Catholic Herald
the voice of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

Our loss



London's gain

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Regular contributors:

Bishop	3-4
Joy Meehan	7
Kathleen Moquin	13

Special Features

Youth and Vocations	8-10, 21
Campus Ministry	14
School snd Education	15-16

Parishes:

Huntsville	6
Ennismore	18
St. Alphonsus	22-23



EDITORIAL

Fr. Ray Rick

A Mysterious Business

It's unlikely that I'm the only one caught off guard by the news that we are loosing our Bishop to the Diocese of London. Somehow I assumed that he would be with us until he reached retirement. This in spite of the obvious example of Bishop McGrattan being transferred to Calgary after little more than two and a half years in our midst.

London is a much larger diocese than is ours. Bishop Miehm will have his work cut out for him as he oversees more than twice as many parishes, a major seminary and who-knows how many Catholic schools and hospitals.

And we are left with a big question mark: who will succeed him here, in Peterborough?

A related question that has come to my ears a few times is: how is a new bishop chosen?

It's a mystery.

I want to say it's the work of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit seems to make a habit of using human agents, and that leaves room for questions about motives, plotting and so on by those humans.

The new bishop will be appointed by Pope Leo. But Pope Leo doesn't know the possible candidates and the circumstances of Peterborough, so he relies on advice from people here. First and foremost among those is the Papal Nuncio (Ambassador, basically) in Ottawa. That would be Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič. He's been watching over the Church in Canada since January 2021. And he will eventually make some recommendation(s) to the Pope about candidates for the job in Peterborough (if he hasn't already).

I'm not sure (and I have not asked) whether he has gathered advice on the matter from Bishop Miehm. That would seem likely.

Be that as it may, the Nuncio will most likely ask advice from other sources as well. As far as I know, he can ask for recommendations from whomever he chooses. He could ask a vague question such as, who wold make a good Bishop (without saying which diocese he has in mind). But he is likely to ask a few more pointed questions, too, about the reasons for a given recommendation: what make this person such a good choice?

Let us pray that, in the end, it's the Holy Spirit that's orchestrating the whole thing.

And in the end we, the clergy and laypeople of Peterborough, will be expected to embrace our new shepherd in much the same way we receive a new Pastor in the parish. He is sent by God! He needs our support and co-operation. He may need our advice, — even when he doesn't want it. He needs his people to pray for guidance and inspiration on all sides. He needs us at least as much as we need him.



Archbishop Jurkovič

These are interesting and anxious times. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will indeed guide the process of bishop-making, and that we all will have the grace to welcome a new shepherd into our flock with a spirit of gratitude and generosity, when the time arrives. ✠

Fr. Raymond Rick is Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Lakefield and Editor of the Herald.

Vol. 22, No. 1 — Spring 2026

NEXT ISSUE

— Fall 2026 —

will be distributed to the parishes before Christmas 2026.
Submissions must be received at the e-mail address below before the end of September..

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.

The Catholic Herald is published (usually) three times a year in the Diocese of Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, for the edification and information of the laity and clergy in accordance with the heart and mind of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

The Catholic Herald is made available free of charge and is distributed in each of the parishes in the diocese. All content is subject to the criteria of the editorial policy and unsolicited manuscripts may not be returned.

Circulation: 2,500 per issue.

Editor: Rev. Father Raymond Rick

Publisher: Diocese of Peterborough
350 Hunter St. W. P.O. Box 175
Peterborough, ON, K9J 6Y8
catholicherald@peterboroughdiocese.org

©2026 Diocese of Peterborough.

Counting Blessings and Thanking God

Bishop Daniel Miehm



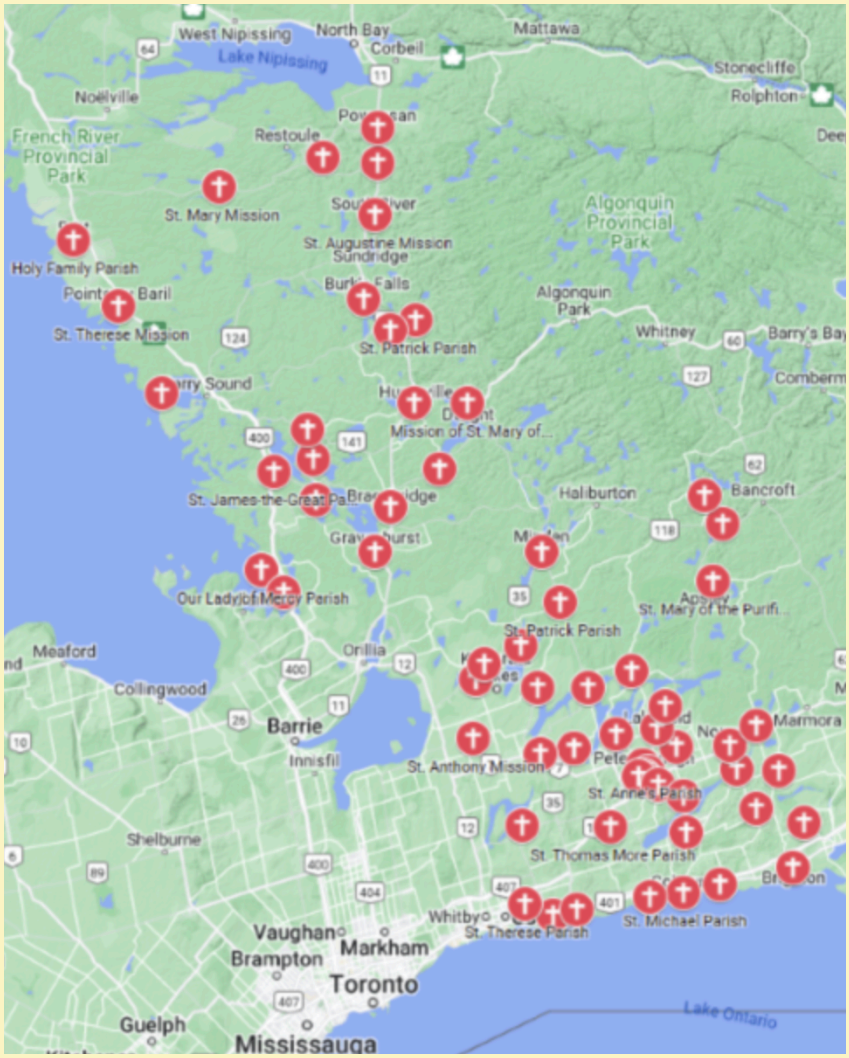
Several years ago, one of my bishop confreres said to me, "I think you have the most beautiful diocese in Ontario." He was speaking about geography and scenery, and I could not disagree with him! From Kawartha Lakes to Muskoka, the Parry Sound Region, Haliburton Highlands and the hills of Northumberland there is such tremendous natural beauty in this Diocese of Peterborough.

I could have highlighted for him the many other ways in which this is a beautiful diocese: the strong faith planted by the first Irish settlers, which we marked in the recent Nine Ships celebration; the contribution of other national and ethnic groups that have come to this region; the beauty of our churches, big and small; our vibrant parishes and active lay organizations; the consecrated women and men who do so much good work; and of course, the very dedicated clergy, priests and deacons alike. Love for the Lord and for the Church he founded is strong among you.

I celebrated my ninth anniversary as the Bishop of Peterborough on April 19th and two days later it was announced that I would not have a tenth. With the Holy Father's decision to appoint me as the next Bishop of London, I now prepare to conclude my leadership and ministry in Peterborough. It is always exciting to embrace new challenges, and I suppose that it is one way that God prevents us from getting covered in rust and dust! Still, it is never easy to close off a chapter and that is even truer because of the many blessings I have received here as your bishop since 2017. I am grateful for your kindness and faithfulness, manifested in your warm welcome of me and the support that you give – spiritual and material – to your local parishes. I have left a little piece of my heart behind in any parish or diocese where I have served, and that will be especially true for this Diocese of Peterborough – both beautiful and beloved.

While I know we accomplished much together here, whenever you move on, you leave things undone. We were poised to launch the Giving to Grow Capital Campaign this spring but made the decision to push pause on that because of these recent events. This good work will not be lost, and I know that you will continue to lay more groundwork so that the next bishop will be well placed to decide about the execution and timing of such a campaign. The many needs - both material and ministerial – will still be here, and I know that you will find ways to give generously for the continued growth and flourishing of the Church in this diocese.

There is a Latin phrase with which I was not very familiar before coming here: "*Oremus pro invicem*." Literally – let us pray for each other. It seems to be popular among the priests here and, consequently, it is now popular with me! Let us indeed pray for each other, dear brothers and sisters, and know of my ongoing gratitude and deep affection, sentiments which will be undiminished by time or distance.



Letter to the Clergy

Bishop Miehm

Bishop Miehm has graciously approved the wider circulation of this very touching letter to his clergy.

21 April 2026

Dear Reverend Fathers, brother priests,
Dear Reverend Deacons,

On Sunday, I celebrated the 9th Anniversary of my Installation as the Bishop of Peterborough. It was bittersweet as I offered Mass at our Cathedral and at the CWL Convention in Cobourg, since I knew I would not celebrate a 10th such milestone here.

I learned on Wednesday of Holy Week from the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Jurkovic, that I was to be appointed as the Bishop of London. The timing of that news in the hurly-burly of Holy Week initially threw me off, but I quickly came to regard it as a blessing. As I celebrated the great liturgies of the Easter Triduum I did so with a sense of finality, knowing they would be my last as the Bishop of Peterborough. I was also able to enter into those liturgies with a strong sense of my need for God's grace and strength but, even more, with a profound sense of gratitude to almighty God for my nine years here as bishop.

So much of that gratitude, dear brothers, is founded upon you: your acceptance of me since the moment I arrived, your good and faithful ministry to the people of God, and your support of the pastoral initiatives we undertook together.

We weathered the storm of Covid-19 , a chapter I daresay that none of us wish to repeat! We navigated the work of an important pastoral planning process and did our best to translate concepts like Synodality to our people. We have celebrated a bicentennial in Peterborough and environs and even now prepare to mark the historic 200th anniversary of the first Mass in our see city. We have welcomed new priests and deacons among us, and we have committed to almighty God the souls of our brothers who have died. May they have the reward promised to good and faithful servants!

One of my last formal tasks as Bishop will be to complete the Ad Limina Report in June, to be sent to the Holy See in advance of the Ontario Bishops' quinquennial visit in January 2027. As I work with others to prepare that document, it is a powerful reminder of all we have done together in the Lord's service, and a testament of your faith, commitment and devotion to the people of God whom you serve as priests and deacons.

There will be more to say in the coming weeks as we set in place the arrangements for the interregnum and the eventual transition in Episcopal leadership. For now, I am content to say "thank you," and let you know of my appreciation, love and deep regard for the priests and deacons who serve in the Diocese of Peterborough. I ask your prayers for me and assure you that my fatherly concern and prayers for you will continue, even as I embrace this new Episcopal responsibility.

Fraternally,

+Daniel

Great Commission Parish Events

Parry Sound and Peterborough



The Holy Spirit is moving in the Diocese of Peterborough!

As part of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, **Goals #1 and #2**, the Peterborough Diocese is working to create welcoming parish communities. On April 23rd, 57 clergy and lay people from our Northern Deanery gathered at St. Peter the Apostle parish in Parry Sound to learn about the Great Commission Parish. The event was repeated on Saturday, April 25th with 130 participants from our Southern, Central and City Deanery parishes meeting at St. Peter's in Chains in Peterborough. Many thanks to the Augustine Institute (Formed.org) and Sacred Heart Centre for Evangelization who hosted these events. Our guest speaker, Austin Habash, is the founder of SENT Evangelization Ministry and ThinkCatholic. For over ten years, he has been engaged in door-to-door Catholic evangelization throughout the United States. The Diocese of Peterborough was the first Canadian diocese to host Austin and SENT Evangelization workshops.

Parish participants were challenged to engage in SENT evangelization by:

- inviting others who may be interested
- reviewing SENT materials on Formed.org
- forming ministry teams for evangelization, prayer intercession and charitable support
- creating parish for community events, faith formation and forming missionary disciples.

This was a wonderful opportunity for us to "meet the moment" of the surging interest that many people have in the Catholic faith. May the Holy Spirit help us to respond creatively and generously! (Bishop Miehm)

These two events offered an opportunity to reflect together on how our parishes can more fully live out Christ's call to "go and make disciples." *(Matthew 28: 19-20)*
If you are interested in learning more about SENT Ministry, contact your parish priest or visit Formed.org. Will you join us?



St Peter the Apostle in Parry Sound, April 23, 2026



St Peter-In-Chains in Peterborough, April 25, 2026



Austin Habash



God's Love
is Blessing our Parish Family

PARISH: Huntsville

St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Huntsville with St Kateri Mission in Baysville, is experiencing rapid changes with growing needs for family members at all stages of life.

For widows and widowers who find themselves isolated after decades of participating in the Church with their spouses and still want to go out and have fun, the Associate Missionaries of St Paul (AMSP) created a monthly Fun Dance Night. This non-alcoholic event includes a new dance step to learn every month from the cha-cha to swing to international dance routines. The opportunity to dance again and socialize in a safe environment cannot be underrated. As Ida one of our parishioners said, "I wasn't sure if I could go out again after Brian died. I am not dating. I don't want to. I just want to talk and listen to music again with my friends. Thank you for creating this safe place in my church. It's saving me."

Our RCIA classes have been steadily increasing in size for the last few years with young families and young adults, as well as baptisms, and children registering for sacrament classes. The parish has switched from these programs running every 2 years to every year.

And with young families we are thrilled to see children and babies again. The library is now an active crying room again complete with toys, a nursing chair and a good selection of children's religious books.

For the working parishioners who are employed in the assisted living, the hospital, tourism, and entertainment industries, we added a 7 pm Sunday Mass to accommodate their jobs and Catholic faith. The Sunday 7 pm Masses, although very new, are becoming well attended; people are coming as they are, straight from work in scrubs or work boots, to join young parents with sleeping newborns. For visiting families who plan to take advantage of vacationing by the water all day they can now join us for Mass before they go back to the city.

After the tremendous success of the 2026 Kids Summer Bible Camp that concluded with the children crowning Mary with their homemade flower arrangements and the parish will be offering it again this summer with crafts, games, interactive plays, bible studies and a ton of giggles.

On May 14th, 2026 the parish is planning a road trip the National March for Life on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, to defend the most vulnerable members of the family: the women who are pressured to abort their child, the unborn child without a voice to fight for the right to live, the physically and mentally challenged and the dying that have lost hope. For anyone in the Northern Deanery interested in joining St. Mary's on the day-trip, please contact the parish office at 705-789-2348.











St George

Feast Day: April 23rd

SAINT PROFILE



Joy Meehan

Saint George: defined by loyalty to God, Christian courage and… a Dragon?

Saint George occupies a unique place in Christian tradition, standing at the intersection of history and myth. Born in Cappadocia in the late third century, George was raised in a devout Christian household and later pursued a military career within the Roman Empire. His rapid advancement in the army reflected not only his skill as a soldier but also his reputation for integrity and courage.

Yet George's true legacy lies not in military conquest but in his unwavering fidelity to Christ during one of the most severe persecutions of Christians under Emperor Diocletian. When ordered to renounce his faith, George refused. He tore down imperial edicts, boldly declaring that his loyalty belongs to God alone. His defiance was not a rash act of rebellion but a deliberate testimony to the supremacy of divine truth over imperial power. For this, he endured imprisonment, torture, and ultimately martyrdom around the year 303. His death has been understood as a victory of conscience, a witness of truth and a demonstration that loyalty to God transcends worldly authority. In this sense, George became a true model of Christian courage, embodying the conviction that faith is worth more than life itself.



And then, there is the dragon. Though not part of the earliest historical accounts, the famous legend has become inseparable from his identity. A city terrorized by a monstrous beast, demanding sacrifices until George intervenes. With spear in hand and faith in his heart, he slays the dragon, rescues the king's daughter, and liberates the community from fear. Whether historical or symbolic, George's story captured imaginations for centuries. Its enduring appeal lies in its universality – every generation faces its own "dragons," and George's courage offers a model – courage rooted in faith – for confronting them. Scholars often interpret the dragon as a metaphor for chaos, sin, or oppressive power. So, perhaps George's dragon was neither savage, wild nor a fire-breathing beast. Not all dragons scorch the earth. Some dragons require only compliance. But no matter what the dragon looked like, George's courage was not bluster; it was intervention. He stood between the devouring force and those who had no sword. George chose to stand where the fire would fall. His triumph was not merely in the slaying, but in the refusal to bow; a triumph that signifies the victory of Christian faith over evil.

The diffusion of George's popularity across Europe and the Near East illustrates the power of narrative to shape collective identity. By the Middle Ages, he had become the patron saint of England, Georgia, and numerous other regions. Knights carried his red cross into battle, seeing in him the ideal of honour, conviction, fidelity, faith and courage; a warrior whose strength was tempered by devotion and justice. His feast day, April 23, became a joyful occasion marked by festivals, songs and stories. Even today, his image – armour gleaming, shield raised, sword poised – remains iconic.

There is something especially appealing about Saint George for children. Ask a group of boys to choose a saint costume for All Saints'Day, and many will pick George. After all, he wears armour, carries a shield, wields a sword, and – best of all – he fought a dragon! His story is thrilling, but it also plants seeds of faith, courage, loyalty and the call to defend what is good. In George, children see not only a hero but a saint who makes holiness exciting. He defends and protects the vulnerable.

From a theological perspective, George's story underscores a significant dimension of Christian life. Just as he confronted the dragon with faith, believers are called to confront the forces that threaten spiritual integrity. His martyrdom reflects the Paschal mystery; through apparent defeat comes ultimate victory. The dragon legend, meanwhile, dramatizes the universal struggle between good and evil, reminding the faithful that holiness is not abstract but lived in concrete acts of courage and compassion.

St George's enduring significance lies in his dual identity as historical martyr and legendary hero. He demonstrates that sanctity is not confined to cloisters but can be lived in the public sphere, even in the face of danger, violence and persecution. His story continues to inspire because it speaks to timeless human concerns: the battle against fear, the defense of truth, and the hope that faith can transform even the darkest circumstances. In this way, Saint George remains not only a figure of the past but a living symbol of courage and devotion for the present. ✠

Joy Meehan, married and mother of four, is Admin Assistant / Bookkeeper at Ennismore and Lakefield.



VOCATIONS

Fr. Stephen DeCarlo

Freedom to Love: The Joy of Celibacy

One of the most distinct features of the Catholic priesthood is the practice of clerical celibacy, the intentionally chosen state of not being married to any woman for the course of one's own life. It is a state in life that presents challenges but also so many blessings. Many priests I know have stated that not only do they love their priesthood, they also love the commitment to celibacy. The more I got to know priests as I was discerning the priesthood, the more I was struck by how happy and fulfilled they were in their vocations, especially in the celibate state. That was because they lived out the fullness of celibacy by being totally dedicated to prayer, ministry, and the brotherhood of the priesthood. To them, celibacy helped them to love more, not less, and they saw the fruits of this sacrificial love in the people they served and in their own lives.

Yet, celibacy is still a thing that causes some people to remark on how challenging it must be to choose and remain in the priesthood. Many question its relevance in a modern world, or its relevance to pastoral experience. After all, how can a celibate priest know how to give advice to married couples if he himself isn't married? What does he know about marital issues, about raising children, about dealing with in-laws, and so much more? A further question is also raised in terms of numbers; would not allowing priests to marry bring in more candidates to the priesthood? They would not be forced to choose between having a family life and the priesthood.

Such opinions are not new and I have heard them many times before in different ways. A few examples come to mind. When I made the decision to enter the seminary, I will never forget the look of heartbreak on my then-girlfriend's face when I told her. Not long afterwards, when one of my cousins found out what I was doing, she shook her head and said "Why are you becoming a priest? You're too handsome to become a priest!" I recall early on in my priesthood during a men's group discussion at my parish where one of the men, himself a young father, mentioned how meaningful it was for him to see the birth of his children; he admitted to kneeling in tears upon seeing his first child for the first time (a remarkable admission from a man whom I knew to have been rather stoic.) Then he added that he considered priestly celibacy a shame because it deprived a priest of that same joy. Our discussions and these memories then formed the basis of this article.[1]

These experiences and these questions were very much at the forefront when Pope St. Paul VI wrote his 1967 letter, *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* (On Priestly Celibacy). During a time when the practice was being questioned, the saintly pope wrote a document that not only reinforced celibacy but also reminded the Church, both clergy and laity, of the beautiful reality that is priestly celibacy. While acknowledging the objections and challenges around celibacy, the pope nevertheless highlighted its spiritual significance for the Church in that it reflects the life and practice of Jesus Christ:

> Christ, the only Son of the Father, by the power of the Incarnation itself was made Mediator between heaven and earth, between the Father and the human race. Wholly in accord with this mission, Christ remained throughout His whole life in the state of celibacy, which signified His total dedication to the service of God and men. This deep concern between celibacy and the priesthood of Christ is reflected in those whose fortune it is to share in the dignity and mission of the Mediator and eternal Priest; this sharing will be more perfect the freer the sacred minister is from the bonds of flesh and blood.



Further on, he highlights that celibacy is not about denying love, or the priest's ability to love but is instead the opposite; priestly celibacy challenges the priest to love God and others even more in a total gift of himself:

> "Laid hold of by Christ" unto the complete abandonment of one's entire self to Him, the priest takes on a closer likeness to Christ, even in the love with which the eternal Priest has loved the Church His Body and offered Himself entirely for her sake, in order to make her a glorious, holy and immaculate Spouse…The priest dedicates himself to the service of the Lord Jesus and of His Mystical Body with complete liberty, which is made easier by his total offering, and thus he depicts more fully the unity and harmony of the priestly life. His ability for listening to the word of God and for prayer increases. Indeed, the word of God, as preserved by the Church, stirs up vibrant and profound echoes in the priest who daily meditates on it, lives it and preaches it to the faithful.

Paul VI also responded to the argument that celibacy robs the priest of a meaningful life. While acknowledging the challenges it can present (which, by the way, marriage presents many challenges as well), the pope emphasized that the opposite is the case:

[1] For the purposes of this article, I will concentrate on the practice of the Latin Church, namely, celibacy of all priests. I will not focus much on the Eastern practice, nor will I discuss exceptions such as married converts being ordained Catholic priests who were formerly ministers in a Protestant denomination.

celibacy helps give meaning to the priest's life and vocation in a very special way that no other vocation can:

> The rest of a priest's life also acquires a greater richness of meaning and sanctifying power. In fact, his individual efforts at his own sanctification find new incentives in the ministry of grace and in the ministry of the Eucharist, in which "the whole spiritual good of the Church is contained": (52) acting in the person of Christ, the priest unites himself most intimately with the offering, and places on the altar his entire life, which bears the marks of the holocaust. What other considerations can We offer to describe the increase of the priest's power, his service, his love and sacrifice for the entire people of God? Christ spoke of Himself when He said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (53) And the Apostle Paul did not hesitate to expose himself to a daily death in order to obtain among his faithful glory in Christ Jesus. (54) In a similar way, by a daily dying to himself and by giving up the legitimate love of a family of his own for the love of Christ and of His kingdom, the priest will find the glory of an exceedingly rich and fruitful life in Christ, because like Him and in Him, he loves and dedicates himself to all the children of God.

Sacerdotalis Caelibatus goes on to elucidate further, but for the sake of this article I will invite you, the reader, to read the document in full with an open and prayerful mind. Pope Paul VI based his teaching upon the teaching of the Church but it is my opinion that he included his own personal experience with priestly celibacy in his reflections. And to that I wish to add my own. For me as a priest, priestly celibacy is a wonderful life and challenges me daily to love more deeply and completely. Celibacy allows me to go beyond minimalism and instead be generous with myself for the people of God. Ironically, celibacy is not about loving less but about loving more.

Further, celibacy allows me to become a real father to the people. Celibacy is all about being married; not to a specific woman but to the Church, the Bride of Christ. Thus, celibacy makes priests real fathers. Just as a married man loves his spouse and his kids, so too does the priest love the Church and his people with the same kind of fatherly love, albeit in a universal way. I recall a powerful example of this fatherly role that the priest has: At a priestly ordination I attended once, the mother of the new priest gave a speech at the reception. She reflected that while she will not be expecting biological grandchildren, she nevertheless pointed out that she will become a spiritual grandmother to hundreds, if not thousands, of her son's spiritual children!

Also, with regards to giving advice, as a priest I do not worry about this aspect. Priesthood gives me a privileged insight into the lives and struggles of all sorts of people, married and not. I quickly learn about those issues and of various solutions. This and my seminary training help me to provide pastoral ministry towards couples, even those experiencing difficulties in their family lives. But keep in mind that many issues require professional help and I have to refer them to a counsellor. Some couples require the expertise of a trained and certified marriage counsellor, something that I was not trained to do, regardless of being married or not. (It also has to be said that some marriage counsellors are not married themselves; they do not rely on their own personal experiences but use their professional training to help couples.) Thus, celibacy does not hinder but actually enhances my priestly ministry.

And finally, I do not believe that loosening the celibacy requirement would bring in more candidates. My experience shows the opposite. For instance, the Eastern Church allows married men to be ordained priests but they still struggle to find candidates for the priesthood. Many Protestant denominations are having a clergy shortage regardless of their ministers being allowed to marry. Marriage alone does not determine vocational recruitment success.

I think young men are not scared off by celibacy but instead want a challenge. They are willing to make a sacrifice for something they believe in, in something greater than themselves. They are willing to 'try out' celibacy to see if priesthood is for them or not. Sometimes they love it, other times they discern it isn't for them and go on to become good Catholic husbands and fathers. Which is fine, since it is God who calls and confirms through the Church. But what is also very clear is that celibacy is a profound gift for the Church, a gift in which a man becomes a dedicated real father to everyone and challenges him to be a real father in his love and generosity.



We are in the midst of planning for World Youth Day 2027!

While details are being worked on, it is expected that a delegation from our diocese will be travelling to Seoul on July 27th-August 9th, 2027, so….

save the date!

Any interested pilgrims, individuals or groups, between the ages of 18-35 are invited to contact Fr. Stephen at

FrStephenDecarlo@peterboroughdiocese.org

so that we know who is interested and to plan an information session in the near future.

see next page…

WYD SEOUL 2027



"Take courage! I have overcome the world!" Jn 16:39









Diocese of Peterborough WORLD YOUTH DAY Pilgrimage July 27 - August 9, 2027

Get ready for an unforgettable adventure!

Join hundreds of thousands of young people from around the world in a celebration of our Catholic faith!



For more information contact
Fr Stephen DeCarlo

Email
FrStephenDecarlo@peterboroughdiocese.org

Winter Camping in Britt

By Charlotte Connell

When I informed my friends that I was going away for the weekend on a winter camping youth trip where we slept overnight in small shelters made out of snow, five hours away, and no phone access, they thought it was strange. One friend even commented that they were going to be warm all weekend in a heated cabin. But as in Pope Benedict XVI's words, "The world offers you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness." Yes, in fact this trip was cold (if you consider -36 degrees cold) and you were stripped of your usual comforts such as your warm comfortable bed, usual routines, and social media. But despite being all out of routine like we were, I felt a sense of closeness to Christ on this trip. It caused me to pause and focus on what really matters, which is God and all the people I was with on the trip.

I was thoroughly excited when I was told that there would be a winter camping trip. When I was first able to attend these events, I always enjoyed them. The winter camping trip was scheduled with many things such as an opportunity for confession, Holy Hour, the Traditional Latin Mass celebrated each day by Father Campbell, and profound talks given by Father Peter Bissonnette and seminarian Andrew Roelands. All these activities gave us a great opportunity to grow in our identity as young Catholics.

Not only was this trip an opportunity for catechesis but it included many fun activities including quinzee building, playing cards, and even a swing dance. Although the freezing temperatures didn't allow us to complete the main activity of sleeping in the quinzees, everyone was still in joyful spirits building up their mounds of snow, hollowing them out, and even hanging out inside of them before it became too cold.

I am incredibly grateful for the consistent, dedicated volunteers who help make these trips possible with the organization, food preparation, and spiritual guidance. The volunteers on this trip are great examples for young people to see others who live out their faith so fully in their lives. As a young Catholic person this trip has helped me grow and learn more about my faith as well as having fun and connecting with other Catholic youth. There aren't many opportunities for young Catholics to get together in our diocese, and I am forever grateful for those who gave up their time to organize this event. You have so much fun on these trips that you don't notice the time going by until you're reminiscing about your day at night hearing the clock ticking away. You forget the "comforts" that you are so used to and pause to enjoy the presence of other people and most importantly Christ who is our true consolation who was truly present on this trip. ✠



Don't know what to think about AI?

You're hardly alone.

Fr. Joseph Royan C.Ss.R reflects on the new encyclical of Pope Leo XIV - *Magnifica Humanitas* (On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence) which considers the recent growth of technology—especially the development of artificial intelligence—as a digital revolution with its own promises and dangers that likewise need to be addressed for the good of all humanity.

Check it out:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDirOXe6N6M

There are many more commentaries and opinions about AI on the internet. Search for them and read to your heart's content.

The Catholic Herald takes no responsibility for the quality of material you may find. — ed.

Blessed Father Michael McGivney Relic

at St. Francis Church, Newcastle

On March 21 and 22, 2026, the Knights of Columbus, Newcastle Council #11268, celebrated the founding of the Order, by Blessed Father Michael J. McGiveny, and displayed a first-class relic of Father McGiveny. The 2026 winter pilgrimage of the bone relic included stops at councils in Maidstone, Oshawa, Cambridge, Newcastle, Bowmanville, Bradford, Brampton and Ottawa. Grand Knight Dave Komel and Deputy Grand Knight Conly Bayley requested the relic and organized the solemn and reverent process of the Blessed Relic into the church at all the weekend Masses. Mr. Bayley also arranged for an Honour Guard to be present and Faithful Navigator Fred Horvath delivered a brief talk.

Father John Rathinaswamy invited the congregation to touch an item (such as a rosary, crucifix or prayer card) to the relic, thereby creating a third-class relic for parishioners to keep and pray with. The response was tremendous. Over the weekend hundreds of people approached the relic to demonstrate their devotion. “I was overwhelmed seeing the congregation coming forward…to venerate before the Blessed Relic,” said Mr. Bayley.

The Founding of the Knights of Columbus

Born to Irish-American parents, Michael Joseph McGivney (August 12, 1852—August 14, 1890) was the eldest of 13 children. At 16 years old he entered the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe in Quebec and continued his studies at Our Lady of Angels Seminary in Niagara Falls, New York and the Jesuits’ St. Mary’s College in Montreal. Following his father’s death in June 1873, he returned home to help his family and raise his younger siblings. He was later able to return to his studies and was ordained a priest on December 22, 1877.

His early life left an indelible imprint on him. He witnessed first-hand the terrible effects on family when the primary source of income was lost. While an assistant pastor, together with a small group of parishioners, Fr. McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus (March 29, 1882) as a mutual aid society providing financial assistance to widows and orphans. The Knights of Columbus developed as a fraternal society that continues to this day with millions of members around the world, donating hundreds of millions of dollars to charities along with volunteering time and skills. “The Knights of Columbus empower Catholic men to put their faith into action—building stronger families, stronger parishes and stronger communities.”

At the age of 38, Fr. McGivney died of pneumonia in Thomaston, Connecticut.

Beatification

In 1996, the Archdiocese of Hartford opened the cause for canonization, an investigation into Fr. McGivney’s life, which is the first step toward formal recognition of sainthood by the Catholic Church. The investigation was closed in 2000 when the case was passed to The Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican. Pope Benedict XVI approved a decree recognizing Fr. McGivney’s heroic virtue and he was declared a Venerable Servant of God on March 15, 2008.

In Dickson, Tennessee, a miracle attributed to Fr. McGivney occurred on May 15, 2015. Michael “Mikey” Schachle had been diagnosed in utero with fetal hydrops, an abnormal accumulation of fluid in at least two areas of the baby’s body leading to severe edema. Mikey was not expected to survive his birth. Prayers for Fr. McGiveny’s intercession were offered and Mikey’s condition vanished. He was born healthy. This year, Mikey turned 11 years old.

The miracle of this medically inexplicable healing was attributed to the intercession of Fr. McGivney by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and was authorized by Pope Francis on May 27, 2020. Fr. McGivney was beatified on October 31, 2020, and he is now referred to as Blessed Father Michael McGivney.

Canonization

To be recognized as a saint, two miracles must be attributed to Blessed Father McGivney’s intercession. Toward that end, The Father Michael J. McGivney Guild was founded. The Guild promotes Fr. McGivney’s cause for sainthood. “Members of the Guild, and anyone devoted to Father McGivney, can play an active role in the cause by praying for his intercession in times of need, especially in cases of serious illness, and reporting to the Guild any favors received.”

To learn more about the life and legacy of Blessed Father Michael McGivney, visit www.fathermcgivney.org.

To learn more about the Knights of Columbus, contact the Council in your parish or visit the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough website.



The Silent Treatment

THE CHOIR LOFT

Kathleen Moquin



Encompassing more than the absence of sound or speech, silence is a paradoxical concept where "presence is marked by absence." Silence from the playroom violates the maxim that children should be seen and not heard and typically triggers prompt parental investigation into the status of resident toddlers. In intensely emotional conversations, the golden silence of harsh words wisely left unspoken may preserve the personal integrity necessary for further discussion or possible reconciliation. Musicians seeking to enhance their ensemble performance skills learn to count the rests, which are unplayed measured silences, to build confidence in flawlessly entering and executing played phrases. Ironically, my position as second violinist in my local community orchestra has magnified my left-sided tinnitus, a phantom buzzing noise likely caused by age-related hearing loss.

Written in the wake of John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, Paul Simon's "The Sound of Silence" casts the singer in a series of increasingly ambiguous silences that starkly highlight the cultural alienation of the era. Alone with his thoughts "like a vision softly creeping," the singer greets the silent "darkness, (my) old friend" in the first verse. In verse 2, the singer's "restless dreams" are interrupted by a "flash of a neon light . . . that touched the sound of silence." A "naked light" in verse 3 exposes "people talking without speaking, people hearing without listening," but the singer's subsequent warning that silence "like a cancer grows" is disregarded "like silent raindrops fall(ing) and echo(ing) in the well of silence." In the bleak final stanza where the people simply "bow(ed) and pray(ed) to the neon god they made," the singer acclaims the ascendancy of truth and meaning that is "written on the subway walls and tenement halls and whispered in the sounds of silence". Employing rich vocals and dramatic orchestral arrangement that propels the song from its somber, quiet opening ballad to a memorably raw, intense conclusion, the 2015 rendition by American heavy metal band Disturbed establishes "The Sound of Silence" as a timeless cultural anthem against disillusionment and indifference https://youtu.be/u9Dg-g7t2l4?si=dHhqxnMKQ-XPlLlF. Recommended listening.

The Church promotes the discipline of silence as her measured response to the loud, alienating reality of a broken world. Monks of the Carthusian order founded by Saint Bruno in 1084 live in seclusion and silence in their individual cells, speaking only when worshipping at the monastery church at night and at communal meals on Sundays and feast days. In his homily on the feast day of St. Bruno, Pope Benedict XVI warned that constant streaming of audiovisual content risks the predominance of virtual dimension over reality: "This is a trend that has always existed . . . reached a level such as to give rise to talk about anthropological mutation. Some people are no longer able to remain for long periods in silence and solitude" (San Serra Bruno, October 9, 2011). The pope emphasized the special charism of contemplative monasticism, which demonstrates that "by withdrawing into silence and solitude, human beings, so to speak, 'expose' themselves to reality in their nakedness, to that apparent 'void' . . . in order to experience instead Fullness, the presence of God, of the most real Reality that exists and that lies beyond the tangible dimension." Settings that facilitate quiet contemplation enrich the experiences of private prayer or adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. In Hallow's 2026 Lent Pray40: The Way series, Cardinal Robert Sarah hosted "Silent Saturdays," weekly sessions featuring periods of silence whose duration increased week by week. Did anybody else check their phone after a few minutes to see if the app had been inadvertently turned off?! It was a difficult challenge for me, and I clearly have a lot more to learn about being in silence. In his book The Power of Silence: Against the Dictatorship of Noise, Cardinal Sarah states that "silence is more important than any other human work. Because it expresses God. The true revolution comes from silence; it leads us toward God and others so as to place us humbly and generously at their service" (Thought 68, page 54).



Pope Leo XIV's message for Lent 2026 opens with an appeal for a demonstration of willingness to listen, which is "the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone." Note that listening is a silent activity, and that someone may be God. Let us enter the Easter season with renewed faith by listening for God in the various silences of our lives. ✠

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

Campus Ministry

Importance of Campus Ministry in the lives of the students



Fr. Chukwudi Jieme, SMMM
Chaplain to Trent University &
Sir Sanford Fleming College

McCloskey Campus Ministry Centre serves as office spaces for the Director of Peterborough Campus Ministry, the Christian Catholic Outreach (CCO), and the Students Executives. The centre also has a quiet time/prayer space, a kitchen, a dinning space, washrooms, large parlor, and a beautiful backyard sit-out. The centre serves as a vibrant location of faith for students of Trent University and Fleming College. It became a welcoming space where students could encounter Christ, build authentic friendships, and grow in their faith. Through regular praise and worship, the house has become a place of prayer and renewal, inviting students to step away from the busyness of academic life and enter into a deeper relationship with God.

Here a strong sense of community is fostered among the students. Events like evening fellowship gatherings, post-Sunday Mass socials, and men's and women's small groups created opportunities for students to connect meaningfully with one another are held in the centre. Whether through shared meals, heartfelt conversations, or simply spending time together, students experienced the joy of belonging to a Christ-centred community.
On Fridays, the centre remains open as a home away from home for the students and CCO. Students are invited to drop in to study, relax, and make use of the space at their leisure. Board game nights, and informal hangouts rest into the rhythm of student life. It was not uncommon to find students cooking meals together in the kitchen, turning ordinary moments into opportunities for friendship and fellowship.

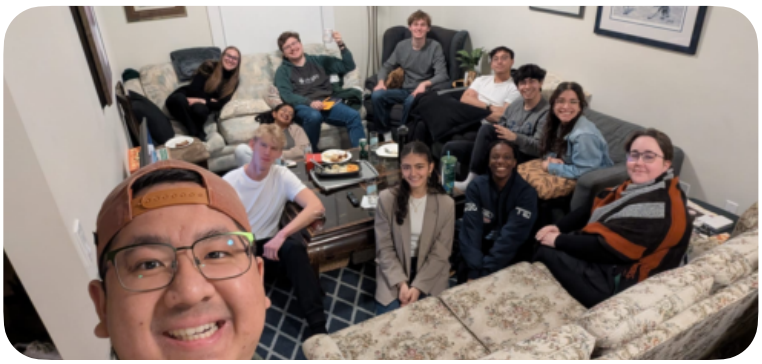
In addition, McCloskey Centre plays an important role in supporting missionary outreach and leadership. It hosted missionary staff and student leader meetings and proved to be a hub for planning and coordination, ensuring that ministry efforts on campus remains intentional and fruitful. Through all these activities, the centre has truly been a huge blessing and a place where faith is lived, shared, and nurtured.

The Diocese is doing its best to maintain, run, and equip the centre so as to make it an enjoyable place for the students. Supports from anyone whether in terms of donations and foods (cakes, muffins, breads, chips, candies, popcorns, noodles, spaghetti, canned foods, etc) and soft drinks will be highly appreciated.

The McCloskey Campus Ministry Centre is a very big boost to the Peterborough Campus Ministry. It will remain one of the finest initiative and investment of the Peterborough Catholic Diocese. We will ever remain grateful to all who made the centre a reality and all who will continue to support it in any form. May Peterborough Campus Ministry continue to nurture the faith and morals of our university and college students who are the future of the world and church. ✠







Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

Christmas Carolling

to Peterborough Nursing and Retirement Homes

Rico Fuerzas, MAAPT, Chaplaincy Team Leader
Pastoral Care/Chaplain's Office

On December 5th of last year, students and staff from Saint Peter Catholic Secondary school once again, the second time year round, rendered Christmas carols to different nursing and retirement homes in the surrounding Peterborough City area. But this time, it started with a Holy Mass with the Seniors in the community at St. Alphonsus Parish in collaboration with the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Simmy Joseph, CMI. It was a meaningful encounter celebrating the mass with the SPCSS Mass Choir singing the hymns as well as the Christmas carols at the end of the mass. Sharing the spirit of Christmas through music was in the air.

The number of students in the Mass choir is increasing yearly with the direction of the Music Teacher, Amy Melanson, vocals class and show choir members usually join the Mass Choir on a regular basis for school liturgies such as School Mass, Tribute to Graduates, and Prayer Service. The school also hosted a Christmas concert days after the Christmas Carolling which was a major event to showcase the talents of SPCSS students.

When students are being asked about their experience of visiting nursing and retirement homes, they usually say that it gives them the confidence to perform as well as to share their talents to people especially Seniors in the community. We thank the following communities that accommodated our visit on that extraordinary day:

1. St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish Community
2. St. Joseph at Fleming
3. Rubidge Retirement Residence
4. Sisters of Saint Joseph Community

We hope to continue this tradition as a Catholic school community reaching out to build connections and create faith experiences for the students through their expressions.



Feeding the Hungry

A Mission to the Unhoused in Cobourg

Cathy Mosole, Chaplaincy Leader
St, Mary Catholic Secondary School Cobourg, Ontario

SMCSS students and staff went to support the Community Christmas Dinner downtown Cobourg on Monday December 8th. This event was a collaboration between St Mary and Greenwood Coalition that brought students, community members and the marginalized together. Our Culinary classes prepared food all day for the gathering, then volunteer staff and students arrived to set up, serve, talk, sing and clean up afterwards. If only it was that simple, what was unexpected and very welcome was the relationship, the laughter, the joy and the warmth of the gathering. Our marginalized souls, the unhoused, arrived with all of their possessions in bags. To the warmth of the church basement, the flavours of the food, the kindness of strangers... Community Volunteers and SMCSS participants received more than expected. They experienced humanity and gratitude. This experience left imprints on the volunteers that are hard to put into words.

Our cold and unhoused, judged and overlooked guests received a few hours of warmth, hot food there and to go, some socks, mittens and hats. They also experienced the warmth of the volunteers, kindness and compassion.

The true meaning of Christmas is not in the material gifts but rather the gifts of acceptance, love and presence. What a Holy night for our community. May we not forget on these cold days to look for the soul of each person we encounter and the gift of every interaction.

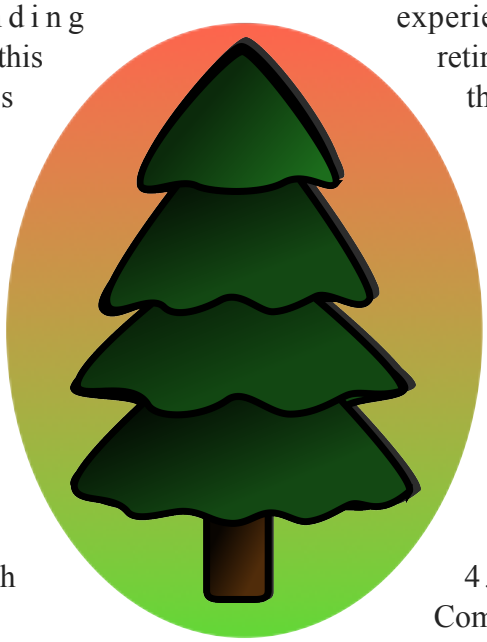




Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

Annual Christmas Caroling
at Nursing and Retirement Homes in Peterborough

On December 5th of last year, students and staff from Saint Peter Catholic Secondary school once again, the second time year round, rendered Christmas carols to different nursing and retirement homes in the surrounding Peterborough City area. But this time, it started with a Holy Mass with the Seniors in the community at St. Alphonsus Parish in collaboration with the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Simmy Joseph, CMI. It was a meaningful encounter celebrating the mass with the SPCSS Mass Choir singing the hymns as well as the Christmas carols at the end of the mass. Sharing the spirit of Christmas through music was in the air.



The number of students in the Mass choir is increasing yearly with the direction of the Music Teacher, Amy Melanson, vocals class and show choir members usually join the Mass Choir on a regular basis for school liturgies such as School Mass, Tribute to Graduates, and Prayer Service. The school also hosted a Christmas concert days after the Christmas Caroling which was a major event to showcase the talents of SPCSS students.

When students are being asked about their experience of visiting nursing and retirement homes, they usually say that it gives them the confidence to perform as well as to share their talents to people especially Seniors in the community. We thank the following communities that accommodated our visit on that extraordinary day:

1. St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish Community
2. St. Joseph at Fleming
3. Rubidge Retirement Residence
4. Sisters of Saint Joseph Community

We hope to continue this tradition as a Catholic school community reaching out to build connections and create faith experiences for the students through their expressions.

Rico Fuerzas, MAAPT
Chaplaincy Team Leader
Pastoral Care/Chaplain's Office (Room 1049)
Phone Number (705) 745-1358 (local 1049)
St. Peter Catholic Secondary School - Peterborough
730 Medical Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 8M4

Appreciations

For the 2026 Way of the Cross

The 2026 Way of the Cross happened on Good Friday, April 3rd, in front of a crowd of over a 1,000 people! Every year, the youth, both Catholic and not, come together and re-enact the 14 Stations of the Cross, donning period authentic costumes and dedicate themselves to a moving performance. Beginning at the Cathedral of St.-Peter-in-Chains and processing 2 kilometres to Immaculate Conception Church, the youth brought to life in the streets of downtown Peterborough Christ's Passion and Crucifixion.

A thing like Way of the Cross takes a ton of work and effort. I could not do it alone.



A thing like Way of the Cross takes a ton of work and effort. I could not do it alone.

Thank you to all of our actors, who dedicated so much time. Your work has paid off! People have been praising your performances and were deeply moved at the production.

Thank you to the narrators for your work in guiding the reflections and prayers!

Thank you to Dane and Monica, our wonderful directors! You both were crucial for this WOTC and your hard work led to a fantastic day. They were also working behind the scenes, organizing costumes, scripts, and recruiting, among so many other duties.

Thank you to Andrea and her choir! Your musical abilities and leadership lifted up the hearts and minds of over a thousand people in attendance! Music sets the mood and you all did it very well!

Thank you to Kelly and her team for the use of the truck and trailer! It helped the singers stay comfortable and kept the pace for everyone.

Thank you to Matt for the sound system work! It was a necessary role and helped maintain the tone.

Another word of thanks goes to the McLaren family for donating the use of their van!

Thank you to the road marshals for keeping everyone safe, especially when a few people needed medical care. Your attention was greatly welcomed.

Thanks goes out to Mary Marrocco, who helped me in getting the city permits as well as the police escort.

Thanks also to Linda and Ruth Ann at Immaculate, for their hospitality lunch after WOTC. The food was amazing and hit the spot!

Thank you to Michele for her work with the costumes!

A special word of thanks goes out to the pastors and parishes of the Cathedral, S. Alphonsus, and Immaculate Conception. They allowed us to hold our practices at their locations (and St. Alphonsus was generous in allowing us to use their hall free of charge) and helped us produce a fantastic WOTC. St. Alphonsus was also gracious in allowing the costumes and props to remain in their basement hall since last year's WOTC!

Thank you to all the families in supporting the actors and singers. Your support made all the difference! Thank you for being committed to the schedule, driving people back and forth, and for attending it!

Thank you to the Knights of Columbus, especially Council 798 (my own council!), for allowing us to use the Bishop Doyle Hall and facilities, especially the one time we had to relocate our practice to their upstairs! And also for the help in moving the costumes and props from St. Alphonsus to the Doyle Hall.

Thank you to Tom Wigglesworth for arranging the busses for us. Thank you for your past work in Way of the Cross, for getting the production off the ground after the Covid-hiatus. We wish you and your family well in your future endeavours.

Last, but not least, thank you to Bishop Miehm for supporting the Way of the Cross! His presence is very appreciated and we thank him for his pastoral leadership. We should also thank seminarian Andrew for helping with the prayer service.

Mark your calendars: the next Way of the Cross will be on Good Friday, March 26th, 2027!

St. Martin's Girls Group

Building Faith, Confidence, and Friendship

PARISH: Ennismore



Founded in 2026, St. Martin's Girls Group has quickly become a vibrant and welcoming community for girls in Grades 5 to 8. Guided by its vision — "We believe in helping girls be at their best. We do this by teaching, supporting, and encouraging girls in an engaging and faith-based environment" — the group offers a meaningful space where young girls can grow, learn, and have fun together.

Today, the group includes approximately 25 participants, supported by seven dedicated teen leaders and run by a committed team of local women volunteers. Each meeting is designed to nurture faith, confidence, independence, and strong friendships, while keeping things engaging and enjoyable.

This year's activities have reflected that balance of learning and fun. Highlights include CPR training, fire-building and outdoor skills, baking nights, and creating handmade cards for community members. Girls have also spent time learning about saints and virtues, tying everyday experiences back to their faith.

St. Martin's Girls Group continues to be a place where girls are encouraged to try new things, support one another, and grow into their best selves — all while having a great time.



Handbells in Ennismore

The Children's Handbell Choir at St Martin of Tours began singing and ringing for the Saturday Evening Mass three years ago. The photo shows the crew at the Palm Sunday Vigil Mass this year. About 20 children are part of the team, with 6 to 8 ringing and singing every week.

Why the smiles?

Development and Peace
CARITAS CANADA

You will never see pictures of miserable-looking people in communication from Development Peace about the needs and issues in our world. That does not mean many of the people with whom we work in the global South do not live in extremely difficult conditions. It means that the inherent dignity of people made in the image of God, and their exercise of their own agency in their lives come first. Development and Peace aims to help people improve their lives with a little extra assistance. That's why we partner with organizations in 34 countries around the world.

This Lent, for example, D&P materials have highlighted a Brazilian organization that has been battling industrial agriculture and mining and dangerous transportation of products. Immediately adjacent to the community of Piquiá de Baixo, an iron mine loads the ore onto uncovered railway cars to make its 800 km journey to a port. Meanwhile the ore blows freely from the cars on this, one of the longest regular trains in the world, into Piquiá de Baixo and other communities along the way. It causes pollution and health problems.

Justiça nos Trilhos (JnT) has been a D&P partner for nearly the entire 20 years since it was founded by Comboni missionaries to support the communities for better conditions. Donations from Catholics across Canada during the years and funds from what is now called Global Affairs Canada, an agency of the federal government, have enabled JnT to move many families to a new community, Piquiá da Conquista, where the quality of life will be better. Father Dario Basso, founder of JnT, explains the new hope, "Known internationally for its tragedy, [Piquiá de Baixo] can become an existential parable of resistance, hope, and the victory of dignity."

That's good news. You might even say that the good news is at the heart of the Gospel, as we try to follow the way of Jesus in this complex world. Popes, from Paul VI through Saint John Paul II and right to Pope Leo, have emphasized the important role of solidarity. Pope Leo even put walking in solidarity with the world's poor at the heart of his earliest preaching and writing, such as the document *Delixi Te*. It is surprisingly easy to read. In it, Pope Leo writes, "God shows a preference for the poor: the Lord's words of hope and liberation are addressed first of all to them... and the Church, if she wants to be Christ's Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes,... a place for the poor to have a privileged place.

Members and donors of D&P across Canada learn about and express their solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Global South not because of the emotional tug of sad faces, but because this is a way they walk in Jesus' path.

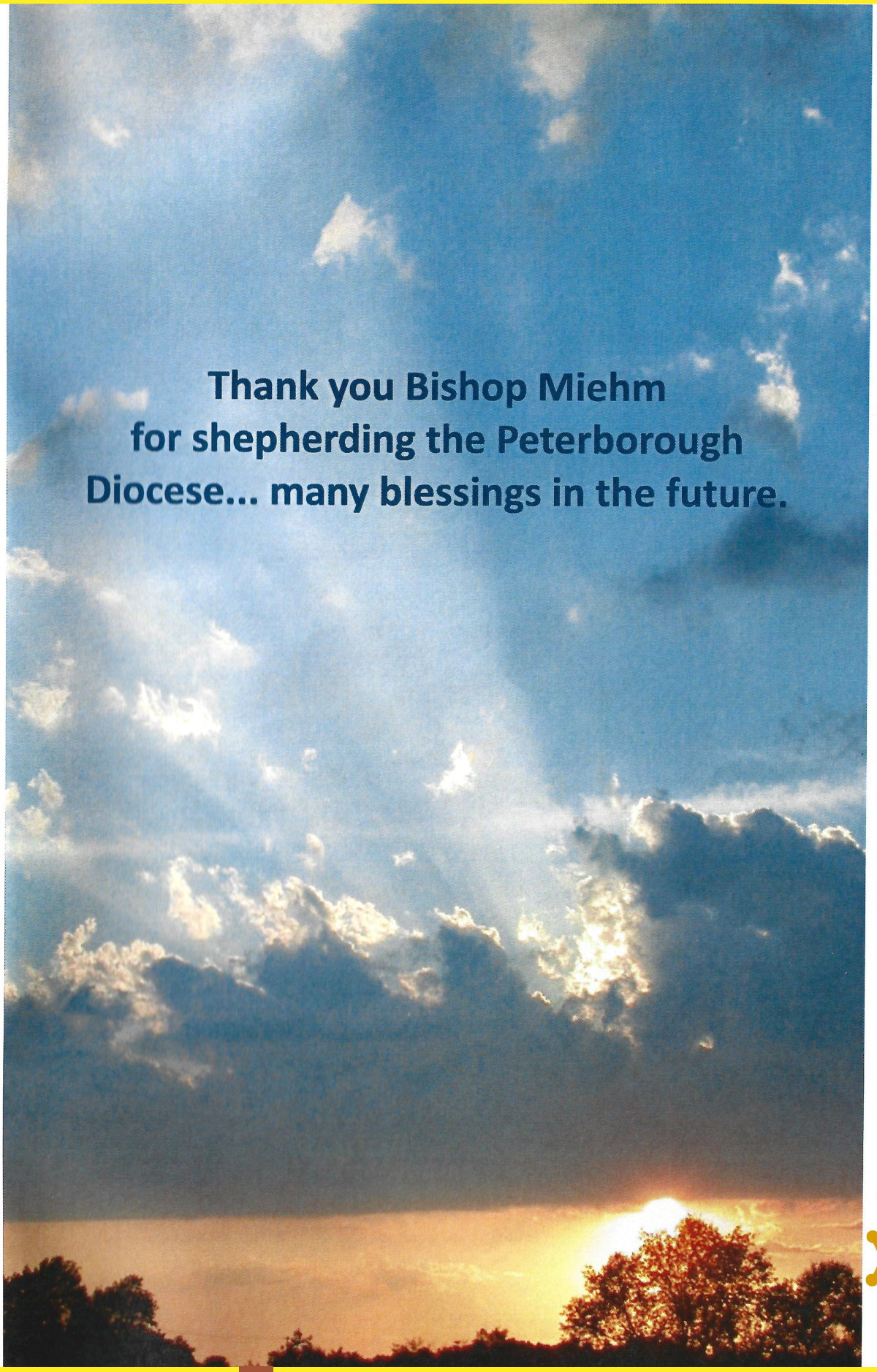
Those partnerships create a synergy. It is a mathematics where 2 + 2 = 5. United as the people of God in Canada, we are able to do more together to promote human dignity and help lives flourish around the world as God intended.

Sometimes the people of the global south feel like nobody in the world is paying attention or cares. But because Development and Peace partners with them, they know that there is at least a little bit of solidarity. And since Development and Peace is the official international development agency of the Catholic Church of Canada, in one sense everyone associated with Catholic churches and schools is a member of D&P.

Of course there are 14,000 people who have explicitly signed on as members, and they receive information opportunities that help them understand the difficulties our brothers and sisters face around the world as well as what is being done by themselves and by D&P to help their situations. Those partnerships create a synergy. It is a mathematics where 2 + 2 = 5. United as the people of God in Canada, we do more to help lives flourish around the world as God intended.



Photo obtained from Development and Peace website; not connected to people or places mentioned in the article above. — ed.


Thank you Bishop Miehm
for shepherding the Peterborough
Diocese... many blessings in the future.

A Seminarian's Reflection

Andrew Roelands

After his resurrection from the dead, Jesus said to his Apostles "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20a). This command from Jesus is called the "great commissioning". This is the call of all disciples, but especially ordained priests which I am aspiring to become. For the last ten months I have been serving at St. Alphonsus Parish in Peterborough, under the leadership of Fr. Simmy Joseph. In this time, I have been keenly aware of this propose - to lead everyone I meet closer to God and his designs for our life. This is the mission of the Church for the sake of saving souls and giving glory to God. It is therefore also the primary goal of parish life too.



Through my time at St. Alphonsus, I have seen God at work in the lives of people I have been blessed to interact with. Much of my work has been with youth in the parish. I spent time visiting over 1,000 students in elementary and secondary schools, helping with Confirmation preparation, and with weekly youth group meetings in the parish. Many young people are seeking meaningful conversations about our Faith, Tradition, and purpose in life. In my work I have been blessed to see some "lightbulb" moments of awareness of the Truth that our Faith offers to them. For example, that everything exists for a purpose and that includes us humans too! God has made us out of His goodness and love, so that we can know, love, and serve him in this life, and be happy with him forever in heaven. I have also spent time with our RCIA groups helping teach them what our Catholic Faith offers them: eternal friendship with God via the Church's Sacramental life. Each week there is a Gospel reflection group where we dive into the Scriptures of Sunday Mass, feeding our spiritual life on the Word of God calling us to conversion. In my time at St. Alphonsus, I have also experienced the work of the Knights of Columbus, CWL, and SSVP where their active apostolate blesses those in need in the parish and wider community.

This work, and more, has been a blessing in my internship. Through the mentoring of Fr. Simmy, I have seen the deeper mission lived out. Parish priests are meant to lead an active life in the world, but this is only fruitful if rooted in a deep prayer life focused on the Holy Trinity and His commands. We first need to be rooted in a prayer life of love and reverence like that of St. Thomas the Apostle when the Resurrected Lord appeared to him. Then we too can help others through our witness, teaching, and worship to also exclaim with devotion "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28) especially each Sunday at the Sacrifice of the Mass when the Sacred Host is raised at the altar for our adoration.

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



St. Peter's Seminary, London, ON

PORTICO REBUILT

PARISH: St. Alphonsus





St. Alphonsus Liguori is one of the few churches in Peterborough with a portico, providing cover from rain and snow when entering or exiting vehicles to enter the church dry. It is also a nice added feature for the happy occasion of a wedding or cover for bringing a loved one to their final Mass.

The church was built and blessed in 1960. Over time the brickwork on the portico started deteriorating. At least 25 years ago it was covered with stucco to stabilize it. In the last few years the stucco started to split and fall apart. The decision was made to remake the wall. With proceeds from two concerts, spear-headed by our parishioner, Ruthie Moher, along with some generous donations, we collected enough to pay for the work. The musical group Misfits, along with special guests, Fr. Paul Massel, Kelly Robertson and Danny Bronson generously donated their time to give all who attended the wonderful performances!

Bouchard Masonry was awarded the contract to do the work and Tom Wigglesworth, a parishioner, volunteered to oversee the project. Tom built a shelter around St. Alphonsus to protect him. On August 4th, 2026 they began teardown and found that under the stucco was a wall of brick on either side of a middle wall made of brick alternating with concrete blocks. The three beams which run from the church to the wall just rest on the wall.

Bouchard Masonry left the middle wall up and replaced the brick walls with vivace stone. It took them 5 and a half days to complete the work and it looks absolutely wonderful - majestic in fact! A nice backdrop for St. Alphonsus Liguori.





SONShine Family Adoration

ADORATION of the BLESSED SACRAMENT

St. Alphonsus, continued

St.Alphonsus Liguori Parish is very proud to be able to offer Adoration to our youngest members of the parish.

On the third Friday of the month, September to June, 9:30 - 10:30am, following the 9am Mass, families with young children are invited to come to visit the Blessed Sacrament in the church. The monstrance is placed on a small table in front of the altar so children can come up and see the Blessed Sacrament at their level and to ask questions and learn more.

We want the children to feel comfortable, like home, so they are encouraged to move around the church and explore. Crayons and pages with different pictures of the Bible are available for them to colour.

If you live in the city or neighbouring area, you are more than welcome to bring your young family to SONShine Family Adoration here at St. Alphonsus Liguori!

Regular Adoration is also offered the First Friday of the month after the 9am Mass for one hour in the church.

Our Blessed Sacrament Chapel, or Oratory, is also open Monday to Friday, 9am - 9pm. It is a small chapel with 4 chairs and a kneeler. Knock on the door if anyone is inside to let you in or there is a key code you can get from the office. Our Lord loves it when you come to visit and spend some quiet time with Him.

The Oratory is located off the main parking lot behind the church, two doors down from the parish office towards the garage.



GOSPEL REFLECTION

We have a great group of parishioners who meet every Friday morning after the 9am Mass for a bit of a social with coffee and treats. After this they take the readings for the coming Sunday and break them down for a deeper and more meaningful understanding.

All are welcome to come join them any Friday (except First Friday when there is Adoration in the church). Come to Mass at 9am and follow them to the Redemptorist Room.

SENIORS FAITH CAFE

We continue to have great success with our Cafe with 70 to 100 seniors in attendance.

In **January** we listened to **Stephen Kyle** talk about the importance of wills and that they should be reviewed at least every 5 years with all the changes in family and laws.

In **February**, **Fr. Tom Lynch** came to speak on M.A.I.D. (Medical Assistance in Dying). Fr. Tom, from St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral, is a Moral Theologian and very well spoken on the subject. It was very disturbing, some of the things he told us.

In **March**, **Fr. Paul Massel** came to speak on his life's journey and how it has come full circle. As an actor he had worked in hospital and now is chaplain at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre.
St. Alphonsus Liguori was his first parish after being ordained in 2000.



OBITUARY
Rev. Fr. Collins Okafor



THE CONGREGATION OF THE
SONS OF MARY MOTHER OF MERCY

Phone: 07066452170, 08066873127
Email: smmmgeneralate@yahoo.com
smmmgeneralate@gmail.com
Website: www.smmmcongregation.org

Generalate
No. 1 Sons Avenue, Ohokobe Afaraukwu,
440001 Umuahia,
P. O. Box 1660, Umuahia,
Abia State, Nigeria.

RC: 10248

Friday, February 20, 2026

OBITUARY ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with a firm hope in the resurrection of the dead and in total submission to the Will of God, that we the Congregation of the Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy announces the death of our brother priest, Rev. Fr. Collins Udoka Okafor, SMMM. He slept in the Lord on Saturday, 14th February, 2026.

Until his death, Rev. Fr. Collins Udoka Okafor, SMMM was on mission in the Catholic Diocese of Peterborough, Canada.

His Funeral arrangements will be communicated later.

We request that you all join us in praying for his happy repose.

May the soul of Rev. Fr. Collins Udoka Okafor, SMMM and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace - Amen.

I remain,
Sincerely yours,

Rev. Fr. Peter U. Onyenwe, SMMM
(Secretary General)

Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy Congregation
SMMM
Umuahia - Nigeria

Fr. Okafor served most recently in: St. Alphonsus in Wooler and Holy Angels in Brighton. He had previously served at parishes in Mactier, Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon.