

Cathedral Connections

SPRING 2020

*We are a Eucharistic faith community, inspired by the Gospel,
committed to engaging each person in the joy of living in the service of Christ.*

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Prayer for our Present Time

We approach you God,
ever confident in Your compassionate
mercy and protection.

At this time, we find ourselves walking in
unknown lands

yet we trust that You continue
to guide our paths.

Our needs are many.

In Your goodness, turn Your ear to us and
hear our pleas.

Give strength to those caring for our sick.

Give wisdom to those searching for a cure.

Give courage to those labouring to
meet our needs.

Grant healing to the sick.

Grant loving consolation to the
frightened and weary.

During this time of fasting
from the sacraments,

help us to find Your presence in other ways.

As we carry this cross, and wait
patiently at the tomb,

keep us mindful of the resurrection.

May Your Son, the Great Physician
and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Peace,
come quickly to our aid.

Amen

– Fr. Michael Béchard, Diocese of London



**For Information on Diocesan Directives issued by Bishop Fabbro and
Resources for Prayer and Reflection, consult these helpful websites:**

St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica: www.cathedral.dol.ca

Diocese of London: www.dol.ca

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.cccb.ca

Salt & Light TV: www.saltandlighttv.org

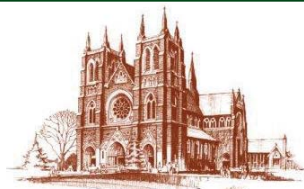
The Holy See: www.vatican.va

City of London -- www.london.ca

Middlesex-London Health Unit -- www.healthunit.com

Government of Ontario -- www.ontario.ca

Government of Canada -- www.canada.ca



**ST. PETER'S
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FR. GARY DUCHARME -- PRAYING DIFFERENTLY

Recently, I spoke with my mother by phone early one morning. After chatting about how things were going in the family, she mentioned how disappointed she was that the doors of the church have been closed to everyone. She understands very clearly why we cannot gather for Mass, but she would simply love to make a visit.

Mom loves to pray the Stations of the Cross during Lent and the church is a short walk from her home. It is extra special to offer her devotion by walking the Stations mounted on the wall to walk outside. I offered a suggestion that she take her Way of the Cross prayer book and walk around a couple blocks in town, stopping from time to time to pray each station.

As she prays, I suggested, she could think about the people in the homes she passed by: the doctor's office on

the corner, the grocery store that seems busier than usual, the seniors center and the schools that are now closed. How is the passion and death of Jesus taking flesh in those various places right now? Can she see the suffering of Jesus on his journey to Calvary, first experienced 2000 years ago, still alive today in the little town where she lives?

I believe this global crisis offers several blessings in disguise as we learn to pray in other ways.

We hunger for the Eucharist and the sacred space of our spiritual home, yet our loving God has not abandoned us. It is up to us to see God's hidden presence in places and people we pass by every day.

Father Gary Ducharme



Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of God's People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

– Pope Francis, March 2020

We Remember...

Mary Catherine McLennan
May 17, 1945 - December 13, 2019

Alojzy (Ale) Olma
February 28, 1925 - December 17, 2019

Mary Kathleen Bernadette Wray
August 23, 1933 - December 22, 2019

Stanislaws Ancans
April 11, 1918 - December 30, 2019

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

Margaret Helen Schwartz
July 19, 1926 - January 11, 2020

Janet Patricia Anderson
October 19, 1967 - February 4, 2020

William Francis O'Connor
May 9, 1927 - February 4, 2020

Maria Valastro
January 15, 1925 - February 20, 2020

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St. Peter's Cemetery is pleased to announce the completion of its latest project which honours the wishes of Pope John Paul II that Catholics renew the practice of praying the Rosary.

The project has also provided for the cemetery needs of those who are more comfortable with the option of cremation and the many choices that this opens up to them.

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Philippe Lauriault and Roberta MacNeil*
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TO THE PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS OF ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL BASILICA PARISH

These days in which we find ourselves are strange, difficult, surreal and demanding. We as people who value our parish community as a place to gather together are now asked to keep our distance. We know it is for the common good so we can protect each other, especially the most vulnerable among us.

We have been shaken from our complacency and forced to confront a reality that has changed us almost overnight. We experience sickness, death, and risk to our health care system and the well-being of those whose lives are changed by necessary closures and precautions.

Our reaction to this can't be withdrawal but a desire to develop a sense of connectedness realizing so many people are suffering in fear.

We need to take care of each other and reach out to each other as best we can.

You are being prayed for these days by all the members of our pastoral team and administrative staff. We continue to work from home and are available through email or phone. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is any need we can assist in meeting. Our desire is to continue to serve our parishioners in these challenging times.

We will get through this but we will be people who are changed. Yes, there is fear, isolation and panic buying. There is sickness and death. There are also people working around the clock for the welfare of others. Neighbours are reaching out to shop for those who cannot. People are checking in on family, friends and the homeless and weary offering meals and support especially to those who always find themselves alone.

We are waking up to a reality that shows us how big we are and how little control we really have and thinking about what really matters. I'm sure you have noticed others and yourself slowing down and seeing things differently and taking the time to reflect:

- Has the pandemic caused me to ask some searching questions?
- Do I see a need to re-evaluate my goals and purpose in life?
- Whatever form it may take for me, do I pray and seek God's presence?
- Who or what is important to me?
- What are my real priorities?
- Where do I seek peace and comfort?

We are realigning our priorities.

We will reach out to those in isolation, making them aware loneliness doesn't have to be part of their day.

Here are some things we can learn.

There is value in knowing we celebrate faith and life with others. We are all on this journey together. To understand that, we need to engage personally with each other, take an interest in each other and invest time and energy to connect with people in new ways during a time of physical distancing.

Our inability to gather for the Eucharist is troubling for us all. I miss seeing you arrive on Saturday evening or Sunday. However, our hunger for the Eucharist can deepen our appreciation for it and point out how many times we have taken it for granted. We may not gather for Mass but God will not abandon us.

Throughout this time many of my plans have changed, perhaps yours too. Life is changed for all of us and lack of control can be difficult to accept. Accepting the reality and speaking about it to God in my prayer can make a difference. If I turn my frustration, disappointment and anxiety over to God I will create a chance to be led to freedom and peace.

We are also learning about the value of silence. We don't always need to be viewing media. Sometimes we do it because we are uncomfortable if there isn't noise around us. But when we are freed from distractions we experience the gift of silence and in silence we can create the atmosphere to listen to God's voice and to those around us.

We are also beginning to value all life as we should. It is a precious gift and these times are calling us to treat all with greater understanding and respect especially those who are most vulnerable.

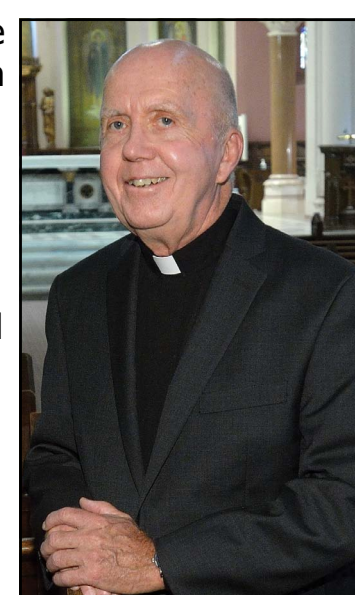
This is a strange Lent. Little did we know on Ash Wednesday we would be on this journey. We are, though, and God is with us.

May we overcome our physical distance by growing closer to God and by strengthening our sense of community as we care for each other.

You remain in my prayers.

Please stay safe and well.

Fr. Jim Mockler



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Bishop of London

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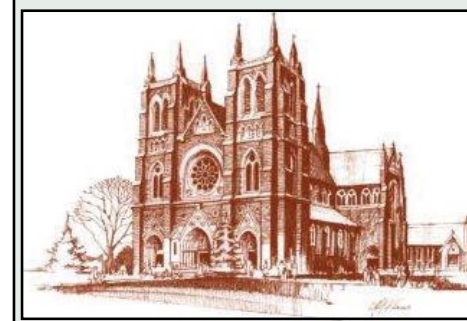
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LIVING IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

When you're living through a period as cataclysmically upsetting as this one, there is an impulse to go digging after more and more news updates and commentaries that will explain what's going on and give you a grip to affix to a world that has become impossible to trust. But if you let this become compulsive or addictive, pinging between doom-mongers and deniers with bylines, I find that the confusion only deepens and you set yourself up for a paralyzing panic or cynicism. I'm not saying they're all wrong or you shouldn't try to keep abreast of important new developments but for the sake of your own mental health, I would advise limiting your intake.

I suspect I'm not the only one feeling a keening nostalgia for those days when you could check in with various news media outlets for an hour to get a sense of how the world was wagging along and then, equipped with that latest semblance of knowledge, you'd get on with managing the exigencies of your own life.

If you learned on the next day that your understanding of a situation was incomplete or one-sided, then you could tweak or shift your perspective a little and carry on in a slightly modified way and see how that worked out for you. There was time and leeway to make those sort of adjustments. Life or death didn't hang in the balance, depending on when or how or where you went about procuring a carton of milk and a loaf of bread.

But what makes this particular apocalypse so mind-shreddingly distracting is the way in which it shows us that actually, yes, at the very deepest and most fundamental level, those are precisely the kind of acts that have always determined whether we live or die; we just didn't realize it because the miracles of human co-operation and economic exchange were tuned with such awesome precision and efficiency that we were enabled to take it for granted and put our attention elsewhere. Now those long-time certainties all seem to be up for grabs.

Whenever I find myself getting distracted by some urgent desire that the world would hurry up and fix some festering problem for the sake of my own peace of mind, there's a sweet little verse by the great Samuel Johnson which I recite to remind me that, powerless as I am to set the world to rights, I am not without agency to at least bring a little discipline to my own perspective:

*"How small of all that human hearts endure,
that part which laws or kings can cause or cure.
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
our own felicity we make or find."*

And so here at last we approach another of those realms which cannot be accessed so easily as in the days before the Corona Virus: religion. Spiritually speaking, I read my missal and scriptures every morning, I take my dog out for a walk

every night in the not-so-wee hours and pray the rosary, but dear God I miss my Church and can scarcely express how disoriented I feel to be going through a confession-less Lent – and three weeks hence, a private Easter – without resort to priests or a sacred space with a consecrated altar on which the sacrifice of the Mass will be enacted.

Three weeks ago on Ash Wednesday most Christians thought they had determined what they'd be giving up for Lent; little suspecting that just a couple weeks later fate and circumstance would up the ante so extremely.

I have taken a lot of sustenance from a recent posting by the American Bishop, Robert Barron, on his Word on Fire blog in which he kicked off his reflections on the spiritual challenges of the quarantined life by quoting Blaise Pascal's assertion that, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." Barron contends that while none of us wanted this particular trial to be visited upon us, we can use this break from business-as-usual to draw closer to God if we "embrace the solitude and silence in a spiritually alert way."

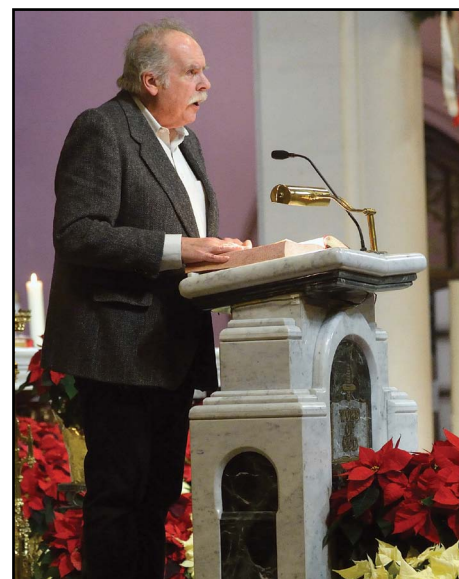
Barron writes that, "The great seventeenth-century philosopher thought that most of us, most of the time, distract ourselves from what truly matters through a series of *divertissements* (diversions). He was speaking from experience. Though one of the brightest men of his age and one of the pioneers of the modern physical sciences and of computer technology, Pascal frittered away a good deal of his time through gambling and other trivial pursuits. In a way, he knew, such diversions are understandable, since the great questions – Does God exist? Why am I here? Is there life after death? – are indeed overwhelming. But if we are to live in a serious and integrated way, they must be confronted – and this is why, if we want our most fundamental problems to be resolved, we must be willing to spend time in a room alone."

So, yes, in this unnerving time of uncertainty and deprivation, a profound opportunity beckons.

Herman Goodden

Herman Goodden, a longtime parishioner at St. Peter's, is the author of a weekly blog, www.hermangoodden.ca.

This article is excerpted with permission from his longer posting on March 24.



Herman Goodden serving as a Lector at Christmas Midnight Mass.

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CLARENCE, THE CATHEDRAL MOUSE – A DIFFERENT EASTERTIME

Lately, I've been thinking about Bible studies and bandages.

Those two topics are probably not mentioned together very often, but due to a small mishap, I began to see a connection between them a couple of weeks ago. Some of you will have attended Fr. Gary's recent Bible study classes. Although I did not sign up formally, I did drop by as my schedule permitted.

(As I mentioned in my Easter column last year, spring is a busy time for mice!) Anyway, I was struck by the fact that so much of St. Matthew's Gospel is about healing. Fr. Gary and many of the participants commented on this, too, as we read through the chapters. People were healed of all kinds of illnesses, some with ailments that others could see and some with ailments that probably only God really understood, but each was healed according to their need.

Now about that mishap...

If you attended Mass at the Cathedral earlier this spring, you will have noticed the scaffolding near St. Joseph's altar. Well, few mice can resist a shiny tower of scaffolding, and although I had planned to give up climbing for Lent, it occurred to me that I should test out the tower to make sure it was safe for the workers. Unfortunately, as I was scampering over one of the metal corners, my tail got caught and started to bleed when I pulled it out. It was only a minor injury, but I did want to stop the bleeding.

Gopher offered to stitch it up, but I've seen his sewing skills, and they're not pretty! So, I searched through the first aid kit in the parish office and found a box of sticky bandages. These bandages were of assorted sizes, not the "one size fits all," and so, I was able to find one that needed only a little trimming to fit. This got me thinking of those people in the Gospel, the ones who were healed according to their need – sort of like the way those various bandages are meant for wounds of different shapes and sizes.

I know this is a difficult time for many folk in our parish and beyond, and so I was thinking that maybe each of us can become like a little box of assorted bandages for others, by offering a kind word, calling someone who feels alone, helping out with errands, or just making someone laugh. Even the smallest of us can do something. Gopher has been planting flower seeds wherever he goes so that this summer will bloom a little more brightly. And for my part, as official church mice are still allowed into the Cathedral, I have been lighting a candle every day for all of you by St. Joseph's altar, although I am keeping well away from the scaffolding!

Just as I close here, it occurs to me that those people in the Gospel stories also went through difficult times, but with the support of their communities, and God's outstretched hand, they got through them. And, I believe, so will we.

I wish you and your families the great blessings and peace of Easter!

*Clarence, the Cathedral Mouse
(with editorial assistance from STH)*



St. Peter's appreciates your ongoing support

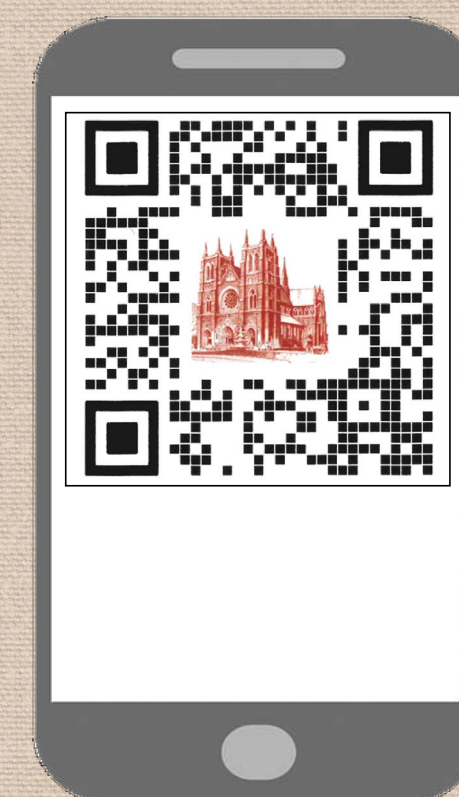
*As a response to inquiries we have received about giving,
we provide the following for your information:*

Methods of Giving during the COVID-19 Crisis

1. Mail a cheque to the Cathedral Office
-- 533 Clarence St., London, ON, N6A 3N1
2. If you have a Parish Bulletin (or use the Mobile Giving ad below), scan or tap the QR Code to access our donation page -- you will be prompted through a number of screens on how to donate.
3. On the parish website, there is a "Donate" button on the top and bottom of the Home Page screen -- you can donate on-line.
4. When on the Donation Page, you can sign up for Preauthorized Debit Preauthorized Giving -- your offertory amount will come from your account automatically at the end of each month.
5. Also, on the parish website, there are QR code instructions in the "About" tab at the top of the Home Page -- just scan or tap the QR code that appears on your screen and follow the prompts.

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1. Place your device in camera mode or open the QR Code Reader
2. Hold your device over the full QR Code.
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4. Follow the prompts to donate.

WINTER EVENTS

AT ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL

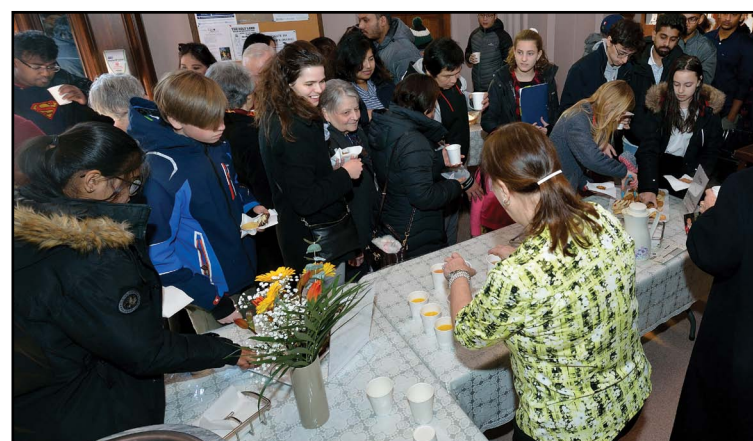


Rite of Election -- March 1

On March 1, Bishop Ronald Fabbro presided at the Rite of Election at the Cathedral. Usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, this is an important time along the journey in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. (RCIA). The Catechumens -- those preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) -- inscribe their name in the Book of the Elect, which is then officially signed by the Bishop. Normally, these Sacraments are conferred during the Easter Vigil, but this year the culmination of the RCIA process will occur at a later date. Congratulations, best wishes and prayers are extended to the St. Peter's catechumens: Jungyon Kwak, Seoyoon (Chloie) Lee and Jiyeon (Bella) Lee.



Cathedral Cafe will return



The popular monthly Cathedral Café, shown here from February 22-23, will return when health circumstances permit. Additionally, the Parish Picnic tentatively scheduled for mid-June has been postponed. When parish activities resume, consult the weekly Bulletin, the noticeboards, the parish website and Cathedral Connections for information.



The spirited "flash dance" to the familiar music of "Mama Mia" was one of the highlights during the "Night Before the Oscars" on February 8. For more coverage of this memorable evening, please see pages 16-17.



The girls' and boys' choir from St. Mary's School sang at Sunday Mass on January 26.

Shrove Tuesday Supper



Parishioners and friends celebrated Shrove Tuesday (February 25) at the traditional Knights of Columbus Pancake Supper. More news about this and other Knights' activities during the winter months can be found on page 15.



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE REPORT -- A SEASON OF CONTRASTS

We were blessed with a mild Winter until the end of February. Following Ash Wednesday, Winter arrived with frigid temperatures and lots of snow. Our St. Peter's CWL members carried on and attended a Lenten Retreat at St. John the Divine parish on Saturday, February 29.

The previous month, in slightly less frigid weather, we joined the Knights of Columbus on January 25 for an annual Winter Welcome "dinner" consisting of salad, ham, potatoes and vegetables, served to clients of St. Vincent de Paul. Deacon Rudy Pflanzner was the Master of Ceremonies, and his article about the Lunch can be found on page 19.



Melrose Paquet, Kimberly Rowley, Julie Sans, Sophia Tacak, Sandra Sanford and Jo Guth serving at the Winter Welcome Lunch.

As a Lenten offering, commencing Ash Wednesday (February 26) following the Noon Mass, a Lenten Lunch was served, consisting of homemade soup, sandwiches and dessert. The Wednesday lunch continued on a "free will" offering basis for two more weeks until cancelled for health concerns. Funds generated from these lunches helped to support many charities through donations by St. Peter's CWL.

On March 1, our St. Peter's council hosted a reception following the Diocesan Rite of Election for approximately 175 people. Food was provided by the Regional CWL Councils.

On March 6, Irene Kennedy represented St. Peter's at the World Day of Prayer at First St. Andrew's United Church. This year's celebration featured Zimbabwe and the theme "Rise! Take up your Mat and Walk."

A similar reception had been planned on April 6 following the Mass of Chrism, again hosted by St. Peter's CWL and joined by 19 Regional Councils. This



reception has been an amazing co-operative effort where the parishes provide the food and refreshments for the reception. Churches from all over the Diocese send representatives to the Mass of Chrism to obtain the chrism oils to be used throughout the year by their parish. Of course, this could not happen this year but the spirit of co-operation will enable CWL members to work together when such joyful gatherings can resume.

One unfortunate cancellation is the Diocesan Convention, planned for April 27-29 in Chatham. It would have been a very special gathering, as we looked forward to joining other councils in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Women's League. Hopefully, it will be rescheduled at an appropriate time later this year.



ESL students helping at a Lenten Lunch with Mary Rose Naudi, Ann Richardson, Myra Schubert and Teresita Oliveros.

All members of our St. Peter's council, along with all of our parish community, our religious leaders and diocesan parishes, our City and the World, pray for an end of this deadly threat to us. May God grant us healing in this and all aspects of our life.

We can continue to celebrate our Lenten and Easter seasons privately by joining in a televised daily Mass, praying the rosary and other prayer opportunities, asking God for forgiveness and blessing.

Our CWL Prayer: Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.

We are anticipating the end of cold weather and look forward to continuing our work for our parish and our community in these uncertain and challenging times.

Dora Dannecker



CWL members preparing the "Oscars" for table decorations at the "Night Before the Oscars": Dora Dannecker (left), Sharron Bernard, Teresita Oliveros, Joan Dalton, Mary-Rose Naudi, Sandra Sanford, Ann Richardson and Jo Guth.

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RON FOX Celebrates 20 Years as Organist at St. Peter's Cathedral

For 20 years, Dr. Ron Fox has brought gifted musicianship, a fine knowledge of Catholic liturgy, and friendly devotion to his calling as organist at our Cathedral parish.

Born in Windsor, Ron took his undergraduate degree there. He then moved to Ann Arbor for his M. Music and D.M.A. (Doctor of Musical Arts) at the University of Michigan. Returning to Canada with knowledge, technique, and musical ambition, his first church appointment was in Woodstock. Next, he became organist at St. Pius X parish (now Holy Family) in London. He also began playing for diocesan celebrations at the Cathedral, and when St Peter's was searching for a new organist in 2000, Ron was well-known and became the successful applicant.

The role of church organist is a complex one, for the musician must have full knowledge of the instrument to be played, complete familiarity with liturgy, and the ability to work with choirs and their directors, cantors, and other church musicians. The role of cathedral organist ratchets those demands even higher. Our organ is a noble and complex instrument, requiring its practitioner to understand both its technical infrastructure and its artistic potential.

As mother church of the Diocese of London, St. Peter's plays host to most diocesan celebrations (the Mass of Chrism, ordinations and installations of permanent deacons, priests, and bishops, etc.), all with exceptional and often exacting musical demands. Ron Fox has proven time and again that he can rise to those challenges.

Some challenges come at unexpected and inconvenient times. One Pentecost Sunday, in the middle of Bishop Sherlock's questions to the *confirmandi* before him, the organ let out a resounding bellow, but could then produce no more sound. This



Some of the many Organ valves and pouches in need of replacement.

was caused by a maintenance technician having neglected to oil the high-pressure blower. I well remember another such occasion: a thunderstorm produced an almighty crash, followed by a similar silence. And then there was the huge inconvenience to Ron when he broke



Cathedral Organist, Dr. Ron Fox at the keyboard of the Casavant Organ

his ankle in 2007. It required a metal plate and nine screws. "During my 12 weeks of healing," Ron remembers, "I had to ascend the circular stairs of the organ loft on crutches, and could not play the foot pedals."

Our Cathedral organ was made by the firm of Casavant Frères of Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, which claims to be the largest pipe organ builder in the world today. The instrument is 19th-century French in character, rather than Baroque, highlighting the Romanticism of the period. The design of our Cathedral with its vaulted ceilings provides an excellent acoustic for the organ. As sound emanates from the pipes, it is carried and amplified by that huge space.

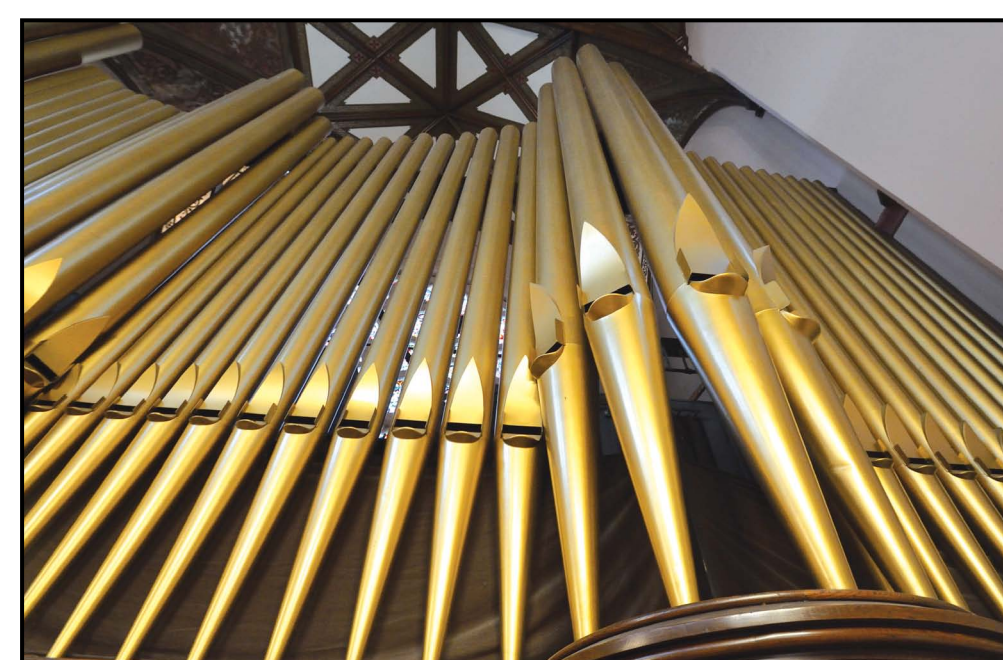
Our Casavant instrument features three manuals (keyboards) – the great, the swell and the choir – as well as a pedal division. It has 59 stops (which control the selection of tone pipes – principals, flutes, reeds, and strings) – and 3,869 pipes. That is complex hardware to monitor, and Ron is diligent in his oversight. At present, the valves controlling air flow into the organ pipes of our fine instrument are being replaced. "Some of those valves date from the installation of the organ in 1926, and their predicted life then was 75 years," Ron explains.

He carefully superintends the regular maintenance of this beloved instrument, and recommends upgrades to its components when necessary. In 2005, a very important improvement was made with the installation of a digital combination action device. "With this I can preset memory levels for all the pieces I am about to play," Ron comments. "An organist who plays an instrument without this particular feature usually requires a helper on hand to reconfigure stops and other controls as playing proceeds."

We are fortunate that church organists are teachers as well as performers. How else could such a complex craft be passed on to future generations? Ron gives instruction on the organ as scheduling permits, and has also taken piano and theory students. He accompanies all the choirs at Catholic Central High School, and in his spare time is a member of the Karen Schuessler Singers, having formerly been the accompanist of that well-known ensemble. For several years he directed our parish's Contemporary Choir, which leads congregational worship at the Sunday evening Mass. "It is a pleasure working with our Cathedral choirs and cantors," Ron told me, "and with the young singers at CCH – they have such energy!"

Besides mastering the musical demands of our church's liturgy, Ron is also proficient in many other compositions for the organ. These are heard in his preludes and postludes and in the concerts he has given both at St. Peter's and elsewhere. Our neighbouring cathedral, St. Paul's, hosts a noon-hour organ concert on many Tuesdays during the year, and Ron is a frequent player in that distinguished series. He enjoys playing the work of French composers for the organ – Louis Vierne, Marcel Dupré, Alexandre Guilmant, and Charles-Marie Widor – but is also devoted to the masterpieces of Johann Sebastian Bach.

A signature work in Ron's extensive repertoire is Widor's Toccata from his Symphony No. 5. When he plays that piece – sometimes after an ordination or as



Some of the 3,869 pipes that provide the wonderful sound



Ron Fox, Gloria Gassi (Director of Liturgical Music), and members of the Cathedral Choir

a postlude on Easter Sunday – parishioners often delay their departure from the church, while the choir remains in the loft as triumphant music from our Casavant organ issues forth.

As a member of the Cathedral Singers who sing at most 10:30 Sunday Masses, I have benefitted from Ron's musicianship for many years. In the midst of playing a complex instrument, taking cues from our conductor, Gloria Gassi, and watching his rear-view mirror to coordinate the organ loft with the sanctuary, Ron manages to thoroughly inhabit both inner worship and outer performance.

Gloria has worked with Ron for most of his time at St. Peter's and values his many skills. "As a singer for weddings and funerals," she relates, "I can rely on Ron to adjust to the singer's breath and to follow any nuances in tempo and dynamics. As a cantor for Masses, I am always confident when Ron is at the organ as he can adjust to any tempo and allows the singer to breathe."

"Ron has the whole package of an accomplished soloist and sensitive accompanist. These are two different skills, which many organists/pianists do not have. Some keyboard players are only soloists and do not have that extra ear to support a choir or singer."

Happy Anniversary, Ron! Your dedicated and knowledgeable work is an inspiration to our parish and diocese!

Hilary Bates Neary

Ron is planning a concert to celebrate his 20 years at St. Peter's Cathedral.

The date of this event is uncertain because of our response to the coronavirus pandemic. But when the coasts are clear, posters and our parish Bulletin will publish details of the concert. Ron plans to play some of his favourite works in order to pay tribute to a fine instrument. His performance on that anticipated occasion will highlight an exemplary record of service at the Cathedral.

WHAT ARE YOU READING – “ALL SAINTS” BY ROBERT ELLSBERG

When we go about our daily routine, it is easy to lose sight of God's presence in the world. The news often grimly informs us of wars, natural disasters, corruption and societal breakdown. We might be tempted to think that we are living in a post-Christian era.

The book *All Saints* by Robert Ellsberg is a powerful antidote to such cynicism. It contains 365 short daily reflections on exceptional people who, by their lives, remind us that our world contains those who are truly exemplary. Many, but not all, are Catholic saints, but every one of them displays the courage and cheerful selflessness that we may lose sight of in our world.

It is remarkable to see the variety of people whose lives are sketched in this volume. There are people from every era, every continent and every vocation.

For example, September 16 features James "Guadalupe" Carney (1924-1983), an American veteran of WWII who, after becoming an engineer, joined the Jesuits and eventually worked with the very poor in Honduras; for this he was thrown from a helicopter by government soldiers.

On October 31 we learn of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez (1533-1617) who lost his wife, children and business through a series of calamities, and then retired at the age of 40 to become a hall porter at the Jesuit College in Majorca. There, despite having no formal education, he had a tremendous impact on countless people, performing his simple job in such a way that they encountered God.

There are stories of musicians such as Johann Sebastian Bach, martyrs such as St. Edith Stein, preachers such as John Wesley, Old Testament prophets such as Jeremiah, religious leaders such as St. Katherine Drexel; it is a list in which we all could find people we would like to meet personally. It shows that as Christ said,

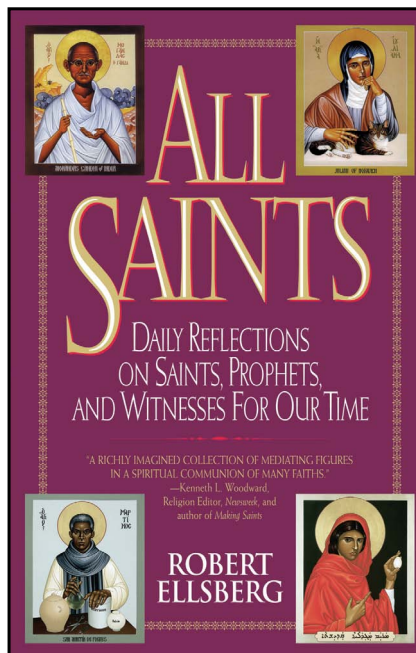
"In my house are many mansions" and that its occupants come from all walks of life. We live in a very big tent.

All these readings are less than two pages long. At the beginning of each person's sketch is a quote. Sometimes it is these quotations that leave the biggest impression: one that comes to my mind is from Vincent van Gogh, "I think that everything that is really good and beautiful, of inward moral, spiritual and sublime beauty in men and their work, comes from God."

The biographical sketches often entice the reader to learn more, so at the end of each day's instalment there are a number of references for further reading.

It is well worth setting aside about 10 minutes each day to learn more about those lives that demonstrate what it means to be truly Christian. To quote St. Philip Neri, "The best preparation for prayer is to read the lives of the saints, not from mere curiosity, but quietly and with recollection a little at a time. And to pause whenever you feel your heart touched with devotion."

Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for our Time*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997. Available on Amazon new, used and digitally at a variety of prices.



WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING? -- THE TWO POPES

This winter many parishioners watched *The Two Popes*, shown both in theatres and on Netflix.

It is an engrossing film, set largely during the period just prior to the election of Benedict XVI, ending a short time after that of Francis I. But it also flashes back into the life of Jorge Bergoglio, exploring his decision to enter the priesthood, and the complex and dangerous life of the church during Argentina's military dictatorship. Much less is imagined about the background of Joseph Ratzinger.

The film stars two consummate actors, Anthony Hopkins as Benedict and Jonathan Pryce as Francis. Its director is the Brazilian, Fernando Meirelles, and its screenwriter is Anthony McCarten. *The Two Popes* garnered three Oscar nominations, but won none. Nevertheless, this film continues to draw viewers and reviewers.

Many of our fellow parishioners have seen it, and several have shared their reactions with me.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the movie. I found it profoundly human. I admired Pope Francis' (at the time Cardinal Bergoglio) openness and freedom to express his views and perspective on the Church, knowing that they would not be precisely Pope Benedict's views. Their encounter showed that through real dialogue people with different views can even become friends."

A second viewer also enjoyed the film. "I'd see it again and I'd recommend it to anyone else. But you have to remember that it's not a news documentary. It's not, well, Gospel truth. *The Two Popes* is just a work of imagination, but I'd like to believe the pizza-eating scene really did happen! It made two high-ranking clerics look very natural and human – and even vulnerable."

The human side of those holding high office in the church was appreciated by my third correspondent who thought, "the movie could have been boring had it not been for the choice of prominent, excellent actors."

The choice of Hopkins and Pryce to play Benedict and Francis was praised by a fourth viewer, but he warned, "I have chosen not to read any reviews of the movie in the media simply because I choose not to let anyone tell me what I appreciate, or don't



Anthony Hopkins (left) and Jonathan Pryce in *The Two Popes*

appreciate, or shouldn't appreciate. It is not a documentary, but I found the scenarios, acting and dialogue very entertaining. I have encountered some people who are not Catholic, for whom it was a catalyst to speak about the Church."

That viewer reminds us that in reading a novel or seeing a film based on history, we must both "suspend disbelief" so that the author or film-maker's narrative seems real to us, and at the same time retain our power to evaluate the truth of that artist's vision.

Another viewer had a different impression. "As an example of excellence in film, there's a lot to recommend: the actors are brilliant, and the director and technical crew certainly have produced an outstanding and memorable experience, albeit with generous amounts of artistic license. However, the skillful interplay of fact and fiction does create an incomplete and at times inaccurate portrayal of the two popes, their differing backgrounds and choices in life, and especially of their differing views on the state of the Catholic Church and the Papacy. And there's absolutely no evidence that the much-heralded "confession scene" ever actually occurred; if it did occur, we would not be privy to the contents.

"The screenwriter and director are clearly far more sympathetic to the life and opinions of Pope Francis than they are to

continued on page 11

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE REPORT

There are a number of projects that we are hoping to undertake over the next few months. Your generosity in the past and hopefully your generosity in the future will allow us to complete these projects.

Casavant Organ

Our beautiful Casavant Organ is badly in need of having all the leather pouches replaced in order for the organ to continue filling our worship space with beautiful music. There is one pouch per pipe which controls the airflow. The organ has almost 4,000 pipes and 4,000 leather pouches to go with those pipes. The work on the organ will begin shortly and will be done in phases as to ensure the organ can be played each weekend. This project will avoid individual pouch failures in the future and is the most cost-effective way to address the issue. If we had to address individual pouches when they fail, the cost per bag would be much higher. Please consider giving generously to support this worthy project.

Coal Bin and Abandoned Tunnel

Our coal bin and abandoned tunnel have continued to deteriorate over the last year and need to be addressed. If there is a collapse of the tunnel or coal bin, our concern is for the health and safety of people and any more substantial property damage. The tunnel and coal bin were inspected by an engineer and in his expert opinion extra bracing is needed. The other option is to infill the coal bin and abandoned tunnel, which would be a permanent fix. The concrete area in the south parking lot that is cordoned-off with cones is just above the coal bin. The cones are there to prevent anyone from parking in that area for safety purposes. Parishioners have been avoiding parking on the concrete and going beyond the cones. We certainly appreciate the compliance by all involved.

Silver Bell Tower

We investigated the Silver Bell Tower or Flèche because it was suspected that water was penetrating somewhere through the structure. There was staining on the ceiling near where the tower is located. A closer inspection with the aid of a drone indicated that there was some wood rot, sealant separation and a pressing need for the structure to be repainted. The Silver Bell Tower is the most

exposed area of the Cathedral to the elements and will need regular maintenance once this remedial work is done. The work on the structure will require either a two-person boom truck or scaffolding in order to reach all points of the tower. If scaffolding is required the cost of the project will rise substantially.

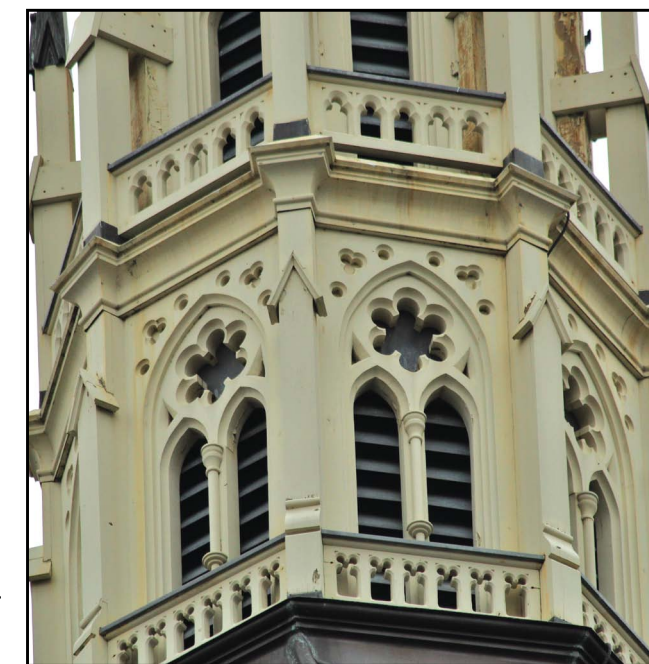
However, this is not a "nice to do" project; it is an essential "need to do" project.

St. Joseph's Altar

As many worshippers have noticed, there is some damage of the plaster around the St. Joseph's Altar caused by water. You will have noticed that there is scaffolding in the Cathedral by the St. Joseph's Altar as well as exterior scaffolding on top of the sacristy and the area just above the St. Joseph's Altar. This issue continues to be investigated to determine where the water is entering the Cathedral and we will develop a solution to address the problem.

Cathedral parishioners have been very generous over the years donating to the many projects that have been necessary to undertake. I would ask that you consider giving a donation directed to our building fund for these worthy projects. Any amount is sincerely appreciated and tax deductible for the 2020 tax year.

Brian Galea



The Silver Bell Tower, showing the rotting wood in the upper righthand corner of the Tower.

WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING? -- THE TWO POPES

continued from page 10

Benedict. As might be expected, far more time is devoted to Francis' career. Benedict becomes almost a foil, and some aspects of his life are simply not accurate, such as the erroneous claim that he preferred to eat alone.

It's a good story, on the whole told very well, but must be approached with a dose of caution."

Finally, one parishioner sent a list of very thoughtful observations:

1. It was both entertaining and thought-provoking.
2. The popes were presented as two different people who were joined by their joint faith.
3. The similarities and differences in their backgrounds were clearly shown. The special background experienced by each of them related to having lived under dictatorships.
4. The deep, common faith of each pope was delicately and convincingly shown.
5. The confession to each other at the end of the movie was heart-felt and humbling.
6. The differences between their backgrounds and attitudes were discussed in a non-acrimonious manner.
7. All aspects of the two popes were shown in a very frank manner.
8. The movie was heart-warming without being cloying.
9. It is a movie to be seen and appreciated many times.

I agree that one viewing is not enough. I want to see the barrios of Buenos Aires, and St. Peter's Square, and the Sistine Chapel, and Lampedusa again. A good friend has offered to invite me over for a Netflix viewing. Perhaps you can do the same.

Hilary Bates Neary

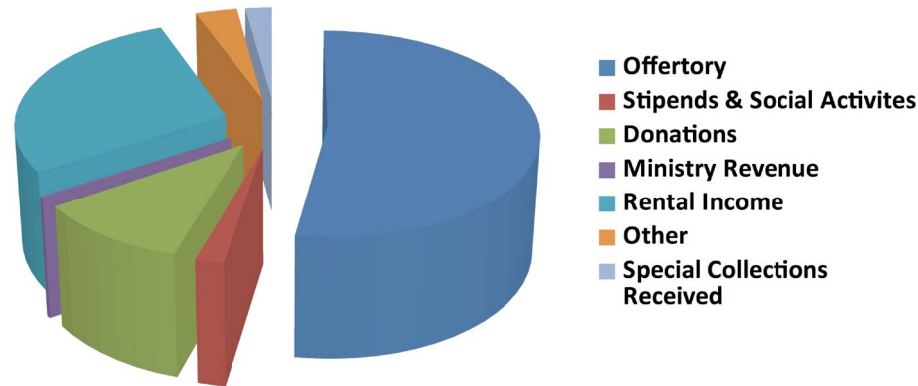
Diocese of London Year of Prayer

**Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,
and fill the hearts of your people with an
ardent desire to follow Jesus,
to be his missionary disciples.
Fill us with joy and a desire to know your word.
May we boldly proclaim the Good News to others;
for when we help others to know that
God loves them,
they will know true happiness.
Fill us with a deep desire for the Eucharist.
May we recognize Jesus in the
proclamation of the Scriptures
and in the Breaking of the Bread;
for when we are united with Jesus,
joy is constantly born anew.
Fill us with a true love of neighbour.
May we seek opportunities for reconciliation,
and with big hearts serve those in need;
for in serving them, we know we are
serving your Son.
With the help of the Holy Spirit,
may we commit ourselves
to loving you and doing your will.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

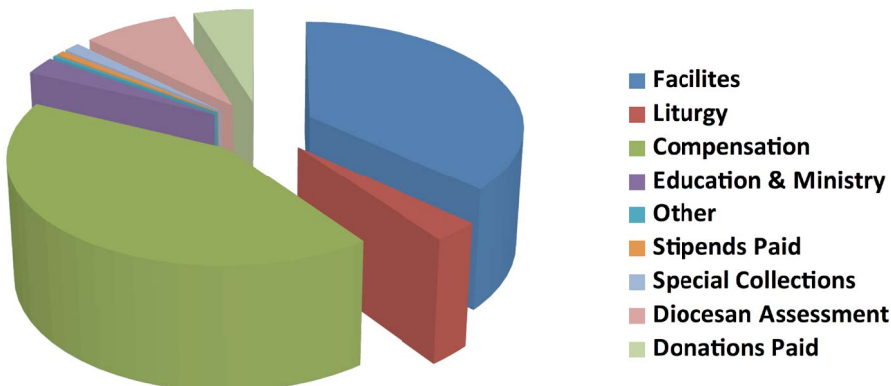
Financial Report for Year Ending December 31st 2019

Operating Revenue	2018	2019	Budget 2020
Offertory	\$725,216	\$717,424	\$730,145
Stipends and Parish Social Activities	\$27,180	\$27,448	\$27,700
Donations	\$67,634	\$148,477	\$84,000
Ministry Revenue	\$5,442	\$5,515	\$5,500
Rental Income	\$370,994	\$386,614	\$398,200
Other	\$49,152	\$48,036	\$48,250
Special Collections Received	\$37,773	\$30,294	\$30,900
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$1,283,391	\$1,363,808	\$1,324,695
Operating Expenditures			
Facilities	\$481,278	\$472,269	\$488,715
Liturgy	\$37,797	\$41,720	\$43,431
Compensation	\$528,532	\$542,302	\$560,217
Education and Ministry	\$37,388	\$34,945	\$40,413
Other	\$3,561	\$4,404	\$5,020
Stipends Paid	\$8,065	\$9,220	\$9,100
Special Collections Paid & Fundraising Expense	\$26,724	\$17,473	\$18,690
Diocesan Assessment	\$102,831	\$102,831	\$104,040
Donations Paid	\$43,528	\$63,904	\$50,625
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$1,269,704	\$1,289,068	\$1,320,251
OPERATING SURPLUS	\$13,687	\$74,740	\$4,444

2019 OPERATING REVENUE



2019 OPERATING EXPENDITURES



FINANCIAL RESULTS -- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What projects are expected to be completed in 2020?

We expect to complete three projects in 2020 and have been good stewards of our building fund to ensure we can cover 75% of the costs without having to appeal for a large amount of funds or ask for a large loan from the Diocese.

The Silver Bell Tower (the Flèche) has a number of leaks and requires extensive work on the exterior and interior of the structure to stop the leaking. This project will need a great deal of planning, scaffolding and labour hours to complete.

The second project is to fill in the old coal bin with gravel and sand, which would make it safe to accommodate parked cars next to our shop and storage room. We would then be able to remove the vehicle cones that currently surround that area.

The third project has to do with our beloved Casavant Organ which is in desperate need of new leather pouches that generate the air through the pipes which makes the beautiful music that fills the Cathedral. This will be a lengthy project done over time as we know the organ is an integral part of our liturgy and we want to ensure it is available every weekend.

Parishioners have been very generous with their donations and bequests to our Restoration (building) Fund over the last couple of years. This generosity has allowed us to undertake these projects. Any financial donations to our Restoration Fund allow us to undertake large projects to maintain and improve the Cathedral. Thanks once again for your generosity.

Why would I change from envelopes to pre-authorized giving which comes out of my account once a month for the offertory?

1. The Cathedral does incur a significant expense producing the envelopes and any savings in this area go to our programs, ministries and outreach.
2. Any envelopes that do not have to be produced helps our environment—every little bit helps.
3. It saves time for our volunteers who have to count the collection

each week. These are dedicated individuals who donate a significant amount of time to get this task completed; therefore, it is appreciated when we can make the work a little lighter.

4. Pre-Authorized Giving allows us to more accurately predict our revenue and stabilize the offertory on a month-to-month basis.

What does rent represent on the Financial Report?

The largest portion of rent is generated by renting the parking lots during the day to office employees working downtown. We also generate rent from night, weekend and special event parking. In addition, rent includes tenant rents that are collected on a monthly basis from our tenants in the Parish Centre. Lastly, event rentals of the remaining rooms we have available also generate revenue. The rental income line generates 28.9% of our overall operating revenue—not an insignificant sum.

What and who is included in compensation?

A number of components are included in the compensation line. There is the administrative staff which includes the Business Manager, Financial Secretary, Secretary Receptionist and Housekeeper/Cook. The full-time pastoral team includes the Pastor, the Parochial Vicar (Assistant Pastor) and the Pastoral Minister. Our Sacristan who prepares for the Masses, weddings and funerals and other tasks is a part-time paid position. Our custodial team includes one Full-time Custodian primarily for the Cathedral and two Part-time Custodians for the Parish Centre. Our music ministry includes many volunteers but also paid positions due to the time required, education level attained and positions of leadership for the choirs. In addition, most full-time positions have benefits and defined contribution pensions. Total compensation would also include the employer portion of government deductions such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan. All salaries are in line with the Diocese of London guidelines for each position.

Good Stewardship of Parish Resources

St. Peter's Parish Finance Committee is pleased to present this financial report for 2019. It includes a comparison of financial results to the previous year (2018) and a presentation of the operating budget for 2020. Funds received are used to support the continuation of our liturgy, ongoing maintenance, capital projects and our parish's many programs and ministries.

Operating Revenue and Expenditures for 2019

In 2019, total operating revenue grew by \$80,417 or 6.3% over 2018, while operating expenses grew by \$19,364 or 1.5%. On the surface, the results look tremendous -- a surplus of \$74,470 — a great result. But if you look a little deeper, the results were generated mainly by an increase of \$80,843 in donations. Unfortunately, 2019 marked a year where a number of parishioners passed away but many had the foresight to leave bequests to the Cathedral. Their generosity drove our very positive results this year and we owe them a debt of thanks. Offertory collections, including special holiday collections, dropped 1.1% in 2019 compared to 2018. Rental income which includes parking fees, tenant rent and room rentals increased by \$15,620 and offsets a substantial portion of our expenses.

Facility expenditures were well-controlled and dropped by \$9,009 over the year. Utilities was the main source of this drop as we received some rebates from the Provincial Government and London Hydro. In

addition, the installation of LED lights in the Cathedral also provided savings on our bills.

Compensation costs increased by \$13,770 or 2.6% which includes a cost of living increase of 2% and some wage grid realignment. The Diocesan Assessment was unchanged from 2018, which also kept our expenses in line.

Cash and Loan Positions

Our Operating Bank Account amounted to \$129,947 as of Dec. 31, 2019. The committee would like to remind everyone that the parish account peaks in December after the Christmas Collection. However, a portion of this year's increase over 2018 will be used to pay down our long-term debt of \$124,282. Our Capital Building Fund stood at \$160,515 and will cover a number of projects this year including the Silver Bell Tower leaks, some foundational repairs in the former boiler room and replacement of the organ's leather pouches.

Donations And Bequests

Special donations and legacy bequests have always been vitally important contributors to both the current (operating account) and long-term (capital account) sustainability of the Cathedral and its missions. The amounts received in donations and bequests are difficult to predict and vary widely from year-to-year, as you can see from the chart.

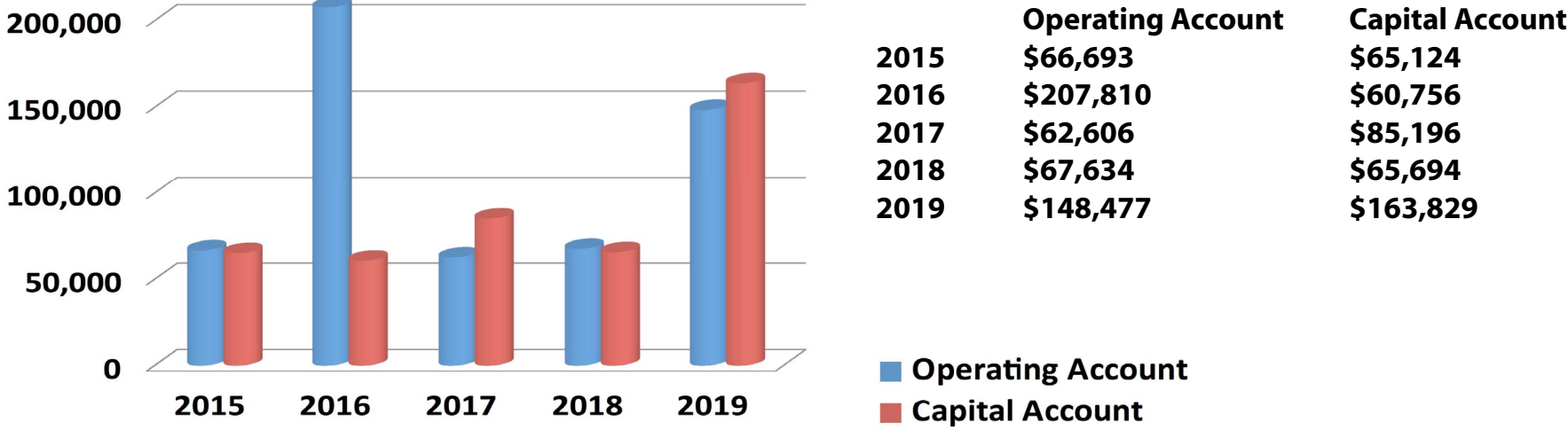
In 2019 parishioners were exceptionally generous in their donations and bequests to both the operating and capital accounts.

Total operating account donations in 2019 amounted to

\$148,477, which contributed substantially to the 2019 operating surplus of \$74,740. Without these donations, there would have been an operating deficit of -\$73,737.

Donations and bequests to the capital account totalled \$163,829 in 2019. This permits us to proceed with several much-needed facility projects such as an overdue overhaul of critical portions of the organ, roof leak repairs, and others.

Donations and bequests, both small and large, are always gratefully appreciated. For additional information please contact Brian Galea or Fr. Mockler.



Budget for 2020

Our goal is to determine the minimum required level of offertory giving, which, together with other revenue sources, will be sufficient to cover our expected expenses for the coming year. The initial step is to estimate 2020 expenses. Facilities expenses for 2020 are expected to rise 3.5% to \$488,715 due mainly to our aging infrastructure in the Cathedral and the Parish Centre. In addition, St. Peter's pays a substantial amount of rent to the Diocese of London for the North Lot and Parish Centre. However, this amount is totally offset by revenue from both properties which provides a large contribution to rental income.

Compensation costs are expected to increase by 3.3% including a 2% cost of living increase. The budgets for all other categories are in line with 2019 levels.

Overall the 2020 budget for total operating expenses shows an increase of 2.4% or \$31,183 which is in line with the expected inflation rate. Rental revenue is expected to rise 3.0% mostly driven by parking revenue. Donations show a substantial drop from 2019 as bequests and donations are sporadic and cannot be relied upon as a large portion of the Cathedral's revenue year to year.

Our 2020 Parish goal for offertory giving is \$730,145 based on the amount of expenses budgeted in 2020. The amount of growth for offertory giving is a 1.7% increase, which amounts to 17 cents on a \$10 donation. An offertory donation does not have to increase in increments of \$5.00 or \$10.00. A small increase will assist in reaching our collective target for 2020. Our budget should generate a small surplus of \$4,444.

Comments

Our goal is to be good stewards of the financial resources provided by St. Peter's parishioners. Our 2020 budget indicates a need for a moderate 1.7% increase in total Offertory giving over 2019 in order to meet expected expenses. We cannot thank you enough for your consideration and ongoing generosity in helping the Cathedral to meet this goal.

If you have any questions that will assist in clarifying anything for you, please contact any of us.

Fr. Jim Mockler Rector Brian Galea Business Manager Jay Jeffery Chair, Finance Committee

LEAVING A LEGACY

A legacy gift is a planned future gift that designates some part of an individual's estate to a non-profit organization, such as a church. Gifts of this nature enable individuals to create a powerful philanthropic legacy by making a direct impact on the causes that are important to them.

This past year several legacy gifts benefitted our parish in a number of ways. We had an influx of \$78,477 over what was expected (budgeted) for 2019 in donations coming largely from legacy gifts. In addition, our building fund account (or capital account) as of the end of December rose by \$97,556 over the previous year. As parishioners, we need to be thankful that those generous individuals had the forethought to include St. Peter's Cathedral when making their estate plans.

These legacy donations are of great significance for the Cathedral Parish and help us in a variety of ways. Currently, we have numerous projects that need to be completed. For instance, the flèche on the Cathedral roof needs to be repainted and waterproofed. The coal bin under the parking lot needs to be filled and secured in order to be considered safe. In addition, the Casavant organ's pouches (*see picture*) need to be replaced so it can continue to fill the Cathedral with beautiful music. These legacy gift donations will aid the parish in completing such projects.

In order to make a legacy gift, a document of high importance is a will. A will is a legal document that contains directions on how your estate will be distributed. It allows you to benefit the people and causes that are important to you. A will also names one or more representatives who will be responsible for carrying out your wishes, called an Executor. It is also important that you revisit your will periodically or when a major life event takes place to ensure it is up to date and reflects your current wishes.

Legacy gifts may include some of the following assets: a specified amount of your estate distribution can be named in the will to be allocated to the Cathedral; the gift of real estate

could be given which can then be resold; life insurance is also a tax-efficient way to create a legacy gift naming the Cathedral as a full or partial beneficiary. You could also donate through annuities, TFSA's, RRSP's or RRIF's by naming the Cathedral as a full or partial beneficiary of the value in those accounts. As well, securities or shares of corporations can be gifted to the Cathedral.

A significant benefit of making a legacy gift for the donor can be lowering taxes owed on your estate, which also benefits your heirs. In addition, your gift will help the Cathedral to serve the community now and in the future. Your contribution would support the spiritual needs of future generations as well as support pastoral ministries such as sacramental preparation, visiting the sick and homebound, and visits to long-term care facilities. Contributions for the upkeep of our historic Cathedral are very much appreciated, as we have many projects and required maintenance on an ongoing basis.

It is very important to get professional advice when considering making a legacy gift donation through a lawyer and financial planner. St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica has been generously supported by its parishioners throughout the generations and continues to be supported by today's generation. Please consider the Cathedral when crafting your will and help ensure that the parish can serve the needs of future parishioners to come.

Brian Galea



The pouches on the left are new pouches and the pouches on the right are old pouches (these pictures are from a different organ). You can see a crack on one of the pouches on the right which would prevent the note from playing.

MASS FOR THE UNBORN

On Friday, December 27, Bishop Fabbro presided over the Mass for the Unborn at the Cathedral, assisted by Fr. John Jasica and Fr. Pio D'Oria. The Entrance Procession included members from the Catholic Women's League and the 4th Degree of the Knights of Columbus.

The evening began with praying the Rosary and reciting the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Prayers were offered for the value and dignity of the human person to be respected from conception to natural death. Also, prayers were offered for the protection of the unborn child and for those impacted by abortion.

This annual Mass began about 20 years ago under the leadership of Steve Sylvain, and Tony Nother, a member of the Knights council at St. John the Divine parish, has been "carrying the torch" for about eight years. Tony was thoroughly impressed with how many volunteers, including many members from our own council, assisted at the event.

In his homily, Bishop Fabbro directly addressed the pro-life movement. He encouraged all the pro-lifers to never lose heart, despite the ridicule and opposition that one faces when trying to build a culture of life. He commended the

pro-lifers for their great work in standing up for the dignity of the human person. Moreover, he told everyone, "never be afraid to proclaim the Gospel in today's society."

Tony found the Bishop's words to be very encouraging. "I appreciated how eloquent the Bishop spoke about the importance of keeping up a strong pro-life presence in our community," he said.

Tony is already hard at work in planning for the next Mass for the Unborn, scheduled for Monday, December 28, 2020 at 7:00pm. As usual, the ceremony will begin with praying the Rosary and Chaplet of Divine Mercy, followed by the celebration of Mass. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend this important diocesan event.

Roger Khouri



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS REPORT – A BUSY LENT AND HOPEFUL PLANS

To begin with some "catchup-up" news that's very important to our St. Peter's Council: during our Christmas social held on December 12, our council received the prestigious Columbian Award. I had the pleasure of personally receiving it from Kevin Belanger, the District Deputy. It recognized the hard work that our council did throughout the year in serving the parish and community with our events and activities. And, the new year wasn't going to hold us back either!

Shortly after celebrating Christmas, our council joined in assisting at the Mass for the Unborn on December 27. Bishop Fabbro celebrated this annual Mass and many of our Knights were serving on the altar and around the parish.

On January 25, our council teamed up with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Catholic Women's League to provide a free meal for the needy of the downtown core. For me, not only does this serve to address the growing challenge of poverty in our community, but it highlights the effective role that three parish ministries can play. It is awesome to see how each ministry co-operated in working with one another to put on a successful event. There's strength in numbers, and for me, there's also strength in collaborating with fellow parish ministries. (*Check Deacon Rudy's article on page 19.*)

Fittingly, on that same day, two of our Knights received their 2nd and 3rd Degrees at a ceremony at St. Andrew's Parish. Congratulations to Jithin Thomas and Juan Rojas!



Juan Rojas and Jithin Thomas

On February 8, the Catholic Women's League staged the gala Night Before the Oscars – a very successful event at our parish! Our Knights assisted by staffing the bar and also aided in the planning and organizing of the festive evening. Congratulations to the CWL for the innovative concept of doing this type of gathering at the parish. (*Lots more coverage of the "Night" on pages 16-17.*)

To help get Lent started off right, our council rolled up our sleeves on February 25 for our annual Shrove Tuesday dinner; we had a record-setting night by serving over 150 guests. Thanks to all the Knights who did double-duty to help keep up with the large turn-out of parishioners. Everyone left with full tummies and a smile on their face, and that's what we like to see!

During Lent, we have been meeting on Wednesday nights to pray the Rosary. When we became Knights, we all received a Rosary and were asked to keep it with us and to pray it every day. By meeting once a week to do this spiritual exercise, our fraternity as Knights can grow and our faith can be re-enforced.

In light of the COVID-19 situation, our activities as a council have been suspended. Therefore, assisting the food bank with the Spring Food Drive, our upcoming parish breakfast and our planned Italian Night, have all been put on hold pending the resolution of the outbreak.

Looking ahead to June, we do have tentative projects already being planned. They are annual events that will be held pending the outcome of the suspension of Knights' activities. First, the Ivan Shea Memorial Golf Tournament will be on Saturday, June 6 with proceeds benefitting My Sister's Place. It will take place at Mapleridge and cost is \$95/person (early bird is \$85). Then, on Saturday, June 20, in co-operation with four other Knights' councils, we will hold the Columbian Service Day. To highlight the core values of our Order – charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism – activities will be held throughout the day. It will begin with cooking and serving breakfast at St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre, followed by prayers at St. Peter's Cemetery, a wreath-laying for our fallen military, then Mass and a dinner.



Diners of all ages enjoyed a seemingly endless supply of pancakes at the Knights' annual Shrove Tuesday supper.



Thanks to everyone for your support and for your patience. Hopefully, we will get back into the "swing of things" in the near future. Our Knights are raring to go with more parish and community supports.

Roger Khouri



Night Before the Oscars

On February 8, a parishioner's four-year dream finally materialized. Julie Sans, President of the CWL, had envisioned a dinner/dance spectacular centered on the Oscars and hosted by the CWL, but the timing was always an issue. This year, the Oscars were scheduled in the period before Lent, which provided the perfect opportunity for the gala.

A committee including Julie, Jane Jeffery, Sandra Sanford, Albin Kmet, Ed Kabel, Anna and Nathan Marchand, Marian Strom, Roger Khouri, Elizabeth Wasko and Catherine Sexton put together this wonderful evening. Many, many additional volunteers worked tirelessly to create flyers, sell tickets, transform the St. Peter's gym into a red-carpet venue, learn and perform an energetic flash dance, and undertake all of the many tasks necessary to ensure the success of the night.

When asked whom they would like to thank, they cited several companies who donated materials, including: Holiday Print, Landmark Cinemas, Silvercity--Cineplex, London Community Players--Palace Theatre, Hyland Theatre and Cowbell Brewing Company. In addition, Fr. Jim added his thanks to the CWL and the volunteers who had hosted such a wonderful community-building event.



The transformation of the St. Peter's gym was incredible. Lights were dimmed; balloons, twinkle lights and stars adorned the room. A large mural covered one wall and movie posters were hung throughout. Guests dressed in their best Oscar finery entered along the red carpet leading you past a video of clips from Oscar presentations from the 40s, 50s and 60s, which were accompanied by Oscar-winning tunes. Each table had Oscar trivia, and ballots for the Oscars being held the next evening were offered. Congratulations to Emily Rouse, who won the voting by correctly predicting 14 of 24 categories.

Tables were decked out in black cloths, cutlery, dishes and glassware, all rented especially for the event. Catering was done by the Marconi Club and Oscar cookies were baked by volunteers; some treats were bagged by the CWL. The Knights tended the bar.

The energy in the room crackled with excitement and fun. Following dinner, the dancing began when 18 volunteers performed a flash dance to the tune of Mama Mia and they encouraged the party-goers to hop to their feet to dance, holding glow sticks aloft. They danced the night away until midnight! The pictures tell it all!

Dawn Munday



Fr. Jim thanking the organizers, Jane Jeffery and Julie Sans, the CWL and the many volunteers.



Thanks to our Oscars Paparazzi—Morris Lamont and Teresita Oliveros

Earlier this year, you may have noticed a cheerful young couple, Sneha and Jithin, in the narthex at the 12:30 Mass, helping to sell “Night Before the Oscars” tickets. St. Peter’s represents their new parish home and family in Canada.

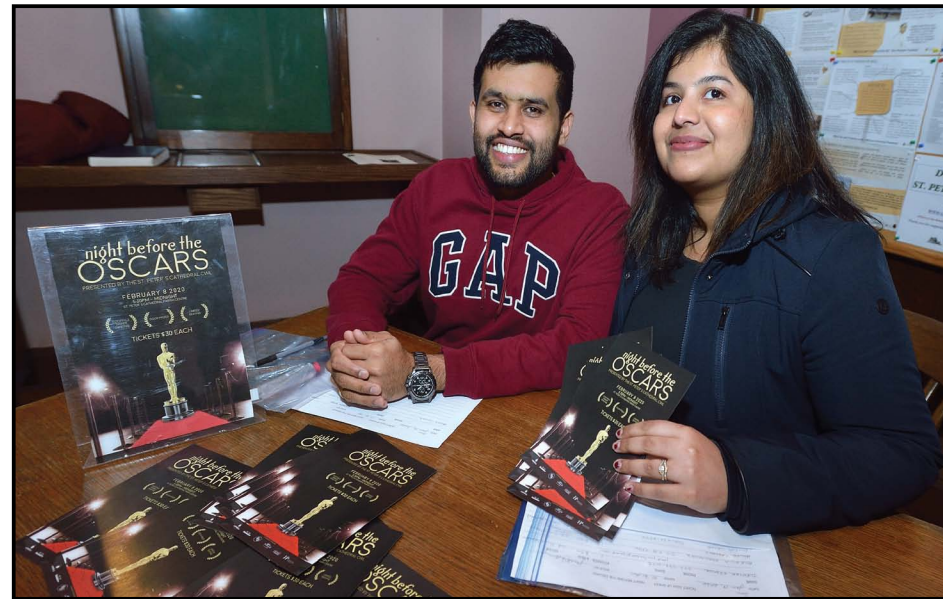
Both are from Kerala in southern India, where there is a large Catholic population, but their paths to Canada were different. Sneha arrived in Canada in 2011 at the age of 19, to attend Fanshawe College; she has graduated from the Developmental Services Worker Program. Jithin had plans to emigrate to Germany, but his paperwork was delayed and he was unable to follow that dream. It seems the Lord had other ideas.

The two had met earlier in Kerala taking an English as a Second Language course, and had remained in touch as friends via the internet. Sneha suggested he consider coming to Canada. He did. Jithin arrived in 2017, and now works in Port Stanley as an Assistant Physical Therapist at Extencicare.

They reconnected in London, and their friendship developed into a stronger relationship based on shared Catholic values and their common background. Their families are very important to them, and they each contacted their parents in a process common to their culture. Sneha said, “My parents’ approval was very important to me,” and the two sets of parents met to determine if this match was appropriate. After receiving parental approval, they returned to India in 2018 to marry.

Their future in Canada looks bright. A licensed Physical Therapist in India, Jithin is planning to get his certification in Canada to pursue his chosen profession. Sneha is hoping to work in a Catholic agency. We chuckled a little, when Sneha mentioned future babies, and Jithin, the practical husband, echoed his father’s advice and said, “Certification first, children second!” They are very excited to have purchased their first home here in London and took possession in late March.

Their strong faith, and steadfast love of the Lord is very apparent. Sneha had originally attended another parish in London, but when she had occasion to come to Mass at St. Peter’s she felt a “positive vibe” that this was where she needed to be. “I really feel welcome at St. Peter’s,” she said, “and I’m very impressed that the priests always greet people in front of



Jithin Thomas and Sneha Scaria

the Cathedral before and after every Mass.” Jithin added that this was not the practice at their parishes in India.

They described how our parish and their own prayer life provide them with the courage to make tough decisions. Jithin said, “My courage comes from God. I am not a courageous person but he gives me courage.” Loneliness is often a difficult challenge for new immigrants, but at St. Peter’s, they found a welcoming home where they could come to pray, worship and find peace and friendship. Sneha said, “People make your day. The small gestures are very important.” The two spend time in prayer every day and are confident that the Lord is present in their lives and informs their decisions and choices.

This is their new home and they are beginning to get involved in parish life – Jithin is a newly-minted 3rd Degree Knight and Sneha has provided a willing hand to the “Night before the Oscars.” They have also helped with the Cathedral Café and the Parish Picnic.

I asked if they had something they wanted to pass on to St. Peter’s parishioners. In reply, they spoke of how students coming to Canada from abroad often feel very homesick, and explained that, “One hello or smile can change someone’s life.” They were very adamant that it is important to engage the young parishioners and make them feel welcome. It was that smile and hello that made them feel at home at St. Peter’s.

Dawn Munday

Looking for a way to get involved at St. Peter's?

At the Cathedral, we have many opportunities to share our gifts to be of service to others, to journey through faith and liturgy, and to assist and support the growth and development of our Cathedral parish community. Opportunities and invitations for involvement occur throughout the year. Please prayerfully consider where you can share your gifts and talents with your parish family.

Liturgical Ministries

Altar Guild
Altar Servers (St. Stephen’s Guild)
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Music Ministry
Lectors
Hospitality-Ushers & Welcome Desk

Outreach Ministries

Community Outreach
Missions Committee
Parish Visitation
Prayer Shawl Ministry

Operational Committees

Cathedral Connections
Communications Committee
Finance Committee
Offertory Collection Counters
Parish Office Assistant
Parish Pastoral Council
Property & Maintenance

Other Parish Groups & Organizations

Cathedral Tours
Christian Meditation
Parish Engagement
Small Christian Communities
Catholic Women’s League
Knights of Columbus
Legion of Mary
Secular Order of Franciscans
St. Vincent de Paul



For full descriptions of all of these ministries, committees and organizations please check out our website – www.cathedral.dol.ca
Contact our parish office to get involved.

Winter Welcome Lunch

Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you!

That is what we kept hearing during and after this past January’s Winter Welcome Meal.

Hosted on January 25, the event (our 12th annual), is “by invitation only” – but no one is ever turned away. Those invitations were hand-delivered in December to clients of the St. Vincent de Paul, as the Society volunteers made their annual Christmas visits to those in need, the less fortunate within our parish boundaries.

A collaborative effort of the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Women’s League and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, this event has really become a favourite.

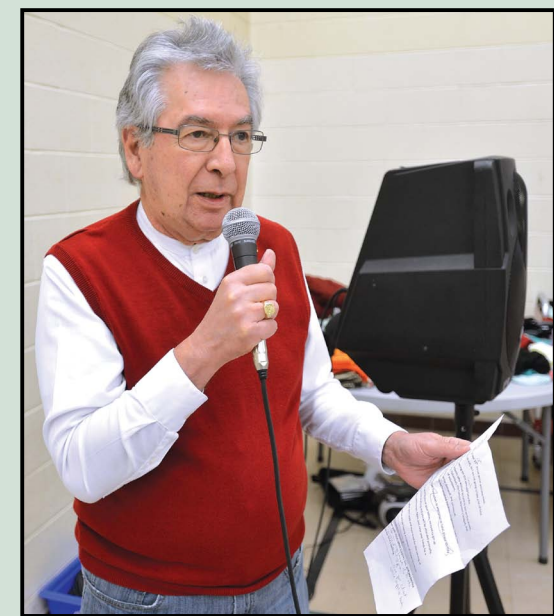
Upon arrival, guests were ushered through registration and into room 105 where they were entertained alternately by talented Mike Zadorsky on piano and George Brunton in stand-up comic form. A fun-time was had by all as they waited for our dining room to open. Once moved to the dining room all were seated and from then on, were served their delicious luncheon by their ever-attendant servers. Rolls, Caesar salad, baked ham, garlic mashed potatoes, vegetables, tea, coffee and

delicious cake. Second’s anyone? just raise a hand. Same for third’s or beverages or dessert.

While all this was happening, a serving cart was making the rounds with donated socks, mitts, toques, scarves, etc. for our guests to choose from. Throw in a few draws for gift cards and you could feel the excitement in the room. Doggy bags anyone? Our guests were invited to take a clamshell dinner home with them for supper. This was one event where no one was going away hungry, disappointed or empty-handed.

Thanks to all our volunteers for their hard work and generosity, as well as the generosity of the parishioners of St. Peter’s who make all this possible. I heard from several of our guests as they went out the door: “Thank-you, thank-you, I can hardly wait until next year.”

Deacon Rudy Pflanzner



Deacon Rudy as the capable MC



From the kitchen...



...to the server



Mike Zadorsky with winter wear gifts

CATHOLIC DEVOTIONS -- THE ALMS PURSE

Between the late 17th century and the early 19th century in France, it was the custom for a beautiful young debutante to collect alms for the poor during Sunday Mass.

One location for this practice was the Royal Chapel at Versailles. An alms-collector (or que’teuse) carried a round drawstring purse of silk or velvet. Perhaps inspired by ecclesiastical vestments, the purses were often intricately embroidered. Unlike a collection plate designed to be passed along a pew, the alms purse necessitated a one-on-one transaction! (During this period, collection plates were used only in parish churches, not palaces.)

Every Sunday, the whole Royal

Family gathered for Mass—with all the pomp and pageantry of a theatrical performance.

The tradition of collecting alms for the poor continued during the French Revolution (1789-1799), even when the government closed all churches. As a result, the sight of les que’teuses collecting for charity became a familiar occurrence on the streets of Paris and other cities.

Napoleon Bonaparte restored church practices with the Concordat of 1801 and a new generation of Frenchwomen took up the alms purse for more than a hundred years!

Joyce Hilton



A modern-day Alms Purse; courtesy of Pieceworkmagazine.com