

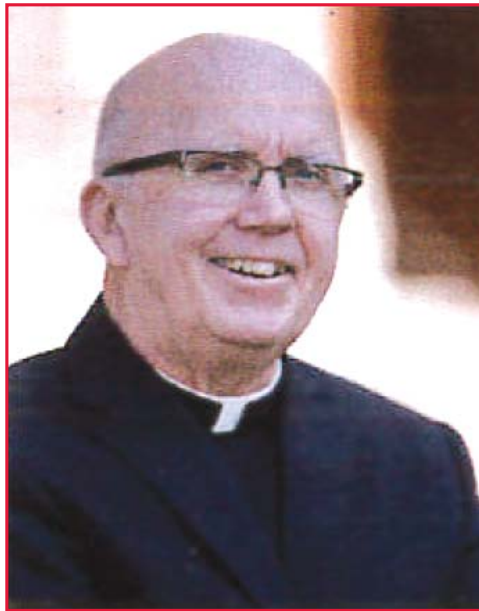
Cathedral Connections

WINTER 2017/2018

*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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A MESSAGE FROM OUR RECTOR



I am writing this late evening on the First Sunday of Advent knowing you may be reading it at Christmastime or beyond, so I will try to make a connection with Advent.

The first generation of Christians realized Jesus was not coming back just yet and their future felt uncertain. Like us, when expected moments don't immediately materialize, their first spurt of enthusiasm

might have lessened. Like us today, they could gradually have fallen into indifference and forgotten him. Instead, those early Christians were concerned that when Jesus came he could find them asleep.

Patient waiting is always seen as an attitude to develop during Advent but this year's invitation from Jesus is to watch and stay awake. We can patiently wait and still do nothing whereas watching implies we are going to be actively looking for something.

Christianity has been lived for over twenty centuries. What has happened to that initial invitation to watch/remain alert/stay awake? How do we go about it today? Are we watching? Is faith for us vibrant and living, or is it dying through indifference or half-hearted efforts?

Over the last few years, there have been countless signs that we need to regroup in

our personal lives, our parish experience and in the midst of new realities. Our parish strategic plan, to which many of you contributed, invites growth, as does the reality that St. Peter's will soon be engaged in a Family of Parishes, sharing ministry, resources and personnel with St. Patrick's, Lucan, and St. Michael's and Christ the King University parishes in London.

In the midst of all the changes and transformation that will come our way, the Church is being asked to have a new heart – to renew itself with the best we have. We are being challenged to shake off our apathy and self-deception and get rid of an image of the Church that does not begin with a foundation in the person of Jesus. Will we do our part to re-ignite the best we have in the Church? Will we support and re-energize the humble and genuine faith of so many ordinary believers?

Advent challenges us to rediscover the authentic face of Jesus who attracts, invites, challenges and awakens.

A parishioner once commented at a meeting, "How can we go into the future continuing to speak, write and discuss about Jesus, without falling in love with him and being transformed by him more and more?"

A Church, a parish which is asleep, which is neither attracted to nor affected by Jesus, is a Church without a future that will decline and become irrelevant due to a lack of vitality.

But who more than Jesus can awaken our Christianity from its rigidity, the struggles of the past and the lack of creativity? Who but Jesus can influence us with a joy and hope in all people?

Many people are doing great things already today. They are actively engaged with bringing gospel values to the cultural, economic, social and



These angels are in a clerestory window in the east transept.



continued on page 2



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

We Remember	2	Knights of Columbus and CWL	8-9
Praying with Scripture	3	Missions Committee	10
CWL Bursary Award	3	Eastern and Western Representations	
Angels in Our Cathedral	4	of the Nativity of Christ	11
Visitation Ministry	5	Splendor of Mercy	12
Clarence the Cathedral Mouse's Letter		Property and Maintenance Report	13
to St. Nicholas	6	Fall Events	14
Community Outreach	7	Gospel of Mark	15
		The Nativity Creche	16

continued from page 1

political realities of our society. The Church is to be a sign and instrument of God's kingdom in the world, and it is our task to make it that.

So Advent is a call to watch more, not as a scare tactic but as an invitation. Where will we find Jesus?

Well, perhaps we could lighten up a bit and, as a start, not get too formalized about it all. Someone once reminded me "How we look for something determines what we will see."

Maybe we can watch for Jesus with an open, expectant approach:

- as children watch for Santa Claus
- as we look for comfort and words to say to someone who is ill or dying
- as a mom and dad wait for children to come home for vacation
- as we scan a crowd in a train station or store looking to see the face of someone we love and who loves us
- as we walk through Victoria Park with our eyes wide open marveling at the beauty of Christmas lights, or when the snow falls seeing the light of the moon reflected on it.

We don't know how often Jesus will come to us but I do know he won't wait until December 25th to make his presence



known in our hearts and minds. Nor will he stop making his presence known on Christmas Day.

Advent is a season of hope, and there's certainly hope for all of us if we can hear the message and respond to it. Over these next, very special days, may Jesus find us watching and waiting to receive Him. He is at hand. He always comes near to us. Where? Just look around.

Along with Bishop Fabbro and St. Peter's Cathedral staff, I wish all of you a Blessed Christmas.

We Remember...

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

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;*

*a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

Audrey Ann Picard

Feb. 3, 1931–
Nov. 4, 2017

Rosemary Teresa Adams

Jan. 13, 1932–
Sep. 28, 2017

Pauline Frances Luzius

Apr. 4 1932–
Nov. 15 2017

Maria Czerniawski

Oct. 15, 1918–
Nov. 19 2017

Adelina Rigor Antonio

Mar. 2, 1936–
Nov. 19, 2017

Carole Ann Josephine Munro

Mar. 15, 1937–
Nov. 13, 2017

ST. PETER'S CEMETERY & HOLY ROSARY WALKWAY

CEMETERY PRE-PLANNING For the love of your family

PRE-PLANNING IS NOT ABOUT DEATH -
It's a Celebration of your Life

PRE-PLANNING MAKES SENSE

- Takes the burden off your loved ones.
- Gives you a voice in how you would like to be remembered.
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- Greater choice of options.
- Eliminates financial worries for your family later.
- Decisions can be well planned free of stress, grief and confusion. Enables families to make decisions together.
- St. Peter's Cemetery offers convenient monthly payment plans, interest free, on all cemetery pre-arrangements.

HOLY ROSARY WALKWAY

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.

CATHOLIC CEMETERIES MINISTRY

*Caring for the living and
faithful departed as we await
the resurrection of the dead.*

*Our knowledgeable staff would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience
or send you additional information concerning our many services.
For further information please contact a Family Service Counsellor.*

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**ST. PETER'S CEMETERY AND
HOLY FAMILY CHAPEL MAUSOLEUM**
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OUR KNOWLEDGEABLE FUNERAL DIRECTORS
WILL ASSIST IN ALL AREAS OF BEREAVEMENT, BE IT BURIAL,
CREMATION, PRE-NEED OR AT NEED SERVICES.

John and Patrick Donohue

John and Patrick Donohue,
Margaret Bloomfield and Lindsay Allen
MEMBERS OF ST. PETER'S

362 Waterloo Street at King **519-434-2708**

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Regularly I meet individuals who wish they felt more comfortable praying with Sacred Scripture. There are many valuable resources available today, some of them printed and others in an electronic format.



One of the electronic resources for praying with Sacred Scripture and designed for people "on-the-go" is called Pray-as-you-go. This prayer resource is found online for your PC or your Apple and Android tablet and smartphone. Pray-as-you-go is created and maintained by the Jesuits of the United Kingdom.

It is a prayerful reflection of thoughts and questions on one of the scriptures of the daily Mass. The daily meditation is about 10 to 12 minutes in length and is just enough to help you carry God's Word with you throughout the day.

Check it out for yourself. Advent is a good time for discovering new spiritual practices.

Go to www.pray-as-you-go.org

Father Gary

CWL Bursary Award



The 2017 CWL Bursary Award recipient, Danielle McCann, recently graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School and is attending King's College University in the Catholic Studies for Teachers Program.

Danielle has volunteer experience with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the London Public Library's READ Program, where she worked with young children to improve their reading skills.

She has also been involved with Anchor Camp for Catholic girls, and had the opportunity to travel with her high school to teach English in the Dominican Republic.

Danielle is very much involved with parish, school and community activities and came highly recommended as an ideal bursary candidate.

Congratulations, Danielle!

The Celebration of the Christmas Season at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica

**THE NATIVITY
OF THE LORD
(CHRISTMAS EVE/
CHRISTMAS DAY):**
Sunday, December 24
5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.,
9:00 p.m., 12:00 a.m.
Monday, December 25
10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.
Thursday, December 28:
7:30 p.m. (Feast of the
Holy Innocents)

**FEAST OF THE
HOLY FAMILY:**
Saturday, December 30
6:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 31
8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.,
12:30 p.m

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD:**
Sunday, December 31
6:00 p.m.
Monday, January 1
10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.
Tuesday, January 2
7:30 a.m. (Memorial of St.
Basil & St. Gregory)
Wednesday, January 3
12:05 p.m.
Thursday, January 4
7:30 a.m.
Friday, January 5
12:05 p.m.

**EPIPHANY OF THE
LORD:**
Saturday, January 6
6:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 7
8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m.,
12:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

**FEAST OF THE
BAPTISM OF THE
LORD:**
Monday, January 8
12:05 p.m.

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Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro C.S.B.
Bishop of London

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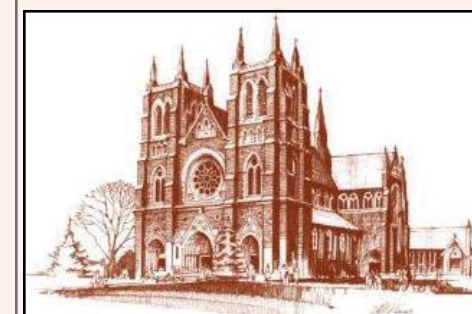
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ANGELS IN OUR CATHEDRAL: THE NATIVITY WINDOW

In Advent, the Church awaits the birth of Christ, the Messiah. Angels alone and in celestial choirs announce and celebrate the anticipated event, appearing as imagery in church windows and frescoes, represented in statuary surrounding the nativity crib, sent in greeting cards, and portrayed in drama and stories of the Christmas narrative.

The Liturgy of the Church during Advent proclaims the nativity gospels, and its music further turns our devotion toward Christ's arrival in Bethlehem.

To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord

Angels deserve particular notice during this season and are significant in many ways. The accounting of the Christmas story, beyond prophetic scripture, begins with the narrative around the Archangel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary. Scripture also tells us that an angel visited St. Joseph in a dream, informing him of Mary's miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

Shepherds are led from the fields to the birthplace of Christ, following a star and accompanied by hosts of angels announcing, adoring and rejoicing at the arrival of our Messiah.

Many pictorial images of angels are represented in St. Peter's Cathedral, enhancing all our celebrations in Advent and Christmas. The largest of these images is the stained glass window of the nativity scene, located in the apse of the sanctuary to the left of the altar.

The iconography of the window's symbols and gestures is extensive, both in the narrative of the Christmas story and also in how it foretells Christ's sacrificial death.

Three angels hover above the central nativity scene in the heavenly realm, surrounded by stars. An arch curved above them is adorned with lily-like flowers reminding us of the virgin birth, but also suggesting the



separation of heaven and earth in the event portrayed. Two angels hold a banner, which passes in front of a central third angel, proclaiming, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo."

Archetypal imagery typifies ribbons as celebratory. The angel on the left holds an olive branch, signifying Christ as Prince of Peace. A palm branch, carried by the angel on the right, points to Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday prior to his Passion, promising the coming of his kingdom. The world expected an earthly king of grandeur; Christ came as a humble Messiah-King.

The angel in the centre with arms upraised in praise carries a banner on its chest that reads "IHS," a conflicting message. Scripture tells us this means, "Jesus, King of the Jews." In the context of Jesus' crucifixion these words are intended as a distorted and cruel message of humiliation. But in this beautiful window depicting Christ's birth, IHS confirms the earthly arrival of Jesus, King of heaven and earth.

The central scene of the window presents the Holy Family adorned with halos. Mary gently pulls back wrappings to present her son, Emmanuel, to all. Mary's gaze is serene yet solemn and thoughtful. Christ raises his right hand in the traditional three-finger blessing.

His halo differs from those of Joseph and Mary, perhaps to indicate his true nature as being not only human as they are, but divine as well. St. Joseph, with



ANGELS IN OUR CATHEDRAL: THE NATIVITY WINDOW

left hand raised in a protective, welcoming gesture above Mary, extends his right arm and offers a blessing that appears to be directed toward the children at Mary's feet. Two shepherds kneel in adoration, one bending low with his shepherd's crook over his shoulder and the other shielding his eyes, perhaps seeing a blinding holy illumination of glory.

Two children are kneeling at Mary's feet, gesturing joyous excitement. One is embracing a small lamb. Lying beside the other is a larger lamb lying on its side, inert, with legs trussed as though ready for slaughter. This symbolism points to the sacrificial Lamb of God.

At the bottom of the window another angel holds a banner upon which is written "Salvator Mundi." This message – Saviour of the World – emphasizes and summarizes the whole meaning of the pictorial narrative of the nativity window.

Evelyn Keep



VISITATION MINISTRY

Our parish's Visitation Ministry, whose mandate is to bring the support of the parish to those whose health prevents them from coming regularly to Mass, currently involves about two dozen volunteers. Our Steering Committee welcomes and trains new volunteers, pairs visitors with those who request visits and also monitors how those visits are going, organizes Masses and visits to those in institutions, and plans the twice-yearly volunteer gatherings.

Six volunteers work in pairs to bring the Eucharist weekly to forty-plus residents at Extendicare and some of these, along with a couple of others, return to visit residents during the week. Three other volunteers, along with Sr. Esther Lucier of the Sisters of St. Joseph, visit or bring the Eucharist to about two dozen residents at Maple View Terrace, Grandwood Park and Queen's Village. For the past couple of years, we have had a monthly Mass for the residents of Extendicare and Maple View and now we are trying to do the same for the residents at Queen's Village. The photo of Fr. Gary shown here was taken prior to the start of Mass there on Nov. 30. St. Martin's Parish provides Eucharistic ministers for Grandwood Park, but our parishioners who reside there love to have a visit from one of our volunteers so that they can catch up on all the news from St. Peter's.

Fourteen of our volunteers visit another twenty-two people who live on their own or at various other long-term care facilities. Most of the time a visit also involves bringing the Eucharist. But sometimes a visit just involves a chat or a visit to a coffee shop, putting together a puzzle, offering a ride to Mass or reading to someone with impaired vision. These are all ways of bringing the compassion of Christ and the concern of the parish community to those who cannot get out to share in parish activities.

We currently have four or five new volunteers who are completing the required police checks as well



as a couple of people with specialized talents in the language department whom we are keeping in reserve until a need arises. The efforts of all who assist with this ministry are very much appreciated. Mary Cahalan, who keeps in touch with those who are being visited in their homes, regularly reports that they are deeply grateful for the attention they receive from our volunteers.

Although we were sorry to say goodbye to Fr. Alfredo, our volunteers and those we visit have been delighted with the way Fr. Gary has been involved with the Visitation Ministry since his arrival at St. Peter's. He has presided at several Masses, at one of which the Sacrament of the Sick was administered, and he has already visited a number of individuals who have expressed the desire to see a priest. He intends to get around at least once a year to see each person to whom we minister, if they would like that. And, at the last gathering of our Visitation Ministry volunteers, he gave a moving presentation on the importance of mercy and compassion, using as a starting point part of a video of Fr. Ron Rolheiser, entitled "Bringing God's Consolation to a Weary World." Anyone who would like to check out this video for themselves can go to the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoO-nlogBwQ&t=1287s>

Susan Brown

CLARENCE the CATHEDRAL MOUSE'S LETTER TO ST. NICHOLAS

Dear Saint Nicholas,

It's such a busy time of year, isn't it? Everyone, from saints to mice (and all in between), has so much to do. However, dear saint, I do hope you will have time to read my letter because, although I've been here only a few months, I've already become aware that our church



buildings need some special repairs. Not that I have been eavesdropping, of course, but when you are dusting quietly in the corners during various committee meetings, well, you just hear things!

And some other problems I've noticed myself. For example, just the other day, I was hurrying through the narthex, and my front paw got snagged in the frayed carpet, sending me rolling under the Angel Tree! It was very upsetting as I was already late for Mass, although that wasn't my fault because the church bells were also running late! (Larry the Sacristan says their timer is off!) Anyway, we would very much appreciate your help.

With my hammer and duct tape, I have been doing my best to help the staff get the Cathedral ready for Christmas, but, well, there is far more than one church mouse can do! I've jotted down a few requests below, but as I wanted my letter to sound different from the letters you usually get, I thought that maybe a little poetry would help you understand our needs better...

You see, I am quite worried, because (although I really scurried) this holy place still needs some repair.

From the bells up in the tower to the carpets on the floor, our Cathedral needs some urgent loving care.

First of all, our bells are failing---the machine that keeps them running is awry!

Now, the timers are not timing, the gears are not gearing, and the chimes are not chiming just quite right.

We need a new gizmo to time the metal clappers or the bells will soon stop ringing "Silent Night."

So, please help us find some donors to keep the church bells tolling every Mass and every hour through next year!

The other things seem more mundane (but are important, all the same):

We need new carpets in the narthex and a cleaner for them, too (ideally, one that squirts shampoo).

Because, from laity, tourist, and clerical shoes, our carpets have begun to fray, especially in the entranceway.

And, to spiffy up our vestibule, for Advent or the coming Yule, we'd like to lay new carpet down, to cure the footwear blight.

Needed, too, a box extractor (sort of like a shampoo-tractor) for keeping flooring clean.

So, if you find a kind parishioner who could supply this floor conditioner,

Please whisper in their ears tonight to make our aislesways nice and bright!

Finally, our Cathedral workshop needs some roof repair.

(I know you will commiserate as every workshop gets its wear and tear.)

Holes have appeared in our workshop roof about the size of a reindeer hoof,

And, though no one is to blame,

The last time Donner and Blitzen came,

There was rain upon the floor!

All in all, a gizmo here and some renos there are what we need this Christmas.

So, kind saint, if you can supply a workshop roof, a clapper controller, carpet yards, or box extractor,

Please stop by to see us very soon.

Or, if your tasks keep you away, please send the earthly saints our way (with some loonies, toonies, or doubloons).

Thank you, St. Nicholas, for again helping us to keep our Cathedral beautiful.

**Clarence, the Cathedral Mouse,
with assistance from STH**

This scene from the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary was made for Canada Post by the artist Christopher Wallis, who also designed the windows in our Lady Chapel.



Thanks to Canada Post and
canadianpostagestamps.ca
for permission to
print this image

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

St. Peter's parishioners continue to show generosity in so many ways, both seen and unseen, towards those in need who live around us.

But I would like to rephrase the last sentence, for it is not simply generosity that we see happening here, it is rather the living out of what Jesus is asking of us, each and every day. God has been generous, to us and we are called, indeed commanded, to share that good fortune with those in need. **This is Love in action.**

As I move into taking on more of Deacon Len's roles within the parish, I continue to be impressed with the efforts you are making towards fulfilling Jesus' call to us of service.

This autumn we had our annual Thanksgiving appeal in support of the Daily Bread Food Bank and the Fellowship Centre housed at St. Paul's Cathedral, which provides healthy lunches to many of our disadvantaged brothers and sisters living in the downtown core.

Deacon Len, Trent Fieldhouse our custodian, and I transferred hundreds of pounds of food so generously provided by our parishioners to St. Paul's.

I was overwhelmed by the gratitude shown to me and by extension to all of you for the contributions you made. In addition to food and much-needed toiletries, you contributed \$1,349.00 in cash donations – these enable the Centre to purchase additional items required by our clients.

I have visited the Food Bank and Fellowship Centre on a number of occasions now, and I am always impressed with the welcome I receive, but even more so by the welcome shown to the guests who avail themselves of the services these programs provide. And, wonder of wonders, I keep running into a number of familiar faces – St. Peter's parishioners – who regularly volunteer their time to prepare and serve lunches and help out in other ways.

The exciting news from the Food Bank and Fellowship Centre is that, as members of the recently formed London Food Coalition, good, healthy fresh food that in the past was thrown away by many food retailers (a sad reflection on what Pope Francis refers to as a "Culture of Waste" when so many are hungry and in need) is now being picked up in a refrigerated truck, which was purchased by the coalition. This food is distributed to various organizations that can now provide even better and more nutritious options for food bank clients and guests of the meal programs on offer. It is a small but significant victory, because it means in part that the lunch program – which often provides the only good meal guests will have that day – will hopefully be expanded to three days a week in 2018.

In fact, in its most recent social services



Find our parishioners in the St. Paul's kitchen.

newsletter, St. Paul's Cathedral refers to the re-establishing of the Friday lunch program, thanks in in large part to support from St. Peter's. New volunteers are welcome to help make this expansion a success. If you are interested in helping, please contact Barb Symington, manager of St. Paul's Social Services, at 519-434-8979.

In another outreach area: I have been blessed with the opportunity of working with our Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It is joyful and humbling to visit clients in their homes, bringing them assistance either in the form of food vouchers, or perhaps meeting needs for clothing or furniture. When able, I accompany our volunteers as they carry out their ministry. The gratitude expressed, along with the cheerfulness many of our clients show despite their extremely difficult financial circumstances, is truly remarkable. I wonder how I, or any of us, might handle living under the circumstances many of our clients are reduced to.

Our SVDP is always in need of new volunteers. Please consider inquiring about how you can make a difference. In this ministry, many hands make light work!

On Nov. 21, the SVDP hosted a well-attended lecture at the Cathedral given by Sister Sue Wilson of the Sisters of St. Joseph, entitled "Scripture, Poverty and Us." She encouraged us to examine how we are living out Jesus' gospel message in our modern world, with its excesses and the disparity between rich and poor. Her message would be worthy of an entire article unto itself.

At the time of writing this, the SVDP Angel Tree is in the narthex and our parishioners are busy purchasing gift certificates, which are delivered when SVDP volunteers make their Christmas visits. These visits are greatly appreciated by our friends and neighbours and help to make the Christmas season a little more special.

Plans are well under way for our parish's annual January Winter Welcome Meal, a combined effort by the SVDP, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League and the Young Adults 4 Christ. This event is a highlight for many of our neighbours who look forward to it every year. More on that in our next issue.

Deacon Rudy Pflanzner

Our Knights of Columbus are Action Orientated

If it seems like our Knights are always hosting a parish event, contributing to the needs of the Cathedral, or involved in raising funds for charitable causes, this isn't imaginary; *it's true!*

When you kneel in the Cathedral, remember that the Knights donated half the cost of replacing the kneelers about ten years ago. To do this, they raised \$32,000 by sponsoring the John McDermott concerts for two years. Recent annual events, such as the Elimination Draw, Italian Nights, Night with the



Three mini-knights serving breakfast

(London) Knights, Parish Breakfasts, and the State Charities Lottery provide funds for charitable works that the Knights support: this report hasn't room to list them all! Recently, the director of one of those charities attended a regular meeting of the Knights to thank the Cathedral chapter for its ongoing financial assistance. Fr. Gilbert Simard directs the **Fresh Start Maternity Supports**, a maternity home for



Enjoying the parish breakfast

women in St. Thomas. He commented on the success of our Baby Bottle drive last spring. Plastic baby bottles were distributed to parishioners to fill with loose change. Fr. Simard reported that the \$3,500 we raised arrived at a time of particular need.

Until 2010, that maternity home was known as "Rehoboth Home," and the Knights supported it by selling small rose badges on Rose Sunday – usually Mother's Day. Rehoboth is the name of a well in Genesis (26:22) where Isaac said, "Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land." Thus, "Rehoboth" could mean "God has made room for us all."

This fall, we participated in a new program to assist needy families who struggle to clothe their children with warm winter coats. **Coats for Kids** is an international program whereby Knights councils across North America can purchase winter coats at a discount for distribution to children in their local communities. This year, our council

bought **three cases of coats** costing \$300 per case, and the coats were distributed to children through the London District Catholic School Board.

In November, the Knights held two successful functions. The Elimination Draw Social on the 11th attracted a near capacity crowd, and featured a buffet dinner, cash bar, and the Tom Linden Band. That group is known for playing music from the 50's and 60's, including rock 'n roll, that drew dancers of all ages to the floor. At one point the band led the crowd in a rousing chorus of "My, My, My, Delilah"!

A Parish Breakfast on the 26th drew many hungry parishioners after the 8:30 and 10:30 Masses.

The Order of the Knights of Columbus has been called the "strong right arm of the Church." Its international membership has grown to 14,000 councils with 1.8 million members in 14 countries. Popes, bishops, presidents and other world leaders have praised the Order for its support of the Church and Catholic education, and its aid to those in need.

Not to be undone, our Council 13404 has received numerous accolades and recognition for its accomplishments over the years. Since 2003, it has received 24 honours, including awards for community projects and membership retention, a regional

Best Council award in 2012-2013, Vocation Sponsorship Awards, as well as a Trillium Award. Our awards and plaques are proudly displayed in the Knights' Council Chamber on the 2nd floor of our Parish Centre, and presently fill two display cabinets.

Knights not only assist others, but also provide members excellent opportunities for friendship and fraternity in a Catholic setting. **Membership isn't all work!** After each monthly meeting, members linger for refreshments and conversation. Each summer, we organize a golf tournament and barbeque for members, spouses and friends. Membership becomes a lasting bond for many long-term friendships.

There is only one qualification for men over the age of 18 to join the Knights of Columbus, namely that they be practising Catholics.

For more information, contact Sir Knight Larry Barrett at 519-657-0819.



Mitch Lenko

ST. PETER'S PARISH CWL Annual Christmas Bazaar



St. Peter's Catholic Women's League held a most successful bazaar on Saturday, December 3rd.

It was patronized by many parishioners and Londoners looking for bargains, excellent baking and jam, religious items, supplies and decorations for Christmas, beautiful plants and much, much more.



That pie was perfect.

Wow! Mary, you still got it!



A beautiful quilt for a cold winter's night



A table of holy images

Baked goods and preserves were sold in a jiffy.

Who is that funny looking camera man?



A room of books and toys and friends

The greenest corner of the gym



Gifts galore!



MISSIONS COMMITTEE

“Let us love, not with words but with deeds”

In the closing paragraph of his first message for the celebration of the **World Day of the Poor**, Pope Francis wrote:

This new World Day, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practise in our lives the essence of the Gospel.

As our Holy Father says, “the poor are not a problem,” they are often the means by which we put forward our best selves. Their presence in our lives can prevent us from being self-absorbed and overly consumed by the material “stuff” of the world in which we are daily immersed. I’m convinced that many of us know that we must strive to do more and to give more to those who have less than we do. I state this because I see great generosity flowing from our parishioners whenever there is a natural disaster or political crisis wreaking havoc somewhere around the globe. People want to help and look for ways to alleviate suffering.

Let me share with you a few important initiatives the Missions Committee has been supporting lately as we put our love into action by promoting ongoing development.



Development and Peace

First is our partnership with Caritas Canada/Canadian Organization for Development and Peace. This year Development and Peace is celebrating its 50th anniversary as the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada and the Canadian member of Caritas Internationalis whose headquarters are in Rome. For fifty years, Caritas Canada has been assisting good people like you and I learn more about poverty, issues of injustice, promotion of peace and many other development strategies for our sisters and brothers in the global south primarily, in our own country and wherever there is need. We are being taught how to effectively raise a voice of concern for those suffering injustice.

During the month of November we presented the parish with the 2017 Fall Education and Action campaign entitled, **May Peace Be With Her**. This is an education program explaining how the role of women is essential in peace negotiations. In the campaign literature you may have read: *Statistics show that when women are involved in peace negotiations, the resulting agreements are 35% more likely to succeed. The political participation of women is also a key factor in creating peaceful societies. When 35% of parliamentarians are women, the risk of relapse into conflict is near zero. Yet, only 2% of international funding dedicated to peace and security is allocated to equality between women and men or the empowerment of women.* The action component of the fall campaign was to call upon our Prime Minister and the Canadian government... *to go beyond words to ac-*



Pope Francis with children in Manila, Philippines.

tion by supporting women and women’s organizations who are working for peace, and by adopting a tangible strategy with a precise time frame for reaching the goal of dedicating 0.7% of the gross national income to development assistance.

If you have not had an opportunity to participate in this fall’s Education and Action campaign it is not too late. All the information you need and the opportunity to add your personal request to call our government to action is available at the Development and Peace website www.devp.org

Chalice Christmas Gift Project

Every year the Missions Committee makes a \$1,000 contribution to support a development activity somewhere in the world. Each October I receive a Christmas gift catalogue from Chalice Canada, an organization which focuses on nurturing the special relationship between a sponsor and a sponsored friend (child/family). Chalice recognizes that, when given the support and encouragement, caregivers will make good decisions that benefit their family. They will set their children up for success by making sure they go to school, eat nutritious meals, and receive proper medical care. We also know that the best people to decide what a community needs to thrive are those who live there. The Chalice Christmas gift catalogue offers many great suggestions for providing support and assistance to individuals or communities in need.

Our donation will assist in providing 1) textbooks and educational supplies, 2) general medications, and 3) a system for clean and safe drinking water for a community. If you are looking to share your good fortune with those who would truly appreciate your help, consider purchasing a Christmas gift through the Chalice catalogue. Go to www.chalice.ca for more information.



Support for the Mission Diocese of Whitehorse

The Bishops of Canada have organized all Dioceses to offer spiritual and financial support to the six Mission Dioceses in Canada. The Diocese of London has been paired with the Diocese of Whitehorse in the Yukon Territories. Since this announcement, our parish’s Missions Committee has been in conversation with Bishop Héctor Vila, Bishop of Whitehorse, and his

EASTERN and WESTERN REPRESENTATIONS of the NATIVITY of CHRIST

In the Roman Catholic Church, Christ’s nativity is usually represented in a single tableau that brings together characters from the Gospel of Luke (Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus, the singing angels, the shepherds with their sheep) and from the Gospel of Matthew (Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus, the star and the magi). Jesus is presented as lying in a manger in a Bethlehem stable, following the lucan account. The holy gospel figures – Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the angels – all wear halos. And, although many details of their accounts differ, Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus’ true identity was recognized first by those whose status before God may have been doubtful because they were poor folks or foreigners.

Unlike the gospels of Matthew and Luke, neither Mark’s nor John’s has an infancy narrative. But the Gospel of John does, in its prologue, present us with the radical claim that God’s own eternal divine Word, God’s agent in creation, God’s only-begotten son, became flesh, became one of us. Why? To reveal God to us and to enable human beings to become God’s children, sharing in the divine life! In John 3:16 we are told that it was out of love for the world, and so that we might not perish, that God acted in this way. And all the gospels proclaim that God’s offer of reconciliation in Jesus is intended for all peoples.

In the Eastern Church, the same characters appear in the icons or images of Christ’s nativity as in the Western nativity scenes but they are presented differently. Their arrangement brings out the theological significance of this important Christian feast. Mary occupies the center of the icon and is usually reclining on a large cushion just outside a cave while Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes that also resemble a shroud, rests near her in a boxlike cradle that is also like a coffin. At the bottom of the icon and to the right, Jesus appears again in the arms of a mid-wife who is about to bathe him—a sign of the genuine humanity of this newborn who will need all the care babies normally receive. The rocky and mountainous background indicates the harsh world which Jesus has just entered.

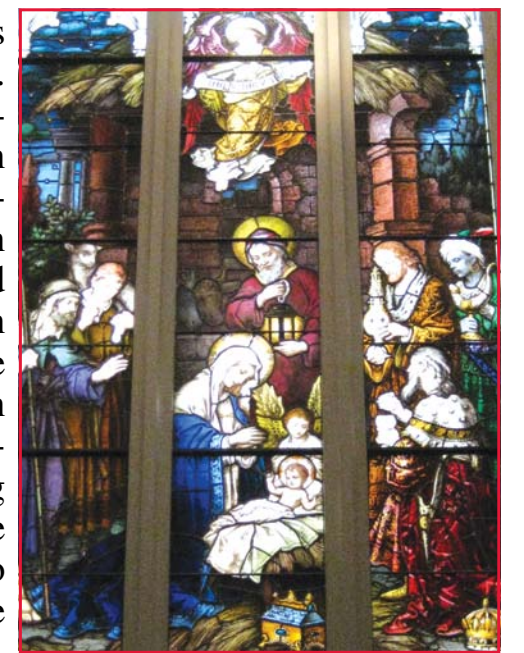
The angels look on from the highest of these rocky hills. Shepherds approach from a hill on one side while the magi approach on horseback from the other. The cuteness of the infant Jesus is never emphasized; instead Jesus looks almost like a small-size grown-up, emphasizing that he is divine as well as human. His mandorla (or halo, also worn by Mary, Joseph and the angels) and the way the rays of starlight shine directly upon him, also point to his sacred status. The ox and donkey beside the cradle recall Isaiah 1:3 while the tree in the central section of the bottom of the icon represents the family tree of Jesse (Is 11:1), David’s father, from which a shoot has burst forth.

One of the most interesting features of the Eastern

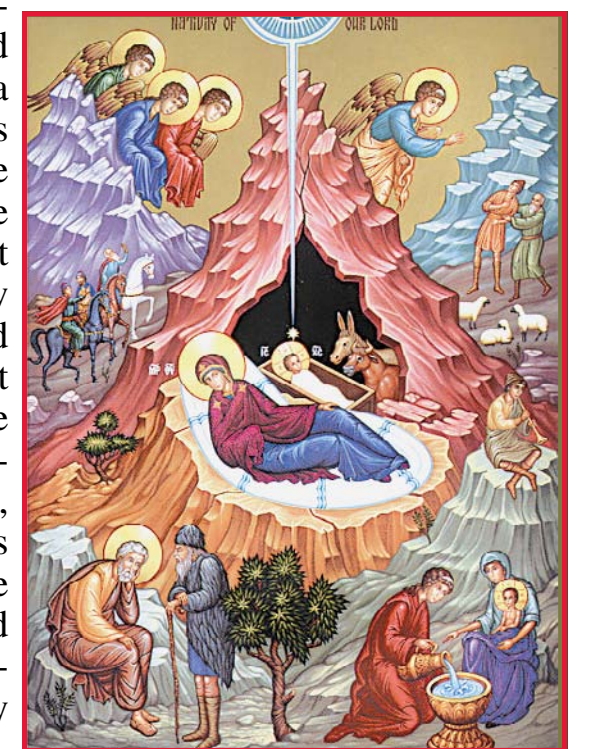
nativity icons, however, is the representation of Joseph. Unlike the Western images of Christ’s nativity in which Joseph appears standing in awe and admiration looking down on Mary and Jesus, here Joseph sits apart in bewilderment, at the bottom left of the icon, in conversation with a bearded old man with a walking stick who represents the devil or the temptation to doubt. And, unlike her pose in Western nativity scenes, Mary usually does not look adoringly at Jesus. She gazes instead at Joseph who does not, however, look at her. This evokes the matthean account of Joseph’s reaction to the news of Mary’s unanticipated pregnancy, but it also points to the radical nature of the Christian claims about Jesus and about the extraordinary scope of God’s mercy, both of which present a challenge to our understanding and faith.

If the real reason for the Christmas season, and even for the gift-giving, is the Incarnation of the Word and the Good News of God’s desire to heal the sin-caused rift between humanity and God, then it is not a bad idea to give gifts that imitate God’s divine ones, that acknowledge the worth of others, that encourage them to grow to be the people God wants them to be, that express genuine love for them. And, following the divine pattern, the best Christmas gift might well be the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation to someone who does not really expect or deserve it.

Susan Brown



Nativity Window from St. Michael's Cathedral, Toronto, after St. Matthew's Gospel



By permission of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE continued

administrative assistant regarding the various needs and projects where we might lend some funding. We are presently reviewing information sent to us and will soon determine how best to offer our service with the funds we have available.



Diocese of Whitehorse

Our Missions Committee would not be able to provide financial outreach without your generous gifts. Your kindness and cooperation enable us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in the mission territories of Canada, in the global south and in other areas of the world where help is being requested. Each member of the committee offers you a

heartfelt **thank you** for your encouragement in the work we doing as we make personal contact with those in need. Those who receive our support and friendship always beg us to pass on their words of gratitude for your prayers and financial support.

We are always looking for new members to join the Missions Committee. We meet about four times a year to consider the various needs that present themselves, to make personal contact with the various agencies and to think of ways to encourage support from you, our parishioners. If you are interested in being a member of the committee please contact the parish office or speak with me.

Fr. Gary Ducharme

THE SPLENDOR OF MERCY

In 2005, Fr. Michael Prieur, better known to us in the Diocese as “Fr. Mickey,” published *Panes of Glory* a book which illuminated our understanding and deepened our love for the majestic stained glass windows in the chapel of St. Peter’s Seminary. This past year, Fr. Mickey has done it again. In his most recent book, *The Art of the Confessor: a vademecum for seminarians and priests*, Fr. Mickey has shed the light of faith upon virtually every aspect of the sacrament of reconciliation in order to illuminate our minds and enflame our hearts for this great gift of God’s forgiveness.

The book is not only a compilation of Fr. Prieur’s class notes and lectures, from several decades of teaching the art of the confessor course at St. Peter’s Seminary, (which would have been a gem in itself!); these pages are also filled with Fr. Mickey’s own personal experiences of receiving, teaching and celebrating the sacrament of penance, along with the wisdom and advice from other theologians, pastors and spiritual writers. Bishop Fabbro, in his foreword to the book, calls *The Art of the Confessor* an exclamation mark to the Year of Mercy, which we have just finished celebrating in the universal Church. Fr. Mickey has indeed left all of us an open door to God’s mercy as we now open the pages of his labour of love!

First, *The Art of the Confessor* is not just for priests and seminarians, although this audience is addressed particularly in the subtitle. This book is for all who are receiving, interested in, or intrigued by, the sacrament of reconciliation. Fr. Prieur has written something for everybody. Beautiful art works depicting forgiveness and illustrating the sacrament of confession are displayed and described at the beginning of each chapter. My personal favourite is the Prodigal Son painting by Bartolomé Murillo, which includes an overjoyed Jack Russell terrier who joins in on the celebration, reminding all of us of the joy in heaven and in all of creation when one sinner repents.



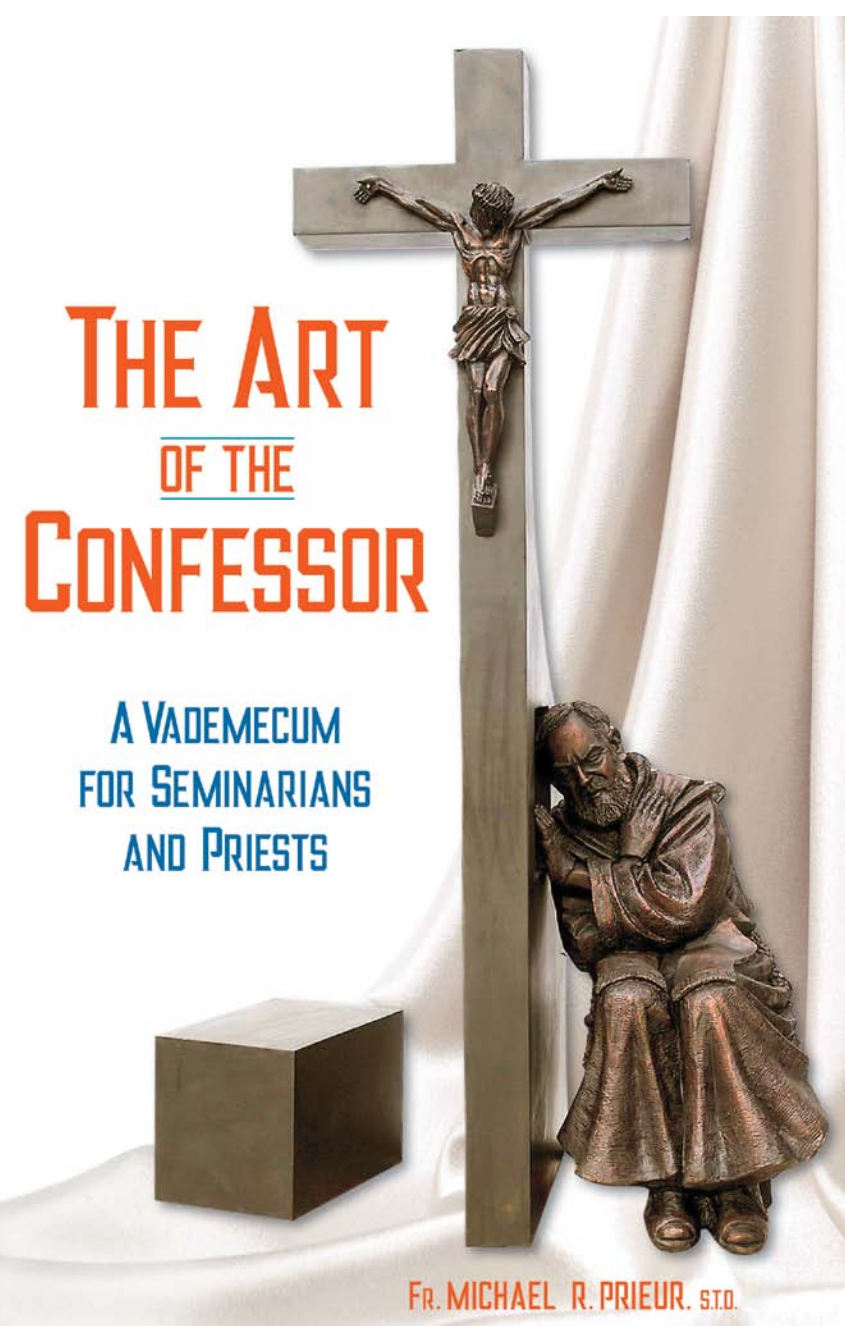
Along with the artistic masterpieces, the book also delves into wonderfully practical explanations of what the different dimensions of the sacrament are all about: contrition, confession, penance, reconciliation, satisfaction, etc. Many people wonder why the sacrament of confession is referred to by so many names – well, here you will find your answers!

Profound insights are also offered into the understanding of the different aspects of the priest’s role in celebrating this sacrament: as physician, teacher, judge and spiritual father. In reflecting on the fact that most people begin their confession with the words, Bless me Father for I have sinned, Fr. Prieur writes, “‘Father,’ encourages both of us [priest and penitent] to remember that God, our heavenly Father, is merciful, kind and compassionate. His Son, Jesus Christ, incarnates these beautiful qualities par excellence.” The reader will also be regaled by the counsel Fr. Mickey gives in using a formal examination of conscience and how to prepare best for confession with the proper dispositions.

Second, a close reading of this book will make you work. Fr. Mickey, as a faithful son of the Church, does not shy away from proclaiming the truth and stretches our minds with traditional theological vocabulary, especially around sensitive issues in our moral lives. But the mental exercises are well worth it, since learning the Church’s teaching vocabulary brings us to encounter her face of mercy, which is always anchored in truth. Throughout the book, Fr. Prieur will return to his mantra “Mercy-in-Truth” whenever he challenges us to a deeper conversion in our understanding of justice, human sexuality and other bioethical concerns.

The Art of the Confessor was published not only at the end of the Year of Mercy, but also as we begin to mark the 25th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II’s landmark encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor*, the *Splendor of Truth*: regarding certain fundamental questions of the Church’s moral teaching. In this encyclical letter, Pope John Paul II reminded the Church that objective truth exists, as does intrinsically evil actions (actions that are always wrong regardless of a person’s intention and/or circumstances). We do not create the truth, nor can we change it based on our own desires. The truth may be difficult to live out at times, but it is always liberating. These may seem like obvious claims to us and self-evident claims for a papal document, but John Paul II recognized that many in the Church were falling into a minimalist attitude toward sin and evil and thereby impacting people’s need for the reception of the sacrament of confession.

Perhaps one of the essential reminders in *Veritatis Splendor* is that Christian morality, and moral laws in particular, are not ends in themselves, but are always at the service of our relationship with God and others. In *The Art of the Confessor*, Fr. Prieur continues the conversation of



THE SPLENDOR OF MERCY

Veritatis Splendor and moves us beyond the two extremes of a rigid legalism on the one hand, and a lax or minimalist legalism on the other, in order to discover the river of mercy leading us to our loving God. Sin is not about breaking a rule or legality, whether great or small, it is about severing a relationship and confession is the ordinary way to heal and restore this ultimate relationship.

Third, and finally, the book *The Art of the Confessor* is called a *vademecum*, Latin for ‘go with me’ or ‘companion.’ It is, however, not only the book, but the author who is a companion on the journey. For all of his priesthood, Fr. Prieur has walked with hundreds of priests, deacons, lay-ecclesial ministers and God’s people from all over Canada in their journey of faith, and has now shared his love for reconciliation and forgiveness with us in book form.

PROPERTY and MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Property and Maintenance Committee along with Fr. Mockler and Fr. Ducharme have been identifying maintenance and capital items that need attention in the near future and over the next few years. Some of these relate to safety, and others will enhance the Cathedral and the Parish Centre.

Recently we erected a booth at the entrance to our south parking lot. It will ensure the safety of our parking attendants from vehicles, as well as providing shelter and warmth in the winter. The booth has a very professional look, and we owe a special thanks to Andrzej Ciesielka for his skill and time working on this project.

Members of our staff were busy recently planting five trees on the Cathedral grounds. Our many trees provide shade in the summer, add oxygen to the air, and increase the beauty of our corner of the Forest City. St. Peter’s Cathedral has been a strong local supporter of the Million Tree Challenge.

The first three we planted this fall are located on the west side of the Cathedral and were generously donated by a parishioner. These trees come with quite a story. They are Regal Petticoat Maples, a Canadian cultivar of the Sycamore Maple with an ancient lineage in Europe and Asia.



Here they serve as a fitting reminder of those many immigrants to Canada who contributed to our rich cultural mosaic. In a corner of France, however, they now serve a different memory. Many Regal Petticoat Maples number among the 500 trees planted this past April at Vimy Ridge and in communities surrounding that historic place. They were planted to honour those Canadian soldiers who perished during the fierce battle fought there in April 1917, and to remember all our veterans of the First World War. A living memorial of Regal Petticoat Maples now surrounds the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, planted there by Canadian Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and First Nations’ Cadets alongside their French counterparts.

In addition to our new Regal

I am proud and privileged to have taken Fr. Mickey’s classes during my formation at St. Peter’s Seminary and blessed to have him as a brother priest. In reading *The Art of the Confessor* it is my prayer that you too will become part of this great journey toward our Merciful Father and be helped as Fr. Prieur walks with you as you go. One is truly on Holy Ground when reading this book as it is not simply good information on a page, but a life poured out in love for God and for His people.

Father Patrick Beneteau

Father Beneteau is the Director of Vocations and Seminarians for the Diocese of London.

The Art of the Confessor (\$35) can be purchased from Rebecca Rivers at St. Peter’s Seminary, or from: Prieurpublications@gmail.com



Finlay Wojtak-Hissong cheerfully scoops soil to support a redbud tree, aided by his uncle, Michael Wojtak, and Brian Galea.

Petticoat Maples, two red buds were planted on the east side of the Cathedral; they will be joined by a flowering dogwood next spring. When mature, they will provide a beautiful shade canopy on that piece of ground. These were generously donated and planted by parishioners Susan Howard, Michael Wojtak and members of their family in honour of their mother, Winifred Wojtak, and to mark the sesquicentennial of Canada as a nation.

I thank the pastoral team and staff and our many volunteers who have made my first six months as Business Manager so interesting and productive. The generosity of St. Peter’s parishioners is very much appreciated by the Property and Maintenance Committee and we welcome all constructive comments.

Please contact me at 519-432-3475 x226; bgalea@dol.ca

Brian Galea



FALL EVENTS

AT ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL



The St. Cecilia Singers, conducted by Gloria Gassi, and the Western University Singers, conducted by Lydia Adams, joined forces with several musicians to present "Rejoice and Sing," a concert of Advent and Christmas music.



Deacon Rudy discusses the Sacrament of Marriage during the Marriage Preparation weekend, November 18-19. 29 Couples participated in the course at St. Peter's as part of a requirement for marrying in the church.



Eight men were ordained as Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of London at the Cathedral on November 4th. From left to right: Deacons Art Bondy, Brian Hanley, Tony Hogervorst, Dan Lemire, Antony Rebkowec, Victor Salazar, Tom MacLeod and Don St. Onge.



On November 12th, the Amabile Boys & Mens' Choir presented their annual In Remembrance Concert, "Remembering Vimy," which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. During the Act of Remembrance, Bugler David Cunningham, played the bugle that his grandfather, Pte George William Shaw, had played during that battle on April, 9, 1917. The wreath was laid by David's mother.



On Nov. 26, the London Men of Accord presented "A Barbershop Christmas" at the Cathedral, featuring five Barbershop choruses from the Western Division of the Ontario District of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK - Liturgical Year B

With the First Sunday in Advent (this year on December 3), we began Year B of the three-year Liturgical cycle. This year, the Church meditates primarily on the Gospel of Mark and uses it for most of the Sunday Gospel readings.

Who was Mark?

Most biblical scholars agree that Mark is the "John Mark" mentioned several times in the New Testament. This Mark accompanied his cousin, Barnabas, and Paul on their first missionary journey to Cyprus. Later Mark joined Paul and Peter in Rome and has been regarded as possibly a protégé of Peter. Papias, an early Christian writer described him as Peter's "interpreter," who recounted Peter's teachings but not in chronological order. According to Fr. John L. McKenzie in his *Dictionary of the Bible*, "interpreter" is taken to mean translator; Peter, it is thought, did not know Greek well enough to teach in that language. Some traditions hold that Mark was martyred in 68 A.D. in Alexandria. One tradition holds that he is buried in the great cathedral that bears his name in San Marco Square in Venice, though churches in Alexandria and Cairo also claim to also house his relics.

The Gospel of Mark

Mark's gospel was written in Greek likely between 65 and 75 A.D., sometime shortly after Peter's martyrdom in 64 A.D. It was intended for gentile Christians in Rome who were largely unfamiliar with Jewish customs. According to the website of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, the gospel "aimed to equip such Christians to stand faithful in the face of persecution while going on with the proclamation of the gospel begun in Galilee."

Mark's account is the shortest of the four gospels as it lacks any mention of Jesus' genealogy or birth and ends abruptly with his resurrection and ascension. In fact, there are conflicting opinions as to how much of the short final chapter was actually added by other writers. Although early church tradition held that Mark's Gospel followed Matthew, modern biblical scholarship now considers it to be the earliest. As noted in a Carmelite liturgical commentary, "Both Luke and Matthew use much of Mark's text. Luke's account contains over half of the verses in Mark's account (some 350 verses out of a total 660 verses in Mark). Unlike Luke and Matthew, who begin their accounts with the events surrounding the birth of the Messiah, Mark begins his account with Jesus' public ministry and the mission of John the Baptist."

There is agreement on Mark's literary style. Some typical comments include: "His gospel is a blend of history and theology written in simple, forceful language"; "The Greek in which it was written is rough and unpolished – the sort of Greek one might have heard in the marketplace"; "Mark wrote carefully and exactly but his work is not a history or biography,

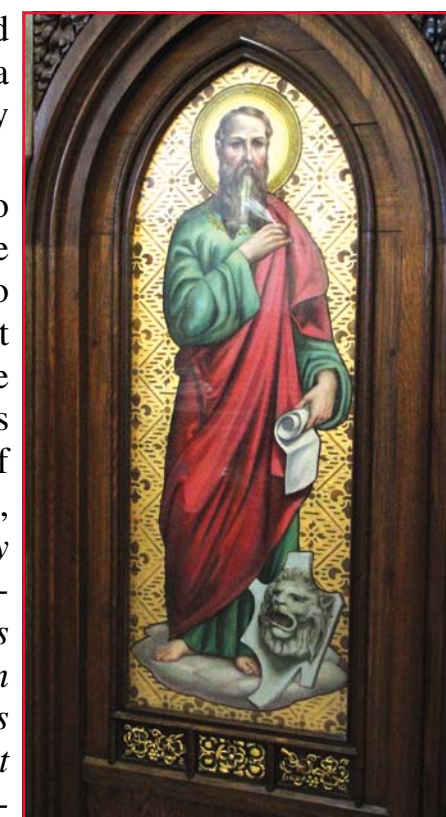
rather a work of faith addressed to faith"; and "Calling Mark a literary genius is probably excessive."

Mark leaves no doubt who Jesus is. The doctrinal purpose of Mark's Gospel, according to Fr. McKenzie, is actually set forth in its opening verse, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Fr. McKenzie elaborates, "This purpose is more clearly seen in some striking characteristics of Mark's style: he relates fewer of the words of Jesus than Matthew or Luke, says often that 'Jesus taught' without telling the content of his teaching and his narrative is more concerned with the deeds of Jesus. It is Jesus Himself as a person, the Son of God whom he wishes to portray; Jesus Himself is the primary and basic element in His own teaching."

Scholars point out that Mark stresses Jesus as "Teacher" and as the "Servant of God." Jesus is regularly addressed as "Teacher" by his disciples (Mk 4:38) and by those who seek his help (Mk 5:35). He also uses the Hebrew form of teacher, "Rabbi" (Mk 9:5). He depicts Jesus' ceaseless activity and his power over sickness, disease, death, and the work of evil spirits.

Although Christ's divinity is central in Mark's account, the evangelist does not ignore his humanity. Fr. McKenzie comments, "Mark reveals Christ's human traits more than the other Gospels. The genuine humanity of Jesus is basic both to His rejection by His own people and to His triumph in His real death and resurrection." In demonstrating the humanity of Jesus, Mark tells us about Jesus' emotions: Jesus was moved with "compassion" (Mk 6:34); he "sighed" (Mk 7:34; 8:12); he "marveled" at the unbelief of his own townsfolk (Mk 6:6); he "looked" upon the rich young man and "loved him" (Mk 10:21).

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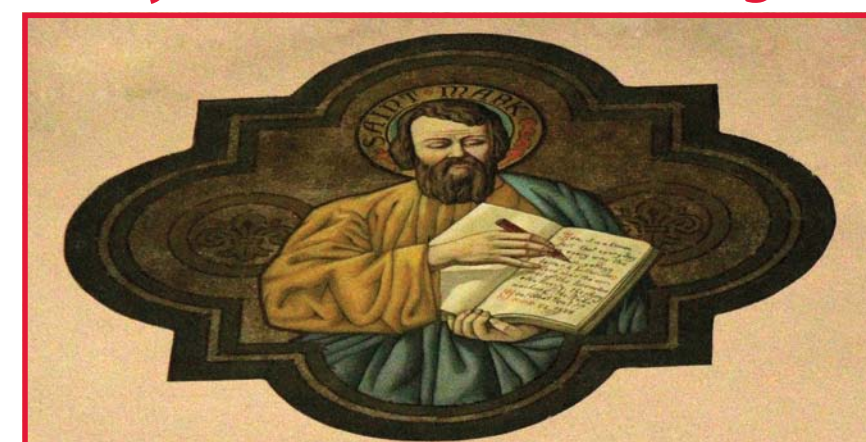


Mark as winged lion in the Sanctuary



St. Mark window in the sacristy

Mysterious Mark Message



In this painting above the nave windows the image represents St. Mark holding an open Bible. However, the text there was actually inscribed by the painter in 1926 for future generations of parishioners, and not deciphered until the restoration of the windows in 2003:

Yea, it is a known fact that every day in every way this world is getting better and better. We've seen the arrival of locomotive, electricity, the flying machine and the radio. Yea! What next?? C L 1926

THE NATIVITY CRECHE

The Nativity Scene, or crèche as it is often called, that adorns our homes and churches at Christmas, has a rich and deep tradition among Christians. St. Francis of Assisi is regarded as having inaugurated this popular devotion on Christmas Eve in 1223.

It is believed that he was first inspired by this idea after visiting the historical place of Christ's birth on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—the humble stable in a Bethlehem cave. His idea was also to combat the excessive greed and materialism that was running rampant through Italy. Through these visual aids he wanted everyone to understand how Christ came into the world in such poverty and simplicity. So St. Francis recreated the scene of Christ's birth inside a cave in Greccio, Italy, inviting both his fellow friars and the townspeople to join in the celebration. He set up an empty manger (the feeding trough of farm animals which served as Jesus' crib) inside a cave, and even included a live ox and donkey beside the manger just as it was believed to have been on that first Christmas night. The simplicity of the scene and the use of the animals further illustrated St. Francis' point that Jesus' birth was not a royal event, but that God gave the world his Son in lowliness, poverty and humility.

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, St. Francis determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, an ox and an

ass to the place appointed. The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise. (According to St Bonaventure, a contemporary of St. Francis)

St. Francis' re-creation of that first Christmas night was so popular that soon every church in Italy had its own nativity scene. The devotion also spread to private homes. Today, nativity scenes are often set up during Advent, and the figure of Jesus is not placed in the manger until Christmas Eve.

The Nativity Scene that the Cathedral displays was gifted to us two years ago by the London District Catholic School Board Education Centre. This nativity set, including the figures of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, the three magi, camels, ox and donkey, was in a flower shop on Wortley Road when the Board Office was located at the Monsignor Feeney Centre on Elmwood Avenue.

The Director of Education at the time, Pat Dunne, came upon it during his lunch hour just before Christmas in 2001, and quickly purchased it. This grand nativity scene graced the Board Room there, and then moved in 2005 to the new Catholic Education Centre on Wellington Road South. These beautiful, but simple, large figures now sit in front of the St. Joseph altar in our Cathedral throughout the Christmas Season.

May our "re-creation" of that first Christmas provide us all an opportunity to reflect on the birth of Christ, and in the spirit of St. Francis, the simple, humble and poor way in which God gave us the Messiah.

Cathryn Hall



photograph by Carl Vanderwouden

THE GOSPEL OF MARK - Liturgical Year B

continued from page 15

Mark's narrative includes many passages concerned with suffering and darkness, including, of course, Christ's passion and death. However, it is very much a Gospel of hope. Fr. Scott Lewis stresses, "With Mark we need to believe – not doubting in our hearts – that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and he has won the victory over all that opposes God."

Images and Symbols of St. Mark in St. Peter's Cathedral

Mark the Evangelist is most often depicted writing or holding his gospel as shown in the painting above the nave windows. In Christian tradition, Mark is symbolized by a lion, such as the illustrations on page 15 of the sacristy window and the small window above the sanctuary. Some Christian legends refer to

Mark as "Saint Mark The Lionhearted." These legends say that he was thrown to the lions and the animals refused to attack or eat him. Instead the lions slept at his feet while he petted them. When the Romans saw this, they released him, impressed by this sight.

Mark the Evangelist is often depicted holding a book with "pax tibi Marce" written on it or holding a palm and book. Other depictions of Mark, such as the one at the rear of the nave, show him as a man with a book or scroll, accompanied by a winged lion. The lion might also be associated with Jesus' resurrection because lions were believed to sleep with open eyes, thus a comparison with Christ in his tomb, and Christ as King.

Paul Carson and Dawn Munday