“Fr. Charles reminds us that the Lord is the centre of our lives. I am profoundly grateful to him. For the Church, the hermitic life is an essential witness.

At the beginning of Mass Fr. Jan thanked Fr. Charles for his years of service, which were not always easy and full of difficult crosses. He also welcomed Bishop Gary, Fr. Vince and Bishop Remi, who ordained Fr. Charles 50 years ago.

In his homily, Bishop De Roo recounted that many years ago, he had a visit from a monk named Dom

Winandy who wanted to revive the office of hermit in the Church. The Vatican had told Winandy that he would have to find a bishop who would agree with what he had in mind. So, Bishop De Roo wrote to the Vatican asking for the revival of the office of hermit, and thus the hermits were restored to the Church on Vancouver Island.

"Jesus stated that there is only one God," said Bishop De Roo. "This absolute statement calls for deep reflection and prayer as it is foundational to our faith. This is where the hermit's life comes in. It is not an easy life, but one of the most difficult. For this reason it is a special privilege to celebrate the 50 years and the example that Fr. Charles has set for us and for the whole world. All members have a place in the Church, including hermits, who are dedicated totally and completely to the glory of God. Let us ask ourselves in our deepest hearts, 'Am I really dedicating myself completely to the honour and glory of God?'"

Picking up on the theme of one of the beautiful communion hymns, *You Are The Center of My Life*, Bishop Gary said, "Fr. Charles reminds us that the Lord is the centre of our lives. I am profoundly grateful to him. For the Church, the hermitic life is an essential witness. All of us who are living the mystery of the common priesthood—we need an engine, and this engine is prayer. I can count on this man to be always praying and I am eternally grateful. Thank you, Fr. Charles!"

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# Our majestic lands, a gift from God

Pastoral Letter from Xyolhmetoxw, Bishop of Victoria  
(Most Reverend Gary Gordon)

December 12 is the memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe, commemorating the appearance in 1531 of the Virgin Mary to an Indigenous Mexican, Juan Diego, who is the first Indigenous saint.

In December 1531, Juan Diego was granted an apparition of Mary on four separate occasions at the Hill of Tepeyac. Mary brought to Juan Diego a message of new life and her maternal protection and care as the Mother of Jesus, giving him and all Indigenous peoples of the Americas a message of hope and loving favour from God. The words she spoke to him, “No estoy yo aquí que soy tu madre?” (*Am I not here, I who am your mother?*) are inscribed over the main entrance to the Basilica of Guadalupe.

There are 53 distinct First Nations within the Diocese of Victoria, comprising three linguistic groups and many sub-groups—and the message of Mary to St. Juan Diego is as relevant in our Diocese in the 21st Century as it was in Mexico 485 years ago. Our history in the Diocese of Victoria is intertwined with Indigenous peoples, and with French, English, Spanish, and American trading and colonial expansion. These intertwined relationships sometimes resulted in communion, and sometimes in antagonism, which had profound effects on a fundamental divine and human teaching: *Love God and love your neighbour.*

The need for respectful relations has always been great, and perhaps at this time in history is even greater with so many threats to life and our Common Home. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invited us to consider as paramount the needs of people, especially the vulnerable and our common home, rather than the headlong pursuit of power and money.

Because I am not indigenous to these lands, and thus have limited understanding of all the complex competing histories of the Indigenous nations and the tensions of cultural contacts pre- and post-European contact, I have worked in collaboration with Qwaqumulwhut and H:umuth (Joan and Jerry Brown) of the Snuneymuxw First Nation to produce this Pastoral Letter. I offer this as an invitation to an essential dialogue that needs to take place in our own historical, geographical and cultural contexts, with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. We are invited to engage in this important conversation and work so that justice, truth and life itself may flourish as the Creator intended—whose Son gave his life to reconcile all creation to the Creator.

Thus, I invite you to view the great lands of our Diocese through an ancestral lens, and to listen, not only with ears but also with hearts, to the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ, responding with the tender mercy of our loving God. This Pastoral Letter is intended as a gentle reminder that these lands and its resources touch every aspect of our life. Indigenous people have long realized that the privilege of these great gifts comes with a great responsibility.

In this Pastoral Letter, I offer a prayerful reflection on this critical topic. Specifically, I will begin with a brief introduction of the way of the Ancestors of Vancouver Island. Please note that the cultural practices that I will refer to are known to be universal practices; specific cultural details of the people certainly go beyond the scope of this discussion. Finally, I will consider how a modern world has impacted the people of this area and suggest a few steps forward on the path.

## Ancestral landscape

Over the past 40 years, I have been fortunate to spend much time with prominent Elders from numerous Indigenous communities. During these sacred times, the Elders invited me to witness time-honoured rituals and ceremonies. They also shared many personal stories, myths, and legends. Through these cultural experiences, I became aware of the Indigenous peoples' profound relationship with their lands. It is a connectedness that provides a deep understanding of complex ecosystems, and techniques for using and managing sacred resources. Pope Francis affirms this connectedness:

*We can say that alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night. Paying attention to this manifestation, we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures.<sup>1</sup>*

Also, as it has been told to me, these beautiful lands are the birthplace of many distinct languages and cultures. Without a doubt this Ancestral way of being with the land honours all living things, sky dwellers, water beings, forest creatures and all other forms of life, seen and unseen. I have learned that the Ancestors enhanced their relationship through reverence, humility, and reciprocity. It is where the Indigenous Ancestors found their peace and vitality.

It is obvious that this level of familiarity could only be acquired over thousands of years, notably, transferring and sharing this amazing land-based knowledge from one generation to the next. I have come to realize that this way of knowing is a precious gift from God. That is, a way of being with the land as God intended. Pope Francis offers further insight:

*In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values.<sup>2</sup>*

## Land, the essence of our people; the cornerstone of our connectivity and wellness

With great respect and with great humility, I would like to consider some of the cultural practices that are important to the wellness of the Indigenous people. First and foremost, I now understand culture is land-specific. In this sense, I would like to draw attention to the mountain realm and the sea world, two distinct ecosystems. A common Indigenous worldview recognizes that the mountain realm and the sea world are two sacred systems that are not only interconnected, but that both play a critical role for the wellness of the Indigenous people. Jerry Brown, an Elder from Snuneymuxw, explains:

*I am Snuneymuxw, born and raised here in Nanaimo. I have been so fortunate to learn the ways of our people from my parents, grandparents and numerous Elders. Their stories, our rituals and ceremonies have always brought me to the mountain. It is an amazing world, from the beginning of time it has provided our people materials for our canoes, food, and our medicines. The Ancestors, including my parents and grandparents, have always lived with these sacred resources in a delicate, humble, reciprocal relationship.*

*The mountain realm has always been known to be a place of significant spiritual power. It is truly one of the precious gifts from God. In the stillness of the mountain, I found time for quiet reflection and prayers. It is a ritual that forever teaches respect and kindness. This is how we came to know our lands, to become one with the spirit of our lands.*

*I have spent much time up the mountain, praying, using the pristine waters to cleanse my body and soul. It is where I have found medicines like the water healing, helping me to grow and learn spiritually, and building a strong heart, strong mind, and a strong soul. This is the way of the Elders, preparing us to live in a good way despite challenges of a modern world.*

## Modern Reality—Impact of the Reserve System

The world in which we live is changing. I have often thought about how, in the ancient times, the Indigenous people thrived in these lands in a delicate give-and-take relationship with their respective territories. In the presence of the sacred resources they learned to be humble, and to offer respect by taking only what was needed. Today they no longer have the same access to their traditional lands and its resources.

It is important to consider that when Indigenous peoples refer to or describe their traditional territories, they are describing a much larger land base: it is an original land base that was enjoyed before the imposition of reserve borders. It is also noteworthy to add that as a consequence of urban sprawl, the Indigenous relationship to their traditional grounds has been drastically altered. I draw on the insight of Fiorini and Lazar to help put this into perspective:

*It is useful to put the area of the land set aside for reserves for the 600+ Indian bands into some context in order to gain a better understanding of the issues surrounding land claims. Canada has a land mass of 6.5 million square kilometers. Over 130,000 square kilometers have been set aside for National Parks (2% of the total land mass). There are currently only 26,300 square kilometers of reserve lands (.04% of the total land mass).<sup>3</sup>*

The consequences for the Indigenous peoples are extreme, including shortage of land for housing, overcrowding in existing homes, loss of economic opportunities, no designated recreational sites, poverty—the list is enormous.

More specifically:

*Although Canada is among the top countries in which to live according to the United Nations' Human Development Index, Inuit and on-reserve Indians are ranked below many developing nations. Many First Nation and Inuit communities face housing shortages, as well as rates of unemployment, dependence on social assistance, and youth suicide, which are higher than the national average. Indeed, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has observed that there has been little or no progress in the alleviation of social and economic deprivation among the Aboriginal peoples.<sup>4</sup>*

These statistics, and my experience and journey with many Indigenous families, have often caused my own tears to fall upon Mother Earth and committed me even more to a path of accompaniment and communion. I continually pray that together we can find a way forward with our Indigenous relatives to reclaim wellness by restoring their God-given ways with their lands.

I am hopeful that if we begin to embrace the land-based values and teaching of the Indigenous peoples, we will begin to see positive changes, not only for the Indigenous peoples of this area, but for all who are passing through this land, as well as respectful relations with our Creator and Creation. Given the chance, Mother Earth will find ways to repair herself, with God's help. And, when these lands are repaired and respectful relations are established with Indigenous people and communities, we will witness a new and powerful grace for a new springtime of covenant care of our Common Home, earth, as God has intended.

I invite all people of goodwill to a springtime of 'Listening', not only with our ears, but also with our hearts—listening like a mother so beautifully exemplified by Mary, who so beautifully responded to the cry of the Indigenous people of the Americas with a promise of God's loving closeness and accompaniment. ✠

<sup>3</sup> Fiorini, J; Lazar F. *Tax Exemption: A tool for economic development for First Nations, Sorting out the issues*; (2002) Turtle Island Native Network, p. 20

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 4

<sup>1</sup> *Laudato Si'*, #85

<sup>2</sup> *Laudato Si'*, #145



# Diocesan News & Events



## Called to service

By Fr. John Laszczyk

Saturday, November 26, 2016, marked a special moment in the lives of five married men as they took the first ritual step towards their ordination to the Permanent Diaconate by celebrating the Rite of Candidacy with Bishop Gary Gordon at Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Langford.

These five men (along with their spouses): John Dawson (Heather), Dion Pomponio (Kerry), Victor Saavedra (Patricia), Michael Watkins (Cynthia), and Philip Yuson (Marie) have been involved in online studies from Newman Theological College in Edmonton, along with monthly Formation weekends and yearly retreats, for the past two-and-a-half years as they seek to discern the Lord's call in their lives.

The Rite of Candidacy marks these men as official candidates for Holy Orders and encourages us to pray for them so that through their formation they may continue to learn to live according to the Gospel so as to be strengthened in faith, hope and charity. On their part, they promise to be faithful not only to their studies but to the entire formation process and to prepare themselves in mind and spirit to give faithful service to Christ and the Church.

Under the guidance of Formation Team Members Fr. John Laszczyk, Fr. Dean Henderson, Fr. David Hogman, Deacon Daniel Lavoie and his wife, Diane Gagne, the candidates and spouses have been learning the three-fold service of a deacon to Word, Sacrament and Charity. Permanent deacons will not be ordained priests and while they will be official teachers and preachers of the Gospel, perhaps even presiding at celebrations of baptism, funerals and marriages, their primary task is to be present to those in need, namely the infirm, the imprisoned, the sick, the poor, and those in any need whatsoever.

Two additional Rites (becoming a Lector and Acolyte) will precede Ordination to the Diaconate which, for those called to Ordination, will occur in the autumn of 2018.

“ In essence, the Order of Deacons was given to the Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit so as to serve the People of God and assist them in fulfilling their Baptismal commitment. Just as Jesus came ‘not to be served, but to serve’, so the Deacon embodies the ideal of every follower of Christ, to be ‘one who serves’.

## Sowing the SEED of faith

By Glen Palahicky, Director, Office of Religious Education

On Saturday September 17, 2016, more than fifty catechists gathered in faith and joy at Ascension Parish in Parksville for their annual Catechist Gathering. Bishop Gary Gordon celebrated Mass and shared within the day's general theme of ‘Mustard Seed Faith’. He encouraged all catechists to bring seeds of faith not only to those who attend our classes and churches but also to the peripheries. As missionary disciples we are challenged to go out and not wait or expect people to be coming to us. Seeds need to be planted ‘outside’.

Throughout the day, catechists enjoyed different breakout sessions on areas of interest such as Youth Ministry, Sacramental Preparation, and the Joy of Love. There was also a retreat component with reflections and fun, active exercises. Building on the word SEED, catechists reflected on four key values that shape a catechist's identity and sense of mission: Sacramentality, Encountering, Echoing, and Discipleship. Each of these has much to teach us about our Catholic faith journey.

A deep sense of *sacramentality* affirms the profound wonder that God comes to us, extending the truth of the Incarnation, through created matter and especially within the seven Sacraments.

To *encounter* is to allow an intimacy and a vulnerability to be present in one's relationship with God and others. Pope Francis often uses the word ‘gaze’. To encounter God is to allow Him to gaze with love at our broken hearts; faith is our response.

The word ‘catechesis’ derives from the Greek, and means ‘to *echo* the teaching’. A catechist hears God's word many ways (principle of sacramentality): through the Church, Holy Scripture, life, prayer, culture, creation; and then echoes it back through deeds and words.

*Discipleship* means we must always be pupils at Jesus' feet—he is the Master. It also sends us forth into an often hostile and confused world. Discipleship, like our

### Vocations Prayer

*O Lord our God, older than all creation, you have made us in your image and likeness. You have given us the gift of the Holy Spirit through your servants who proclaim the good news of your Church.*

*We humbly beg you, do not leave your people deprived of spiritual gifts, but grant us an abundance of vocations to your holy priesthood, the diaconate and consecrated life, and to lives dedicated to your service.*

*Open the hearts of men and women to hear your words, “Come, follow me!”*

*Indeed, do not leave us orphans, but be with us through your Holy Spirit, who is present everywhere and fills all things, and who raises up mere mortals to divine service by the mystery of his grace.*

*Truly you will never forget your promise to be with us always, until the end of the world, but forgive us if we have, in our weakness, failed to follow you as we should.*

*For you alone are holy now and forever. Amen.*

From the Sts. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. ✠



Diaconate candidates and their spouses (L to R) Dion and Kerry Pomponio; Victor and Patricia Saavedra, Bishop Gary Gordon, John and Heather Dawson, Michael Watkins and Cynthia Bouchard; Philip and Marie Yuson.



participation in Mass, is a coming and a going! It demands some discipline and has a cost, but leads to joy and peace the world cannot give.

Many thanks to all who came out and made the day special, especially to Bishop Gary, our pastors and the good, hospitable folks at Ascension Parish.

I share our catechist prayer of the day.

*Gracious Merciful God,*

*Help me to see you reflected in all of creation. May I encounter You in the Other and echo Your Love to the world through my service and discipleship. Though my faith is like a mustard seed, I trust Your Spirit will nourish the SEED of my ministry to bear much fruit.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen. ✠*



# Calendar of events

## January

**14** **St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Victoria:** 1 – 3:30 PM, Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk MC will deliver a talk about the life and legacy of St. Teresa of Calcutta. Fr. Kolodiejchuk knew St. Teresa well, and was the postulator for her cause for canonization. Call (250) 384-2292 for tickets or more information.

## February

**4** **St. Edward's, Duncan:** Annual Diocesan Conference, *Crossing the Road, Finding my Neighbour*, with guest speakers Bishop Gary Gordon and Dr. Gwen Point. This event is open to the Diocese. Cost is \$20 before January 15 and \$25 thereafter; you should reserve your spot by registering on Eventbrite ([www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)) by searching: Diocesan Conference. Contact Glen Palahicky for more information: (250) 479-1331 or [gpalahicky@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:gpalahicky@rcdvictoria.org).

**7** **Cedar Hill Golf Club, Victoria:** Association of Catholic Leaders Breakfast, 7 AM registration, 7:30 AM breakfast buffet, done by 8:40 AM. Seeking all Catholic professionals who are looking to network about integrating their faith into their daily work lives. Also find us on Eventbrite. Cost is \$23 per person, \$15 for students. Dana and John Mellis will be the speakers. For more information email [victoriabcacl@gmail.com](mailto:victoriabcacl@gmail.com).

**11** **St. Patrick's, Victoria:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training: *Session 1: The Healing Ministry of Christ*. (World Day of the Sick) 9 AM – 3 PM, in Our Lady of Lourdes Hall. Fr. William Hann will be the morning presenter. For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four sessions. If so, a completion certificate will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact St. Patrick's Parish office to register: (250) 592-7391 or email: [stpat190@telus.net](mailto:stpat190@telus.net).

## March

**3-5** The Vocations Awareness office is pleased to announce opportunities for young adults (18 – 30) for Vocational Discernment. For women: the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia will host a weekend in Victoria. For men: Fr. Dean Henderson will host a Vocations Road trip within the Diocese. For more information email Fr. Dean at [catholic@uvic.ca](mailto:catholic@uvic.ca).

**4** **Trinity Church, Nanaimo:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training Program, in the Lounge. *Session 3: The Grieving Process & Ministering to Families*. 9 AM – 2 PM. All Pastoral Care Outreach workshops are open to all. For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four workshops, if possible. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact Trinity Parish office to register: (250) 390-2612 or email [trinitycatholic@shaw.ca](mailto:trinitycatholic@shaw.ca).

**18** **St. Patrick's, Victoria:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training: *Session 2: Listening & Communication and Mental Health*. 9 AM – 3 PM, in Our Lady of Lourdes Hall. For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four sessions. If so, a completion certificate will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact St. Patrick's Parish office to register: (250) 592-7391 or email: [stpat190@telus.net](mailto:stpat190@telus.net).

## April

**8** **Trinity Church, Nanaimo:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training Program, in the Lounge. *Session 4: Who Am I as a Pastoral Care Outreach Visitor?* 9 AM – 2 PM. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact Trinity Parish office to register: (250) 390-2612 or email [trinitycatholic@shaw.ca](mailto:trinitycatholic@shaw.ca).

**15** **St. Joseph the Worker, Victoria:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training: *Session 3: The Grieving Process and Ministering to Families*. 9 AM – 3 PM. For continuity, we recommend

## Pastoral itinerary

### December

23 **Victoria:** Confessions – St. Andrew's Cathedral (10 am)  
 24 **Penelakut Island:** Christmas Eve Mass and Baptisms (4 pm)  
**Victoria:** Christmas Vigil Mass – St. Andrew's Cathedral (11 pm)  
 25 **Victoria:** Christmas Day Mass – St. Andrew's Cathedral (11:00 am)  
 29 **Vancouver:** Mass – CCO *Rise Up* Conference  
 30 **Port Alberni:** Mass – Feast of the Holy Family, Holy Family/Notre Dame Parish (7 pm)

### January

8 **Victoria:** Pastoral visit – William Head Institution (6:30 pm)

that participants attend all four sessions. If so, a completion certificate will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact St. Joseph the Worker Parish office to register: (250) 479-7413 or email [sjtwoffice@shaw.ca](mailto:sjtwoffice@shaw.ca).

## May

**20** **St. Joseph the Worker, Victoria:** Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training: *Session 4: Who Am I as a Pastoral Care Outreach Visitor?* Boundaries, visiting tips and role plays. 9 AM – 3 PM. For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four sessions. If so, a completion certificate will be provided. Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea will be provided. Contact St. Joseph the Worker Parish office to register: (250) 479-7413 or email [sjtwoffice@shaw.ca](mailto:sjtwoffice@shaw.ca).

## Weekly events

### WEDNESDAYS

**St. Patrick's, Victoria:** St. Patrick's Parish invites moms or dads at home with children under age 5 to join our Parents and Tots group from 9:30 – 11 AM. Parents meet in the parish library for friendship, fellowship, faith sharing, or just chatting about the challenges of parenting. Children are cared for in Our Lady of Lourdes Hall under the watchful guidance of volunteer grandmas. If you are interested, or know someone who would be interested, please contact the Parish Office at (250) 592-7391, or call Pauline at (250) 592-9434. (Note: will start on January 11, 2017.)

### 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.

### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:ygcatholicunderground@gmail.com)

9-13 **Mission:** Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops' Retreat

18-25 **Victoria:** Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

### February

3 **Victoria:** Island Catholic Schools & Staff Faith Formation Day

4 **Duncan:** Annual Diocesan Conference – St. Edward's Parish

6-10 **Victoria:** Catholic Schools Week

21-23 **Victoria:** meetings with Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops

### March

8 **Toronto:** Catholic Health Alliance Meeting

25 - **Rome:** Ad Limina visit

Apr 1

### SUNDAYS

**St. Joseph the Worker, Victoria:** Holy Families group gathers on the first Sunday of the month for a potluck lunch and discussion from 1 – 5:30 PM. Please note: on January 1, 2017 only the meeting will be from 11 AM – 2:30 PM. Contact Kristy for more information at (250) 590-7004.

**Our Lady Queen of Peace, Victoria:** Traditional Latin Mass at 12 noon with Gregorian Chant.

**Our Lady Queen of Peace, Victoria:** Hungarian Mass at 2 PM on the first Sunday of every month.

## Upcoming events

### MAY 2017

Save the date!! The 2nd Annual Bishop's Gala will be held at Our Lady of Fatima hall on May 6, 2017. We sold out last year, so be sure to mark your calendar, and stay tuned for more information!

### JANUARY 2018

Eastern Caribbean stay and cruise. Mary Hof, parishioner of St. Edwards Parish, is putting together another cruise for those who would like to travel as part of a group. It's a way of making new friendships, and for some not having to travel alone. Rooms must be secured now. The trip will be 11 days, 4 nights in Puerto Rico and then a 7 day cruise from Puerto Rico to Fort Lauderdale, on Celebrity Summit. For more information contact Mary Hof at [mhof126@gmail.com](mailto:mhof126@gmail.com) or call (250) 743-4074. A truly spectacular way to experience the Caribbean and make memories to last a lifetime!

**To have your event included in the Diocesan Calendar of Events please email the details to [editor@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:editor@rcdvictoria.org)**

Please visit [www.rcdvictoria.org](http://www.rcdvictoria.org) to view the online Calendar of Events for the most current information



## The Diocesan Messenger

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# Blanket Ceremony in Parksville

By Sandi Digras

Recently, the Church of the Ascension (Parksville) was blessed to host a Reconciliation Blanket Ceremony. There were more than 50 attendees, many of whom had never taken part in this ceremony before. There were many Narrators, or story tellers, from Kairos Canada who sponsored the morning, including Rose Marie Hague, Ascension's Adult Faith Coordinator, who is also a member of Kairos and an active advocate of First Nations issues.

The floor was covered with many blankets of many colours and textures, representing North America, or Turtle Island, as it was known to the Indigenous peoples, before Confederation. Surrounding this island of blankets was a circle of chairs, so we all were active participants in this ceremony.

As we listened to the story of the first settlers of the territory they referred to as Turtle Island, we found out they lived, worked and shared their bounty with each other. With no other humans, all the land was theirs to protect and use.

One of the Narrators represented the British colonial rule. We learned how the area represented by the blankets got smaller, bit by bit, as the land the First Nations tribes settled was taken from them. Diseases foreign to these people decimated their numbers, and later, as more and more settlers arrived, those pieces of cloth ended up as tiny squares that represented the only land left for them.

We also heard that their culture and ways of life were denied them. No more religious ceremonies, sweat lodges, language, or customs were allowed. Children

were taken from their families and placed in Residential Schools, where attachments to their former lives were discouraged.

Thankfully, those tiny pieces of cloth started to expand. More enlightened governments and organizations recognized the error of their ways, and began the process of reconciliation. It was a graphic and uncomfortable experience for most of us who come from colonial backgrounds.

After the Blanket Ceremony, we had a chance to sit in smaller circles and engage in the 'Feather Exercise'. One person speaks, holding the feather, until they are finished and it is passed to the next person. There are no questions, interruptions or interaction allowed: we simply listened. In doing so, we learned, and asked questions, and made promises in the hope that as an interfaith group coming together to share and learn, those errors of the past will not be repeated. ✂



Rosie MacLeod-Shannon

# On Point: Bishop's Distinguished Lecture

By Liam MacKey

On November 3, 2016, at the First Peoples House at the University of Victoria, Dr. Gwen Point, Chancellor at the Fraser Valley University and member of the Stó:lō Nation, gave a presentation titled *Culture and Education*. This presentation was different from any other that I had experienced before. First, Dr. Point didn't treat it like a lecture. Her presentation consisted of different stories about her people and her childhood, which she wove together in order to teach us about her culture.

She talked about growing up in the Stó:lō community, how she and the other children were not taught by spoken word, but had to learn by the example set by their parents and elders. She told us stories about the struggles and pain that she experienced during her first pregnancy, and how instrumental prayer was in her and her husband's endurance during this time.

Dr. Point gave a particularly powerful recollection of how, when her first son was born, she took him to visit her grandmother on the reserve near Chilliwack. Her grandmother wanted Dr. Point to leave the child to be raised on the Reserve, so that he would be immersed in Indigenous culture. Gwen refused, not wanting to let go of the son that she had struggled so much to give birth to. Dr. Point looked at us all then and told us that, to this day, she regrets her decision.

Another interesting factor about Dr. Point's presentation was that she switched multiple times between speaking English and her native language of Halq'emeylem. She even sang a short song in Halq'emeylem, explaining the words and the actions as she went. Afterwards, Dr. Point noted how people who haven't grown up listening to or speaking Indigenous languages have trouble replicating their complex sounds.

Out of all the strange and wonderful things in Dr. Point's presentation, there is one thing she said that still echoes in my mind today. She called up Bishop Gary, a long-time friend of hers, and said that she was so grateful to individuals like him, who have walked with her people through all of their trials. This highlights how we non-Indigenous cannot just stand and watch the First Nations people of our country suffer. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and it is only together that we can truly reconcile our peoples for all the conflict that has existed in the past. ✂



Dr. Gwen Point at the First Peoples House at the University of Victoria

# Even the spiders . . .

By Gerry Heywood, CWL Council President, St. Joseph the Worker Parish

On Tuesday, October 4, 2016, parishioners at St. Joseph the Worker Parish celebrated the Feast of St. Francis with a Blessing of the Animals. More than 75 people (including three-year-old twin girls) brought their pets for this special event.

We gathered outside at the Shrine of Our Lady and Fr. Alfredo Monacelli held a very moving service. To top it all off, we had two talented musicians lead us in song. The Catholic Women's League (CWL) served hot chocolate to everyone and also presented a very special handmade bookmark, which used the artwork of a young CWL member, to all the participants.

Earlier, Fr. Alfredo and the CWL visited each classroom in St. Joseph's elementary school and gave a printed invitation to the Blessing to every student. One girl wanted to know if she could bring her pet spider. Our CWL member paused at this and then asked if her pet would be in a cage. The girl assured her that the spider would indeed be in a cage. Our CWL member cheerfully replied that the spider would be most welcome.

We had dogs, cats, bunnies, a turtle, one gecko and probably other varieties of pets. Personally, I didn't check the small cages too closely for spiders!

It was wonderful to see how much people love their pets. As Fr. Alfredo said, all animals (even spiders) are created by God and therefore are to be treasured. We people and children of God first learn to love one another through our families. This includes our pets, whom we cherish, and each other. I believe this to be true and that our parish people are well on the way to loving all creatures as a gift from God. ✂



# Pastoral Care Outreach Ministry Workshops

*And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*

~ Matthew 25:40

## The Healing Ministry of Christ

By Sandi Digras

On Saturday, October 22, 2016, the first of four outreach programs offered by the Pastoral Care Committee was held at Trinity parish in Nanaimo.

The morning session was presented by Fr. William Hann, who shared his own journey and the training he received for this most worthwhile ministry.

He cautioned when visiting the sick that "evangelization is not the purpose of our ministry, God is already there." He further suggested, "We are there to give comfort, compassion and love."

Following a presentation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan we were told "we are standing on the shoulders of those who came before us." He explained, "This is messy work. It involves humans at their most delicate, vulnerable, at the end of their lives. This is really doing God's work on earth."

End of life issues are going to be a big challenge in the years to come, particularly on Vancouver Island where the population is heavily weighted toward the aged 60+ population—of which I am one. As I looked at the others in the room, participants seemed truly inspired by the work they are doing and the graces it brings to them. Sheila Tourond, one of the newer members of the team said, "It gives me energy to give attention and love to others."

Following Fr. Hann's presentation, we were given six points to discuss, starting with the Parable of the Good Samaritan and what that story meant to us. We were asked to share what we learn from the most vulnerable souls we give our comfort to. How do they teach us?

Our facilitator, Moira King, kept us on point and moving through a time of discernment and questions. *Am I ready to do this? Do I have the compassion and will to help those at the end of their lives?* She encouraged us by reminding us that we would not have attended the session if God had not touched us in some way.

During the afternoon we focused on *The Healing Ministry* video presentation by Fr. Mark Miller CSsR. We were also given a kit with all the necessary materials, including a diagram that shows the four elements of illness.



By the end of the day my head was full, and my spirit blessed by my time spent at this workshop. ✠

*For more information about this workshop series, or inquiries from former attendees who meet the requirement to receive the four sessions Completion Certificate, please contact Moira King, Chair of the Diocesan Health Care Committee: moiraking@shaw.ca.*

## Listening & Communication/Mental Health

By Pat Forrest, Pastoral Care Ministry Member

On November 12, 2016, Trinity Parish sponsored another successful Pastoral Care Outreach session, with 27 parishioners from Trinity and St. Peter's (Nanaimo), Ascension (Parksville) and St. Edward's (Duncan).

There are four sessions for this Diocesan training program. This second workshop featured the topics of *Listening & Communication* and *Mental Health* presented respectively by Marian Lord, a member of the Trinity Pastoral Care Ministry, and Moira King, St. Joseph the Worker Parish (Victoria). The presentations, including group discussions, allow for sharing the participants' experiences and to discuss the material in greater depth. "All in all, an excellent overview of the knowledge and skills as they relate to pastoral care outreach," and "The information is helpful and insightful," are two comments representative of the session evaluation, as well as "Great take-away kits."

As always, in addition to the volunteer speakers and the engagement of participants, it is the people in the background doing the planning and setup that make these sessions so successful. Huguette Fox, chair of our Trinity Pastoral Care Ministry, led our team. Trinity Catholic Parish pastor, Fr. Jozef Kobos, also opened both sessions with a prayer and a blessing.

We invite all who attended the first two workshops to sign up for the remaining two sessions. *The Grieving Process* and *Ministering to Families* is scheduled for Saturday, March 4, 2017, and *Who am I as a Pastoral Care Outreach Visitor?* is set for April 8, 2017.

A certificate will be presented to those who attend all four sessions. If you miss any of these sessions at Trinity, you can make them up when St. Patrick's Parish holds the first two 2017 sessions in Victoria (February 11 and March 18) and St. Joseph the Worker hosts the last two sessions (April 15 and May 20). Continue to check the *Diocesan Messenger* as well as your parish bulletins for more details of these very important training sessions. ✠



Participants gathered at Trinity Catholic Parish (Nanaimo) for the second of the Diocesan Pastoral Care Outreach Training Programs. Photo credit: Margaret Lariviere, Trinity Catholic Parish member

## On Marian pilgrimage

By Tony Southwell with Fr. Stephen Paine. Photo credit Tony Southwell

In late September, Fr. Stephen Paine (pastor of Holy Family/Notre Dame, Port Alberni) led forty-three pilgrims from various parts of our Diocese, as well as Washington State and Calgary, on a Marian pilgrimage of Spain, Portugal, and Southern France.

The pilgrims travelled from Madrid to Avila, visiting the places of St. Teresa of Avila; then ventured on to Fatima to view and pray at the sites where Our Lady first appeared to children in 1917 (*see story, page 14*), and to visit the homes where those children lived. From there the pilgrims headed to Santiago de Compostela to visit the burial place of the apostle, St. James the Greater (James, son of Zebedee) and then to Burgos to visit and pray at the Cathedral dedicated to Our Lady of Burgos. The pilgrimage continued on to Lourdes, where the pilgrims sought healing in the baths through prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes. After Lourdes we headed south again to Spain and to Barcelona to visit the Church of Sagrada Familia (Holy Family), to Montserrat to pray before the Black Madonna, and to Saragossa to pray before Our Lady of the Pillar. From there it was back to Madrid.

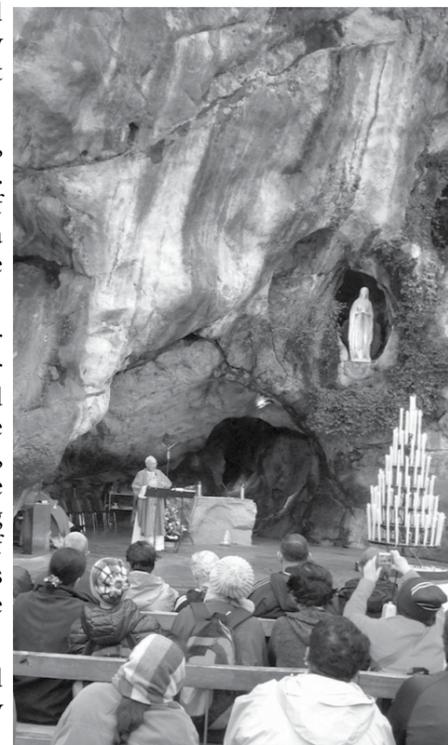
When in Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrims took a one-hour bus trip to a location outside the city and then walked back partway to Santiago de Compostela on the *Camino* (the Way of Pilgrimage). In Fr. Stephen's words, "The day

we walked the Camino was a gorgeous autumn day, and our walk took us through fields and forests. It was a truly marvellous and holy experience to be walking even a short distance on the Camino."

Each day of the pilgrimage began with praying the Rosary, singing Marian hymns, and praying various Marian prayers. Mass was celebrated every day, most of them in honour of one of the titles of Mary. Fr. Stephen, who had prepared a booklet of Marian reflections for the pilgrims, used those reflections as the basis of his homilies.

For the visit to Lourdes, the tour group had arranged for Fr. Stephen to celebrate Mass in the Grotto. Three other priests and their tour groups from Borneo, Ireland, and South Africa were also scheduled to join in the Mass in the Grotto at the same time. Just minutes before Mass began, Fr. Stephen was 'elected' as the main celebrant. One of the pilgrims, who was with the group in Lourdes remembering her last trip there with her late husband, had the privilege of reading the second Reading. As one pilgrim recalled, "This was a wonderful Mass, and Fr. Stephen delivered one of the best homilies of our two-week trip."

In all respects the pilgrimage was a wonderful, holy and healing experience and each of the pilgrims was richly blessed by their time together. ✠



# Supporting the HIPPYs in Nanaimo

By Swedini Halliday, HIPPY Manager and parishioner at Trinity parish

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is an evidenced-based program that works with families in the home to support parents, primarily mothers, in their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher. HIPPY strengthens families and communities by empowering mothers to actively prepare their children for success in school". (HIPPY Canada: Because Mothers Matter) The HIPPY program is offered to families from various cultures especially to those who are most at risk due to poverty and social isolation.

The HIPPY Program was launched by the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS) on May 27, 2014, with the enrollment of 12 families. Currently there are over 40 families participating in the program. CVIMS is grateful to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for supporting the HIPPY program by providing funding which allows us to offer the program to eligible newcomers to Canada. CVIMS also recognizes that there are other local, low-income families who would benefit from program, but may not meet the IRCC eligibility criteria. Consequently, CVIMS depends on private donations to bring this wonderful program to these families.

Trinity Catholic Church in Nanaimo believes HIPPY is valuable to the education of all children and has embraced and supported the program from the beginning. The Nanaimo Ecumenical Center (NEC), composed of Trinity Catholic and Trinity United Parishes, offers space for monthly meetings at a very reasonable rate for the participants of the program. These monthly meetings are an integral part of the HIPPY program and without this meeting space the program would be in jeopardy. Trinity Catholic Parish Council continues to offer support through annual financial contributions. Trinity Catholic Ladies Group and the Saint Vincent De Paul Society have also made financial donations. Furthermore, through their very generous donation, the members of the Knights of Columbus

Council 9990, Trinity Catholic Church, have sponsored one local, low-income family for enrollment for one year in the program.

It is very encouraging and life-giving to the participants of the HIPPY program to be embraced and supported in this manner by NEC and the Trinity Catholic Parish. CVIMS wishes to recognize their efforts and generosity.

Blessings to you for embracing multiculturalism, welcoming new immigrants, and supporting their settlement and integration to the Canadian way of life. ✠



Ed McDonald (center) from the Knights of Columbus Council 9990, Trinity Catholic Church, presents a cheque for the HIPPY program to Swedini Halliday (left) and Hilde Schlosar (the former Executive Director of the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society, right)

## Women & Leadership Conference

By Sr. Sheila Moss SSA

On a wet, stormy weekend about 100 people, some men, but mostly women, accepted the invitation given by the Society of Friends of St. Ann's Academy to "come together in conversation and explore women's leadership, activism and creative ideas and practices in response to the pressing gender and social issues of our time." The Women and Leadership Conference, supported by funding from the Sisters of St. Ann and sponsored in collaboration with Leadership Studies, University of Victoria and the Royal British Columbia Museum, began with Elder May Sam welcoming all to the Songhees First Nations Territory, expressing her hope for the future with a sung blessing over us all.

The desire to make the event an occasion of encounter and learning was carried out through panel discussions led by women prominent in a variety of fields who informed and inspired the participants by speaking of their commitment and work for justice and equality. A special highlight was given to the lives and stories of Indigenous women.

The Conference also included hands-on workshops in puppetry, theatre, fabric craft and storytelling. The history of the Academy and of the Sisters of St. Ann unfolded through a walking tour of St. Ann's Academy historic wing, the frontage

of St. Joseph's Hospital and the long-term care facility, Mount St. Mary Hospital, ending at the first school and convent now located on the Museum grounds. The Sisters leading the tour shared from their personal perspectives the evidence of the Sisters of St. Ann's daring, faith-filled leadership since 1858. In answer to the needs of the time they laid the groundwork for a social network through their dedicated work in education, family services and health care, and a concern for the needy that continues today.

The final event of the Conference was held in the First Nations Longhouse, Mungo Martin House, at the Museum. Teachings and experience were shared through storytelling, a panel on Women in Politics and dance in which Lindsay Delaronde led the participants around the centre fire in an Iroquois Shuffle Dance.

The continuing conversations, laughter and hugs revealed the reality of bonds of friendship and strengthening of commitment built throughout the Conference. The staff, coordinators, Friends of St. Ann's members and volunteers felt a joyful gratitude that the Conference's objectives had been met, and that women's roles in leadership had been celebrated and strengthened. ✠

## Third Annual Saint Night Event

By Laura Gaetz, Children's Religious Education, Church of the Ascension

This year at our third annual Saint Night, Church of the Ascension hosted its biggest event yet, including 14 'Saint Centres': St. Michael the Archangel, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Edward the Confessor, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Katharine Drexel, St. Philomena, St. Behnam and his sister St. Sara, St. Anthony, St. Christopher, St. Louise de Marcella, St. Bridget of Sweden, and St. John Paul II.

Much fun was had by all as students and parents alike completed a Saint scavenger hunt, learning how they could use a million dollars to help others, or making a fishing craft from which St. Anthony preached.

Our parish's volunteers, some new and some returning for another year, dressed in costume at their Saint Centre, eager to share their Saint with the children, and they did that so wonderfully! St. Teresa even had a special guest, Lucienne, who had actually met and hugged Mother Teresa.

Our Parish Youth Members provided fabulous assistance in the craft center, not only helping with activities, but also recycling scrap materials. A week later, as we gathered together, I was pleased at the excitement of the children, who eagerly shared all they had learned.

This event, which was started to help bridge the teachings of the parish community with our Children's Religious Education program, has grown into a success at the hands of God as I had never dreamed. With His blessing, it will continue to flourish for years to come.

God bless, and thank you to all those who contributed to its success. ✠



The 'saints' at Church of the Ascension. Photo credit: Gaetz Designs



# Remembering Sr. Helene Corneau SSA

Press Release, Sisters of St. Ann

Sr. Marie Helene Corneau, also known as Sr. Mary Rose Estelle SSA, was born November 8, 1925 in Central Falls, Rhode Island, USA, and died September 19, 2016 at Mount St. Mary Hospital, Victoria, BC.

Born of Franco-American parentage, Helene was the sixth of eleven children. She entered the Sisters of St. Ann in 1944 and pronounced her vows on July 24, 1946. Dedicating her life to God, she began teaching in New York and Massachusetts before traveling in 1951 to Western Canada as a missionary educator. Later she became a landed immigrant.

For nearly 20 years Helene taught in Catholic and Government BC schools. She taught in New Westminster, Lower Post, Mission City, Port Alberni and Burnaby as well as Skagway, Alaska.

Helene obtained a BA from Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington. In support of Helene's second ministry she gained a BFA from the University of Victoria. She provided us with many beautiful pieces of art. A prayerful woman sensitive to the needs of others, Helene worked with the L'Arche Community, opened a house of prayer, became part of the Co-op Housing and assisted with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Victoria. Many sought her out for spiritual guidance. When Helene retired, she resided at St. Ann's Residence, gently continuing her ministry in Art and Spiritual Direction. Her final years were spent at Mount St. Mary Hospital. We will miss her caring presence. ✠



## Being Part of Solutions

By Yvonne Zarowny, Social Justice Team Chair; Church of the Ascension.  
Photo credit: Rosemary Blank

The tiny Social Justice Team (SJT) at Church of the Ascension (Parksville) is pleased to welcome two new members: Merry Danarti (Woollatt) and Diane Jones. They bring much needed fresh eyes, energy and diverse backgrounds to our team.

Given the numerous life-threatening challenges with which we are confronted, the SJT understands its mission as *promoting a consistent life-with-dignity ethic for the full continuum for all God's Creation*. That is: we are to facilitate our parishioners' understanding the root causes of many of our challenges so we can faithfully respond in a manner consistent with our Church's teaching.

☾ Earth and its resources do not belong to us;  
they belong to God.

A consistent 'life-with-dignity' ethic has been part of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) since 1891. These teachings enable us to be part of effective solutions for serious problems.

Being part of solutions requires a deep understanding that to constructively and effectively engage our culture of death, and transform it to a variety of cultures of life, we need to understand the inter-relatedness of the issues challenging us. As Pope Francis affirmed in 2015 with the Encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*—Earth and its resources do not belong to us; they belong to God.

Consistent with the long tradition of CST, Pope Francis reminds us we are to respectfully use Earth's resources for the common good of all God's Creation. Pope Francis stressed we can no longer address our numerous life-threatening challenges on an issue by issue basis. We need integral human development.

This was emphasized at Church of the Ascension as the SJT facilitated saying prayers and a special collection to assist our Haitian brothers and sisters build resilient communities, enabling them to have life with dignity.

Few parishioners realized that as recently as the 1970s Haiti was not only self-sufficient in its food production, it exported surplus. Then, as a result of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Haiti was impoverished and life with dignity was denied to many.

This pattern was repeated around the world, deepening a culture of death. We have more refugees than at any time in human history, with the hottest year on record, and a disrespect for life at all stages.

It is to rectify as well as prevent the perpetuation of this culture of death that Popes have written about this in their social Encyclicals, including St. John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis. They all stress the need for prayerful, reflective engagement that enables all to have life with dignity.

As we anticipate celebrating anew the birth of the Christ Child in our hearts, we invite you to ponder how keeping Christ in Christmas enables you to be part of solutions. ✠



## Honoring Sr. Vinda RVM

By Barbara Ann Charlie

How do we say *goodbye* to someone who is an integral part of St. Ann's faith community?

Sr. Vinda Ochoa RVM arrived in the Cowichan Valley five years ago and immediately immersed herself into our community. It was as if she had always been a member of our Cowichan family. Sister walked with us as we worked together in different capacities to reach our common goal: *To move forward by strengthening the spirit of St. Ann's Parish*.

A woman with leadership qualities was a welcome asset to our parish. Working together we have shared laughter, experienced successes, and have faced obstacles to our good deeds. Yet she viewed these obstacles as challenges that served to strengthen us as we worked to reach our goals. Sister also reminded me that our focus was to do God's work.

So the answer to my question is, "We don't say goodbye but we say we will 'See you again, Sr. Vinda.'" Most importantly we honour Sr. Vinda for sharing her time with the Cowichan People.

On Sunday, October 9, 2016, we honoured Sr. Vinda with a blanket ceremony. Before Mass, Sr. Vinda was escorted to the entrance of the Church where she was dressed in a blanket by the Cowichan members. This is a symbol of the love and care that we have for her.

The children of St. Ann's, supported by Jerry Brown, led Sister in a procession while singing the Hul'qumi'num Prayer Song. These are the children with whom Sister worked very closely in St. Ann's Children and Youth Ministry for the past four years. The children were dressed in blue shirts adorned with a white Spirit Bear design. The children chose the design as a symbol of strengthening our spirit together. As the children moved forward they took their respective positions on either side of the aisle, acting as honour guards for Sister to walk through. As Sister reached the front of the church she was escorted to the front pew, her usual seat during Sunday Mass. She was seated with the blanket wrapped around her shoulders, and the children took their seats surrounding her. Sister was able to take part in Mass in its entirety without any responsibility for its occurrence.

After the final blessing, a blanket was carefully and lovingly placed on the floor in front of the altar, a symbol of our prayers and protection for Sister. She was led to the blanket and adorned with a headband. Once again the children took their positions on either side of Sister.

Every person in attendance was invited to take the opportunity to come forward to personally acknowledge and honour Sister Vinda. The children, led and supported by Charlie George, sang the Hul'qumi'num Honour Song, and raised their hand in thanks to Sister throughout this ceremony.

It was a beautiful sight to witness the entire congregation and visitors from Nanaimo and surrounding communities lined up to embrace Sister in thanks and appreciation and to offer good wishes. The children and adults in attendance who came forward are a representation of the many lives that have been touched by Sr. Vinda—a woman who always made everyone feel welcome. ✠

Sr. Vinda Ochoa RVM and Sr. Janet Bayron RVM are now residing in Port Alberni, helping to expand the Diocesan mission outreach to the West Coast.



# The Legion of Mary

By Ying-jeng Wang

October is the month of the Holy Rosary. On the first Saturday, the World Day of the Rosary takes place while the Church celebrates Our Lady of the Rosary. The initiation of this prayer took place eleven years ago in Mexico, uniting people in every corner of the world to pray the Rosary together.

This year, the World Day of the Rosary fell on October 1. Traditionally, the Legion of Mary (LOM) would walk the Rosary Road from Mile 0 on Dallas Road to St. Andrew's Cathedral, yet it was cancelled due to unceasing rain, and moved to October 8 at St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Unlike the usual Rosary we pray, on this occasion we prayed the international Rosary in five different languages: English, French, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Spanish. Each language led the first half of the prayer and we answered the rest in English. Though we didn't understand those languages, we could still respond spontaneously, despite the initial pause and uncertainty. Surprisingly, five visitors from Panama joined our prayer later! We prayed an extra Mystery with them in Spanish, and ended the prayer by singing *Immaculate Mary*.

Following the Rosary Road, our spiritual director of the Legion, Yvonne Behm, shared with us at our weekly Friday meeting the importance of praying the Rosary. She drew from a passage in *Magnificat* (October 2016), written by Fr. James M. Sullivan, who states that Rosary is "simply meant to be prayed, to be held in one's hands and be prayed." Fr. Sullivan stresses that one of the seven Spiritual Works of Mercy is to pray for the living and the dead, and that the profundity of our faith can be made simple with the Rosary.

Although the Rosary seems to be repetitive, requiring that we say the prayers over and over, the depth and richness of the prayers are self-evident. Pope Benedict XVI said that Mother Mary, during her apparition in Fatima as 'the Madonna of the Rosary', insistently recommended praying the Rosary every day to bring an end to the war. The Pope regards the Rosary as a powerful means not only to bring peace to our families and the whole world but also to meditate on Jesus' life so that we can love him and follow him more faithfully.

Regarding the numerous benefits brought by praying the Rosary, let's take out our Rosary and start to pray—along with ours and others' intentions!

## Mini Retreat

This year, the mini retreat held by the Legion of Mary took place on November 19 at St. Andrew's Parish Centre. We began with Mass, followed by the Rosary prayer and a testimony. The highlight of our retreat was the speech delivered by our honorable speaker, Dr. Patricia Rooke, who featured her talk on 'Finding Grace in Unexpected Places'. Dr. Rooke has been teaching adult faith formation classes at St. Andrew's Cathedral for about 12 years. Her invaluable experience, powerful testimony, and more importantly, her fervent love for God had drawn a large crowd to the small meeting room, which was jam-packed with attentive listeners, eager to gain pearls of wisdom from her.

Dr. Rooke talked about two conversions in her life, one being how the Holy Spirit led her to convert from being an atheist and a communist party member to a Catholic. Her father, a humble wharf labourer, was a communist, a comrade, and a passionate Stalinist, but never rose up in officialdom despite the Party's rhetoric about equality. It was his influence in her early years that led her to search for the truth. After trials and tribulations, she finally found the Catholic Church that Jesus Christ has founded. To her surprise, Patricia's mother actually had her secretly baptized—without her father's knowledge.

While she attributed her baptism to the conversion into the Catholic faith, it was her encounter with Pope John Paul II that led her to the second conversion—teaching about Christ. She talked about her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join the morning Mass held by the Holy Father in Vatican. She said she was unaware of the fact that the Pope had been lying prostrate for a solid hour until the church bell signalled the beginning of the Mass. She and her husband later joined the breakfast with the Holy Father and were asked about their professions. "What do you do?" the Pope asked. "We are professors," they responded. The Holy Father replied them with simple yet profound words, "Go and teach about Christ."

By God's Providence, this is what Patricia has been doing for decades. It seems that God wants her to continue His work.

Overwhelmed though we were by Dr. Rooke's inspiring speech, we sang *Immaculate Mary*, *Anima Christi*, and *Pray the Rosary for Peace* to officially mark a wonderful ending of this short yet fruitful retreat. For more information about Dr. Patricia Rooke, visit [www.mary-modelofchurch.net](http://www.mary-modelofchurch.net). ✠

## Save the Date!

*Bishop's Gala*

Saturday, May 6, 2017  
Our Lady of Fatima Hall

# Remembering Fr. Michael Birch

By Most Reverend Steven J. Lopes, Bishop, Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter

Fr. Michael Birch was born January 19, 1940, in Vancouver. He earned a Bachelor's in history from the University of British Columbia in 1967 and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Theology from the Theological College of British Columbia in 1970. He worked as a bank teller and a municipal clerk for the City of Vancouver before discerning a call to Holy Orders.

Fr. Birch was ordained a deacon for the Anglican Church of Canada in 1970 and a priest of the same jurisdiction in 1971.



Fr. Michael Birch

“I love being a priest, for it is what God wants me to do ... And may he call you, young men, to that ministry, and you, young women, to the consecrated life of prayer and action, that he will not be without witness in this, your generation.”

For well over 40 years, Fr. Michael faithfully served the people of God in a number of priestly assignments. His years of ministry included service as Rector of St. John the Evangelist in Calgary (1974–1984); Rector of St. Mark's in Calgary (1992–2003); and Founding Pastor of Christ the King in Calgary (2003–2006).

On Divine Mercy Sunday in April 2012 Fr. Birch entered into full communion with the Catholic Church in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria. He was ordained a priest of the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter on June 14, 2013, at St. Andrew's Cathedral. He was assigned to Blessed John Henry Newman, the Ordinariate's community in Victoria, where he remained in ministry until his death.

In a 2014 edition of the *Diocesan Messenger*, a publication of the Diocese of Victoria, Father Birch composed a column on vocations, writing:

*I love being a priest, for it is what God wants me to do ... And may he call you, young men, to that ministry, and you, young women, to the consecrated life of prayer and action, that he will not be without witness in this, your generation. And when you hear or feel that call, may you add your 'yes' to that of Our Lady. By her 'yes' the Saviour was born; by your 'yes,' His continued presence is assured. Then we shall understand St. Paul's statement about his ministry, 'Not I, but Christ in me.' ✠*

'Mercy' is more than having compassion; it means we enter freely into the other person's chaos or suffering. We feel the other's pain, see through their eyes, and place ourselves inside the person's heart and mind. When that happens, we are moved to respond in a merciful way.

~ Bishop Gary Gordon

## 10 years of Marythoning

By Jane Bowers, Director of Fund Development

Ten years and a few thousand kilometers later, Mount St. Mary Hospital's Marythoners team were at the GoodLife Fitness Marathon again on Thanksgiving Sunday in October. The weather was mild and spirits were high as team members warmed up at the start line.

Our runners and walkers participated in both the half marathon and the 8K event. Team member Tony Heemsker even walked his own 10K in Portugal. Knowing they had done a job well, everyone still had smiles on their faces as they crossed the finish line.

The commitment and determination of all the team members was inspiring. Their commitment to Mount St. Mary Hospital residents resulted in over \$6,838 being raised for our *Room to Care* campaign—absolutely fantastic!!

The funds raised will be used to repair, renew and refresh resident rooms at the Hospital. Every dollar helps Mount St. Mary Hospital make this very important project a reality.

Our Marythoners team was led by captain Mandy Parker with team members participating in this year's event in memory of Sr. Lucy Dumont SSA. Sr. Lucy was our original cheerleader and champion—she was dearly missed. From all of the activities leading up to the day, including team recruitment and fundraising, to saying 'hello' to so many on the race course, Sr. Lucy led this team for nine years with great passion and dedication.

For each step we took at this year's event, we know Sr. Lucy was there with us in spirit. We trust she is proud of all that we accomplished this year, and pleased with the positive impact it will have on our residents. ✠



# Island Catholic Schools



## So what is this redesigned curriculum?

By Beverly Pulyk, Superintendent

BC's Educational Transformation has arrived—so what is it exactly? The following provides some highlights from a recent provincial workshop facilitated by lead educators Misty Paterson and Suzanne Hoffman, from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education website [www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca](http://www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca) also provides detailed information on the New Curriculum.

“We are moving from an education model based on compliance to one of innovation.”

Kaleb Rashad states, “The goal of 21st Century Learning is the creation of knowledgeable, adaptable people who can work with others to innovate in the new economy.” The demand for skills is changing; Linda Darling-Hammond writes that “two-thirds of today's young people will enter jobs that don't yet exist using technologies that have not yet been invented to solve complex problems we have not solved.” She also notes that there is a growth in jobs requiring complex communication and higher-order thinking, while at the same time there is a decrease in jobs that are routine and manual. In 1970, Fortune 500 identified the top five most valued skills to be: writing, computational skills, reading skills, oral communication and listening skills. In 1999, the top five were identified as: teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal skills, oral communication and listening skills.

We are moving from an education model based on compliance to one of innovation. It requires shifting students from: passive to active; completing/replicating to creating; consuming to producing; memorizing to processing; marching to reflecting; isolation to collaboration; dependent to autonomous; answering to asking. For teachers it means shifting from: teacher-centred to student-driven; telling to listening; mass production to mass customization; linear to multiple streams; presenter to facilitator; content experts to process experts (Kaleb Rashad).

As such the Guiding Principles of the Redesigned Curriculum are:

- Personalized Learning by tapping into students' interest to help them learn;
- Six Core Competencies balanced with the solid Foundation Skills of reading, writing and numeracy; and,
- Real-life Situations

This reduces the prescriptive nature of the curriculum, allowing for more flexibility and choice. It also supports interdisciplinary learning, enabling teachers to be creative and innovative. Lastly, it aligns assessment and evaluation.

There are six Core Competencies common to all subject areas and grade levels. They are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long

## Catholic Schools Plan Enhances St. Patrick's School Safety

By Deanne Paulson, Principal

The Island Catholic Schools Plan recognized the need to seismically upgrade St. Patrick's School and dedicated \$1.5 million to improving the seismic resistance of the existing 1958 gym and adjacent three-storey intermediate classroom wing.

The work began during Spring Break, 2016, with a projected completion date of September 19, 2016. The gym and classroom wing were physically separated to allow each structure to move/shake independently from the other. Shear walls were built between classrooms, the exterior cinder blocks were filled with rebar and cement, the steel infrastructure was reinforced and steel cross bracing cables were installed.

The seismic upgrade was completed on time and on budget! The building now meets the current required standard, meaning that the building would remain standing in an earthquake. This would allow students to exit safely.

St. Patrick's installed an earthquake early warning system that is monitored by the University of British Columbia. Steel desks were purchased from Lifeguard Structures for all the staff members and students in the three-storey wing. They are designed to provide a safe shelter and are equipped with survival kits. Both the warning system and desks complement the seismically upgraded facility.

St. Patrick's School is a seismically-prepared model school! ✂



learning (Ministry website). They are abilities, skills and processes that students must develop to be an effective, educated citizen. The six Core Competencies are:

- Communication
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Positive, Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Responsibility.

Students will be expected to self-report at the end of the year on their progress with the six Core Competencies—more on that later in the year, while we as teachers determine how best to support that at the various grade levels.

Within each subject area students are expected to know, do and understand things relative to the subject area—understand the Big Ideas by knowing essential Content and Concepts, and doing the Curricular Competencies. The New Curriculum also expects the Aboriginal Worldview, Perspectives and Pedagogies to be woven into the curriculum where appropriate. And of course being a Catholic school, we expect teachers to integrate our Catholic faith throughout the curriculum, not just in Religion classes.

Then there is assessment. Teachers are still expected to measure student success relative to the provincial standards. Students will be required to show what they have learned and how to apply it. Standardized tests of reading, writing, and numeracy will still take place in Grades 4 and 7. High school students will write provincial exams in math and literacy—the key subjects post-secondary institutions look to for admissions. (Ministry website)

As part of modernizing education “the Ministry of Education is looking for input from parents to guide the development of the reporting approach for students in kindergarten to Grade 9 so parents have a better understanding of their child's progress.” (Ministry website). View the following website for further details on how parents can provide input: [www.engage.gov.bc.ca/yourkidsprogress/en/home](http://www.engage.gov.bc.ca/yourkidsprogress/en/home).

The new curriculum change required will be a journey, it will not happen overnight. Teachers will continue to receive professional development on the new curriculum, how to effectively implement it in the classroom, and how to best assess students within its context. ✂

## Long service recognized

By Beverly Pulyk, Superintendent

At the Diocesan Schools' Conference held on November 14, staff members employed by Island Catholic Schools for 10 and 20 years were recognized for their long service, dedication and commitment. Congratulations are extended to the following people:

### 10 Years

Mark Christante  
Peter Chimich  
Brian Untereiner  
Maria Harrison  
Carol Gamey  
Angela Peterson  
Michelle McHugh  
Elena Harrison

### 20 Years

Annie Ingraham  
Bern Muller



L to R: 20 Year ICS employees Annie Ingraham and Bern Muller



L to R: 10 Year ICS employees Michelle McHugh, Angela Peterson, Mark Cristante, Peter Chimich, Brian Untereiner



# 'Happenings' at St. Joseph's Chemainus

Authors as indicated

## Harvest House Food Bank

The Harvest House food bank is important to the community because it feeds between 50-80 people per week. It is part of a food bank network all over the country. Many businesses, churches and individuals donate food to the food banks. The best foods to donate are pasta, whole grain cereals, and canned vegetables, fruit, meat and fish. The food bank is located on Willow Street and is run by volunteers. ✂

~ By Lucy

## Principal's update

Students and staff of St. Joseph's School in Chemainus are well into another full and exciting year. Our children were delighted to find that the Parent Group had installed new equipment in the playground over the summer—a great surprise!

We are very pleased this year to be learning about the traditions, language and culture of the local First Nations Peoples through weekly visits from Elders and classroom guests. This is a highlight in our week. *Huy'ch'qa!*

We have found many ways to come together as a community over the last three months, with a Welcome Back Barbeque in September, a Family Halloween Dance in October, a Movie Night in November, and monthly Family Masses. As we prepare for our Christmas Concerts in December, the school is filled with the sound of students singing songs that celebrate the birth of our Saviour. We will return from our Christmas Break to enjoy an Epiphany Feast prepared by our generous PAC volunteers. Parishioners are always welcome at all our communal events. We are very grateful for your prayers and financial support. ✂

~ By Bernard Muller, Principal, St. Joseph's Chemainus

## Terry Fox

On July 28, 1958, Terry Stanley Fox was born. Little did he know that as he grew up he would make such a huge difference for people and for cancer research. Terry was never the best at sports but it never stopped his passion for them. In fact Terry was so committed to making his baseball practice he would arrive half an hour early for his ride. On March 9, 1977, when Terry was only 18 years old, doctors amputated his right leg 15 cm above the knee because he had bone cancer. Later on, in 1979, Terry began training for his Marathon of Hope. He said, "I'm not a dreamer and I'm not saying this will initiate any kind of definitive answer or cure to cancer, but I believe in miracles. I have to." And so, on April 12, 1980, Terry dipped his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean signifying the start of his Marathon of Hope.

In 143 days, Terry ran 5,373 km and stopped outside of Thunder Bay Ontario. His cancer was back. It had spread to his lungs. Before going into treatment Terry said, "I'm going to do my very best. I'll fight. I promise I won't give up." Even to this day, St. Joseph's School and many other schools in Canada still carry on Terry's dream on running to find a cure for cancer. ✂

~ By Jelena



# Peace Week at St. Andrew's Regional High School

By Andrew Keleher, Principal

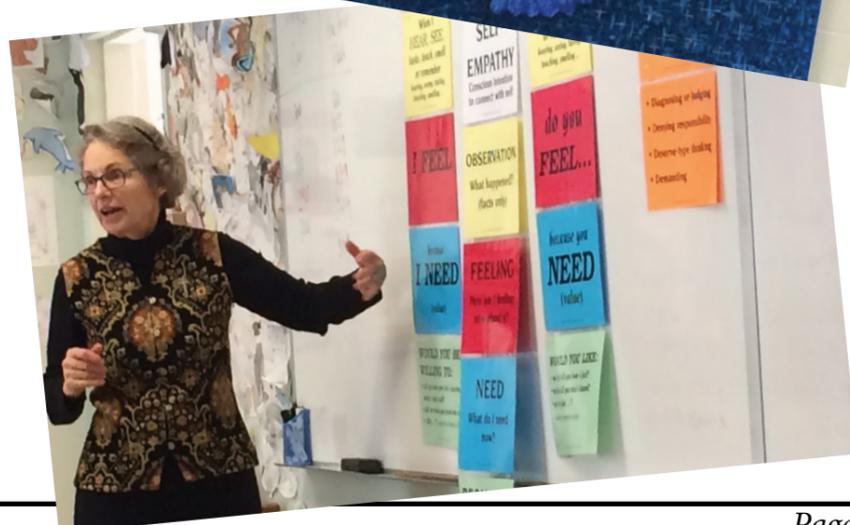
From November 7 – 10, 2016, staff and students of St. Andrew's Regional High School participated in their Annual Peace Week event. Peace Week began four years ago when a group of VOICE (Volunteer Outreach in Catholic Education) students from St. Andrew's attended a PeaceQuest workshop generously sponsored by the Sisters of St. Ann. The members of VOICE, and many other community members, joined the Sisters at St. Ann's Academy for a Peace Symposium. The symposium consisted of a discussion about peace, an information session about Restorative Justice, and the opportunity to practice Non-Violent Communication. Members of VOICE were hooked, and they began to plan the first Peace Week.

This year, we engaged in several projects or events.

- All members of the school community were invited to participate in a school-wide art project. Under the excellent direction of art teacher Mr. Andrew Gibbs, a picture of a dove was created. This picture is now hanging in the front hall of St. Andrew's Regional High School (see photo, right).
- Students in the Grade 9 classes participated in a 'Blanket Exercise'.
- A grade 10 and grade 11 class were instructed by Sr. Judi Morin SSA in the practice of Non-Violent Communication (see photo, bottom right).
- Three grade 9 classes were taught about Restorative Justice by Julie Cormier.
- Members of VOICE and Peer Ministry held a Bake Sale that raised \$115.00 for Development and Peace Syrian Relief.

These very worthwhile activities were made possible by the generous support of the Sisters of Saint Ann, Sr. Judi Morin SSA, Julie Cormier, Kairos, and Kelly Bourke.

Thank you for investing in peace. ✂





# Celebrating the Jubilee

“Mercy cannot become a mere parenthesis in the life of the Church, but a doorway through which the profound truths of the Faith are revealed. Everything is revealed in mercy; everything is made possible in mercy.”  
*(Misericordia Dei)*

## Mercy Chapel at Holy Cross Church

By Trudy Holden

It began with our Bishop and ended with our Pope! Two years ago, our then-pastor, Fr. Dino Villadiego, brought to Parish Council the suggestion from and wish of Bishop Gordon that our churches remain open during daytime hours. He believed that people need and want a sacred place to pray and reflect, and open-door churches were to be the place.

The Holy Cross family took the Bishop’s suggestion to heart and the project, realized the last week of October 2016, took shape. The ‘crying room’ was seen as the ideal place for daytime church visits. Now, rarely used for crying babies, sometimes used by latecomers to Sunday liturgy or by those who felt the room afforded a space close to the celebration of the liturgy, the room would be repurposed. It would become a day chapel.

In short order a lock was put on the door, separating the room from the larger church to secure the church proper. For a while planning slowed as priest assignments were announced, then Fr. William Hann was transferred to Holy Cross. Those who know Fr. William know that he brings with him enthusiasm, a deep authentic spirituality, a high need to include everyone—no one is to be excluded—and a longing to bring the Gospel beyond our church doors. Of course, all of this is wrapped up in an energy level of one half his age! The idea of an open, accessible and available prayer space fit Fr. William’s vision as completely as a good glove fits a hand.

By means and measures, chapel work progressed. Fr. William secured the perfect chapel altar and we engaged the services of a parishioner with a truck, and in no time the altar was here. One move by another eager parishioner and the altar was in its perfect spot. The tabernacle was moved to the double glassed wall space where it had been when the church was built, and from which it would be accessible to both the church and chapel.

Now, all that remained was a name for our new day chapel. The Year of Mercy has been in sharp focus at Holy Cross this year—workshops, conversations, weekly bulletins highlighted quotes from Pope Francis, and mercy themes underscored liturgical homilies. The obvious and perfect choice, our chapel would be Mercy Chapel. Honoring Fr. Joe Jackson, who together with a small group of families

**Mercy is unending forgiveness,  
no matter how many mistakes we make.**

~ Lucy, ICS student



On April 19, 2016, about two dozen people from the Southern Gulf Islands (Mayne, Pender and Salt Spring Islands) travelled to St. Andrew’s Cathedral to enter the Door of Mercy.

This was a historical event for the Gulf Island folk. Together we entered the Door of Mercy, were given a tour of the Cathedral and crypt, celebrated Mass, enjoyed lunch at Romeos, and then were blessed with a tour and presentation at Congregation Emanu-El synagogue.

We hope this will be the start of an annual inter-Gulf Island pilgrimage of faith for the Catholic folk of the Southern Gulf Islands. Plans are beginning to come together for a second, yet different itinerary.

began the Gordon Head Mission in February 1980, the brass plaque on the door reads:

**MERCY CHAPEL  
Sacred to the Memory  
Founding Pastor  
Fr. Joe Jackson C.S.Sp.  
1915-2003**

Our Mercy Chapel—a living legacy of the Year of Mercy, and a place rooted in the very beginnings of the Gordon Head Mission. Our Mercy Chapel—a place where we bend knee in Adoration, a place of wordless prayer from the heart, a place of word-rich prayer from the knowing mind, a place of silence; a place to be enveloped in God’s breathtaking mercy toward each of us and a place from which we move onwards, through open doors to live out our lives in mercy, to show to all those we meet, those we know and those on the fringes, the mercy that God so generously shows to us. And so, our Mercy Chapel keeps the Year of Mercy eternal. ✠



**Mercy is ultimate forgiveness.**

~ Diego, ICS student

**Mercy is love—all my sins taken away.**

~ Payal, ICS student



St. Joseph’s Elementary School in Victoria undertook a pilgrimage to St. Andrew’s Cathedral as our Staff Retreat in May. All teachers and support staff walked the Galloping Goose trail from St. Joseph’s to the Cathedral, stopping twice for prayer along the way. We based our prayers on traditional pilgrimage prayers, and adapted them to our purpose. We met Bishop Gary at the Cathedral, where he celebrated Mass and then joined us for lunch. It was a great way to hold a staff retreat, and everyone loved it!



# Pilgrimage Year of Mercy

life of the Church; it constitutes her very existence, the Gospel are made manifest and tangible.

is resolved in the merciful love of the Father.”

*et misera, 1)*



## Pilgrimage to the Door of Mercy

By Denise Buckley

It is said that passing through the Holy Door evokes the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish (Saint Pope John Paul II). This privilege was enjoyed by 45 parishioners of Christ the King Parish when we traveled on our ‘mini pilgrimage’ from Courtenay by bus to St. Andrew’s Cathedral on Tuesday, April 5, 2016, during the Year of Mercy.

Our day in Victoria began at the Cathedral with Mass celebrated by Fr. Harrison Ayre. It was nostalgic and a pleasure to attend a Mass celebrated by him as he had spent his ‘resident’ year with us at Christ the King. Our group then passed through the Holy Door in hopes of receiving the plenary indulgence promised each pilgrim after fulfilling the conditions laid down by the declaration of the Holy Father.

Afterward, Carol Ball, a member of the Cathedral Parish, graciously gave us an informative talk describing the origin and description of the interior of the Cathedral itself. The group was then invited to view the crypt in the lower level, as well as the new hall.

A tasty lunch followed at one of Victoria’s many restaurants, where everyone shared their experience and joy at having been involved in this mini pilgrimage. We were then treated to a tour of St. Ann’s Academy, where a few of our group had gone to school in years gone by. Our guide told of the role of the Church and the dedication of the Sisters of St. Ann who had been instrumental in the beginnings of education and healthcare in British Columbia. Now a national historic site owned by the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens’ Services, St. Ann’s remains one of Victoria’s premier landmarks surrounded by heritage gardens and green space to provide an oasis in the centre of the capital city.

The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination. For our little group from Christ the King, that destination was achieved on that very happy and holy day. ✠



Holy Door of Mercy Pilgrims from Our Lady of the Rosary in Langford

## What does ‘Mercy’ mean to you?

From Island Catholic Schools students in grades 4 – 7

**Mercy is being forgiven and given another chance.**

~ Ana

**Mercy means the place is in peace.**

~ Portia

**If you give someone a hug after they give you a mean face.**

~ Kelden

**Mercy is getting to try again.**

~ Naiomi

**You have to take deep breaths.**

~ Ryan

**Mercy is when a punishment is lifted.**

~ Cam



On November 12, 2016, students from the University of Victoria’s Catholic Students Association made a pilgrimage from the UVic Chapel to St. Andrew’s Cathedral for one last opportunity to pass through the Doors of Mercy. Students complemented their pilgrimage with Corporal Works of Mercy by handing out socks and mittens to those on the street.



# Anniversary celebrations in the Diocese of Victoria

## Centennial celebrations for Our Lady of Fatima

By Giovanna Aquila

**2017** marks a special year for Portugal and the Catholic Church: the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady to the three shepherd children, the *pastorinhos* of Fatima.



Between May and October of 1917, amidst the world war and global suffering of the time, Our Lady visited Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto. These visits were preceded by three visits from an angel in the spring, summer, and autumn of 1916 when the children were aged 9, 8, and 6, respectively. Now one hundred years later, thousands upon thousands of pilgrims flock to Fatima each year and even more faithful show special devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. St. John Paul II beatified Francisco and Jacinta on May 13, 2000 and their cause for canonization is under way. Sr. Lucia, who lived as a nun until her death in 2005, is also en route for canonization, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI having waived the five-year waiting period to begin the process.

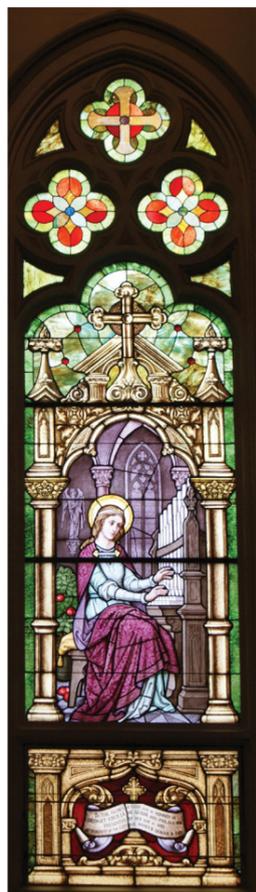
At Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Victoria, preparations are already underway to celebrate this momentous year. Starting in Advent of the new liturgical year, events leading up to the official festival include:

- Presentations at the 11:30 bilingual Mass on the first Sunday of each month to teach and remind us who the children were and what happened leading up to the apparitions of Our Lady
- Various fundraisers—check our bulletin and ‘like’ our Facebook page (Centennial of Apparitions Celebration in Victoria, BC) to stay updated.

In May, there will be special Masses celebrated by different priests of our Diocese and concelebrated by Fr. Marinaldo. The schedule is:

Wednesday, May 10 7 PM	• Mass (Bilingual) with Fr. Eduardo Santos
Thursday, May 11 7 PM	• Mass (English) with Fr. Alfredo Monacelli
Friday, May 12 6:30 PM	• Mass (English) at 6:30 PM with Fr. Dean Henderson. Reception in the hall following
Saturday, May 13 7 PM	• Mass (Bilingual) with Frs. Marinaldo Batista and Manuel Cardoso • Recitation of a living Rosary • Candlelit procession
Sunday, May 14 11:30 AM	• Mass (Bilingual) with Bishop Gary Gordon • Blessing and installation of relics of Blessed Jacinta and Francisco • Social party following Mass with food, beverages and entertainment

The parishioners at Our Lady of Fatima would like to extend an invitation to everyone in the Diocese to join us in honouring this special centennial year. Pray the Rosary, make sacrifices for the repose of all souls, and consecrate yourselves to Our Lady, as she asked us to do—and as the *pastorinhos* followed so faithfully. And in particular, come and visit our parish and engage in the Portuguese culture and tradition as we share the message and history of Fatima together. ✠

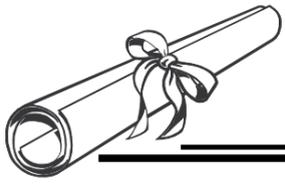


## St. Andrew's Cathedral 125th Anniversary concert series

St. Andrew's Cathedral began its 125th anniversary celebrations with special Masses celebrated on October 29 and 30, 2016, for the Dedication of a Church. Our festivities will continue throughout the coming year, which dovetails into the 150th Anniversary of Canada. Special liturgical and cultural events highlighting the architectural beauty, acoustical excellence, and historical and spiritual relevance of the Cathedral in our Victoria community will be on the calendar. Here is a snapshot of some of the concerts and events that are being planned for the year. Mark your calendar and join us in the festivities of the Mother Church of our Diocese. More information on events will follow as the 125th year progresses. ✠

Sunday, January 29	2 PM at St. Andrew's Cathedral	Victoria Cello Quartet featuring Rachel Capon, Eli Bender, Silvina Samuel-Lowden & Nathan Jacklin, performing Concerto for 4 cellos by G.P. Telemann, and other cello repertoire by Mercante, Piazzolla, Barber, Bach and others.
Sunday, February 26	2 PM at St. Andrew's Cathedral	Arion Male choir & St. Andrew's Music Ministry Hymn Sing. Come and sing some of your favourite Hymns with us!
Saturday, April 1	2 PM at St. Andrew's Cathedral	Emily Carr String Quartet performing "Last Words of Christ" by Joseph Haydn





# The Campus Mission



by Fr. Dean Henderson

I'm writing on a Marian memorial day, just after the Church has celebrated the Solemnity of Christ the King, and anticipating publication closer to our great feast of the Incarnation of our Lord at Christmas. I write with a heartfelt gratitude for the intercession of Our Lady of the Missions on campus.

When intimate with the liturgy of the Church, which is intimacy with Jesus and all his army of Saints, it's not hard to have hope; it's good to be Catholic. This isn't just me talking; this is a sentiment expressed by an impressive array of students. One, a stranger to me, emailed to introduce herself and asked about coming to Mass and talking to me about learning more about the Catholic faith. Last week I met with a senior student over a coffee after discovering he's returned to his childhood faith and recognized his need for the solid foundation of Christ's love. He's requesting instruction for his First Communion and Confirmation, like the African student Christian in formation with RCIA at Holy Cross, seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. The parish of Holy Cross has stepped up their support for the student mission by organizing a monthly potluck supper, a welcome addition to the usual support received from the downtown 9/10 Club support for the past 10 years. Our recent Coffee House Talent Night after Sunday Mass brought out 60 young people who shared a splendid variety of talents as a means to honour and glorify God. A similar number came to enjoy both an 'International Mass' with six or more languages incorporated a delicious assortment of foods offered at a multicultural potluck.

We just sent four young men to the Benedictine Abbey Seminary 'Live In' and readers might be encouraged and perhaps amused by a sample of their own words.

*When deciding about how to live one's life—just follow God, and you will always find joy. The seminarians and monks exhibited a type of joy and happiness that derives not from maximizing throw-away pleasures (as our culture strongly does), but from the abundant joy that comes with following Christ with all your heart. Their joy was genuine, sincere, and authentic.*

*Going to a live-in at the Westminster Abbey in Mission was kind of crazy. I've compared being at home versus being at the Abbey to the difference between being a seagull and being a dolphin, a seagull can dive into the ocean to get fish and get a short, blind glimpse of its depths, whereas a dolphin can stay under the surface, coming up only for air, and stay submerged long enough to really explore the waters. I have no other way to describe it. The seminarians really stuck out to me as well; they would go miles out of their way to offer us little courtesies, like giving us the biggest portions at meals, and were some of the most patient, honest and funniest guys I've ever met. All that didn't stop them from beating us at basketball, although I like to think we gave them a hard run for their money."*

Along with Campus Christian Outreach (CCO) missionaries Chantal, Laura, and Nathan, and in cooperation with the student leadership of the CSA, the mission on campus is thriving. And this in spite of, or perhaps because of, an intensifying

ideological culture of disdain for our faith, particularly our moral convictions based upon the theology of the human body!

In an environment in which University administrations recognize increased and incapacitating levels of student anxiety, depression and mental health disabilities, our students are finding (not without struggle) purpose and peace in Christ. Upon the solid sacramental foundation of the Holy Mother Church, students have been challenged to 'Mercy Motivated Conversion' (our year's theme) through CCO faith studies; Development & Peace participation; increased knowledge of Pope Francis' *Amoris Laetitia*; a Franciscan Friary Advent Retreat; a marvellous lecture on First Nations Culture and our need for reconciliation; Praying for All Souls; a pilgrim walk to the Cathedral Doors of Mercy; Theology of the Body; knowledge of Purgatory and Adoration for vocations at Campus Mass; and CCO's Summit! The benefits of our summer pilgrimage to Poland with 30 young members of the Diocese are evident in spiritual fruit on campus and some of them look forward to joining the stellar CCO celebration of faith, *Rise Up*, in Vancouver just after Christmas.

St. Augustine reminds us of the Marian nature of the mission on campus when he exhorts: "Now you in your turn must draw to the font of baptism as many as you possibly can. You became sons when you were born there yourselves, and now by bringing others to birth in the same way, you have it in your power to become the mothers of Christ." ✠



## Employment with the Catholic Diocese of Victoria EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP AND CHANCELLOR

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria is seeking a full-time Executive Assistant to support the Bishop and Chancellor to ensure optimal day to day work flow. The incumbent provides comprehensive administrative support in a professional, courteous and efficient manner while maintaining absolute confidentiality.

### Position Requirements

- High level of initiative, judgment, confidentiality and discretion;
- Excellent command of the English language including writing, editing and proof-reading skills;
- Organizational skills with the ability to prioritize, multi-task and meet tight deadlines;
- Excellent interpersonal skills;
- Must be proficient with MS Office Suite in particular Outlook and Word;
- Attention to detail essential;
- Knowledge of the organization and workings of the Catholic Church;
- Previous experience in a highly professional office environment along with relevant education;
- Compliance with the Responsible Ministry & Safe Environment policy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.

Interested applicants are invited to submit a résumé and cover letter by January 13, 2017 to:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria  
Attention: Cynthia Bouchard, Chancellor  
#1 - 4044 Nelthorpe Street  
Victoria, BC V8X 2A1  
Email: [chancery@rcdvictoria.org](mailto:chancery@rcdvictoria.org)  
Website: [www.rcdvictoria.org/employment.php](http://www.rcdvictoria.org/employment.php)

*The position will remain open until filled.  
Please note that only those short-listed for an interview  
will be contacted.*

## Annual Diocesan Conference

### *Crossing the Road, Finding my Neighbour*

with

Bishop Gary Gordon  
and  
Dr. Gwen Point

**Please join us for this special event**

**Friday, February 3, 2017**

(Pastors and ICS staff only)

8:30 AM – 3 PM

**Songhees Wellness Centre**  
1100 Admirals Road, Victoria

**Saturday, February 4, 2017**

(Open to all)

8:45 AM – 3:30 PM

(doors open at 8:15 AM)

**St. Edwards Parish**  
2085 Maple Bay Road, Duncan

Registration is required for the Conference on Saturday  
Search for 'Diocesan Conference' on Eventbrite: [www.Eventbrite.ca](http://www.Eventbrite.ca)  
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# Why can't Johnny put his cell phone down?

By Fr. Rolf Hasenack OP, Pastor of St. Elizabeth's, Sidney

Recently the clergy of our Diocese of Victoria gathered with Bishop Gary Gordon for our clergy study days. The main topic under the heading "Why Johnny can't put his cell phone down – at the dinner table, in the classroom, in bed" was a series of presentations by Sr. Marysia Weber RSM (Sisters of Mercy) of St. Louis, Missouri, USA, on the growing problem of internet addiction among children but also in adults. Sr. Weber is a physician, neurologist and psychiatrist who received her training at the Mayo clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

The worldwide web became available on a worldwide basis only in 1991, a relatively short time ago. But ever since, people have acquired behavior which was not seen before, with accompanying physical changes in the human brain. There exists real evidence that excessive use of the internet is affecting us emotionally, spiritually, and in our relationships with other people, and even physically in our brain. This occurs even more so in children and young people because the prefrontal lobe of the brain which is responsible for our reasoning ability is not fully developed until the age of 26. Sr. Weber called on adults to provide learning moments for children and young people so that this reasoning ability, which is a learned skill, can be strengthened. We need to use it or we will lose it. If we use the brain cells which give us reasoning ability, then they are physically strengthened. If we do not use them, then they can eventually disappear.

One of the first presentations Sr. Weber gave was appropriately entitled: "Is electronic media rewiring the human brain?" Studies show real evidence that the frontal lobe of the brain is shrinking in people, especially children, who excessively use the internet or play interactive games.

Online and interactive games can be good because they can help children learn. However, we also need to be aware that there can be negative effects on the brain and on development. 97% of children and youth between 12 and 17 are playing online games; 81% of 18–29 year olds are playing online interactive games. Many are spending seven to eight hours a day on the internet. Excessive gaming replaces face-to-face interaction among adults, children and toddlers, who are diminishing their ability to learn, or are endangering their social skills.

We also need to remember that many of these games are interactive and include role playing. When we then think of the amount of violence, including sexual violence, contained in these games, then we can see how it can affect a person's or a child's behaviour. Virtual violence fuels real violence, especially in children who cannot yet distinguish between virtual reality and natural reality. Some studies estimate that 85% of children playing online interactive games are becoming addicted; it produces more anxiety, depression and even suicide. The teachers of our Island Catholic schools came together recently in order to discuss the growing problems of anxiety, depression and thoughts of suicide in school children.

We need to become aware that this misuse of the Internet is a growing problem. And since children at a very young age are introduced to electronic media, we need to be attentive to what they are watching. As parents and adults we should not be afraid to direct and teach our children and youth to use the positive gift of the internet in a responsible way, while at the same time making sure that the negative effects are minimized.

Several sessions dealt with internet pornography addiction (IP addiction). Citing medical literature, Sr. Marysia shared some alarming statistics with us. Sex is now the number one search topic on the internet. Sixty-eight million pornographic search engine requests are made each day. Forty million adults in the USA regularly view internet pornography, 10% of whom admit to an addiction. 64% of college men and 18% of college women spend time online for internet sex every week. 56% of divorce cases involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites. 90% of children between the ages of 8 and 16 have viewed internet pornography. Youth today have more access to pornography, via the internet, than their great-grandparents had in a lifetime. The average age of children first exposed to internet pornography is less than ten years. In the USA, 28% of boys and 18% of girls have viewed bestiality online; 39% of boys and 23 % of girls have seen sexual bondage online.



Sr. Marysia Weber RSM

To lure customers, pornographers use various techniques such as 'mouse trapping' or browser tricks to deceive users into visiting their sites. For example, disabling the 'back' button or flooding the page with pop-up ads might lead anyone, particularly children, to click on links which lead to pages from which they are unable to exit. This kind of manipulative programming is widespread in this industry; it is insidious in its ability to attract individuals. Once attracted, there is a greater chance of addiction; sadly, children are often innocent prey of these nefarious practices.

There are five stages in IP addiction: discovery; experimentation; habituation; compulsivity and desensitization; and eventual hopelessness. In addition, IP addiction meets the test of the three A's: it is Accessible, Affordable (free or low cost), and it is Anonymous.

Similar to alcohol, IP results in desensitization, or a growing tolerance to its effects, with an increasing need for escalating doses, physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms. Because of this desensitization, something which used to give a 'high' in IP may no longer meet the hunger: it needs to be progressed with a corresponding increase in the use of violence or darker forms of pornography.

Internet Pornography is incredibly addictive, because once seen, images remain in the brain, in the imagination, unlike alcohol or drugs that eventually exit the body. There is, however, hope for reversal of this addiction and hope for a reduction in the statistics. The website RECLAIM ([www.reclaimsexualhealth.com](http://www.reclaimsexualhealth.com)), recommended by Sr. Marysia, offers online Recovery Programs and resources to help individuals break free from addiction. ✠

## Celebrating the Season of Creation

By Yvonne Zarowny, Chair, Social Justice Team, Church of the Ascension

During September and October, the Church of the Ascension observed the first Season of Gratitude for Creation.

In 2015, Pope Francis officially placed September 1 on the Catholic Liturgical Calendar as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Numerous faith communities extended the time of prayerful contemplation and thanksgiving for creation to October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

In September 2016, by officially placing the season on the liturgical calendar, Pope Francis invited Roman Catholics globally to participate with many of our Christian brothers and sisters. As long ago as 1989, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed September 1 as a day of prayer for creation in the Orthodox Church. In 2003, the Catholic bishops of the Philippines created such a season. And, in their 2003 writing *You Love All that Exists*, the Canadian Catholic Bishops observed:

**"The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one."**

Tess Cormack read about the Season of Gratitude for Creation in the UK Catholic publication, *The Tablet*. Most of the resources required more energy and people than our tiny committee had. Fortunately, thanks to the support and creativity of our pastor and the cooperation and collaboration of other ministries, we celebrated the Season of Gratitude for Creation.

Each Sunday, we had a special prayer as part of the Prayers of the Faithful. These acknowledged our dependence on aspects of creation and asked for the grace to grow in awareness and effective action. Prayers were offered, thanks to the cooperation of our Lector and Liturgical committees.

On the last Sunday of the Season, with Fr. Karam we prayed one of Pope Francis's prayers from *Laudato Si'*.

On October 4, in collaboration with our Adoration committee, we had a special Rosary and Mass. We began with a viewing of Pope Francis's Prayer Intention video on Care for Creation produced by the Vatican, and available at the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network.

The meditations for the Sorrowful Mysteries were written by Diane Sisonene, a member of our Adoration Committee. These were shared with all parishioners so people could join us from home.

The Rosary was followed by Mass. The opening hymn was *The Prayer of St. Francis*, and we concluded by praying another of Pope Francis's prayers from *Laudato Si'*.

Pope Francis stresses the need for prayer and action. The agro-ecology Development and Peace Fall Education and Action Campaign was included in our observance of the season. On Thanksgiving Sunday, thanks to the quick thinking of Fr. Karam and the flexibility of our youth ministry, we had an illustration of the Two Feet of Social Justice (works of mercy and works of social action), as our youth collected food for the local Food Bank in the tradition of St. Teresa of Kolkata.

We asked people to take actions to effect structural change so all had food with dignity in the tradition of martyred Blessed Oscar Romero of San Salvador. Then, as if to punctuate the need for our deep personal and societal conversion for which we had been praying, Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti, and we had the opportunity to put into action our commitment to creation and to our brothers and sisters in need. ✠

Together let us pray to the Virgin Mary that she helps us ... to walk in faith and charity, ever trusting in the Lord's mercy; He always awaits us, loves us, has pardoned us with His Blood and pardons us every time we go to Him to ask His forgiveness. Let us trust in His mercy!

~ Pope Francis



# Vocations



## Celebrating the hermitic life (continued from Page 1)

Photograph courtesy Joan Ripley

After the dinner, many speakers honoured Fr. Charles with remarks about their relationships with him. Master of Ceremonies Brigid Pomeroy praised Fr. Charles for his wisdom and loving approach. Noting his skill as a nature photographer, Pomeroy said that with his peaceful perception, Fr. Charles “always got the picture.”

Keynote speaker and journalist Stephen Hume thanked Fr. Charles for raising his awareness from the “noise, suffering, pain and disaster” of modern life that gives the impression that “there is more hell than heaven,” leading him to not just looking, but seeing as the Desert Fathers did, who learned the primacy of love for all living things.

Many other friends of Fr. Charles made presentations as well and a tribute from Elizabeth May, MP was read out.

“We have to look at the world differently ...  
Only the sense of the sacred will save us!”

The final speaker of the night was Fr. Charles himself, who spoke with conviction and eagerness despite his 93 years and the lateness of the hour. At one point in his speech he held up a copy of the old Code of Canon Law (1917) and said that it didn’t mention anything about hermits, but that Bishop Remi made an intervention at Vatican II, and the revised Code of Canon Law (1983) makes reference to the hermitic life. He spoke of the hermitic life with its focus on contemplation, tracing its history from the earliest days when the corruption in Rome drove thousands of men out of the city into Egypt to live along the Nile and to Syria. He noted that whenever the brothers encountered each other they would ask, “Brother, give me a word!” “So,” he said, “My word is, ‘Only the sense of the sacred will save us!’”

In 1964 Fr. Brandt left New Mellary Abbey in Kentucky, at which the famous author and master of the contemplative life, Thomas Merton, had a tremendous influence on him. Fr. Charles has often shared that Merton told him in a private conversation that life at the Abbey could make him a good monk but not a good contemplative. The subject of the new community of hermits on Vancouver Island was of great interest to the community. Fr. Brandt said that he was quite keen on the idea of coming to British Columbia, so he got permission to leave

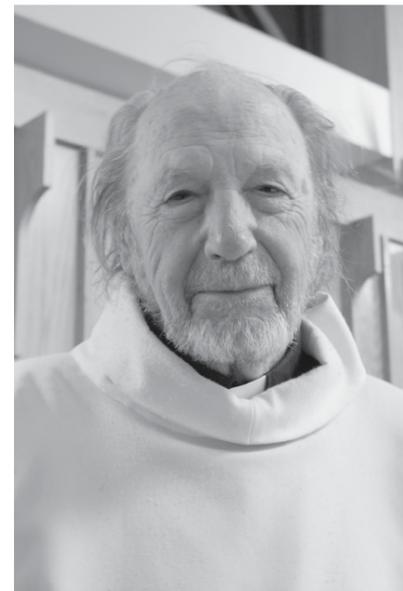
the Abbey and came and met the hermits on the Tsolum River. He was accepted into the new community and soon met Bishop Remi. Fr. Charles was ordained two years later at Christ the King parish in Courtenay.

Fr. Charles made many other references to Thomas Merton and also noted that Pope Francis included Thomas Merton on an exclusive list of four accomplished Americans during his recent visit to the United States. Fr. Charles described Merton as an “outstanding leader of the contemplative life.”

In discussing the hermitic life further, Fr. Charles said that hermits are supposed to be poor and that the Church has a preferential option for the poor, which might not always mean material privation. Quoting Thomas Berry, he said, “The heart of poverty is cultural discouragement,” and stated that we need to use all our energies to uphold the discouraged, including all sentient beings. He said, “A thing is right if it upholds and preserves dignity. Does a pipeline crossing many rivers preserve the dignity of the natural world? We have to think about that.”

“We have to look at the world differently,” he said. Quoting Thomas Berry again, he said, “We have to make a transition and a transformation in our society, so that we come to have a benign presence. We must begin to experience creation as a wonder and delight, not something to use. It is only when we love someone that we will save them and we will only love them if they are sacred. Only the sense of the sacred will save us!”

While cutting his enormous cake, many friends congratulated him and thanked him for the powerful witness of his 50 years of faithfulness to his vocation as a hermit and a contemplative. ✠



Fr. Charles Brandt ERM

# Out of the Archives

by Theresa Vogel

## Christmas Greetings and Gratitude

As I write this, it marks one year since the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria Archives adopted policy and workable procedures for operations. Mostly, it is a time of great gratitude to you, the faithful, readers, citizens, visitors and volunteers, for a year of enjoyment of the historical treasures in the Diocesan Archives, as well as all the hard work dedicated to bringing the archival material alive.

Among the treasures from our past are a number of documents, photos and artifacts from the ‘Mother Church of the Diocese’, St. Andrew’s Cathedral. As the 125th anniversary year unfolds, there will be displays of material concerning the Cathedral over the years, as well as stories and memories, beginning with the photo to the right of the sanctuary, from Christmas 1900.

Very best wishes for a blessed Advent and Christmas, with much health and happiness in 2017. ✠



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# Faith Matters



## The ins and outs of Advent

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

***Life is a constant Advent season: we are continually waiting to become, to discover, to complete, to fulfill. Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfillment are all part of our Advent experience.***

"Life Is an Advent Season" CONNECTIONS Magazine, November 28, 1993

**A**round this time of year many people have the feeling they just need to get off the treadmill that their lives have become and find a nice relaxing vacation spot when, horror of horrors, some department store appears resplendent with Christmas decorations, and it's nowhere near the first Sunday of Advent yet!

Why the rush? Could it be the specter of age creeping ... that perception of time racing ... as we, in futility, try to catch up? No. In fact more and more the transition to Christmas happens the day after Hallowe'en. If you hadn't noticed, Advent is a forgotten footnote on the secular calendar, which is all about 'Drop the formalities, let's get to the point: shopping, eating, presents and holidays', which, as we know, is missing a big part of the point.

From shop windows and streetscapes to Merry Muzak, we're bombarded with the message that we're in the Christmas Season—whether we like it or not. How did we get here? We didn't even get a chance to ask, "Are we there yet?" Rather than the specter of age perhaps it's the specter of our age, our times, that's creeping. Well, one obvious reason for the rush is keeping the marketplace flush with cash—important enough, but what's not so obvious is the potential fallout this produces: worry, anxiety, and even depression.

If we dig a bit deeper we realize that the human drive for improvement and the profound capacity for creativity have more often than not been hijacked by the spirit of consumerism. Technology has become a mixed blessing. It has allowed us to be more independent, has opened up enormous creative possibilities, and enabled us to do more, much more quickly. But all of this comes with a price—more dependence on the technology—and the potential for unrealistic expectations.

The fact that there are 24 hours in a day hasn't changed; it's just that those twenty-four hours are much more full than they used to be—less tedious, granted, but much more hectic, with more demands, because we have let them become more full—we want to do it all, we want to have it all. It begs the question, *Who's really in control, the master or the machine?*

While we're at it let's throw busyness into the mix. Want something done? Ask a busy person. In our culture busyness has become a badge of honour, a status thing.

Certainly part of it is our own innate desires and good intentions. We all want to do our best, we don't want to appear as the 'slacker', we don't want to let anyone down—but there is also the unmistakable herd mentality that we can get caught up in.

And let's not forget the culture's obsession with fame, or rather, self-absorption, the primary vehicle for which is what, for many, has become that culturally sanctioned shameless egotism we call Facebook posting, or the myriad platforms vying for a piece of 'ego pie': Twitter, WeChat, WhatsApp, Tweetie, Snapchat, and more, (yes at least eight more) and that's not even getting into such things as YouTube!

At times our culture seems to be devolving to a certain *I want it now; and I want all of it* attitude; a childish impatience driven by self-gratification, self-centeredness, and entitlement! We have come to want—or rather to expect—life our way, not the way it comes, especially when it doesn't go our way.

Many of the darker aspects of current culture reflect this too, the lack of appetite for such 'inconveniences' as unexpected new life, or what some deem as 'less-than-perfect' new life, or what the culture defines as a 'lesser quality of life', or the expense of care for the failing, or the cost of caring for those facing death.

The superficial has overshadowed the significant, the expedient trumps the less efficient, and externals override the inner life. To right the balance the quest at some point has to shift from a preoccupation with finding life *out there* to finding life *in here*. Many just didn't see it coming, which brings us back to Advent—the Great Coming.

... we are continually waiting to become ...

"Become what?" is the question! We are naturally driven; we continually seek and have the desire for perfect and unconditional Truth; perfect and unconditional Love; perfect and unconditional Goodness/Justice; perfect and unconditional Beauty; and perfect and unconditional Being/Home. Because the human person is made in the image and likeness of God, these "transcendentals" naturally drive the human person whose spirit yearns for the wholeness, the completeness that is God.

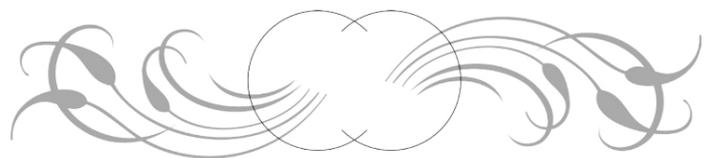
Advent is a time when we can develop more this 'inner life'—our relationship with Jesus—so that we can be strengthened and sustained in the work, the trials, the crosses of the living-out-in-love our outer life—our relationship with neighbour.

Hope, struggle, fear, expectation and fulfillment are all part of our Advent experience. There's no need to fear the treadmill of life, if the first step we take is inward to the Source of all life. There's no need to fear the struggle against the cultural currents which threaten to sweep us away or the quiet shoals of self-sufficiency which tempt us to drift, to set down our oars, lulling us into a complacency, or worse a despair which can run us aground, if we but first set our sails to catch the Spirit's breath, following his course.

☪ Be not afraid, I go before you always, come follow me and I will give you rest.

~ Bob Dufford SJ

Have a blessed 'Great Coming' today, and every day! ☩





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*"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'





# Face the Day



by Bonnie Landry

St. Paul is a good guy. In fact, he's one of my favourites. I don't mind saying it, I play favourites amongst the saints and patrons. Paul is one of my first go-to guys (competing with St. Anthony when I lose things). I like Paul because he brazenly and lovingly just tells me what to do. This, for example:

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now that's a direct communicator.

Paul speaks here to the Romans (and to me), who were (are) notorious for not being particularly good. *It's crazy.*

*It's crazy:* to think for even a minute that we could overcome evil with good.

*Forgive someone who has hurt you.* To forgive does good for the other—especially when they know of the forgiveness. But when we forgive, the floodgates of relief open up in our own soul. We make more room for Christ.

Advent is a time for preparing for the great Feast of the Birth of Christ. What better time to practice overcoming evil with good, to practice forgiveness? Whatever the hurt, whatever the injustice, whatever the slander, however small or large the evil was that wounded us ... we can forgive the other.

St. Paul cuts to the heart of Advent, or preparation. Virtually every address he makes to his people, his Colossians, his Romans, his Ephesians, his Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, and others (me, for example), speaks of love and forgiveness and preparing for our Lord. And he says, this, too:

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience."

I ponder what St. Paul means by 'clothe yourselves'. I'm guessing he doesn't mean *be compassionate, kind, humble, meek and patient when it is convenient or strictly to people who don't share the same home with you.* I'm thinking he means more along the lines of *clothe yourselves in a sort of clothed way.* Like all over, like cover yourself with these things. Like, have this be your outer bearing.

*It's hard to forgive.* Why is that? I think it's because we feel like we are going to suffer. It is going to be humiliating to address someone kindly when we feel they have wronged us. But the suffering is brief. And St. Paul says this:

"We rejoice in our suffering because suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; character, hope."

And when we ponder what it might be like to stand before someone who has hurt us, whom we must forgive, whom we vehemently do not want to forgive and would rather revel in our anger and pain, and we think to ourselves, "I'm not strong enough. I'm not loving enough, I'm not good enough to say the words of forgiveness that I need to say..."

We can drop our arms to our sides, we can stop fighting it, we can give in and give up and give it all to God. We can *get ready.*

We can say another quote from St. Paul, Philippians 4:13); in fact, we can *pray* this...

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." ✠

## In the Bleak Midwinter

Christina Rossetti

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone,  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow; snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain,  
Heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign:  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed,  
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air,  
But his mother only in her maiden bliss,  
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can, I give him—give my heart.



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- Captain Alexandro Malaspina Assembly 34 serving Nanaimo and the Alberni Valley

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- Bishop Hill Council 5468 serving Campbell River
- Monsignor Albury Assembly 2006 serving the Alberni Valley and Parksville north

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## Vatican Unveils Child Protection Website

On the feast of St Nicholas, patron saint of children, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors [PCPM] launched a new website to provide information on the Commission and its Mission. The website has resources divided into four categories: 'Healing and Care', 'Guidelines', 'Education', and the 'Day of Prayer for the Victims and Survivors of Sexual Abuse'. It also provides news and information about the Commission in an easily accessible format.

[www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31499](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31499)

## Canada: National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

The Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council has released a prayer of thanksgiving for families to mark the 2016 National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. The Aboriginal Council and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops have promoted the annual National Day of Prayer since 2002. It is celebrated on December 12, the memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whom Pope Pius XII proclaimed patroness of the Americas in 1946.

Read the prayer here: [www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Prayer\\_for\\_Families\\_2016.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Prayer_for_Families_2016.pdf)

[www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31493](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31493)

## First US-born Martyr on Path to Sainthood

Pope Francis has recognized the martyrdom of Father Stanley Rother, a priest from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City who served in Guatemala. Fr Stanley was murdered on 28 July 1981 by a death squad believed to have been made up of right wing extremists. He is the first martyr to have been born in the United States.

[www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31488](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31488)

## US Bishops Announce Day of Prayer & Solidarity with Refugees and Migrants

Day of Prayer with a focus on the plight of refugees and migrants will take place across the United States on December 12, 2016, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. "It will be a time to place before a merciful God the hopes, fears, and needs of all those families who have come to the US seeking a better life," the Bishops say in a statement. "As Christmas approaches and especially on this feast of Our Lady, we are reminded of how our saviour Jesus Christ was not born in the comfort of his own home, but rather in an unfamiliar manger," said Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, archbishop of Galveston-Houston and president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

[www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31479](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=31479)

## Longest married couple sought

*Press release*

The annual search for the Longest Married Couple in both Canada and the United States began on Monday, October 10, 2016.

The Longest Married Couple search is sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter and is running simultaneously in both countries from October 10, 2016, to January 10, 2017. Canadian and US winners will be announced in February 2017, to coincide with World Marriage Day celebrations.

This is the seventh year for the project in the US and the fourth year in Canada. In 2013 Worldwide Marriage Encounter Canada honoured Alice and Arthur John of Ross River, Yukon, who had been married 77 years. In 2014 Clemon (Clem) and Mildred Mintz of Parry Sound, Ontario, married 80 years, were awarded. Bert and Bertie Nickerson of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, married 80 years were recognized as the Longest Married Couple in Canada in 2015.

"We want to show the world that couples everywhere work to keep their marriage vibrant and alive, and that marriages can last a lifetime," said Ana Lilian and Ernesto Ayala and Fr. Michael Basque, the Canadian leadership team for Worldwide Marriage Encounter. "As a marriage enrichment ministry we work throughout Canada to support married couples and help them enjoy a richer, fuller life together, so this campaign is a natural fit for our movement."

The Longest Married Couple is selected solely from nominations submitted. Nominations are open to all husband and wives regardless of religious affiliation. Nominating a couple is easy; just send the names of the husband and wife, their wedding date, their current home location and contact information for the person who is submitting the nomination to Ernesto and Ana Lilian Ayala, by mail to 113-7471 Blundell Road Richmond, BC, V6Y 1J6, by email to

[wwme.cet@hotmail.com](mailto:wwme.cet@hotmail.com), or call (604) 337-5845.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME) offers tools for building and maintaining a strong, Christian marriage in today's world and is a registered Canadian charitable organization. WWME has been offering weekend experiences for more than 48 years and has a presence in almost 100 countries. In Canada, the WWME programs are presented in English, Spanish, French, and Korean languages.

*The mission of Worldwide Marriage Encounter is to proclaim the value of Marriage and Holy Orders in the Church and in the world. To learn more, visit [wwme.org](http://wwme.org).* ✕

## Pope: Christmas tree and crib symbols of hope and love

*From Vatican Radio (www.news.va)*

This year's Christmas tree and crib were due to be inaugurated and lit up on Friday, December 9, 2016, in St. Peter's Square. Earlier in the day in the Paul VI hall, Pope Francis met with the donors of the tree and the nativity scene, telling them that these gifts "form a message of hope and love."

Welcoming the donors of this year's Christmas Tree and crib, Pope Francis thanked them for their gifts which he said, would be admired in Saint Peter's Square "by pilgrims from around the world during Advent and the Christmas holidays."

The 25 metre high spruce tree was donated by the Lagorai Forests Association which is located the Trentino region of Northern Italy and the Pope remarked that, "the beauty of those views is an invitation to contemplate the Creator and to respect nature, the work of his hands."

The Pope also had a special word of thanks to the children who decorated the tree, with the support of the "Lene Thun Foundation" that organises the ceramic therapy workshops in various Italian hospitals for children undergoing treatment for cancer and other illnesses.

He told them that, "the multicoloured ornaments you have created represent the values of life, love and peace that Christ's Christmas proposes to us anew each year."

This year's crib in the Square, was donated by the Bishops and the Government of Malta and is the work of artist Manwel Grech from Gozo.

The Nativity scene features 17 figures dressed in traditional Maltese costume as well as a replica of a traditional "Luzzu" Maltese boat.

The Holy Father said that this typical Maltese vessel, recalled "the sad and tragic reality of migrants on boats making their way toward Italy", and he expressed the hope that "those who visit this nativity scene would

be invited to rediscover its symbolic value", which, he said, was "a message of fraternity, of sharing, of welcome and solidarity."

Pope Francis concluded by telling those gathered that, "the crib and the tree form a message of hope and love, and help create a Christmas spirit that can draw us closer to living with faith the mystery of the birth of the Redeemer who came to this earth in simplicity and meekness." ✕



The Christmas Tree in St. Peter's Square. Photo credit: [www.news.va](http://www.news.va)



# CCCB Christmas message

Text of a letter from Most Reverend Douglas Crosby OMI, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

This past year the Holy Father gave us the gift of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, choosing as its motto “Merciful like the Father” (*Misericordes sicut Pater*). In March, on the Feast of Saint Joseph, he joined this gift with another, *Amoris Laetitia*, the Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, tying it closely to the theme of the Jubilee, both by inviting Christian families to live in the daily spirit of forgiveness and by encouraging us to be signs of God’s mercy and closeness “wherever family life remains imperfect or lacks peace and joy” (no.5).

In Canada, 2016 was a year in which the term mercy took on heightened significance apart from the inspiration of Pope Francis. It was the year when Parliament, provincial legislatures, and physicians’ colleges set policies that would permit physicians to help patients end their own lives under the misperception of mercy-as-compassion. It was also the year when Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission would release its findings and calls to action, expressing the suffering felt within Indigenous communities, thus prompting Canadians to reflect on what mercy-as-forgiveness ultimately means.

Christmas is not an obvious place to look for insights on mercy, even though it is at this time of year that division and pain cry out for healing. What can Christmas teach us about mercy? The birth of the infant Christ is the event through which mercifulness is revealed as the central aspect of God’s relationship with humanity. God takes on human flesh because of his deep sympathetic concern for our pain and brokenness. The mystery of the Incarnation is essentially the mystery of God’s compassion. Through Christ, God became like us in all things but sin (Hebrews 4.15), that by his suffering and death on the Cross he might win for us the reward of eternal life (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 457). In this way, we were taught that Christ’s new commandment, to love one another as he has loved us (John 13.34-35), had virtually no limits in the ordinary run of life.

According to the logic of the New Testament, humility and mercy are inextricably intertwined. To those who love and keep his commandments (John 14.15), Christ’s mercy will flow from generation to generation (cf. Luke 1.50). Such was the declaration of Mary on the occasion of her Visitation to her cousin Saint Elizabeth. It is modeled as well by Mary on Christmas night. “His mother only, in her maiden bliss, worshiped the beloved with a kiss,” wrote the poet Christina Rossetti, reconciling a moment of tenderness between mother and infant with the overwhelming reality that this particular infant was love incarnate destined to redeem humanity.

The reverence of Saint Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, the ox and ass, and the angels above, all follow suit. That adoration and mercy are two sides of the same reality may not be apparent at first. But just as humility is required in seeking pardon and forgiving others, so the extent of our mercy, which is the fruit of our humility, necessarily depends on the adoration of Christ: Christ in the manger, Christ on the Cross, Christ in the Eucharist.

Our experience of remorse following sin, the brokenness that disrupts our families, the suffering of loved ones who have lost hope in life, the failures for which we must seek pardon and those of others we are asked to pardon, each evoke a different aspect of what it means to be merciful like the Father. The significance of those who gather on bended knee around the infant Christ, and the many carols and hymns that have since immortalized that moment, is to remind us that the adoration of Christ precedes every great Christian act, not the least of which is mercy. It is my prayer that this Christmas we might all find room in our lives to adore the infant Christ, seeing in him the face of God’s mercy, and be moved to radiate his love for humanity to those around us.

To him be honour and glory forever. I wish you all a very happy Christmas. ✠



## Employment with Island Catholic Schools

Do you like working with children? Do you have experience in that area? Do you want to work on call?

Island Catholic Schools is looking for Relief Educational Assistants in all 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/experience relative to the position
- 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>

# CCCB resources for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

Excerpted from a letter from Bishop Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Most Reverend Richard Gagnon, Archbishop of Winnipeg

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has released materials prepared by a joint CCCB-ELCIC (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) working group, to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The resources entitled *Together in Christ* are intended for parishes as well as for ecumenical officers, and consist of two primary resources:

1. Five documents of the *Together in Christ* resource which comprise all the necessary information required to run the five-part parish study guide covering the 500-year history since the Reformation. It is designed to foster mutual prayer, study, and conversation among Catholics, Lutherans and other Reformed traditions. The study guide can be used either in segments or as a whole by individual or joint ecumenical study groups.
2. The common prayer jointly developed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation for use by Catholics and Lutherans on this occasion, entitled *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Dioceses and eparchies are invited to use or adapt the resources according to local needs and interest.

Materials are available on our website at [www.rcdvictoria.org](http://www.rcdvictoria.org).

On the occasion of Pope Francis’ apostolic journey to commemorate the Reformation in Lund, Sweden (October 31—November 1, 2016), Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation, signed a powerful joint statement which read in part:

*While we are profoundly thankful for the spiritual and theological gifts received through the Reformation, we also confess and lament before Christ that Lutherans and Catholics have wounded the visible unity of the Church. Theological differences were accompanied by prejudice and conflicts, and religion was instrumentalized for political ends. Our common faith in Jesus Christ and our baptism demand of us a daily conversion, by which we cast off the historical disagreements and conflicts that impede the ministry of reconciliation. While the past cannot be changed, what is remembered and how it is remembered can be transformed. We pray for the healing of our wounds and of the memories that cloud our view of one another. We emphatically reject all hatred and violence, past and present, especially that expressed in the name of religion. Today, we hear God’s command to set aside all conflict. We recognize that we are freed by grace to move towards the communion to which God continually calls us.*

It is in this spirit of dialogue, reconciliation and trust that Lutherans and Catholics in Canada are preparing to commemorate the Reformation. We remember so as to move forward. And we move forward through the loving embrace of God’s love which never tires in the mission of reconciliation. ✠



“With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”  
—Colossians 3:16

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By Connie Dunwoody

When I was eight or nine years old, and my brother was nine or ten, we made a pact. We knew that Mom and Dad were partly responsible for the gifts under the tree on Christmas morning, and we each helped our parents shop for the other, so we agreed that, if and when we knew anything, we would share with each other what was in store for us.

All during Advent we exchanged furtive whispers and giggles, and while we never actually ransacked the house to find presents, we did let each other know about the gifts each of us was to receive.

That was the most disappointing Christmas ever.

There were no surprises. We didn't wait in anticipation, and we didn't experience the thrill of discovery. On Christmas morning, while we tried to fake our joy and delight, I suspect our parents knew exactly what we'd done. For us, the usual Christmas excitement of giving and receiving gifts was incredibly hollow.

We never did it again.

It was then I discovered that a huge part of the joy of Christmas is the anticipation of it all, the not-knowing, the excitement of possibility, the delight of receiving an overwhelmingly wonderful gift that someone loved us enough to give. As an adult, it seems the season of Advent passes by all too quickly, caught up in whirlwinds of activity: parties, decorating the house, trimming the tree, baking, shopping. Much of that whirlwind is wonderful, and much of it supports the meaning and the spirit of Christmas. But it's still a whirlwind.

I remember as a child, the time to Christmas morning seemed to drag, and we thought it would simply *never* arrive. We had to *wait*, we *yearned* for the day. Even Christmas Eve was desperately long with anticipation; my younger cousin and I

would try to stay up all night to see if we could spy Santa (we never did), sneaking down to the room where gifts glittered in the firelight; we stood in delight as our eyes took in tiny lights on a fragrant tree and watched huge white flakes of snow falling silently against the black sky. We prepared our hearts and imaginations for a glorious morning together after the darkness and waiting, as we anticipated dawn, hoping ...

That morning, so many decades ago, I also discovered that the real gift wasn't even in the box. The real gift was the person who paid attention, who got me things I wanted or needed (even though I wasn't thrilled by socks), who took the time to shop for me or make me something. The real gift was what hung silently in the room when the whirlwind was done, when every gift had been given and received, when all the thank-yous had been said, and the stillness was stirred only by a sudden, soft catch of breath containing the echo of a baby's cry. In the hush, what remained was *love*.

Our whole life is an Advent season. We can't possibly know what delights await us until we get to that day. A huge joy of our lives is the anticipation of it all, the not-knowing, the excitement of possibility, preparing to receive an overwhelmingly wonderful gift that Someone loved us enough to give. We ready our hearts and imaginations for a glorious morning together after the darkness and waiting, as we anticipate the dawn, hoping ...

And when the whirlwind is done, when the gifts have been given and received, and thank-yous said, then we will know, then we will be delighted and then, in the hush, what will remain is Love ...

... and the echo of a baby's cry. ✕

## Moving forward

By Sandi Digras

In the year since my husband passed away, I have found the journey forward has been a mission of finding deeper faith and depending more on God to help me move forward.

Sharing my grief with others and hearing their responses has at times confused and at other times encouraged me. We only start to better understand what others may feel after we have ourselves experienced a death.

My life, and how I lived it as a married woman, was fraught with unfulfilled wishes and regrets for things done badly. It was also filled with unexpected happiness and just plain enjoyment. The guilt for things not done and the regret for the many times I lost sight of the point, are the things I dwell on too much.

In speaking with others who are grieving, I find they dwell on the happiness they had, and the loss of the feelings of joy they had with their mates despite the person's shortcomings. When probing with them what those highlights were it always comes back to something like: *He made me feel special* or *I miss the companionship*—they miss those moments of togetherness. For those grieverers, it is the challenge of what to do now that they have to 'go forward' and live a new life. In some ways, perhaps the looking-back is keeping them from accomplishing that.

When Jesus was sending the apostles to 'go and preach the word', he sent them on a journey without purse or sandals, and told them to 'travel light'. Metaphorically, I think he may have meant *Don't bring mental baggage. Don't try and second guess what I want you to do or say. Listen to the words of the Holy Spirit, and follow.*

After loss, we too often carry too much baggage. All those memories, good and bad, can burden us and keep us from listening to what God expects from us now. Sometimes we misinterpret the message—or miss it altogether.

What does God want me to do now? I have tried to listen to the words of the homilies given by our pastor, responded to a call to come and share my faith and stewardship on EWTN and even said *Yes* to becoming a Media Missionary. I have read more books about finding a deeper faith and becoming, as Matthew Kelly wrote, a more 'dynamic Catholic'.

I am reluctant to set firm goals but each day I focus on what I think would reflect Jesus in me. It might be calling an old friend, inviting someone for a meal, or responding to a request I was not prepared for. I try to start most days at Mass to focus myself, and then work through my day.

For those like me who gave much of their time to an ailing loved one with very little time left for themselves—know that in some ways I have treasured the alone time I have had in the past year-and-a-half since becoming a widow. The luxury of waking without worry and response to a crisis have helped heal my mind and heart.

For those who experience sudden loss it is much harder to restart your life clock. The death is so sudden it leaves no time to say goodbye and the 'if only' can be much deeper and stronger.

Aging and change go hand and hand with all the losses we are facing as we reach the later decades of our lives. When I was younger, I thought my grandmother was old at 60, but now I look at how much longer I have lived than that, and all that I have done.

I have no bucket list; I don't aspire to climb the highest mountain or take wild adventures into the unknown places of this world. I am content to watch others with more energy and spirit of adventure do that and share it.

Instead, I aspire to a deeper and fuller faith in God, to listen to those who have wisdom and understanding, and try and apply it to my own small life. Mother Angelica said we should all aspire to be Saints, even of small things like St. Faustina, and to pray for others to aspire to bigger goals.

Jesus said "You have to lose your life to gain a new life." Thus we have to give up putting ourselves first and instead we have to watch and listen to the clues God is giving us and be prepared, as the Apostles were, to "come follow Me" on the journey of moving forward. ✕



### Employment with the Catholic Diocese of Victoria TRANSCRIPTIONIST

Please note that only those short-listed for an interview will be contacted.

A part time (one day a week) and temporary position is available to assist in the Office of the Marriage Tribunal of the Diocese of Victoria. The suitable candidate must have:

- Proficient computer skills, especially in Microsoft Word
- Typing speed and accuracy
- Command of the English language
- Good listening skills

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Discretion and confidentiality
- Ability to work independently
- Attention to detail
- Experience with digital transcription helpful but not necessary
- Knowledge of the Catholic Faith

**Interested applicants are invited to forward a cover letter, a current resume, two letters of reference, and a letter of recommendation from their pastor by January 15, 2017 to:**

Diocese of Victoria – Marriage Tribunal Office  
Attention: Moira Gill, Assistant to the Judicial Vicar  
# 1 - 4044 Nelthorpe Street  
Victoria, BC V8X 2A1  
Email: mgill@rcdvictoria.org



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## Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island

The Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island was established in 1985 to provide ongoing support for projects within the Diocese of Victoria by building up capital, the income from which provides an enduring legacy of funding for worthwhile projects within the Diocese of Victoria, including:

- Capital costs of Island Catholic Schools
- Support and maintenance for retired clergy
- Support and maintenance for seminarians
- Assistance for social projects
- Development of parishes
- Parish and Diocesan capital projects
- Creating ministries, faith development, and religious education projects
- Support and maintenance of missionary work

### 2016 GRANTS AWARDED

Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Conference	\$1,000
Victoria Hospice	\$4,000
South Island Centre for Counselling & Training	\$5,000
Habitat for Humanity, Vancouver Island North	\$3,000
South Island Centre for Counselling	\$2,000
St. Patrick's, Campbell River, Camp Homewood Annual Diocesan Retreat	\$1,500
Diocesan Youth Office	\$5,000
9-10 Club Serving Soup to the Hungry	\$5,000
St. Andrew's Cathedral 125th Anniversary: sponsoring transportation of the Island Catholic Schools Youth Choir	\$3,000
The Oasis Society for the Spiritual Health of Victoria	\$750

### TESTIMONIALS

"Your generous response to our request for funding ... is an answer to our prayers. The Anawim Board of Directors, staff, and residents thank you for giving testimony to the spirit of the Gospel in touching those remaining on the outer edges of society. The poor struggle to be recognized for their worth. We can make a difference."

"We are tremendously grateful for your ongoing support and trust for the South Island Centre for Counselling and Training. These funds will be used for our Samaritan Fund in order to provide professional counselling to those most in need."

"On behalf of the Board of Oasis, I would like to extend our deep and heartfelt gratitude for your kind gift. May you all in turn know many blessings on your own pilgrimage."

*Please consider the Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island when making your charitable donations and bequests.*

Please return this part with your gift to: The Catholic Foundation of Vancouver Island, 1 – 4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria BC, V8X 2A1

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*Thank you for your generosity.*

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# 2016 Christmas & New Year's 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
<b>St. Andrew's Cathedral, Victoria</b> <i>Please note: the 11 PM Christmas Eve service will be very full; please arrive early to ensure you get a seat.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4:40 PM Carols and Children's Pageant; 5 PM Mass</li> <li>7:30 PM Carols; 8 PM Mass*</li> <li>10 PM Carols; 11 Mass*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM</li> <li>11 AM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 AM</li> <li>9:30 AM</li> <li>11 AM*</li> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>
<b>Christ the King, Courtenay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM Mass</li> <li>7:30 PM Carols; 8 PM Mass</li> <li>11:30 PM Carols; 12 Midnight Mass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> <li>2 PM (Hornby Island)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>
<b>Church of the Ascension, Parksville</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> <li>9 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>
<b>Fellowship of Blessed John Henry Newman (at Our Lady of Fatima), Victoria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 PM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:15 AM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:15 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:15 AM*</li> </ul>
<b>Holy Cross, Gordon Head</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM</li> <li>8 PM</li> <li>12 Midnight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9:30 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>
<b>Holy Family/Notre Dame, Port Alberni</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM*</li> <li>8 PM*</li> <li>12 Midnight*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM</li> </ul>
<b>North Island</b> <i>Our Lady of Assumption, Alert Bay; St. Bonaventure, Port Hardy; St. Mary's, Port McNeill; St. Theresa's, Port Alice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM (Port Alice)</li> <li>9 PM Mass (Port Hardy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM (Port McNeill)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM (Port McNeill)</li> <li>11 AM (Port Hardy)</li> <li>5:30 PM (Port Alice)</li> </ul>
<b>Our Lady of Fatima, Victoria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM (English)*</li> <li>12 Midnight (Portuguese)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11:30 AM (Bilingual)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM (English)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11:30 AM (Bilingual)*</li> </ul>
<b>Our Lady of the Rosary, Langford</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> <li>7:30 PM*</li> <li>10:30 PM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>
<b>Our Lady Queen of Peace, Esquimalt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM (English)*</li> <li>12 Midnight Traditional Latin*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM*</li> <li>12 Noon Traditional Latin*</li> </ul>
<b>Sacred Heart, Victoria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM Pageant and Mass</li> <li>8 PM (English)*</li> <li>10 PM (Korean)*</li> <li>12 Midnight (Polish)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (English)</li> <li>3 PM (Korean)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM (English)</li> <li>10 PM (Korean)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM (English)</li> <li>10 AM (English)</li> <li>12:30 PM (Polish)</li> <li>3 PM (Korean)</li> </ul>
<b>Salt Spring Island</b> <i>Our Lady of Grace, Ganges; St. Paul's, Fulford Harbour; St. Teresa's, Pender Island; St. Joseph's Mission, Mayne Island</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 PM (Pender Island)</li> <li>7 PM (OLOG)</li> <li>11 PM (St. Paul's)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (OLOG)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM (OLOG)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 AM (St. Paul's)</li> <li>10 AM (OLOG)</li> </ul>
<b>Sidney</b> <i>(St. Elizabeth's and Our Lady of the Assumption)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> <li>7 PM (Our Lady of the Assumption)</li> <li>9 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM (Our Lady of the Assumption)</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Ann's, Duncan</b> <i>December 19, 5 PM Mass at Jerry and Joan Brown's residence, Nanaimo Reserve 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 PM Penelakut Island (Gymnasium)</li> <li>10 PM Carols; 10:30 PM Mass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 AM</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Edward's, Duncan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4:30 PM Carols; 5 PM Mass*</li> <li>8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM Mass</li> </ul>
<b>St. Francis Xavier, Mill Bay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM</li> <li>12 Midnight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> <li>11 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> <li>11 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Joseph the Worker, Saanich</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM</li> <li>8:30 PM</li> <li>12 Midnight*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM</li> <li>6 PM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Jean Baptiste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 PM (Messe de Minuit)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (Messe du Jour)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (Messe du Jour de l'An)</li> </ul>
<b>St. Joseph's, Chemainus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:45 AM</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:45 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Leopold Mandic</b> <i>(Victoria and various locations, Croatian)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 Midnight (St. Leopold's, Victoria)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11 AM (St. Leopold's, Victoria)</li> <li>2:30 PM (Trinity, Nanaimo)</li> <li>5 PM (Port Alberni)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM (Trinity, Nanaimo)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12:30 PM (St. Leopold's, Victoria)</li> </ul>
<b>St. Louis de Montfort Church, Lake Cowichan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 PM</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM</li> </ul>	
<b>St. Mary's, Ladysmith</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Patrick's, Campbell River</b> <i>Including St. Peter &amp; St. Paul, Gold River and St. Joseph's, Tahsis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4:30 PM Carols; 5 PM Mass*</li> <li>7 PM Carols; 7:30 PM Mass</li> <li>11:30 PM Carols; 12 Midnight Mass*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM*</li> <li>11 AM</li> </ul>
<b>St. Patrick's, Victoria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM</li> <li>8:30 PM Carols; 9 PM Mass*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> <li>1 PM (Vietnamese)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> <li>1 PM (Vietnamese)</li> </ul>
<b>St. Peter's, Nanaimo</b> <i>Including Gabriola Island</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> <li>8 PM</li> <li>12 Midnight*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10:30 AM</li> <li>2:30 PM (Gabriola Island)</li> <li>7 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM</li> <li>12 Midnight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8:30 AM</li> <li>10:30 AM</li> <li>2:30 PM (Gabriola Island)</li> </ul>
<b>St. Rose of Lima, Sooke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 PM (Youth/Family Mass)</li> <li>7 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>
<b>Trinity Catholic Church, Nanaimo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 PM</li> <li>5 PM (Children's Pageant)</li> <li>9 PM Carols; 9:30 PM Mass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 PM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 AM</li> <li>9 AM</li> </ul>
<b>West Coast</b> <i>Holy Family, Ucluelet; St. Francis of Assisi, Tofino; St. Lawrence, Ahousaht</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 PM (Ucluelet)</li> <li>7 PM (Tofino)</li> <li>10 PM (Ahousaht)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (Ucluelet)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5:30 PM (Tofino)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 AM (Ucluelet)</li> </ul>

\* Denotes incense will be used

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