



THE DIOCESAN MESSENGER

A Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

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The Diocesan Messenger

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Take Note

“Clearing the stuff isn’t about what is given away; it’s about decluttering the life and purpose we treasure most.”

A year ago, my husband and I downsized from our 3,400 sq ft home to a 2,000 sq ft townhouse, quite literally moving in to the next phase of life. It was quite a process, mostly because we (read: me) had inexplicably acquired enough stuff to fill a large house. We’d outfitted a suite in addition to our own living space, and so in effect, we had two households’ worth of detritus to sift through.

Some decisions were easy: give away the pockmarked wall unit, the saggy couches, the battered kitchen table and chairs. Donate secondary kitchen appliances, utensils, mugs, plates, and tired linens (we gave old towels and sheets to the SPCA). Some were harder: what do I do with the antique pump organ that I took from my Mom’s condo after she died? Ditto, sentimental pieces that I never used, but couldn’t seem to bring myself to part with?

My head knows my Mom isn’t in that saucer-that-has-no-cup, but my heart couldn’t seem to let it go.

Why, oh why, do we cling so tightly to *stuff*? And while I’m pretty sure I’m not the only one who had a box of completely useless computer cords from the 1990s, the reasons we hang on to sometimes-useless stuff vary; things aren’t always as simple as they seem. It’s easy to question others’ collections even as we stuff our own broken crockery back into the cupboard, taking it out now and then to hold, feel, and remember. My head knows my Mom isn’t in that saucer-that-has-no-cup, but my heart couldn’t seem to part with it. And when I recently picked up my dog’s toys to donate them, a year after he passed, I unexpectedly burst into tears—and kept them.

It’s complicated.

But there’s nothing like a deadline. As the days went on, and moving day grew closer, it became apparent what was precious, and what could better serve someone else. I cringed a little as I put memento after memento into boxes destined for St. Vincent de Paul, but my heart was content, knowing that what was lying unused in my cupboards could come to light and usefulness in someone else’s home. Clearing the stuff isn’t about what is given away; it’s about decluttering the life and purpose we treasure most.

Then, a flash of insight: perhaps it’s not about the *stuff*. My Mom isn’t in that saucer, or this pitcher; she doesn’t live in that table, or these chairs. She’s in *me*; in my heart and my memory; she’s in my nieces and nephew, her grandchildren, who regularly share our table; she’s the echo in the laughter that roars around the table at Sunday Night Dinner; and in each other’s eyes we see reflected the twinkle of hers. It’s the *who*, not the *what*.

Ah. Jesus: the *Who* of my Christmas season. Not the stable in which He lies, but the mother who opens her arms and cradles Him. Not the detritus in which I sometimes lie, but the Father who opens His arms, and lets me cling to Him.

It’s not so complicated.

This Christmas may our laughter echo His joy; may the twinkle of our eyes reflect the star that calls us to witness His birth; and may our hearts be united in the simplest gift of all—endless, ineffable Love. ✠



Connie Dunwoody serves as Communications Coordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria, and as Editor of the Diocesan Messenger magazine.

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Communio

Bishop Gary Gordon



Building a manger as the house of God

By Bishop Gary Gordon

As a young boy growing up in Burnaby, the season of Advent and the Christmas started with the arrival of the first box of mandarin oranges, which always seemed to coincide with the beginning of December.

When my father would come home from his work with the Great Northern Railway in the early darkness of December evenings, my brother and I would be waiting at the door and ask Dad excitedly, "Are they here yet?" And after a few weeks of patient waiting, Dad would arrive home with the first box, and the amazing sweet start to the Christmas season in the Gordon household began. With an excited *Thank you*, I would charge downstairs to the basement to get the hammer and open the prized box. Dad would say, "Be careful, you don't want to wreck the delicate wood," and of course, "Don't mash the oranges!" Finally, after much careful prying and a little indelicate banging, we beheld the beautiful individually wrapped



“May our hearts be built into a humble manger of openness to God’s love and mercy.”

mandarin oranges—the kind even a little kid could peel without using a knife or getting squirted in the eye.

The goal of this magical ritual was of course to try to consume the entire box as quickly as possible. Despite our parents trying to limit our intake of oranges, the box seemed to empty in just a few days, even though a few tummy aches always happened. But no tummy ache could slow our feasting on this seasonal sweetness. We knew there would be more boxes to come, but it was this first box that counted the most.

I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.

(Evangelii Gaudium, 27)

With the mandarin orange box empty, it meant that now we could build our Christmas manger for the little figures of our crèche. The real joy of our Christmas season was building our little manger for Jesus’ birthday. It was quite a big nail-and-hammer project for little boys, working as carefully as little hands with big hammers can. It would always be a masterpiece of engineering and architectural style—at least that’s what Mom and Dad would say after we set it up in the living room, carefully setting in place the figures of Mary and Joseph, shepherds, donkeys, sheep, and of course, the dog. It always seemed so wonderful to a little boy that baby Jesus had a pet dog.

Now the expectant waiting for Christmas could begin. Mom and Dad, along with our Catholic school teachers and parish priests, could engage our little hearts with all the amazing teachings about the birth of Jesus.

Looking back to those foundational years of faith formation, complete with mandarin orange boxes and the sheer joy of preparing a house for Jesus, it has become so abundantly clear that one little heart was filled with the true meaning of Christmas and inspired to build a body and soul for Jesus and to make room for the immeasurable sweetness of our God’s tender love.

My prayer for us and for our Church this Advent / Christmas season is that we may all discover what St. Francis of Assisi discovered in a little broken-down church called San Damiano in the valley below Assisi. Kneeling in prayer before the Crucifix that hung on the crumbling sanctuary walls, Francis heard God’s powerful call to “rebuild my Church, which is in ruins.” Francis of course set about with bricks and mortar to restore this building, and two other churches, before it dawned on him that God was asking for something much greater: a moral and spiritual rebuilding of the missionary/evangelizing heart and soul of God’s temple, the Body of Christ.

In this beautiful time of Advent and Christmas, we will once again experience the closeness of our God in the vulnerability of Mary’s newborn son Jesus, and the simplicity of a manger. May our hearts be built into a humble manger of openness to God’s love and mercy.

Merry Christmas! ✠

I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting, and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedure.

(Evangelii Gaudium, 49)



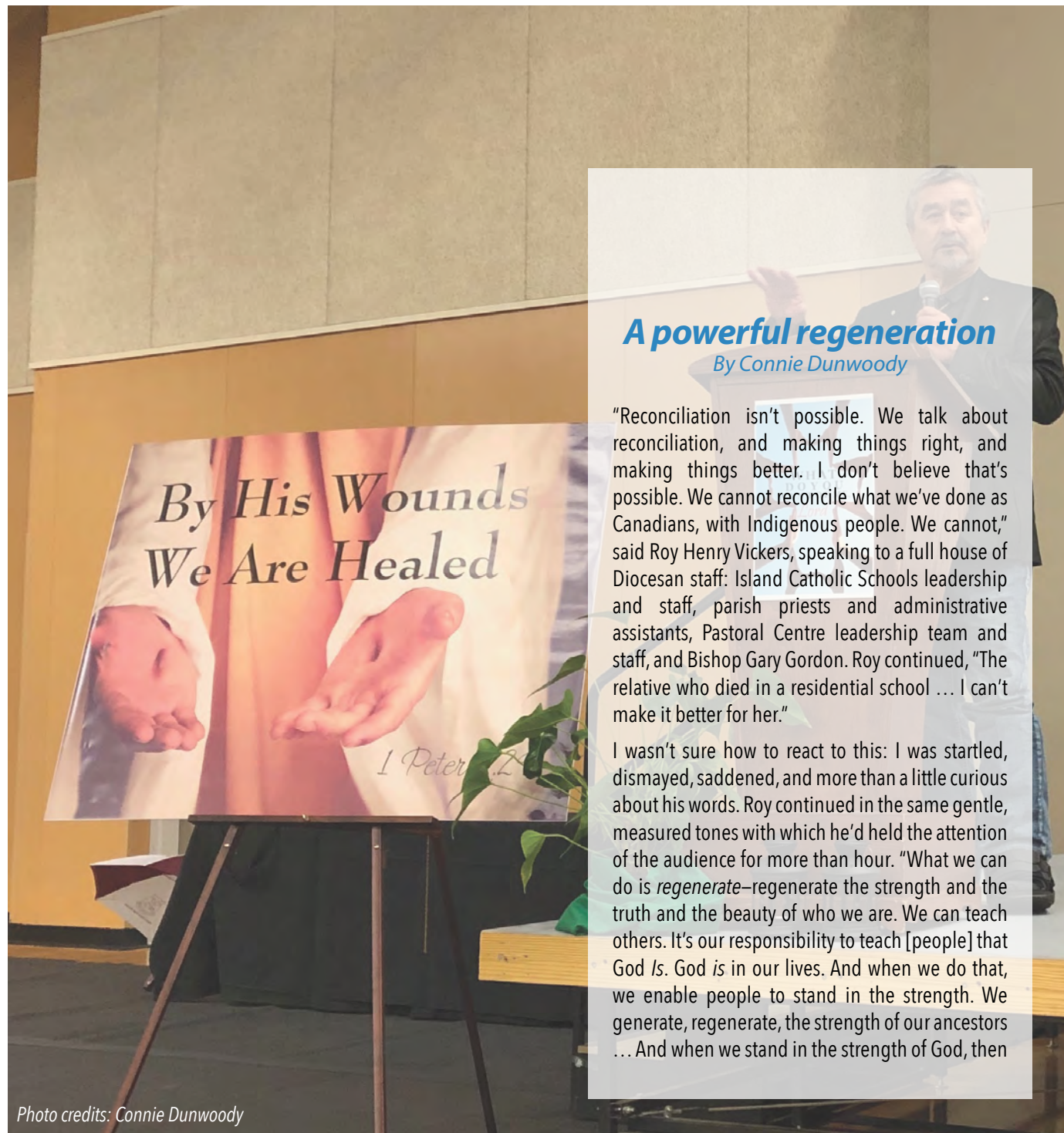
Most Reverend Gary M. Gordon is Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.



Our Diocese



Catholic communities building God's kingdom with hope, mercy and love



A powerful regeneration

By Connie Dunwoody

"Reconciliation isn't possible. We talk about reconciliation, and making things right, and making things better. I don't believe that's possible. We cannot reconcile what we've done as Canadians, with Indigenous people. We cannot," said Roy Henry Vickers, speaking to a full house of Diocesan staff: Island Catholic Schools leadership and staff, parish priests and administrative assistants, Pastoral Centre leadership team and staff, and Bishop Gary Gordon. Roy continued, "The relative who died in a residential school ... I can't make it better for her."

I wasn't sure how to react to this: I was startled, dismayed, saddened, and more than a little curious about his words. Roy continued in the same gentle, measured tones with which he'd held the attention of the audience for more than hour. "What we can do is *regenerate*—regenerate the strength and the truth and the beauty of who we are. We can teach others. It's our responsibility to teach [people] that God *is*. God *is* in our lives. And when we do that, we enable people to stand in the strength. We generate, regenerate, the strength of our ancestors ... And when we stand in the strength of God, then

Photo credits: Connie Dunwoody



“Regeneration is precisely what Jesus Christ is all about.”

the beauty of all our ancestors comes out of us.”

Sr. Dr. Nuala Kenny OSC MD FRCP, who spent part of the morning and afternoon with us, also spoke of regeneration, through the revision of the book *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to the Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation*. The book, described as “a response by the Catholic bishops of Canada concerning the need to update and expand their efforts at safeguarding pastoral environments and to improve responses to complaints regarding the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults,” draws on past experience and current wisdom to provide a valuable resource for bishops, pastors, and lay people in Canada. “We wanted to set up the tone of the revision in humility. We wanted it to be set up in the tone of repentance, of now coming to understand, and we chose the theme that is in the book, *Lessons we have learned*.”

Sr. Nuala is a petite pediatrician whose passion for protecting minors and the vulnerable is anything but small. In her talk, we heard insights about the history of the Church with regard to clerical abuse, saying, “These public revelations ... are not new. They are longstanding—first documented in 306 AD.” She went on to remind us that this is an issue that respects no culture, country, gender, or generation, and she lamented the slow recognition by the Church of the magnitude of harm.

However, Sr. Nuala shared her own feeling of encouragement with us. “In Canada, especially with our new CCCB statement, our bishops really are ahead of so many others in understanding that this is about deep spiritual crisis, as well as a time for structural reform. The Church is in a time of testing: there must be systemic change; we have to treat more than the symptoms. And we can



Roy Henry Vickers

Sr. Dr. Nuala Kenny OSC MD FRCP

only do it if we are together, in community.” As she said these words, I remembered Roy’s closing words to us:

You, by being here, are regenerating the strength of those who have suffered for generations, and I am humbled, inspired, encouraged, and strengthened ... It is possible for people who are hopeless to come back to hope. It’s possible for us to teach people who have lost

the belief that God Is. It is possible for us to restore it.”

In his homily, Bishop Gary summed up the day’s talks beautifully:

Regeneration is precisely what Jesus Christ is all about. Regeneration is the possibilities of complete and utter internal and external transformation with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not about fixing what’s broken! Jesus Christ is about regeneration. That’s a powerful word. It’s something new. It’s very much what the whole Gospel invites us to. A powerful regeneration. It’s new life. But we know that new life only comes when old life dies.

While the day’s topics were difficult, there were many tender moments, much profound wisdom, and an abundance of hope. To paraphrase Roy, *Remember that we each have a strength and a power that we carry in this life, and the closer we walk with God, the stronger it is.*

May we all continue to walk with our brothers and sisters, in the hope, confidence, and strength of God’s eternal love. ✠

Sr. Dr. Nuala also presented at our Annual Diocesan Conference at St. Edward’s Parish in Duncan on Saturday, November 24, 2018.

Our Diocese

Outreach

A ministry of healing, friendship and support

By Fr. Thomas Chinnappa

It is now more than a year, from June 9, 2017 to October 2018, since I arrived in Saanich Peninsula Parish after a brief introduction to Canadian culture and way of life in St. Ann's Parish, Duncan. Thank you for the warm welcome that made me feel at home, and made it easier to adjust to the new environment.

For two months I began to familiarize myself with the four First Nations Reserves within the Saanich peninsula. I was invited to experience a First Nations funeral for an Elder, Pamela, which was held in their gymnasium. I was privileged to observe First Nations burial traditions, including a reception afterwards, at which all who had helped the family in any way were thanked.

Sarah Modeste, an Elder from Duncan, together with her daughter, Freda, visited with me and took me to the Tsartlip Reserve to visit members of the Sampson family, and Thelma and Cristy Underwood. I felt their acceptance and support. They invited me to attend the Pow Wow. Again, it was a wonderful opportunity for me to observe First Nations cultural practices for three consecutive days. During the event, Maurice, an Elder, introduced me to the community gathered there. Norman Underwood, Tsawout Elder, invited me to visit him at his home and I was also invited to attend his birthday celebration. Later they included me in the family's Thanksgiving dinner and introduced me to family members who were present. Norman announced I would be celebrating Mass in his home; and a week later I celebrated Mass with 13 family members attending.

In the first week of December 2017 there was a funeral at the Pauqu'achin Reserve for a member of the Williams family. They asked me to bring rosaries and lead them in a prayer service. I felt accepted by their community. The next day there was a funeral Mass which I celebrated, followed by a reception. As part of First Nations tradition and culture, I was offered handshakes by family members.



Fr. Thomas Chinnappa, right, with Tsawout Elder Norman Underwood

On Christmas Day 2017 I celebrated Mass on the Tsawout Reserve attended by 28 Band members. But for the snow, more had planned to attend.

On Good Friday 2018, a service was held at Tsawout Band Office with nine Elders and a few parishioners attending.

Gradually, some First Nations families have invited me into their homes. On September 12, 2018, I celebrated Mass in Norman Underwood's home together with 30 family

members, with families from Tsartlip and Tseycum attending. Now, every first and third Friday of the month, I bring Communion to Norman, Thelma, and Geraldine Underwood in their respective homes. I was again invited to join the family for Thanksgiving Dinner in 2018.

On the social side of life, Scott Sam took me out for a day's fishing in the Salish Sea: we came home with fresh fish for his family.

Historically it would appear that the majority of the four Coast Salish peoples forming the four Reserves in Central and North Saanich were baptized and raised in the Catholic faith. Tsawout Reserve had its own Catholic church and pastor, and still has a street named Church Road where the church was situated.

On the occasion of First Nations cultural events, I have been contacted by families, and have contacted them in order to participate. I have been invited to attend and to participate in funeral ceremonies at the Shaker Church on the Tsartlip Reserve.

My presence and ministry among the First Nations people has been an experience of healing, friendship, and support. ✠



Fr. Thomas Chinnappa currently serves as Assistant Priest at Saanich Peninsula Parish, with outreach to local Indigenous communities.



A refuge of hope and love

By Peter Dunwoody, Refugee Coordinator

In 2018, six refugee families arrived in Canada and settled on Vancouver Island with the assistance of hard-working parishes. During this past year, one family reached their one-year anniversary, and another relocated to Ontario. Parishes provide financial support for the first year at which time the family is expected to be independent.

The emotional support given to a refugee family by their Parish Refugee Committee begins with written and verbal communication

during the two years it takes to process immigration to Canada. This is often a trying and frustrating period for both family and parish. Once the family arrives, practical needs are met: housing, financial arrangements, medical and dental providers, transportation, and education.

"We were privileged to be able to offer refuge to a family that was persecuted for their faith.

For our group, undertaking sponsorship meant no longer feeling helpless against the injustice in the world."

During this time cultural and communication differences exist—it is unnerving for a family to move to a country and do their best to adapt to a new way of life, knowing they can never return to their mother country. This emotional challenge is an important matter for the newcomers and their parish to deal with. A typical parish report in the early days of getting settled is: "They arrived on October 16 and we have been very busy getting to know each other. They seem happy and are trying very hard to find a home in our community. I believe it is going well. When the children were asked to draw their family today, the 10-year-old included me (Chair Person of the Refugee Committee). The two children are now enrolled in school and mom is being assessed for language proficiency tomorrow." It is critical for families to learn English as soon as possible in order to promote employment and education.



Welcome to Canada!

After six months, things have typically progressed: "Our church has been so blessed to welcome a refugee family. We have been able to guide this lovely family through the first traumatic months to a total acceptance of their new home. In that short time the father has secured full-time work, the mother has taken her ESL placement test, and their daughter will attend full-time daycare when she turns three.

They also took part in lots of firsts:

a Canada Day parade; Thanksgiving with a lovely parish family; and Halloween trick-or-treating with lots of parish children. Their daughter quickly learned English words and is very comfortable taking part in the children's liturgy at Sunday Mass. When asked if she is happy in Canada, the mother replied, 'This parish is my new family, and you have all become my adopted parents.' We are looking forward to celebrating their first Canadian Christmas with them."

A report provided by one Parish at the conclusion of their experience: "We were privileged to be able to offer refuge to a family that was persecuted for their faith. For our group, undertaking sponsorship meant no longer feeling helpless against the injustice in the world. We and the family worked through this experience together, both sides learning as we went, sharing a lot of tea, animated discussions, and much laughter. They are doing well on their own now, and are newcomers that Canada can be proud of." ✠

"This parish is my new family, and you have all become my adopted parents."



Peter Dunwoody serves as the volunteer Refugee Coordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.



Our Diocese

Outreach

100 years of loss

By Fr. Dean Henderson

A large, unopened orange box atop the library shelves at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre caught my attention a couple of years ago. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation produced a curriculum for a six-week course, including DVD interviews with survivors and a professionally produced five-panel photo display of Canadian historical relations with First Nations.

... they want neither our sorrow or guilt, but simply wish us to stand with them.

My curiosity converted into commitment by increasing personal knowledge of the deep sorrow and pain many of my First Nations Elder friends carry as a legacy of their experience at residential schools. After reading accounts of the schools by both the Sisters of St. Ann and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and viewing the very recently produced DVD of healing and reconciliation from the Catholic Diocese in the Northwest Territories titled *In the Spirit of Reconciliation*, I took a deep breath, leapt out of my comfort zone and offered to facilitate a six-week course at the UVic Interfaith Chapel with my Anglican Chaplain colleague. The course was

intended to inform non aboriginals of the residential school history, purpose, legacy, and need for healing based on truth and justice, from the perspective of Indigenous people.

The course was not easy to facilitate, nor was it always comfortable to participate in, but it proved strangely inspirational. Over the weeks we were privileged to welcome three residential school survivors who confirmed that in spite of some exposure to good teachers and experiences, the overall experience of forced departure from family and home, intentional shaming of identity, and stripping of language, spiritual tradition, and culture was devastating to most. An additional experience of the Kairos 'blanket exercise' was offered to the 25 participants at Holy Cross Church. As a Coastal hereditary Chief friend shared with us on one evening, they want neither our sorrow or guilt, but simply wish us to stand with them.

Course participants certainly came away from the six week course, *100 Years of Loss*, prayerfully committed to find ways to stand in friendship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. ✠

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, from January 18 – 25, 2019, invites us to remain in a state of hopeful gratitude for the common Baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This week of prayer is an invitation to proclaim a common faith in Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, and to face the challenges we may personally and collectively experience while upholding deep respect and love of the other.

St. Peter's Parish, Nanaimo, will host the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service at 1:30 pm on January 20, 2019.

Lord Jesus, we pray for the unity of the Christian Church as you willed, and for our brothers and sisters at (name of Christian church closest to your church).

Photo, right: Bishop Gary and Fr. Kyrillos Edward (left of Bishop Gary), with the Coptic Orthodox Church community, joined with the Parish Pastoral Council member of St. Francis Xavier Parish. Twice a month for the past year, the Coptic Orthodox community has been using St. Francis Xavier Church for their sacred liturgy.



The mission on campus

By Joseph Potter, Catholic Christian Outreach Missionary at UVic

Catholic Christian Outreach is celebrating its thirtieth year as a movement, and the ministry has entered its fifth year at the University of Victoria (UVic). Much has changed in these five years as missionaries have come and gone, students have graduated, and our once full-time chaplain, Fr. Dean Henderson, is attending to the needs of parishioners at St. Rose of Lima in Sooke. However, the mission at UVic has remained the same as always: to be catalysts in the New Evangelization.



The CCO UVic community on retreat at Pioneer Pacific Camp. Led by Fr. Harrison Ayre, students spent the weekend learning about the spirituality of St. Theresa of Calcutta.

This has been a year of transition for the mission at UVic with the departure of many familiar faces. Long-time campus leader Chantal Côté has transferred into a new off-campus role with CCO, and so we welcome Maria Arsenault. Having served the Simon Fraser University Catholic community for the past five years, Maria brings a range of spiritual warfare experiences and a keen eye for the lost. Nate de Jesus is now working at a parish in Calgary, and so in comes the joyous Rachel Hidocos to assist in building the women's ministry.

With the graduation of 12 of our student leaders in April, our new team is left with with opportunities and challenges to build up the ministry at UVic. The team took time to pray and consider the lay of the land, and we feel the Holy Spirit has called us to really focus our time and efforts on those students who can join us and assist in

our mission of evangelization. We are looking forward to Nightfever, an evening of Adoration and street outreach, where our students will be provided an opportunity to put the skills they have learned into action. We are also excited for the five students taking RCIA with Fr. Dean and me.

We recall the words of Pope Benedict XVI in *Verbum Domini* to inspire and remind us of our mission here: "Our own time, then, must be increasingly marked by a new hearing of

God's word and a new evangelization. Recovering the centrality of the divine word in the Christian life leads us to appreciate anew the deepest meaning of the forceful appeal of Pope John Paul II: to pursue the mission *ad gentes* and vigorously to embark upon the new evangelization, especially in those nations where the Gospel has been forgotten or meets with indifference as a result of widespread secularism." Amen to that!

Please pray for the student ministry, the CCO team, and Fr. Dean Henderson; we are grateful for your continued support. ✠



Joseph Potter serves as a full-time missionary with Catholic Christian Outreach at the University of Victoria. CCO challenges students to live in the fullness of Catholic faith with a strong emphasis on becoming leaders in the renewal of the world.

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Our Diocese

History

Out of the archives

By Theresa Vogel

As I write this, mere weeks before the thoughtful days of Advent and the busy season of Christmas come upon us, I take a quiet moment to consider, as many others are doing, the centenary of the armistice which marked the end of World War I. I invite you to do the same.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria contributed much to the war effort, counting the prayers and sacrifices of the people, the expertise of the Royal Canadian Navy situated in the port, and the faithful clergy who gave up a life of stability for unknown ministry overseas. Two of the local priests who served with distinction (and returned home safely) are part of the rich Catholic/civilian history captured in the Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.

Fr. Major John Knox (photo, above left) was born in County Down, Northern Ireland in 1879. He first came to British Columbia in 1890, but returned to England in 1901. By 1915, he was back in Canada, and with the permission of Archbishop Casey of Vancouver, joined the chaplaincy services of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Msgr. Major Anselm 'Bertie' Walton Wood (photo, above right) was born in Hertfordshire, England in 1885, son of Anglican Vicar Alfred John Wood, and his wife Ada. He first came to Canada in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, and also joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force as chaplain.

Two dedicated chaplains you might say ... yet these two had something else in common. Both of them were baptised Anglican, and were ordained as Anglican priests. Both sought conversion to Catholicism, and both became members of Catholic religious orders; Fr. Knox became a Jesuit, and Msgr. Wood, a Benedictine. Both gave it all up to join Canadians overseas on the fields of battle.



Both of these men went on to become distinguished Canadians and clerics, and their 'collections' include: 'Commander of the Order of the British Empire' (OBE), 'V for Victory' medal (King George VI), rank of 'Major', Chaplain General of the Royal Canadian Navy, Prelate of Honour, the text of the speech given at the 1946 banquet for the Centenary of the Diocese, and more.

Autumn, Thanksgiving, and Christmas in such close proximity are times of memories. Let us not forget the memory of these two brave and dedicated priests. During this Advent and Christmas season, I invite you to remember the gifts they selflessly gave to countless people. ✠

Theresa Vogel serves as Archives Manager for the Diocese of Victoria. She can frequently be found in the cellar at the Pastoral Centre, engaged in any manner of Archival Activities. Theresa is also an active Rotarian whose favourite pastimes include raising money for worthy causes.



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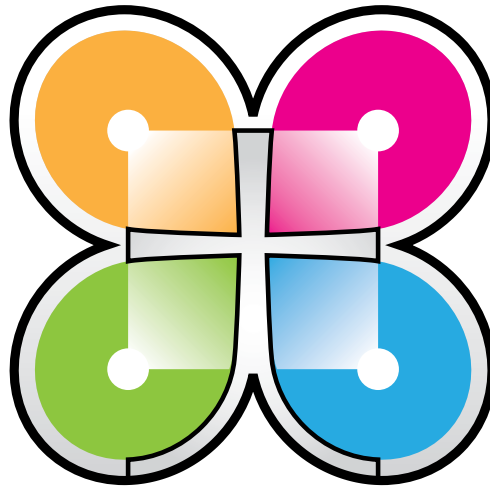
Responsible Ministry & Safe Environment

By Greg Beattie, Responsible Ministry & Safe Environment Coordinator

The recent disclosure of sexual abuse committed by clergy in the U.S. state of Pennsylvania has indeed been disturbing for many Catholics. I too have felt a personal sense of betrayal. The need for a comprehensive healing strategy has never been greater. There is also a great deal of work ahead for the Church in re-establishing trust that children and the vulnerable are protected. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has begun this rebuilding process with the release of *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to the Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation*. While we look to Pope Francis and the leadership of the Church to further spearhead this change, we, the laity, can and should do much more to ensure safety and accountability. This process begins with and is fundamentally a part of parish life.

Our Diocese has taken a very active leadership role in ensuring that parishes and schools have the tools and resources necessary to protect children and vulnerable adults. In 2011 our Diocese released our comprehensive *Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment Policy* (RMSE). This policy provides a set of safeguarding standards that all members of our faith community must follow. In 2015, the Diocese hired a Registered Social Worker (myself) as Diocesan Responsible Ministry (DRM) Coordinator and an Office of Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment was created. A volunteer Parish Responsible Ministry (PRM) Coordinator position was created in each parish and an equivalent position in each school.

We have a comprehensive process to help ensure a safe environment throughout the Diocese. A key part of this process involves the selection and screening of volunteers, employees, and all clergy. The RMSE Policy provides a comprehensive list of volunteer positions within the Diocese. Each position lists the screening protocol required for the position as well as the risk level. The PRM for each parish is responsible for ensuring that each position is screened according to these policy requirements.



An Advisory Committee for Responsible Ministry & Safe Environment, primarily comprised of lay members, oversees the implementation of the RMSE Policy and provides strategic advice and direction to the Diocesan Responsible Ministry Coordinator. Through the Advisory Committee we monitor compliance with RMSE Policy through an annual audit and work with each parish and school to ensure that their staff

are trained and knowledgeable in RMSE protocols. Over the next few months we will be introducing a new, online training system that will offer us a greater ability to provide ongoing training and monitor the processes of each parish and school. This training program will greatly improve our ability to reach every priest, deacon, religious, employee and volunteer working in the Diocese. It will also allow us to verify that all participants have completed the appropriate level of training, are aware of and compliant with RMSE policy and have a basic level of knowledge about abuse prevention.

The Diocese requires anyone who has reason to believe that a child is in need of protection report their suspicion immediately to the Ministry of Child & Family Development (MCFD) at the following toll-free number: **1-800-663-9122**.

Additional contact information and helpful guiding information can be found in our policy on line at: www.rcdvictoria.org/responsible-ministry.

Should anyone have any concerns, past or present, in our Diocese, please contact me immediately at the following confidential toll-free number: **1-877-237-7233**. ✕



Greg Beattie serves as Responsible Ministry & Safe Environment Coordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.



Our Diocese

Family Life

Face the day

By Bonnie Landry

Dear Christmas,

I'm always a little shocked this time of year, when, on the heels of October, you almost literally come knocking at my door. Flyers, decorations, Christmas stock in all the stores, and signs and wonders urging me onward in that almighty Christmas quest: shopping.

I love you, Christmas. Sometimes I wonder at your ways though, your precociousness. Your lack of subtlety. "Buy stuff!" you holler. Like a toddler or teenager, we simply can't ignore you.

What to do, what to do?

We must keep our eye on heaven ... Let our joy overflow, not our credit cards.

One option we have is to take the hard line. *You can't get the better of us, Christmas!* We can become stiff and unrelenting, choosing not to participate, not to engage, keeping you at arm's length in order to retain our sanity and our dignity. We could simply ignore all the attention you demand. Insisting that you won't get the better of us, we could get our backs up. Embittered by those who choose to indulge you, we may try to control you through sheer force of will. We could get angry.

We might also choose to give in. We could let you manipulate us, get your way with us. We could surrender to all your demands. We could try to assuage your persistence by buying everything you offer. Participating in all your parties, events, photo ops, sales, and materialism could be our way of throwing our hands up against the tide of your attempts to take over our lives.

Oh, Christmas. What are we supposed to do with you?

Are we stuck with a black-and-white choice to either resist all of your charms, or give in to them all? Probably not. I think we can find a different way of dealing with you.

The first thing we must do is realize *Christmas is the incarnation of a person*, human and divine. You, Christmas, are an event that



celebrates a person. We can embrace the person. In fact, our entire lives should be the desire to learn how to embrace this person more perfectly. We can even, perhaps, learn how to embrace the person of Christ by learning how to deal with you, the event.

Is it possible that we can walk with you, engage with you, find the person at the centre of your cultural materialism? Perhaps when we stiffen against you,

we are allowing commercialism to embitter us against others, against businesses, against the culture; even against Jesus. Can we stretch our charity to include those who are caught up in your wild antics? We don't need to roll over and simply lay down our credit cards, either. Being a pushover can distract us from finding Jesus in the midst of your raucous season.

Christmas, we must keep our feet on the ground. We must also enjoy the celebrations of the season, splurge a little on our loved ones with our time, talent, or treasure. It's exciting to feel the Christmas spirit and the impact of your delight and energy—so long as we're cautious about wearing ourselves thin, both physically and materially.

And we must keep our eye on heaven. When we look at all the stuff, the tree, the gifts, the food and the busy calendar, we must remember to look up. Let our joy overflow, not our credit cards.

So, Christmas. I love you and I wish to keep you as a reminder to look up. I want to indulge you with joy—and temper you with common sense. I want to remember the person you represent, and find ways, during the hustle and bustle, to walk ever closer with Jesus, the newborn King.

Love, Bonnie. ✕



Bonnie Landry is a parishioner of St. Francis Xavier, is a busy mom of seven great kids, and is thoroughly married to her wonderful husband, Albert.

Our Schools



Building in love



What's new in education?

By Beverly Pulyk

The landscape of education has been undergoing change in the last few years. In the Fall of 2015, the new K-9 curriculum came on line. This September, the Ministry of Education launched the new Grad Program, starting with the Grade 10 Curriculum; Grade 11 and 12 will come on stream next year. A number of people are asking, *What is different, and how does this relate to our faith?*

Bishop Gary Gordon says, "A Catholic worldview is an integral human development and integral ecology; it is always seeking the common good and the wellbeing of creation. A Catholic worldview is a profound invitation for Catholic educators to imbue all of the curriculum with this worldview that sees the wellbeing and the good of all creation, and sees eternal life as the goal, not simply as an add-on."

According to the Ministry of Education's website, "the curriculum has been redesigned to be more learner focused and flexible, with a focus on core competencies, big ideas and learning standards; Indigenous culture and perspectives have been integrated into all curricula." New course structures exist including: eight credits



Our Schools

Superintendent's Message

of Career Education and a Capstone Project, courses designed to be accessible to all students, and Health Education has been combined with Physical Education. Mandatory Provincial Exams in Socials, Science, English, and Mathematics will be replaced with two new provincial graduation assessments – Literacy and Numeracy; these assessments are no longer tied to a particular course. The new curriculum still requires that students complete 80 credits to graduate.

The curriculum structure:

- Focuses on learner-centered and flexible learning, with more voice and choice for students and an increase in inquiry-based learning.
- Is composed of three parts: Content (what students will know); Curricular Competencies (what students will be able to do); and Big Ideas (what students will understand).
- Provides learners with a strong foundation of Core Competencies of Communication, Creative and Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Responsibility.
- Is not designed to stream students into easier or more difficult pathways.

- Includes Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and content across the curriculum.
- Is designed so that literacy and numeracy skills are developed through applications in all curricular areas.
- Provides more course options in each subject area.

At this time there are no plans to change the student progress reporting for Grades 10-12; letter grades and percentages will continue. The new provincial numeracy and literacy exams will be evaluated on a four-point provincial proficiency scale and reported separately on Graduation Transcripts. (Source: [Ministry of Education Website](#))

It is an exciting time in education, as the focus and goal of the new curriculum, combined with our opportunities to include our Catholic worldview, will help create a solid foundation for the lives and faith of our students after high school. ✠



Beverly Pulyk serves as the Superintendent of Island Catholic Schools, and she is Chairperson of the Catholic Independent Schools Committee of British Columbia



Employment with Island Catholic Schools

We are seeking people to work 'on call' in all employment areas: Teachers, Educational Assistants, Early Childhood Educators, and Before/After School Care Workers.

Preference will be given to candidates with the following qualifications:

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

Interested persons are invited to visit our website for application forms and requirements.

www.cisdv.bc.ca/employment-opportunities.php

Saints in our schools

By Deanne Paulson, Principal, St. Patrick's Elementary
and Rachelle Warman, Principal, St. John Paul II Elementary

The Catholic Church has a rich history of saintly men and women who lived holy lives in obedience to God's will. There is also a long tradition of adopting patron saints by groups, or individuals, who feel some connection with a particular saint.

At St. Patrick's Elementary School in Victoria, each class has chosen a patron saint for the year. Students are learning about symbols associated with their patron saint and have used some of the symbols to decorate their classroom doors. Over the school year, students will do research about their saint and the saintly attributes that they can try to emulate in their daily lives. It is hoped that students will benefit spiritually from their connection with their saint as an intercessor on their behalf before God. The class will celebrate the saint's feast day and, when possible, attend Mass on that day.

To further highlight our focus on the saints, Fr. Lee celebrated Mass on All Saints Day with the entire school community. A student from each class brought forth gift symbols that are representative of their saint, as a classmate explained why they had chosen their patron saint.

By the time a kindergarten student graduates from St. Patrick's, he or she will be very familiar with at least eight of the Church's blessed role models. It is hoped that the graduate will benefit from the example of these role models and be inspired to lead a holy, Christian life.

Each year, the staff and students at St. John Paul II in Port Alberni take time to honor and to learn about the lives of our Catholic Superheroes, better known as the Saints. While these Saints may have started their lives as normal people like you and me, there is something special and powerful about each one of them. It is as though they somehow received super powers of holiness. The fact is, we have all received super powers of holiness



through our Baptism. Baptism transforms ordinary humans into extraordinary disciples who have the power to become saints. This super power is called *grace* which allows us to live according to God's plan for our lives and to build God's kingdom on earth. This is our message; this is our belief.

At the beginning of the school year, each class chooses a 'patron saint'. This year we have St. Nicholas, St. Patrick,

St. Thérèse, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Cecilia, and St. John Paul II praying for us. A week prior to All Saint's Day, the teachers prepare an activity that promotes learning and fun for all. Our students are placed in multi-graded 'family groups' that are led by the grade 6/7 students. These groups rotate throughout various activities having fun and learning about the different saints. This year, students were engaged in creating crafts, dancing, singing, participating in a 'Saints Kahoot' and 'All Saints Jeopardy'. All in all, children learn about the saints and our hope is that they should desire to become like them.

Baptism transforms ordinary humans into extraordinary disciples who have the power to become saints. This grace allows us to live according to God's plan for our lives and to build God's kingdom on earth.

Our Superintendent challenged each classroom to take on a social outreach project this year and our staff has gladly accepted this challenge. Staff and students are baking for the elderly and local shelters, bringing music and fellowship to our local senior centers, participating in a toy drive and winter hampers for St. Vincent de Paul, and taking on monthly service projects. We take great pride in our Catholic faith and in our call to love one another, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me" (Matthew 25:40). ✠

Our Faith

Faith Matters

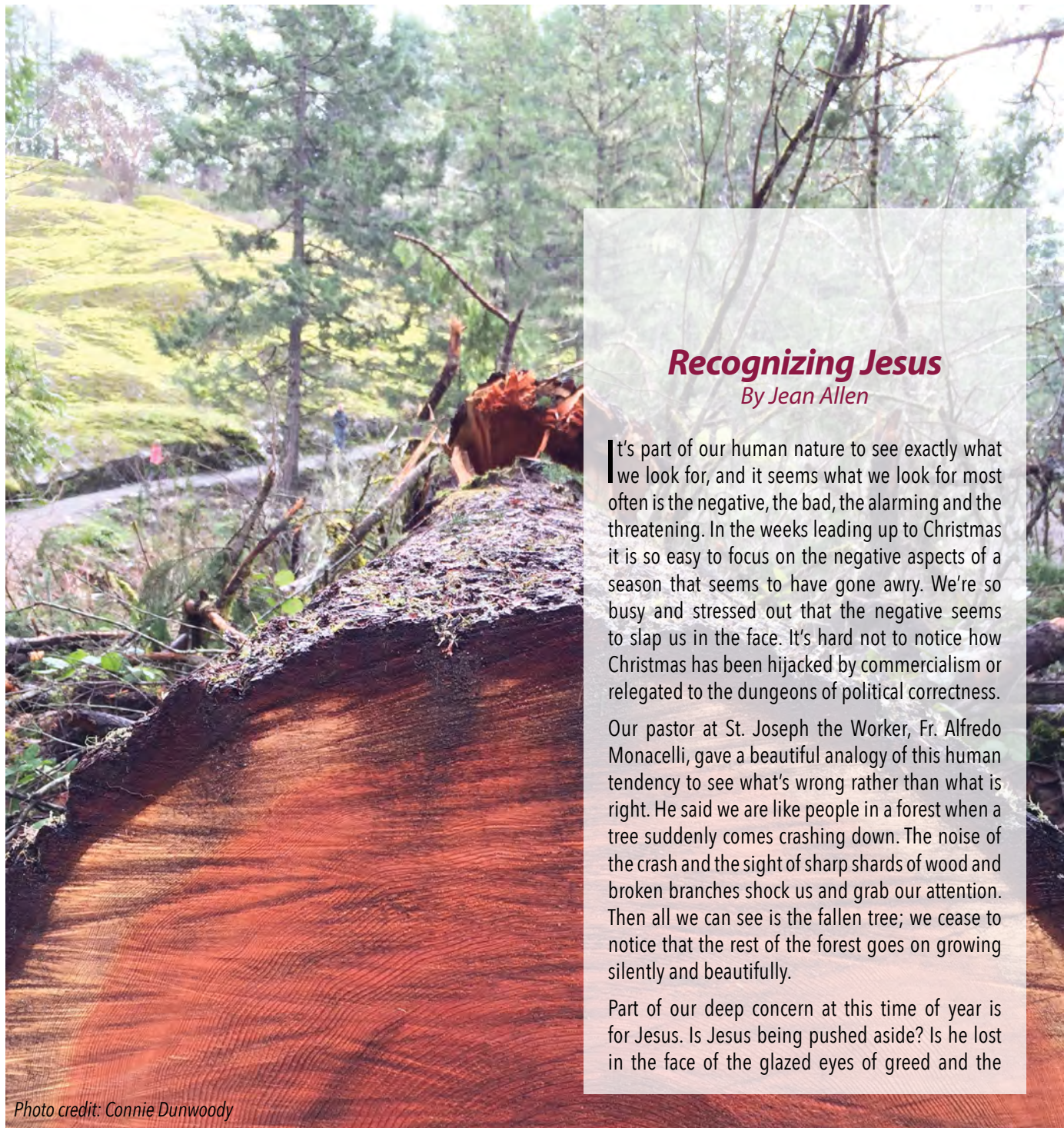


Photo credit: Connie Dunwoody

Recognizing Jesus

By Jean Allen

It's part of our human nature to see exactly what we look for, and it seems what we look for most often is the negative, the bad, the alarming and the threatening. In the weeks leading up to Christmas it is so easy to focus on the negative aspects of a season that seems to have gone awry. We're so busy and stressed out that the negative seems to slap us in the face. It's hard not to notice how Christmas has been hijacked by commercialism or relegated to the dungeons of political correctness.

Our pastor at St. Joseph the Worker, Fr. Alfredo Monacelli, gave a beautiful analogy of this human tendency to see what's wrong rather than what is right. He said we are like people in a forest when a tree suddenly comes crashing down. The noise of the crash and the sight of sharp shards of wood and broken branches shock us and grab our attention. Then all we can see is the fallen tree; we cease to notice that the rest of the forest goes on growing silently and beautifully.

Part of our deep concern at this time of year is for Jesus. Is Jesus being pushed aside? Is he lost in the face of the glazed eyes of greed and the



Our Faith

Faith Matters

pressure to offend no one? Is the world poorer for the seeming unseating of Christ?

Is Jesus in competition with the world? Has he ever been? I don't think so. He was born in anonymity, lived in relative obscurity and died ignominiously. If he was in competition with the world, he did a poor job of it. As far as the world was concerned, he lost. In his birth, life and death there was no honour or recognition for who he truly was. Yet he is still marvellously alive and active—and known!




If we are noticing the strident demand for political correctness and the hungry greed of commercialism, we are missing the gentle, theologically correct glowing glimmers of acts of love happening all over the place. Love has only one source. Just one. Pay attention and you will absolutely see the source of all love blithely ignoring all competition and continuing to work in his profound and awesome way.

Let the weary heart rejoice! ✠

Christ does not depend on the world recognizing him, or understanding him, or accepting him—never has and never will. As he said in John, "My Father goes on working and so do I" (John 5:17). When he said this, the Jewish authorities were harassing him but he didn't strive for their approval and acceptance, or moan that he was losing to their negativity. It is we who enter into competition with the world, we who demand respect for God, we who feel justified in judging and criticizing the world—the world we are paying so much attention to that we stop paying attention to the one we love. It is we who fail to see the one who quietly goes on working whether the world acknowledges him or not—and whether we, his brothers and sisters, pay close attention to him or not.


Jean Allen is a parishioner at St. Joseph the Worker parish in Victoria.



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Our Faith

Faith Formation and Evangelization

Saying 'yes' to the best news

By Glen Palahicky, Director, Faith Formation and Evangelization

Many televangelists have given evangelization a bad name. Often, Catholics just can't connect or trust that type and style of evangelization and say to themselves, "If that's what evangelization looks like—no thanks!"

Yet, as Catholics we are challenged to understand evangelization in a deeper way and try to redeem it from its popular misuse. Something so central to Christian identity and mission needs to be rescued and put in its proper and dignified place. Since Vatican II all of our Popes have placed evangelization at the center of our faith. Nearly 50 years ago, Pope Paul VI wrote in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church ... Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.

The Church, you and the whole community you worship with on Sunday, and 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide, "exists in order to evangelize." Really? Let's be honest, if 100 Catholics were asked why the Church exists, it's likely 99.9 of those answers wouldn't be 'to evangelize'!

Where should we start? At the simplest level evangelizing is about loving and sharing a message of Good News. God is Love and is at the center of everything that exists. Since evangelization is central to the Church, it must be rooted in God's Love. Thus, when we use loving words and caring deeds, we evangelize. Appreciating and willing good for the other is evangelizing. The saints, by being saints evangelize. When evangelization is connected to love, then we see how it must be central to the life of the Church.

But there is more. How has God shown his love most clearly? What has been the best gift God has given to us? For Christians the answer is Jesus. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Evangelizing simply aims to express the conviction that Jesus is the best gift



God has ever given. His life, death, and resurrection is the Best News of all! If we can let that truth seep into our heads, hearts, and hands then our evangelizing will be real.

André Regnier, Founder of Catholic Christian Outreach, shares the importance of saying our explicit Yes to Jesus. Just as married couples declare their Yes to each other, so we Christians need to declare our Yes to Jesus, to be converted. As

Catholics we have a special opportunity to say Yes every time we receive Holy Communion.

When we accompany and support people to say and live this Yes we are evangelizing.

Jesus, You are the best gift God has given. I say Yes to you being the centre of my heart and life. May this Advent lead me to live a deeper Yes. Amen. ✠



Glen Palahicky serves as Director of Faith Formation and Evangelization for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria.

"I don't know Who—or what—put the question ... but at some moment I did answer Yes to Someone—or Something—and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal."

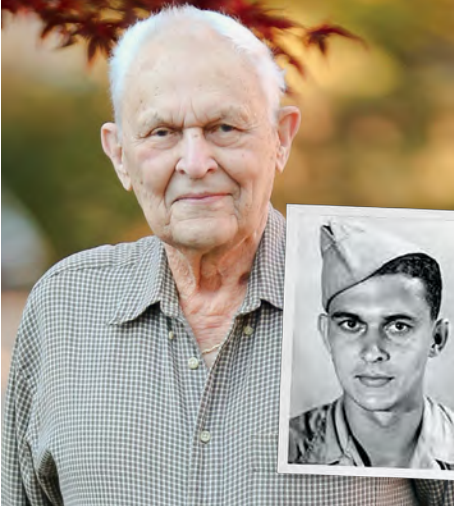
~ Dag Hammarskjöld



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Our Faith

Vocations

Vocations

By Fr. Pawel Szczur SDS

I am not sure what my brother priests' experience was of their time in seminary, but for me, it was an extraordinary experience that allowed me to grow in my faith, advance my knowledge about the world, and learn a lot about myself.

I attended the Salvatorian Seminary in the small village of Bagno, which is located in southwest part of Poland, close to the City of Wroclaw. Our daily life would begin at 6:00 am, when we gathered together for prayer, meditation, and Mass.

After breakfast, it was time for intellectual discussions and lectures where we learned about truth, God, philosophy, psychology, and many other topics and subjects. Our afternoons were spent working in our gardens, doing farm chores, and keeping our rooms and common areas clean and tidy. There was also time set aside for writing our various papers, and reading countless books. After evening prayer, we enjoyed free time with our fellow seminarians.

These days brought me great joy, and yet there were also many challenges. There was time to celebrate success, and also time when I needed to work even harder to achieve my goals. In these six years of preparation to be a priest there were many wonderful moments that I will always remember: our first religious professions, the taking of our perpetual vows, installation into the ministry of lector, installation into the ministry of acolyte, ordination to the transitional diaconate, and finally our ordination to the priesthood.

These years were also marked by nerve-wracking moments such as countless exams, our first homily 'preached' to classmates (who were the toughest 'congregation' ever), my first experience as a teacher and many wonderful, unforgettable, and funny moments when we just could not stop laughing. These times helped me to understand that patience is a very important virtue. Throughout these years of formation, amazing bonds are formed between people, especially the bond of friendship that can be tested in many different situations. My seminary years helped me to grow and understand that God puts people into our lives to help us grow in holiness and work hard to become the best possible version of ourselves.

These are my memories from my seminary days, after 15 years of priesthood. I know that technology changes, some of the subjects of study change, and there are new formators, who, with their

own personalities, continue to try to help new seminarians grow in their vocations. However, even with all that change, I think one thing stays the same. What was a hundred years ago for some seminarians, and what remains important for me 15 years later, and what remains important for seminarians today, is that seminary, be it located in Poland, Ontario, or Alberta, is home for seminarians.

Seminary remains a very important home where vocations grow; where challenges and joys are faced; and where seminarians get to know their character better. It is not just the place where they learn new things; it is not just a dormitory where they stay for their time of learning. It is the home where every student transforms his life to be a priest of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you have the time and opportunity to connect with our two seminarians during their Christmas break in our Diocese (Guillermo Carcamo and Joseph Yuson), ask them about their experience thus far in their journey, and I am sure they will be happy to share their experiences with you.

As our seminarians continue their journey towards the priesthood, please keep them in your prayers and your hearts, as we all know that in these changing times the world needs those who are called to spread the Good News about our newborn Lord.

God bless you! ✠



Fr. Pawel Szczur SDS serves as Formation Director for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria, and is Pastor of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Langford.

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