Catholic Herald

the voice of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

Father Peter Bissonnette



Ordained a Priest, 30 May 2025; Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains

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EDITORIAL

Fr. Ray Rick

Building on the Past

Unsurprisingly, the first major teaching document of Pope Leo XIV builds on a theme dear to the heart of his predecessor, Pope Francis. The late Holy Father had produced an Encyclical, *Dilexit Nos* ("He loved us" — Rom. 8:37); now Pope Leo has written an Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te* ("I have loved you" — Rev 3:9) on love for the poor.

In this way, the Holy Father emphasizes that, even though he is new on the job, he intends to be in continuity with the previous Pope and, by extension, with all the authentic teaching authority of the popes who have gone before.

Our past is important. None of us wants to toss aside our history and the wisdom, faith and blessings of generations before us. We are not, of course, stuck in the past, but build on the good things that have been accomplished before we got here. To do this, it is helpful to review our history, even as we look ahead.

Perhaps this resonates with the experiences of so many of us in and around Peterborough who celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Peter Robinson settlement this year. We hold onto, in some sense, our history as a treasured indication of who we are today. Or, to put it another way, we don't have to create from scratch who we are and what we're about; we can embrace our foundations and carry on with the common tasks of living meaningful lives. Certainly, we are not stuck in the past, nor are we unchanging, but we grow from roots already established.

The teachings of Popes Francis and Leo XIV (echoing, obviously, the commandments of Christ, the Lord) challenge us to open our hearts to the enormous burdens of great multitudes of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, even this very day!

The above-mentioned Peter Robinson migration crossed the sea to escape hardships in Ireland and found different hardships, both en-route and here. But, with perseverance and faith, they built hopeful lives for themselves and their descendants.

The Successor of Peter, whoever he may be, carries the great responsibility of teaching the whole Church, all of us, to have a heart for the poor. We acknowledge that the Son of God came into this world to bring Good News for all, not just a select few. When we learn this, we pray for strength and look for ways to build a a hopeful future for those less fortunate than we. ✠





Fr. Raymond Rick is Pastor of St. Paul's Parish in Lakefield and Editor of The Herald.

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NEXT ISSUE

— Easter 2026 —

will be distributed to the parishes in March 2026.
Submissions must be received at the e-mail address below on or before February 28th.

Stories and photos of events from every parish and organization in the diocese are welcome. Photos should be sent as attachments, not embedded in a text document, and the bigger the image file the better. Submissions as PDFs often do not reproduce well. No contributor to the *Catholic Herald* is remunerated in any way.

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Artifacts Returned

Joint Statement of the Holy See and the Canadian Conferenceof Catholic Bishops

This morning, 15 November 2025, in the Apostolic Palace, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV received in audience the Most Reverend Pierre Goudreault, Bishop of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), accompanied by the Most Reverend Richard Smith, Archbishop of Vancouver, and the Reverend Jean Vézina, General Secretary of the CCCB. During the audience, the Supreme Pontiff gifted to the CCCB sixty-two artefacts belonging to the ethnological collections of the Vatican Museums.

At the conclusion of the journey initiated by Pope Francis, that included his Apostolic Journey to Canada in 2022, various audiences with indigenous communities, and the publication of the Declaration on the Doctrine of Discovery in 2023, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV desires that this gift represent a concrete sign of dialogue, respect and fraternity. This is an act of ecclesial sharing, with which the Successor of Peter entrusts to the Church in Canada these artefacts, which bear witness to the history of the encounter between faith and the cultures of the indigenous peoples.

The sixty-two artefacts, coming from different communities, are part of the patrimony received on the occasion of the Vatican Missionary Exhibition of 1925, encouraged by Pope Pius XI during the Holy Year, to bear witness to the faith and cultural richness of peoples. Sent to Rome by Catholic missionaries between 1923 and 1925, these artefacts were subsequently combined with those of the Lateran Ethnologic Missionary Museum, which then became the "Anima Mundi" Ethnological Museum of the Vatican Museums.

The Holy Father's gift takes place in the context of the Jubilee of 2025, which celebrates hope, and the centenary of the Vatican Missionary Exhibition. These artefacts, accompanied by information in the possession of the Vatican Museums, which certify their origins and the circumstances of their transportation to Rome for the 1925 Exhibition, have now been given to the CCCB, who in a spirit of authentic cooperation and dialogue with the Directorate of Cultural Heritage of Vatican City State, are committed to ensuring that these artefacts are properly safeguarded, respected and preserved.

Exerpts from The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops — cccb.ca

Lily of the Mohawks



Known as the "Lily of the Mohawks", Kateri Tekakwitha was born in 1656 in Ossernenon (today Auriesville, New York) to a Catholic Algonquin mother and a Mohawk Chief. When she was four years old, her parents and brother died of smallpox. Kateri was also affected by the disease, which left her almost blind and badly scarred her face. She was taken in by her aunts and uncle, who was strongly opposed to Christianity.

When she was 10 years old, her village moved to Caughnawaga (today Fonda, New York). In 1667, her village was visited by the Jesuit missionaries Fathers Fremin, Bruyas and Pierron. From them, she received her first knowledge of Christianity. When Kateri turned 18, Father Jacques de Lamberville arrived to take charge of the mission in her village. Despite his misgivings, her uncle allowed her to be baptized as long as she remained in the village. Following her Baptism, Kateri lived a pious and faith-filled life, spending hours in prayer and fashioning crosses out of twigs. She also refused to marry, believing that she was married to God and that no man could take God's place in her heart. Her beliefs were met with ridicule, hostility and threats. Thus, two years after her Baptism, she fled to St. Francis Xavier Mission, a Christian Mohawk village in Kahnawake, Quebec.

There, she received her first Communion on Christmas Day 1677. She also made a vow of perpetual virginity on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1679. In Kahnawake, Kateri was known for her faith and holiness. She taught prayers to children, cared for the elderly and the sick, and would often attend mass at sunrise and sunset.

Kateri's health deteriorated in the last years of her life. She died of tuberculosis on April 17, 1680, shortly before her 24th birthday, and was buried at St. Francis Xavier Mission. Her final words were: "Jesos Konoronkwa" ("Jesus, I love you"). Witnesses report that within minutes of her death, the smallpox scars vanished from her face, which then radiated with beauty.

It is believed that since Kateri's death many miracles have been performed through her intercession, with the sick being cured and many prayers being answered. Kateri was declared Venerable by Pope Pius XII on January 3, 1943, and beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980. On December 19, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI signed a decree officially acknowledging another miracle attributed to her intervention. Saint Kateri Tekakwitha was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 21, 2012, in Rome. She became "the first native North American to be raised to the glory of the altars".

Today, there are a number of shrines and centres dedicated to Kateri in both the United States and Canada, including the National Shrine of St. Kateri Tekakwitha at the site of her Baptism in Fonda, New York, the Kateri Centre at her burial site at the St. Francis Xavier Mission in Kahnawake, which today is in the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, and the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs at her birthplace in Auriesville, New York.

St. Joseph's CWL, Bowmanville
90th Anniversary Dinner
April 26, 2025



















Saint Germaine Cousin

SAINT PROFILE

Fr. Joseph Devereaux *



The prophet Isaiah utters the mind of God saying: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, says the Lord" (Is. 55:8). Oftentimes, and understandably so, it is easy for us to be more attune to the secular world and human activity than to see the unfolding of God's plan around us. However, having witnessed the rapid growth of spring, then also the maturing of our fields and gardens, it is a perfect time to reflect upon the transformations that God wishes to bring about in us, the climax of His creation as recounted in *Genesis*.

The mysterious plan of God was revealed beautifully in the life of Saint Germaine Cousin, who was born in 1579 of humble parents at Pibrac, a village about ten miles from Toulouse, France.

From her birth she seemed marked for suffering. She was born with a deformed hand and the disease of scrofula (an infection of the lymph nodes and associated with tuberculosis). Her mother died when she was an infant, and her father soon married again. The new stepmother treated Germaine with much cruelty. Under pretence of saving the other children from the contagion of scrofula she persuaded the father to disallow Germaine from associating with her half-brothers and sisters, and so, at the age of 9 or 10, Germaine was hired out as a shepherdess and spent all her days alone in the fields. When she returned at night, her bed was in the stable or on a litter of vine branches in the attic.



Life was very hard for Germaine, but she bore it with humility and patience. She was gifted with a marvellous sense of the presence of God and of spiritual things. To her already difficult life, she added voluntary mortifica-tions and austerities. She possessed a great love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and for the Virgin Mother. When the church bell would ring for Mass, she pushed her staff into the ground and told her guardian angel to watch over her sheep; and, even though the surrounding forests teemed with wolves, Germaine's flock never came to harm, as she daily attended Holy Mass.

Her spiritual devotions consisted of the Rosary, and she recited the Angelus with the greatest devotion. Like many saints, she was at first the object of scorn. However, because of her utter goodness and the miracles that occurred around her, the local people, even her harsh stepmother, began to love and revere her. Eventually Germaine's parents asked her to return to the house to live, but she begged to be allowed to remain in her humble surroundings. Shortly thereafter, one morning in the early summer of 1601, her father realizing that the sheep had not been taken to the pasture, went to the stable and found Germaine dead on her pallet of vine-twigs. She was 22 years.

Her remains were buried in the parish church of Pibrac in front of the pulpit. In 1644, when the grave was opened to receive one of her relatives, the body of Germaine was discovered fresh and perfectly preserved. It was exposed for public viewing near the pulpit, and eventually a beautiful casket was requisitioned by a woman who had been miraculously cured through the intercession of St. Germaine. This began a long series of wonderful cures wrought at her relics. In 1661 and 1700 the remains were viewed and found fresh and intact by the vicars-general of Toulouse, who have left testamentary depositions of the fact.

Expert medical evidence determined that the body had not been embalmed, and experimental tests showed that the preservation was not due to any property inherent in the soil. In 1793 the casket was desecrated by soldiers of the French Revolution, who threw lime and water on the body and buried it in sand. However, after the Revolution, Germaine's body was found to have remained mostly intact, even though it ought to have decayed.

Hundreds of miracles and cures of every kind have been attested to this great saint's intercession – from multiplication of food in time of famine to recovery from grave sickness. On 7 May 1854, Pius IX beatified Germaine, and on 29 June 1867, enrolled her in the list of saints. Her feast is kept in the Diocese of Toulouse on 15 June. She is represented in art with a shepherd's crook or a distaff, a watchdog or a sheep, or with flowers in her apron.

Miracles always have as their primary purpose the glorification of God and the calling of people to salvation. The Bible tells us that God's ways are as different from man's as are the distance of the stars from the earth (Isaiah 55:9). May we once again marvel at the wonders of God and imitate the great love that the saints possessed for the Holy Trinity and the Communion of Saints. ✠

* Fr. Devereaux has, unfortunately (for us), transferred to Nova Scotia and will no longer be writing for the Catholic Herald. If some kind reader would like to take on the "Saint Profile" page, or write on some other matter, please contact CatholicHerald@PeterboroughDiocese.org — ed.

Hope and Joy

Pope Leo's Message to Grandparents

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Jubilee we are now celebrating helps us to realize that hope is a constant source of joy, whatever our age. When that hope has also been tempered by fire over the course of a long life, it proves a source of deep happiness.

Sacred Scripture offers us many examples of men and women whom the Lord called late in life to play a part in his saving plan. We can think of Abraham and Sarah, who, advanced in years, found it hard to believe when God promised them a child. Their childlessness seemed to prevent them from any hope for the future.

Zechariah's reaction to the news of John the Baptist's birth was no different: "How can this be? I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years" (Lk 1:18). Old age, barrenness and physical decline apparently blocked any hope for life and fertility in these men and women. The question that Nicodemus asked Jesus when the Master spoke to him of being "born again" also seems purely rhetorical: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (Jn 3:4). Yet whenever we think that things cannot change, the Lord surprises us with an act of saving power.



The elderly as signs of hope

In the Bible, God repeatedly demonstrates his providential care by turning to people in their later years. This was the case not only with Abraham, Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, but also with Moses, who was called to set his people free when he was already eighty years old (cf. Ex 7:7). God thus teaches us that, in his eyes, old age is a time of blessing and grace, and that the elderly are, for him, the first witnesses of hope. Augustine asks, "What do we mean by old age?" He tells us that God himself answers the question: "Let your strength fail, so that my strength may abide within you, and you can say with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then I am strong'" (2 Cor. 12:10). The increasing number of elderly people is a sign of the times that we are called to discern, in order to interpret properly this moment of history.

The life of the Church and the world can only be understood in light of the passage of generations. Embracing the elderly helps us to understand that life is more than just the present moment, and should not be wasted in superficial encounters and fleeting relationships. Instead, life is constantly pointing us toward the future. In the book of *Genesis*, we find the moving episode of the blessing given by the aged Jacob to his grandchildren, the sons of Joseph; his words are an appeal to look to the future with hope, as the time when God's promises will be fulfilled (cf. Gen 48:8-20). If it is true that the weakness of the elderly needs the strength of the young, it is equally true that the inexperience of the young needs the witness of the elderly in order to build the future with



wisdom. How often our grandparents have been for us examples of faith and devotion, civic virtue and social commitment, memory and perseverance amid trials! The precious legacy that they have handed down to us with hope and love will always be a source of gratitude and a summons to perseverance.

Signs of hope for the elderly

From biblical times, the Jubilee has been understood as a time of liberation. Slaves were freed, debts were forgiven and land was returned to its original owners. The Jubilee was a time when the social order willed by God was restored, and inequalities and injustices accumulated over the years were remedied. Jesus evoked those moments of liberation when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he proclaimed good news to the poor, sight to the blind and freedom for prisoners and the oppressed (cf. Lk 4:16-21).

Looking at the elderly in the spirit of this Jubilee, we are called to help them experience liberation, especially from loneliness and abandonment. This year is a fitting time to do so. God's fidelity to his promises teaches us that there is a blessedness in old age, an authentic evangelical joy inspiring us to break through the barriers of indifference in which the elderly often find themselves enclosed. Our societies, everywhere in the world, are growing all too accustomed to letting this significant and enriching part of their life be marginalized and forgotten.

Given this situation, a change of pace is needed that would be readily seen in an assumption of responsibility on the part of the whole Church. Every parish, association and ecclesial group is called to become a protagonist in a "revolution" of gratitude and care, to be brought about by regular visits to the elderly, the creation of networks of support and prayer for them and with them, and the forging of relationships that can restore hope and dignity to those who feel forgotten. Christian hope always urges us to be more daring, to think big, to be dissatisfied with things the way they are. In this case, it urges us to work for a change that can restore the esteem and affection to which the elderly are entitled

That is why Pope Francis wanted the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to be celebrated primarily through an effort to seek out elderly persons who are living alone. For this reason, those who are unable to come to Rome on pilgrimage during this Holy Year may "obtain the Jubilee Indulgence if they visit, for an appropriate amount of time, the elderly who are alone... making, in a sense, a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. Mt 25:34-36)" (APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, Norms for the Granting of the Jubilee Indulgence, III). Visiting an elderly person is a way of encountering Jesus, who frees us from indifference and loneliness.

As elderly persons, we can hope

The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, "our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope" (Angelus, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.

Our affection for our loved ones – for the wife or husband with whom we have spent so much of our lives, for our children, for our grandchildren who brighten our days – does not fade when our strength wanes. Indeed, their own affection often revives our energy and brings us hope and comfort.

These signs of living love, which have their roots in God himself, give us courage and remind us that "even if our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). Especially as we grow older, let us press forward with confidence in the Lord. May we be renewed each day by our encounter with him in prayer and in Holy Mass. Let us lovingly pass on the faith we have lived for so many years, in our families and in our daily encounter with others. May we always praise God for his goodness, cultivate unity with our loved ones, open our hearts to those who are far away and, in particular, to all those in need. In this way, we will be signs of hope, whatever our age.

From the Vatican, 26 June 2025

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Faith Formation for Children

When my grandson was a babe, I learned about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. I knew that I wanted him to be part of this rich child-focused Catholic formation program. The atrium is a unique and reverent space, full of experiences to delight and inspire the little ones. I am grateful for the love for our faith that is modeled by the outstanding catechists.

Patty A





Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a genius program that makes the Catholic Faith accessible to children. My three children have grown in their love of Jesus and understanding of the Mass to an astounding degree. My own understanding and relationship with Christ has deepened throughout my time assisting in the atrium and I am so grateful for this program!

Ksenia G

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a peaceful respectful and creative faith formation program. The children who join us in the atrium have the wonderful opportunity to learn about Jesus and become closer with God.
As a student volunteer, I think it is wonderful to work with the kids in the atrium. I can tell that the children love the materials and prayerful community. We hope more families join us!

Hadleigh J







Phoebe and Colleen get up on Saturday mornings with such enthusiasms for CGS. It has been a true gift.

Thank you for your ministry!

Josh C

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an opportunity for children to fall in love with Jesus and the Good Shepherd through guided presentations and meditation on scripture.
It is an opportunity for each child to experience their own journey to faith.

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Faith Formation for Children



Thank you very much for allowing me to visit your atrium and for walking me through the program. It is an awesome and amazing program. I was enthralled.

Sr. Dorothy Nzekwe
Diocese Volunteer Screening Coordinator

Ruth Ann, I want you to know that Saturday morning classes are resonating in his heart and soul. He says really precious things about Jesus and Mary...so a big thank you! I know the hard work and dedication that goes into this beautiful vocation you have taken on.

Ingrid M





As a student volunteer, I think it is wonderful to work with the kids in the atrium. I can tell that the children love the materials and prayerful community. We hope more families join us!"

Hadleigh J

Xavier holding food for the Food Bank and Lenten Hearts for prayer, during our Tridium Sacristy Tour.

He is standing in front of the book case, as he loves the Lectionaries and the Roman Missal.



The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is beginning its 4th year serving children from all across the diocese. High school students have paired with CGS to complete their 40 volunteer hours to graduate.
This year, CGS leaders will make monthly school visits, presenting liturgical and biblical-themed materials, as well as collaborate with schools to offer sacramental formation in the atrium environment.

Refugee Sponsorship

Fall Gathering Celebrates Community, Culture, and Compassion

On Saturday, October 18, the St. Alphonsus Catholic Parish Hall in Peterborough came alive with laughter, and the rich aromas of shared dishes as the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough hosted its a Fall Gathering. Organized by the Refugee Sponsorship Committee and supported by the Youth Leadership of St. Alphonsus, the event welcomed recently arrived New Canadians and their sponsors in a celebration of unity and cultural pride.

The large crowd of attendees was a testament to the spirit of togetherness. People enjoyed potluck traditions, coffee and cookies (courtesy of the Catholic Women's League) and the chance to win door prizes, connecting across cultures and generations- all while the children enjoyed entertaining games lead by Monica and her helpers.

A Community Built on Faith and Action

The Diocese took this opportunity to express its deepest gratitude to the organizers, volunteers, and attendees who make the Refugee Sponsorship Program such a success. In heartfelt remarks shared during the event, the Diocese emphasized the importance of the Sponsorship Agreement as a reflection of faith in action. “All of you here are a testament to the program and our communities,” the message read, underscoring the vital role each person plays in building a welcoming and inclusive society.

Through its Sponsorship Agreement Holder Agreement with the Canadian Government, the Diocese has facilitated the sponsorship of 202 individuals since 2018—and hundreds more since the program’s inception in 1998. These numbers reflect not only the scale of the initiative, but the enduring commitment of the Diocese and its partners to providing refuge, hope, and opportunity.

Background: The Roots of Refugee Sponsorship in Peterborough

The origins of the Diocese’s involvement in refugee sponsorship trace back to 1995, when Casa Maria Refugee Homes—sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph—opened their doors to welcome refugees arriving in Canada through the Inland Refugee process. These families, once settled, expressed a heartfelt desire to reunite with loved ones still living in perilous conditions abroad. In response, the Sisters applied to partner with the Federal Government’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, laying the groundwork for what would become a long-standing and deeply impactful initiative.

Beginning in 2015–16, when the first wave of Syrian refugees arrived, the Diocese—with the blessing of the Bishop—mobilized its refugee volunteers to work in partnership with 17 parishes and 42 community-based support groups. Together, they sponsored over 80 families, representing approximately 240 individuals. This coordinated effort marked a significant expansion of the program and demonstrated the power of faith-driven collaboration in responding to global humanitarian needs.

Honoring Champions of the Program

Special recognition was given to the Sisters of Mount St. Joesph, whose decades of leadership laid the foundation for the program’s enduring success. Sister Ruth, remembered as a fearless and compassionate guide, and Sister Joan Driscoll, whose instrumental contributions helped shape the program’s direction and impact, were both honoured for their unwavering dedication. Their continued support, both financially and through the Advisory Committee, remains a cornerstone of the initiative.

The Diocese also acknowledged long-time supporters Aspa and Maggie for their invaluable consulting roles, and Jack Gillan for his transformative leadership. Under Jack’s stewardship, the program has grown in scope and impact, benefiting from his organizational expertise and deep commitment to community service.

Aspa, a long-time volunteer, shared a sentiment that resonated with many:

“It is the best feeling for everyone involved in this work to see newcomers with refugee backgrounds finding hope and starting new lives in welcoming environments prepared by the sponsors, with support coming from the New Canadian Centre, local schools, and the community at large.”

Sister Anne of St. Joseph’s added her own reflection on the gathering:

“A joyful spirit among all, a re-connecting for some people and lots of energy.”

Long-time volunteers Nancy McLeod and Tracey McConnery were also celebrated for their steadfast dedication and hands-on involvement over the years. Their tireless efforts have helped sustain the program’s momentum and ensure that newcomers feel welcomed and supported from the moment they arrive.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee was praised for its essential role in vetting and supporting participants, a newer but vital addition that ensures the program’s integrity and sustainability.

A Shared Journey of Hope

As the gathering drew to a close, the message from the Diocese resonated deeply: “It truly takes a community to build and support the program.” The stories shared, the connections made, and the joy felt throughout the afternoon were powerful reminders of the transformative impact of compassion and collaboration.

To everyone who attended, contributed, and continues to support the Refugee Sponsorship Program—thank you. Your presence and participation are not only appreciated, but essential to the remarkable journey of welcoming and empowering new members of our community.

For more information about the Refugee Sponsorship Program, contact Jack at refugees@peterboroughdiocese.org

Year of the Sacred Heart
a Good Thing comes to a Good End

Trout Creek

PARISH



Surrounded by clegy and lay faithful from across the diocese, Bishop Miehm solemnly opened the Year of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at Sacred Heart Church in Peterborough on the 7th of June 2024, and brought it to a glorious conclusion at Sacred Heart Church in Trout Creek on the 27th of June 2025.















VOCATIONS

Fr. Stephen DeCarlo

A Priestly Ordination

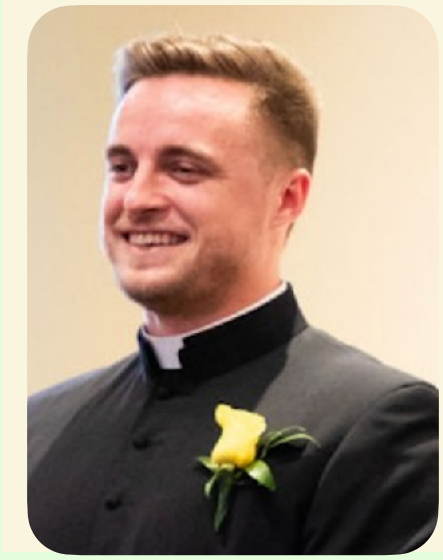
As priests, we witness the entire range of human experiences, either directly or, more frequently, indirectly through others. We see a lot of sad and ugly things: sin, death, division, discord, envy, pride, suffering, misery, greed, and so on. Often, as a priest I can be called to minister to people at their very worst. I face people's sufferings, doubts, fears, hurts, wounds and struggles. They look to me to be the face of Christ and to shine a light in their personal darkness.

All of this would be discouraging and make one despair were it not for the beautiful moments of life that we priests see as well. There are plenty of beautiful moments as priests: baptizing new babies; working with youth and young people; weddings; anniversaries; reunions; reconciliations and acts of thanksgiving. We celebrate the sacraments everyday, which is a beautiful moment of acting *in persona Christi*. We see people having faith despite the odds against them. We see wonderful families united in faith. We absolve even the worst sinners in the confessional, meaning that God's mercy and grace will always prevail.

One beautiful event I encountered recently was the priestly ordination of Fr. Peter Bissonnette. On May 30th, 2025, the Cathedral Church of St. Peter-in-Chains was standing room only as Fr. Peter was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Daniel Miehm. The church was filled with family, friends, priests from the diocese, seminary, and beyond, as well as former and future parishioners and faithful people praying for him. One priest commented that he had never seen an ordination this crowded before! The building shook with a standing ovation when Fr. Peter was formally called to the priesthood at the start of the ceremony.

Fr. Peter lay prostrate on the floor as a symbol of his self-offering to God while the choir sang the Litany of Saints, asking the saints to intercede for him. He rose and Bishop Miehm placed his hands on Fr. Peter's head, invoking the Holy Spirit to come down and ordain this man a priest. This was followed by the priests doing the same as a gesture of priestly fraternity. The bishop prayed the prayer of consecration over the kneeling Fr. Peter where, upon its conclusion, he arose a newly ordained priest. He was vested by his spiritual director, Fr. Kevin Belgrave, putting on the priestly vestments publicly for the first time. His hands were anointed with the Oil of Chrism, as his hands will be the instruments by which the sacraments, blessings, and divine grace will be dispensed. He was given the chalice and paten, the "tools" he will use to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, with the words reminding him to "Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to Him. Know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross." The rite concluded with the exchange of peace with the bishop and brother priests. Fr. Peter then concelebrated the ordination Mass alongside his bishop and brother priests.

After the Mass, he gave first blessings to the hundreds of people who came a great distance to see him. Receiving a first blessing from a newly ordained priest is a privileged moment in which a special grace is received. You could also have a chance to kiss the newly ordained's hands, as it is also a popular custom (though keep in mind his hands are sweaty due to the hectic nature of the event!) It was also a good chance to greet him personally, express your congratulations and give him a gift. (A "first blessing" is basically any blessing given by a newly ordained in his first year of priesthood.)



The day after saw Fr. Peter celebrate his first Mass of thanksgiving at St. Michael's Parish in Cobourg. It is a long-standing custom for a new priest to offer a special Mass in which he gives thanks to God for his priestly ordination and for all those who helped him along the way, both great and small. Not surprisingly, the church was packed with people as he wore his special Holy Family vestment to celebrate the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since it is also a custom for the first Mass to have a special guest preacher, Fr. Ronald Angervile of the Diocese of St. Catharines delivered a wonderful and meaningful homily encouraging Fr. Peter to place his trust in Our Lady, the Mother of Priests. The Mass was followed by a reception where Fr. Peter delivered more first blessings. The next day saw him travel to St. Joseph's Parish in. Bracebridge, where he offered Mass for the people he served while on internship as a seminarian.

The entire ordination weekend was quite beautiful for many reasons: the music, vestments, incense, reverence, and people who came out of faith and gratitude. It was also beautiful because it allowed me to reflect on my own priestly ordination over seven years ago and my journey thus far. Much like how married couples are renewed in their marriage by attending weddings, we priests get renewed in our priesthood by attending ordinations and first Masses.

But it was also beautiful because it was all about a young man giving his life for Christ! Fr. Peter gave an example to young people that you are never too young to follow Jesus and that He calls you at all stages in life. It serves to show how young people are called to be not only the leaders of the future but also the leaders we need for today. The Prophet Jeremiah reflects on this theme beautifully:

> ***Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak,***
> ***for I am only a boy."***
> ***But the Lord said to me,***
> ***"Do not say, 'I am only a boy,'***
> ***for you shall go to all to whom I send you,***
> ***and you shall speak whatever I command you.***
> ***Do not be afraid of them,***
> ***for I am with you to deliver you,***
> ***says the Lord."*** (Jeremiah 1:6-8)

Thus, I encourage young people to reflect on where God is calling them. You are never too young to serve Christ! You are never too young to consider the priesthood and religious life. In fact, the best time to consider these vocations is in your youth, when you have all the necessary enthusiasm and joy that these vocations will require. Everyone's path is different, but I have never heard anyone regret discerning their vocations, regardless of whether they make it to ordination/final vows or not. Plus, discern while you have the time now! It may feel like you have all the time in the world, but the reality is you do not. Time will move on and at some point, you will notice that it has passed on. I know people who have let time pass them by and regretted not making use of opportunities they had when they were younger, graces which are no longer possible for them. But right now, you have a lot of time, so use it wisely. Consider Christ's call to the priesthood and religious life and embark on a journey that will strengthen and refresh you!



Jubilarian Celebration of Priestly Anniversaries

Every year, the priests in the Diocese of Peterborough spend five days in spiritual retreat at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga. This year saw Bishop Gerald Bergie (Saint Catharines Diocese) speak about priestly peace and how to find and maintain it. An annual tradition sees the priests holding a priesthood appreciation night where we dress up in our formal clerical wear and honour various jubilarians celebrating major anniversaries. This year saw a total of eight jubilarians being honoured. Six were celebrating 25-years: Fr. Joseph Devereaux, Fr. Max Delamour, Fr. John Rathinaswamy, Fr. Paul Massel, Fr. Collins Okafor, and Fr. Emmanuel Mbam. Fr. Luis Lapinid was honoured for 50 years of priesthood and Fr. Joe Moran for 55. The evening concluded with a group photo of us in our priestly best!

It was a wonderful evening to celebrate priestly service, as our jubilarians were faithful to their priestly vocation and testified to the priesthood being an amazing vocation that is worth undertaking. The jubilarians mentioned how if they could do life over again, they would still chose the priesthood. For me as, a more junior priest, this is inspiring and encouraging to hear! The jubilarians said that despite the trials and challenges of their vocation, the blessings far outweigh the tough stuff. They also mentioned the various joys of living out the priesthood.

For those more recently ordained, these celebrations reinforce one's commitment to the vocation to priesthood. I heard many senior priests speak about the joys of their vocation and this confirms one's own vocation. Such jubilees are wonderful also for lay people, as to hear that their priests enjoy being priests is edifying for them in their own state of life and faith journey. It reminds us all that despite the trials and difficulties of life, it's always worth it to bear with it because Christ walks with us. Every vocation lived out in full is an encounter with Christ.

To all our jubilarians, *ad multos annos*!

Costello Classic

In April of 2025, young men form the Peterborough area played a game of hockey with seminarians from St. Augustine's Seminary called the Costello Classic. The Classic brings together seminarians from St. Augustine's Seminary, priests, and young men and dads to enjoy a friendly game of hockey. This year it was held at the Kinsmen Arena in Peterborough. It was sponsored by Mr. Frank Doyle of Doyle Tree Services and we were joined by Mr. Pat Costello, nephew of Fr. Les Costello, the namesake of our hockey tournament the Costello Classic. Fr. Les Costello was a former Toronto Maple Leaf who later became a Catholic priest and started up the Flying Fathers hockey team composed of Catholic priests. The goal is to have fun, fellowship, and maybe win the Costello Trophy!

The Flying Fathers hockey team composed of priests who play hockey, who went on to play various games across Canada in support of various charities. The Costello Classic revived the spirit of Fr. Les and brought together young men and priests and seminarians in a friendly game of hockey followed by a time of social in which they had a chance to interact further and create lasting memories. While the seminarians won the game, everyone had a great time! Hopefully one or more of these young men will consider the priesthood!

Awakening Vocations Conference 2025

Early this Fall 2025, I attended the Awakening Vocations conference for Canadian diocesan vocations directors. Being held in Cochrane, Alberta, within the Diocese of Calgary, I joined over 20 other directors of vocations from across the country as we met for an annual conference aimed at assisting us in our work. It was a wonderful and inspiring experience to meet vocations directors from across the country and learn more about promoting vocations and accompanying seminarians. We had speakers such as Sister Gemma Labestre, MST, speaking about psychological evaluations and how to use them effectively; Fr. David Belushi, O.P., speaking about addictions and young adult ministry; Mrs. Rhonda Grunenwald speaking about parish-based vocations promotion and working with laity in promoting vocations. There was, of course, time for small groups and sharing ideas. We were also joined by Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Toronto, who provided spiritual guidance throughout the week.

Naturally, we had a group excursion to Canmore, where we hiked alongside the famous Rocky Mountains and visited Our Lady of the Rockies Shrine. This is truly an amazing and beautiful country!



Happy Priests!

One unspoken assumption I sometimes come across is when people presume that priests are unhappy. Often, people look at the fact that priests are paid low salaries, that they don't have a family, that they're always busy and don't have free time for anything, or have to be poor, chaste, and obedient (things the world sees as undesirable). This on top of being misunderstood, undervalued, and taken for granted, would make priests feel unhappy in their vocation. Of course, the majority of people do not subscribe to this view, but a certain number do.

The good news is that the vast majority of priests are very happy in their vocations! Several recent surveys of priests in different countries such as the United States, Australia, and France, show that most priests are flourishing and happy to be priests! They show that despite the difficulties and challenges that ordained ministry brings (and the surveys do not hide that fact), priests are still happy to be priests and won't change it for the world. They show that they are very fulfilled by their celibacy and use this as a way to love their people and their ministry on a deeper level. Obedience allows them to see the will of God in their lives, and for those religious priests who have taken a vow of poverty (diocesan priests do not take such a vow but are required to live simply), they understand this as being less attached to the world and more attached to the things of God. Across the board, priests are flourishing and very much on spiritual fire in their priestly ministry.

While no recent study has been done in Canada, it is my empirical observation that Canadian priests' happiness would be very similar to those surveys. Most of the priests I know are happy, joyful men and are energized by their priestly vocation. Despite some long days, occasional difficult situations, and many heavy burdens, they are men of deep faith and intense joy. All the retired priests that I have met have spoken of how much they valued their priestly ministry and continue to serve in various ways despite being retired. In other words, not a single retired priest has ever regretted being a priest!

To me, this is proof that the priestly ministry is certainly worth it. Please pray for our priests, for more vocations to the priesthood, and for the people they lovingly and happily serve! ✠

https://www.catholic.edu/all-stories/priests-flourishing-trust-bishops-improving-slightly

https://melbournecatholic.org/news/catholic-clergy-have-strong-sense-of-wellbeing

https://www.osvnews.com/happy-as-a-priest-in-france-survey-shows-increased-satisfaction-fulfillment-/among-clergy/

World Youth Day 2027

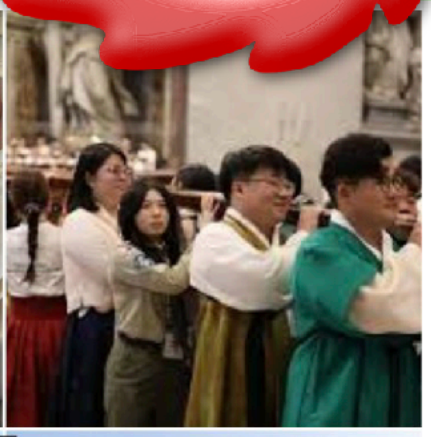
SAVE THE DATE

We are once again looking into heading over to World Youth Day, this time happening on August 3rd-8th, 2027! We are planning on sending a delegation from our diocese over to South Korea on a pilgrimage of a lifetime. Further details will be made public once available, but it's a good idea to start thinking about it.

Anyone interested should contact Fr. Stephen at **FrStephenDecarlo@peterboroughdiocese.org** or at **705-745-5123**







Diocese of Peterborough World Youth Day Pilgrimage
August 3rd-8th, 2027
Seoul, South Korea
Save the Date
More details to follow



WYD SEOUL 2027

Take courage!
I have overcome the world.
(Jn 16:33)



Canonization

St. Carlo Acutis and St. Pier Giorgio Frassatti

Fr. Stephen DeCarlo

On September 7th, 2025, Pope Leo XIV canonized two young saints, Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassatti. Both had passed into eternal life before their 25th birthdays, and both lived in the 20th Century; Frassatti passed in 1925 and Acutis in 2006.

Frassatti was known as a social activist but one who did so based on his faith. Faith, to him, was not something we do on Sundays and live detached lives on the other days of the week. No, everything we do should reflect our faith and our faith should motivate us to do good in this world. His motto was "verso l'ato", which means "to the heights", emphasizing how we are always called to be greater, not as the world views it but as God views it.

Acutis is also known as a millennial saint, having been born in 1991. Carlo Acutis is thus a great example in the modern age of young people being role models of our faith. He is the first millennial saint (which is special for me, being a millennial myself!) and yet he serves as an example of young holiness for future young people. To me, he's special because he and I were contemporaries; we lived around the same time with only an ocean apart. We enjoyed much of the same activities despite never having met each other. Still, I feel so close to St. Carlo Acutis and he serves as an inspiration for me and those to whom I minister. He is, for us all, an example of faith and hope. Any one of the youth in our sacramental programs, schools, families, parishes, can be the next Carlo Acutis. Our efforts are never in vain. Whenever we are tempted to think that, let us be reminded that the next Carlo Acutis, himself born into a lukewarm Catholic family, might very well be in the group in front of us.

Even though the canonization happened in Rome, the Diocese of Peterborough held a celebration locally to mark this momentous occasion in the life of the Church. At the vigil Mass, on the eve of the canonizations of Carlo Actus and Pier Giorgio Frassati, we held a special Mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains in honour of the two young saints. The Mass concluded with a blessing from a relic of Acutis. A long line of people showed up for the blessing and we also held a reception that was well attended. A short presentation by the Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) team was given and we concluded the evening with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. A fitting conclusion, given how St. Carlo Acutis was a big promoter of the Eucharist.

St. Carlo Acutis and St. Pier Giorgio Frassati, pray for us!



Peter Robinson Settlement 200 Years

Fr. Keith Wallace

The year 2025 is an important one for the Peterborough Diocese and the Kawarthas for it marks the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Peter Robinson Emigrants. Various communities and parishes celebrated this milestone: Ennismore, Douro, Downeyville, Asphodel-Norwood, Otonobee and Young's Point.

1825 was a time of poverty, injustice and oppression. Although not as marked as the 1840s Famine Starvation, the Irish peoples were suffering greatly. Therefore, when they were offered transport to Canada, and lands to settle, over 50,000 applied. Two thousand and twenty-four were accepted, including many well known Peterborough area families. One such family was Francis Young, founder of Young's Point.

Recently widowed and now caring for nine children aged 8 to 24, Francis Young was blessed to be one of the 2,024. The nine ships left Cobh Ireland in May 1825 and sailed the dangerous Atlantic waters to Quebec City, Montreal and eventually to Cobourg where they travelled by foot to Rice Lake and on to Scott's Plains (Peterborough). From Scott's Plains, the Irish were sent to the various lands.

While many would engage in farming and other businesses, the pioneers that followed the Young Family would be unique in that their new village would center upon the waters. Thus the motto of Young's Point this year: "200 Years On The Water." Located between two lakes, logging hotels, stores and schools would be built. In 1867 the little white church at Young's Point was built by the many pioneers. A set of locks and mills would arise, the first built by the hands of Francis Young and sons.

Unique also to the growth of Young's Point would be the steamboat lines. Cottagers took the train from Rochester or Toronto to Lakefield. Here they could transfer to the steamboats that would take them to their cottages and various resorts.

The seeds of the Irish.

2025 commemorated these persons of faith and hope. Particularly at Young's Point, Bishop Miehm celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving and the events of the August 3 day included a canoe flotilla, Irish music, First Nations music and presentations, guest speakers and historical displays. It was a remarkable day led by many, many volunteers and donors.

History is important for it reminds us of the hardships of those who have gone on before us and the ardent faith that overcame many hardships. These are great lessons for all of us, and especially for our youth. Lessons of Hope.

Congratulations:

- Nine Ships;
- Peterborough Diocese;
- Various Communities;
- and Young's Point 200 years on the water.



Celebrations of the Jubilee











Campbellford Makes 51 km Pilgrimage OVERNIGHT

"Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!" is one of the powerful suggested forms of dismissal at the end of a Eucharist. This had an extra special meaning for a small but determined group on Friday, May 30, 2025. During our Jubilee Year of Hope, we have been encouraged to make a pilgrimage to the four churches designated in our Diocese of Peterborough, to receive a plenary indulgence. In turn, the hope is to return home where our pilgrimage began and be brighter lights in glorifying the Lord.

Parishioners of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Campbellford, made a commitment to take part in an **overnight pilgrimage** following the Ordination of Fr. Peter Bissonette at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains, arriving in time to celebrate their Parish Feast Day on May 31st. Coincidence???? I think not!! Rather a GODcidence!!!! The pilgrimage was divided into ten, 5km legs. Each leg had 2-4 participants. One group even accepted a last minute, challenge to complete **two consecutive legs!**

As the night progressed the excitement grew as each group neared the hand-off point and met the next group in this "overnight pilgrimage relay".

Approximately 30 individuals took part. Most were able to reassemble in Campbellford's No Frills parking lot at 10:00 am and walk the last half kilometer to the church for the Parish Feast Day Eucharist followed by a delicious breakfast. ✠

Statistics Summary - 12 hours, 50.8 km, 10 – 5 km legs – 30 pilgrims (2-4 per leg)
Graces received and witness given – INNUMERABLE!!!!!
Possibly the seed of a new tradition for our parish has been planted!!!!!

Jubilee Mass in Kearney





16 July 2025



Why I am Pro-Life

Lisa Cossar

Have you ever been asked if you are pro-life? Possibly you have not been asked and maybe not given it much thought. I have always been pro-life; please allow me to share some of my reasons.

As Christians and followers of Christ we follow in his footsteps, reading God's word and learning from Christ's teachings. Psalm 139:13-16 praises God for our conception and the first 9 months of our being. It reads,

> *"For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book, they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."*

As humans we have no control or say in our conception and birth into this world. Think of all the ancestors that came before each of us in order for us to be here. In the Bible, Matthew, Chapter 1 lists 42 generations in Jesus' lineage and Luke, chapter 3 lists 77 generations. Thankfully our own ancestors were pro-life or we wouldn't be here reading this article.

Thankfully, Mother Mary said yes to life! From a human perspective, our Lord's conception and birth were unplanned! But Mary said yes, "*Behold: I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to Thy Word."* (Luke 1: 37-38). Even planned pregnancies require sacrifice in their parents' lives. While there is joy in the promise of a new life there are also physical, emotional, and financial struggles along the way. Unplanned pregnancies have all those struggles too, but added hardships of being judged, ostracized by family or society, (something Mother Mary definitely would have faced), and sometimes the trial of a mother having to face the pregnancy alone without a devoted husband.

However, even facing hardship, fear and an unknown future, with the right support a woman can carry her baby to full-term and deliver her child. It takes caring church communities, caring friends who offer positive tangible support, local pregnancy care centres that offer medical support and programs (local or government sponsored) that offer financial support.

> **"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to put on faith, hope and love as we go out into the world and become the word in body as well as spirit."**
> **— Pope Francis**

Mother Mary travelled with haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth who also was experiencing an unplanned pregnancy in her old age. The two women supported each other and shared their experiences. We know how positive Elizabeth's greeting to Mary in Luke 1:43-44 was**, "***But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."* If only every woman was praised this way when she shares she is unexpectedly pregnant.

The Pro-Life movement not only defends the right of the unborn to life, it also offers support for women in their time of need. John Cardinal O'Connor said it best:

> *"That is what the pro-life movement is about. We are not simply anti-abortion as we are so often painted to be. We are pro-life, pro the mystery of life, pro the wonder of life, pro the joy of life. And we are impelled to share this message with everyone. We need to bring the Gospel of Life to the heart of every man and women and to make it penetrate every part of society."*

People in the world who are pro-choice believe that it is the woman's choice whether or not to have this child. Many women however, feel trapped and do not see any other choice but abortion. When they are not presented with **all** the choices available to them, choices such as carrying the child to full-term, to raise it together with the father or a partner, to raise it as a single parent or to offer the baby for adoption, they cannot choose well.

Medical professionals rarely mention the emotional (and often physical) scarring that abortion causes. And if the pregnancy occurred due to abuse or rape, how does abortion fix those conditions that led to the pregnancy? A website dedicated to people who have survived abortions called *Faces of Choice.org* states, *"Abortion breaks us. It never fixes our lives; it only takes us down a path of self-destruction. Only Christ can put us back together again, so we are set free."*

Many women share their regret over having abortions and the organizers of the movement *Silent No More* are dedicated to listening to their stories and amongst their services, offering retreats for healing.

Personally, I am so thankful my birth mother gave me up for adoption in 1965. I wish I knew her story and her sacrifice. I have shared my gratitude with a first cousin from my birth family, but



unfortunately both my birth parents died without knowing how grateful I was. My own three children and 8 grandchildren would not be here if my birth mother had chosen abortion!

Not being able to have children of their own, my husband's sister and brother-in-law were foster parents when they were asked to foster a newborn. They said most people have nine months to prepare for a baby and we had nine days! What a blessing this little girl was, and after two years, they were able to adopt her. How amazing that they themselves are now grandparents of two sweet little boys. None of this would have been possible if her mother had chosen an abortion.

So, if you are ever asked if you are pro-life, say yes! It only takes one step in the right direction to choose life. "*I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children will live and you may love the Lord your God. Listen to his voice and hold fast to him.*" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

If you are interested in learning more about what resources are available, please see the following list.

- Peterborough Pro-Life Association, https://peterboroughprolife.ca/peterborough-prolife/ Prayer vigil every first and third Saturday along Medical Drive, Peterborough 10 am – 11 am.
- Peterborough Pregnancy Support Services https://www.mypregnancycentre.org/ offers many services to women and families in crisis pregnancy situations.
- Donna's House (Peterborough) https://www.donnashouseptbo.com/ offers inclusive support to pregnant youth and parenting women in the community.
- Sisters of Life (Toronto) https://sistersoflife.org/ offer a variety of supports for women in crisis pregnancy situations.
- Kawartha Haliburton Children's Aid Society https://www.khcas.on.ca/our-services/foster/ learn how to become a foster parent
- Silent No More https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/ allows people affected by abortion to share their stories and offers healing.
- Faces of Choice https://facesofchoice.org/ emphasizes the themes of hope, love, forgiveness, and reconciliation to survivors of abortion.
- 40 Days for Life, March for Life and Life Chain are events promoting awareness of the sanctity of life https://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/40-days-for-life https://www.campaignlifecoalition.com/life-chain https://marchforlife.ca/
- Shocking that Canada does not have an abortion law and abortions are legal up to 9 months pregnancy https://weneedalaw.ca/
- Above all, pray daily to protect life at all stages from conception to natural death.

"If we judge people, we have no time to love them." Mother Teresa

PARISH

St. Alphonsus

FUNKY FASHION SHOW & TEA!



On Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, the Catholic Women's League of St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish, Peterborough, hosted a Funky Fashion Show and Tea.

A committee of 20 CWL members gathered in January to begin the planning and creating of each fashion extravaganza, organizing the traditional afternoon tea and begin to gather door prizes. The event was to be a fundraiser for the Peterborough Regional Health Centre's Re-Imagine Campaign and to provide an afternoon of community, tea-time and laughter for our guests.

One hundred ladies, young and old, attended the Fashion Show and Tea. They were treated to linen covered tables, pretty china tea cups and saucers, chocolate treats, fancy sandwiches and treats on tiered trays, many door prizes and laughter, plenty of laughter! A good time was had by all.

On Wednesday, May 14th, at our monthly meeting, we proudly presented a cheque for $1,000 to Ashley Marcoux of the PRHC Foundation. ✠



God is Good: Rebuilding Youth Ministry

PARISH

Before Covid, the parish of St. Alphonsus Liguori had a thriving Youth Ministry. But since the pandemic, it has taken a long-suffering 4+ years to fully recover. Which makes sense, considering all it demands of time, financial resources, volunteer commitment, food provision, and content creation. Not to mention start up costs… again. It's going to take a good deal of effort to get off the ground, but its's an effort we MUST be ready to initiate.

On the weekend of July 19th and 20th Monica Lavoie, the new Youth Minister, made a parish appeal to the congregation. In her plea she expressed her desire to redecorate the basement, the pre-covid youth room. This space was very outdated; basically, it had turned into a large storage room. It needed a deep breath of new life for this new generation of young people.

Monica painted a picture to the congregation of a space where youth can hang out, somewhere they can relax, be comfortable, and have fun in an inviting environment… a place they can call a home. So, she made a call to action. Monica asked the congregation to support her vision by donating couches, wood flooring for a stage and a cross, monetary donations for the projector and screen, cutlery and table ware, paint, and other décor items.



Monica also came up with an ambitious meal plan to feed these hungry kids. She asked the congregation to provide full meals for the kids 4 times a month, or every other week. Encouraging families to sign up, and potentially pair up so the responsibility of providing a full meal isn't so much of a burden, but more a delight.

Let us sing praise to God for He is so, so Good! After the Saturday night mass, by the time Monica returned home at 6pm, she received an email from an anonymous parishioner wishing to pay for the projector, screen, sound system and installation in full! God is good! She called Father Simmy right away with tears of joy! The following morning, Monica gave her appeal again to the 9 am and 11 am masses, giving them the good news as well. Since the projector and screen was essentially paid for, she asked for the next big item, a laptop… God is good! By the end of the 11 am mass, that too was vouched for to be purchased in full, and 10 people/families had signed up to provide meals (however, more are still needed), and many others provided financial aid to buy supplies, decor and food. In addition, by Monday night, 2 large couches were donated, a circular kitchen table, 4 saddle seat stools, and many emails have been received from people volunteering to provide physical help with set up, painting, organization, cleaning, and brainstorming ideas and content for the ministry. The room is well on its way to being finished, and the support has been literally overwhelming!

Having a space for the kids to hang out is important but it isn't the reason for them to gather. Starting in September, Catalyst, the ministry for high school students will meet on Tuesdays, running from 6-9pm, beginning Tuesday, September 16th. Club 316, the ministry for middle schoolers, grade 6-8, will run on Fridays from 6-9 PM, starting on Friday, September 19th. This fall we will be exploring 'The Search Begins', a video message series from the Saint Augustine's Institute. Adapted from the adult version 'The Search', these 7 videos are designed to engage youth in meaningful discussion, and enkindle a curiosity for answers to life's big questions: Who am I, Who is God, Why am I here, What meaning does my life have?

Sounds great right? Interested? Curious? Good. Come join us! Tell your children or grandkids, your nieces and nephews, tell your parents about us, your siblings, your neighbour, and invite them and your friends! Our location is the basement of the St Alphonsus office at 1066 Western Ave, Peterborough. Come in through the office door and head down the stairs. Have questions? Please contact Monica Lavoie, Youth Minister at monica@stalphonsus.net, or by phone at 705-745-8623 ext 204.

At Catalyst and Club 316, we will have fun with games, share a meal, make new friends, and invite teens to dive into the deepest questions of the human heart, together.

Love God. Love others. Make disciples.

PARISH

Millbrooke

A Vibrant Faith Community

St. Thomas More



For the past six years I have been commuting daily from my home in Millbrook to Durham Region where I, as a Catholic educator, have the good fortune of teaching religious education to high school students. When I moved to this quiet rural area, I was blessed to find a parish such as St. Thomas More, where I could come to nourish my Catholic faith. Little did I know then how strong Christ's light would shine from this tiny church. Though a small faith community in numbers, the spiritual strength drawn radiates immeasurably.

Our small parish, St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, originated in 1966 with Bishop Webster who established a mission church in Millbrook and has evolved over the years as has the number of parishioners over the decades. Originally Mass was formerly celebrated at the local Legion Hall, then at the United Church and then moved by way of a rental agreement in 1978 to Grace Presbyterian Church. The rental agreement ended in 1998 when St. Thomas More Parish purchased the building.

This quaint church nestled in the woods is perched on a lovely piece of land, flanked by mature trees on two sides with a ramp making it accessible to all. The interior is replete with sacred statues and dons original hardwood floors and pews which appeal to our sense of tradition. However, what is more stunning are the parishioners: the small but strong faith community of vibrant, energetic volunteers, many well into their seventies who work tireless hours, and who are the heartbeat of the church community. They have continued this under the spiritual leadership of our former parish priest, Father Tony Barol, who lifted our spirits with his gift of music and song to inspire and welcome all with his warm, genuine embrace. No doubt that they will continue under Father Francis Mensah, who joins us this summer.

A church is only as strong as its followers - its community members who support one another in love and service of Christ. St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church is a finely woven tapestry of rich talent and unending compassion, corporal works and spiritual works of mercy regularly performed by the vibrant and active living out of their faith. They serve with unrelenting energy whether through leadership roles in supporting Masses, sharing musical talents, fundraising events to help local charities such as Community Care and the Millbrook Food Bank, Breakfast Programs for local Elementary schools, donations to Catholic Charities such as Canadian Food for Children and Chalice Canada, or providing for the church's day to day functions, and strengthening the parish presence through summer picnics or Christmas Bazaar and potlucks, or maintaining beautifully the manicured Church grounds.

Our call to discipleship resounds firmly at St. Thomas More. Over the years, this tiny parish has grown with faith-filled parishioners who come together to serve and support one another placing others above self. We may not all be 'big S Saints', but clearly these 'miracle workers' heard and responded to their call to discipleship living like saints. As Saint Mother Teresa reiterated, "There are no great things, only small things with great love. But those small things done with great love become the source of great joy." No truer words are spoken and lived out as they are at our parish.

Our parish volunteers and parishioners are active faith-filled members who live out God's Word through their actions. Whether planning and organizing social gatherings creating opportunities for fellowship or fostering a sense of community within the parish that reverberates within our local community. Working tireless hours by making themselves continuously available even as they age, they continue to keep Catholic faith present and visible within our parish. With a willing spirit and loving heart, they have responded to the call of discipleship by keeping the flame of the Holy Spirit burning brightly through shared responsibilities in the maintenance and of the church and rectory and their dedication to supporting our town community.

This is a message of appreciation and gratitude to the volunteers – core and extended – and all parishioners. It is an invitation for all to become actively engaged in responding to Christ's call of discipleship.

We continue to see it grow. As the Millbrook housing development continues, making it an urban county while retaining its small-town charm, we invite you to join us to live out your faith, to praise and worship God, to love and serve, and to enjoy fellowship.

Whether in Millbrook (St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church) or Nestleton (St. Bernadette Mission, our sister parish which is the only active mission church serving in North Nestleton), we invite you to join us for weekly service, spiritual nourishment and fellowship where all are welcome to join our vibrant Catholic church community.— Isabella Fabiilli





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Augustine Institute

A Pilgrim's Journey

Andrew Roelands

Waking up on August 10th, 2025, at 6:00 am, I felt the familiar excitement and slightly nervous feeling I usually get before starting off on an adventure. This was no unfamiliar adventure for me, though there are always unique challenges (like +30°C, pouring rain, or five flat tailer tires). This adventure was my seventh time on the '*In the Footsteps of the Canadian Martyrs Walking Pilgrimage,'* more informally known as "The Walking Pilgrimage."

We are off on an adventure!

As I got up and packed my truck to travel to St. Joseph's Church in Powassan, my feelings of excitement mixed with wonder at why I was again dragging my body to walk 130 kilometers over the course of the next five days. But by the time I reached the 10-kilometer mark on Day 1, I was feeling what I knew all along to be true about why I was walking and co-leading this pilgrimage. This pilgrimage is clothed in our rich Catholic tradition, started by Fr. Eric Mason, and has always bore good fruit. I directed my feelings in the first few hours of the pilgrimage to follow this truth. It was not difficult as I saw about seventy young people, familiar and new, gather to follow the example of St. Jean de Brebeuf in doing something challenging for the love of God and the love those walking with us.

The tradition of walking pilgrimages throughout Europe precedes us, from obscure pilgrimages to local shrines to the famous Camino and Chartres pilgrimages. Additionally, St. Jean de Brebeuf and his companions made the 1200-plus kilometer journey by canoe from Quebec to Huronia several times. This was before our minds all week as we walked along their route and heard stories of their mission to evangelize the Hurons. The Martyrs courageously faced their journey through a wild land to bring the saving grace of Jesus to those who had never heard the Gospel before. While walking along, this example made the tired muscles and sore feet easy to forget. There was more than a little laughter at the story of the stinky, unwashed bodies the Martyrs had to endure, among more deadly trials.

Why would a young person want to embark on this journey, walking 130km in the



Setting out from Powassan



Mass on Monday Evening



Listening to the Martyrs



Adoration on Wednesday



Almost there



The Last 5 Km



After the closing Mass

Andrew Roelands is a Seminarian of the Diocese of Peterborough and currently resides at St. Alphonsus Ligouri Parish, Peterborough while doing his internship year.

heat, bugs, and without our usual comforts? If a bar is set high, it usually shows importance, and most young people will jump up to reach for it. When a bar is set low, it can foster indifference, and the bar will be crawled under. On a natural level, we enjoy the reward of completing a challenge, especially with friends or while making new friends. On a more important, supernatural level, in a world that is so fragmented, distracted, and direction-less, young people are searching for order, meaning, beauty, and tradition – ultimately God.

The pilgrimage is a spiritual retreat from our comforts, technology, and daily routine. It is a time to grow closer to God. This happens daily through praying fifteen mysteries of the rosary and the Traditional Latin Mass (the form of Mass St. Jean de Brebeuf brought to Huronia in 1626), formation talks and the opportunity for a good Confession. The spiritual fruits are very evident in the charity and joy that develops among the pilgrims throughout the week. While some pilgrims are accustomed to these spiritual practices and others less so, we all grow closer to God and each other as we offer our intentions to Him, whether it is thanksgiving for blessings, petition for a need, reparation for our sins, or simple adoration of God.

This pilgrimage is like a snapshot of our lives. We have our joys, sufferings, and a mission to accomplish for God's glory. We do it best when we do it close to Jesus and with those walking on a holy path to a holy place. We did indeed arrive at Holy Family Church in Britt on the Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady and venerated relics of the Canadian Martyrs. While Britt is a quaint small town which we enjoy at the end of our pilgrimage, the beatific vision of the Holy Trinity is the greatest goal for which we are striving. We strive not for the easy path, but for greatness.



"The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort, you were made for greatness!" – Pope Benedict XVI.

(I have noted for next year that we may need more spare tires!)



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

Kathleen Moquin

An Innocents Project

18th-century poet, artist and engraver William Blake (1757-1827), whose work was largely neglected or dismissed during his lifetime, is considered one of the earliest and most visionary poets of English Romanticism. In 1789, Blake employed an "illuminated writing" technique, where etched copper plates were dipped in acid to create reliefs for printing and shading, to publish *Songs of Innocence*. In 1794, the *Songs of Experience* set was added to a single volume entitled *Songs of Innocence and of Experience Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*. Many secondary and post-secondary students have studied the collection's most famous poems, *The Lamb and The Tyger*. From *Songs of Innocence*, *The Lamb* is a Christian poem that celebrates nature and creation. In the opening stanza, a child asks the lamb "Dost thou know who made thee . . . gave thee clothing of delight, softest clothing woolly bright" before affirming God's dominion over the universe in the mystery of the Incarnation:

He is called by thy name,
For He calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek and he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

In the contrasting poem from *Songs of Experience*, The *Tyger* further explores the nature of God who, creating both vulnerable and fearsome beings, allows for the existence of evil:

Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?
Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Since the late fourth century, the Church has commemorated the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28 which falls on the Feast of the Holy Family this year. In this Sunday's Gospel reading, Joseph demonstrates fidelity to his paternal responsibilities by leading his family into Egypt to escape the slaughter of young boys in Bethlehem ordered by jealous King Herod (Mt 2:13-17). It is poignant that the "innocence" of the Holy Family is celebrated during the Christmas octave that also commemorates the "experience" of the early martyrs on their feast days: St. Stephen (December 26), St. John (December 27), and the Holy Innocents (December 28).



Dating from the 16th century and traditionally performed in Coventry, England as part of a guild nativity pageant, *The Coventry Carol* presents details of Herod's gruesome orders in a haunting minor melody sung as a lullaby by mothers to their doomed children:

Herod the king, in his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might in his own sight
All young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child, for thee
And ever mourn and may
For thy parting neither say nor sing,
"Bye bye, lully, lullay."

These versions, by Loreena McKennitt and the Kings Singers respectively, are recommended additions to your Christmas season playlists: https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=5XjoXAb6efY and https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=5IiR_UvQqt0.

Recalling William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, *The Coventry Carol*, and the Feast of the Holy Innocents, may we recognize our society's vulnerable "innocents," particularly the unborn, the forgotten, and the dying, to serve them with deepest compassion and Christian charity.

Dr. Kathleen Moquin lives with her family in Parry Sound.

Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

Service for Seniors

This is a yearly event at Saint Peter Catholic Secondary School and it happens twice in a school year - one in the Fall and one in the Spring.

Students go out from the school building to do volunteer work and visit to different households of Seniors in the community.





High School

Retreat Pilgrimage

This Jubilee Year of Hope, our student retreat is doing a retreat pilgrimage to churches within the area. We bring the students to Saint Alphonsus Liguori Church for a teaching tour and encounter with the pastor and a youth minister sharing the community life in the parish and how they accompany the youth ministry of building their faith journey.

The second part of the Retreat Pilgrimage was the visit of Saint-Peter-in-Chains Cathedral as one of the declared Jubilee Church during the Jubilee. The participants learn about the historical background of the Cathedral and the relationship of the Catholic School where they belong.

The highlight of the Retreat Pilgrimage is to acknowledge one's faith journey through the paradigm of See, Judge, and Act, in line with the Catholic Social Teachings and Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The whole experience of the Retreat Pilgrimage is an example of community-building through prayers, reflections, and connections with schools and communities.

Rico Fuerzas, MAAPT
Chaplaincy Team Leader
Pastoral Care/Chaplain's Office (Room 1049)
St. Peter Catholic Secondary School - Peterborough
730 Medical Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 8M4

A Day of Faith and Fellowship

St. Paul Catholic Elementary Staff (Lakefield)

What an absolutely wonderful and inspiring Faith Day the



staff at St. Paul Catholic Elementary experienced! It was a day perfectly tailored to nourish the soul and strengthen communal bonds, especially significant as October is the Month of the Holy Rosary. The morning began beautifully with a nature walk to Mass, allowing everyone to connect with creation before entering into worship—a truly peaceful and reflective way to start a spiritual retreat.

The day continued to uplift with a keynote address "On the Path to Holiness" by Dr. Anne Jamieson, Executive Director, Institute for Catholic Education who undoubtedly offered profound insights to deepen everyone's faith journey. Following this enriching talk, the staff enjoyed a potluck lunch and then participated in an hands-on activity of making one-decade rosaries. This activity provided a quiet, meditative moment of creation. The day culminated in a powerful way, with the entire staff gathering to say a decade of the rosary together. This collective prayer and shared experience beautifully highlighted the commitment of the St. Paul staff not just to education, but to their shared Catholic faith. This day of reflection, creation, and prayer was a resounding success!



Jenn DeMaeyer
Principal

PARISH

Bowmanville: World Day of the Poor

Solidarity Jubilee Mass





We would like to express our appreciation to several individuals and groups for a very successful celebration at the Nov. 16th **11:00 AM Solidarity Jubilee Mass for the World Day of the Poor, at St. Joseph Church, Bowmanville.**

The Mass was beautiful and greatly enhanced by Kelly Robertson and his choir. The selection of the hymns was so appropriate!

We were able to collect 175 petition signatures which will be sent to Montreal, to be presented to our government, in the hope that the debt to Global South countries will be cancelled.

The monetary and food donations towards the work that the St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank volunteers do is much appreciated to help so many in need.

We are blessed to have the support of Bishop Daniel Miehm, and our Pastor, Father Craig Cruikshank, towards the endeavour of social justice.

Special thanks to the hearts and hands of all those individuals, and groups who worked so hard to provide hospitality to our guest speaker, Hector Acero Ferror, and to those attending the mass and the presentation.

Thank you to Anne Higgins, Mary Jo Mahon, Joan Miller, Linda Trimble, Lisa Yardley, and Cindy Martin!

May we continue with our actions, to advocate and support those who are oppressed and disenfranchised, both on a local and a global level. Amen

Michelle Lange and Donna Modeste, on behalf of the St. Joseph Church, Bowmanville team for Development & Peace - Caritas Canada.



Administrative Assistants and Bookkeepers

descend upon Lindsay!



October 30, 2025

Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Lindsay

Teresa Walsh Purification of the BVM, Lindsay, **Taunia Borsellino** St. John the Evangelist, Kirkfield, **Susan Pearson** St. Patrick's, Kinmount, **Karen Quinn** Purification of the BVM, Lindsay (host), **Patricia Elcome**, St. Francis of Assisi, Newcastle, **Pilar Ponce de Leon** St. Therese, Courtice, **Patsy Scott** Immaculate Conception, Ptbo, **Michelle Holy** St. Therese, Courtice,
Theres Ann Mathew & Lily Cavanagh St. Anne's, Ptbo, **Ria Collins** St. Michael's, Cobourg, **Mary Porter** St. John the Baptist, Ptbo, **Karen Grubb** DPC, **Bishop Daniel Miehm**,
Catherine Ward Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains, **Kristen Penfold** St. Peter the Apostle, Parry Sound, Our Lady of Mercy, Honey Harbour & St. James the Great, Mactier, **Deb McRae** DPC, **Cindy Campbell** St. Joseph's, Bowmanville, **Sister Krolowa** St. John the Baptist, Ptbo, **Joanne McCloskey** DPC, **Hanna Dracup** St. Alphonsus Liguori, Ptbo, **Trish Stanley** St. Joseph's, Douro & Our Lady of Mercy, Port Hope, **Joy Meehan** St. Paul the Apostle, Lakefield and
St. Martin of Tours, Ennismore, **Stephanie Noonan** St. Joseph's, Bowmanville,
Michele Graham, DPC, **Kelly Russell**, Co-Owner of T.H.R.I.L. (Therapeutic Horse Riding in Lindsay) which we visited.
KNEELING: **Monica Lavoie**, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Ptbo

NOT IN PICTURE BUT ATTENDED:
Fr. Dominic Clovis IVE, Pastor of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Lindsay (host)
Deb Marino, Immaculate Conception, Ptbo
Geoff Loosemore, St. Thomas More, Millbrook & Purification of the BVM, Lindsay

OBITUARY

Fr. John Albao

(Juan Maglente Albao)



November 23, 1950 — August 26, 2025

Ordained a Priest, February 27, 1981
(Diocese of Masbate, Philippines)

in Peterborough, served as Pastor at

Parry Sound	1991-1993
Port Hope	1993-2004
St. John the Baptist, Peterborough	2004-2008
St. John the Baptist & Sacred Heart, Peterborough	2008-2009
Kearney	2009-2012