Chères sœurs et chers frères dans le Christ,

Au début de l’année dernière, le diocèse de London a entrepris un virage historique en adoptant le nouveau modèle des Familles de paroisses. Après les deux Familles pionnières, qui furent activées début 2018, j’annonçais récemment que six nouvelles Familles de paroisses entraîneraient en fonction en juillet 2019. Ce qui nous donne déjà 8 Familles; il en reste 22 à venir.

Nos Familles de paroisses ont pour but, pour citer le pape François, d’être une authentique « Eglise missionnaire ».


Dans notre société, nous sommes soumis à une évolution aussi massive que rapide. Autrement, la culture soutenait la foi et les gens affluaient à l’église presque par défaut. Aujourd’hui, la foi reçoit très peu de soutien de la culture profane.

Ces études sont néanmoins portées d’une bonne nouvelle. Bien des gens dans notre société, même s’ils ne viennent pas dans nos églises, cherchent une spiritualité. Ils sont en quête de quelque chose de plus dans leur vie. Rappelons-nous la Pentecôte et la mission que nous avons reçue de tendre la main à toutes les personnes, de les accueillir dans nos paroisses et de les inviter à faire l’expérience joyeuse de la rencontre de Jésus.

Si nous voulons obtenir des résultats différents, si nous voulons stopper le déclin de nos paroisses, il nous faut faire les choses autrement. Nous devons changer. La vision qui nous guide à travers les changements que nous devons entreprendre nous vient du Grand Mandat que Jésus a donné aux disciples : allez! De toutes les nations faites des disciples, baptisez-les et enseignez-les (Mt 28, 19-20). Nous avons pour mission d’aller faire des disciples de Jésus.

Dans son exhortation apostolique, La joie de l’Évangile, le pape François tire les leçons de ce qu’il a vécu en Argentine. En Amérique latine, il a observé que bien des gens étaient baptisés, mais qu’ils n’avaient jamais eu de rencontre personnelle avec le Christ et n’avaient jamais pris la décision personnelle de devenir ses disciples. Le cœur de notre foi, souligne le pape, c’est la rencontre avec le Christ et la décision personnelle de devenir son disciple. Ensuite, l’Esprit Saint nous envoie faire d’autres disciples. Le pape rêve que nous devenions une Eglise missionnaire, une Église qui ne plus repoussée sur elle-même, mais « une Eglise qui sort ».

Qui a la responsabilité de remplir cette mission? Toutes les baptisées et tous les baptisés. Quelles qualités doit avoir le disciple? Une relation d’intimité avec Jésus, la prière, méditation de l’Écriture, la participation à l’Eucharistie, à la Réconciliation et aux autres sacrements; une vie de service et de témoignage de sa foi. Quelques caractéristiques d’une paroisse missionnaire: de bonnes célébrations liturgiques, de la bonne musique, de bonnes homélies; un ministère de l’accueil chaleureux; le RCIA, opportunités pour enseigner la foi et la formation; petits groupes de partage de foi; une présence aux personnes dans le besoin, des œuvres de justice sociale et le souci de l’environnement.

Le modèle des Familles de paroisses permettra à nos prêtres, même s’ils deviennent moins nombreux, de continuer d’exercer leur ministère pour répondre aux besoins de notre population. Les paroisses pourront collaborer pour exercer leur mission de manière plus efficace, en parrainant conjointement une famille de réfugiés, par exemple, ou en se regroupant pour engager un administrateur ou une administratrice. À force de persévérance, de prière, de patience et de gros travail, et sous l’impulsion de l’Esprit, nous serons une Église vivante, axée sur la mission.

Sincèrement uni à vous en Jésus Christ,
Mgr Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB, Évêque de London

Message de l’Évêque
Bishop’s Message

IN THIS ISSUE: Catholic Women’s League / Reaching Kids / Brescia University College Centennial / Family of Parishes Phase Two Our Lady of Guadalupe Home / Mission for the Young and For All / Catholic Schools / St. Joe’s Hospitality Centre / Jean Vanier

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Early last year, the Diocese of London embarked on a historic change by adopting the new model of Families of Parishes. In addition to the two pioneer Families that were activated at the beginning of 2018, I recently announced six new Families of Parishes, to take effect in July 2019. This brings us to a total number of eight Families, with 22 more to go.

The goal of our Families of Parishes is to be, in the words of Pope Francis, a true “missionary Church”.

Studies show that huge challenges are facing the Church today in North America. Many people have quit their church, with as many as 80% of youth leaving the Catholic Church. The fastest growing demographic is the unaffiliated, those who list “none” as their religion.

We are subject to an enormous and rapid change in society. In the past, the culture supported the faith and people filled our churches, almost by default. Now, there is little support from the secular culture.

There is good news in these studies. Many in our society, even though they are not coming to our churches, are searching spiritually. They are looking for something more in their lives. We need to remember Pontecost and our shared mission to reach out to all people, welcoming them to our parishes and inviting them to experience the joy of meeting Jesus in their lives.

If we want different results, if we want to stem the decline in our parishes, we have to do things differently. We have to change. The vision guiding us through the changes we have to make comes from the Great Commission that Jesus gave the disciples: Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them (Mt 28:19-20). Our mission is to go forth and make disciples of Jesus.

In his apostolic exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis builds on what he experienced in Argentina. In Latin America, he saw that many were baptized but lacked a personal encounter with Christ. The heart of our faith, the pope emphasizes, is an encounter with Christ and the personal decision to become his disciple. The Holy Spirit then sends us out to make more disciples. The pope’s dream is that we become a missionary Church, one not turned in on itself but “a Church that goes out”.

Who is responsible for carrying on this mission? All the baptized. What are the qualities of a disciple? A close relationship with Jesus, prayer, meditation on the Scriptures, participation in the Eucharist, Reconciliation and the other sacraments; a life of service and witness to one’s faith. Some hallmarks of a missionary parish: good liturgies, good music, good homilies; a welcoming hospitality ministry; RCIA, opportunities for teaching and faith formation; small faith sharing groups; outreach to those in need, social justice works and care for the environment.

The Family of Parishes model will enable our priests, despite their declining numbers, to continue to minister to the needs of our people. Parishes can work together to be more effective in their mission, for example, collaborating to sponsor a refugee family or to hire a youth minister or a business administrator. With hope, prayer, patience, and hard work, and the guidance of the Spirit, we will be a vibrant, mission-oriented Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
Bishop of London

Photo credit Morris Lamont

ISSUE 173 OF THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON
Spring 2019
The Women, A Bishop and a Princess: A CWL Story Found in Boxes

Contributed by Deb Majer Fraser, Diocesan Archivist

A number of years ago, I was researching through Bishop Michael Fallon’s papers of 1910 to 1931 and came across files dealing with the Catholic Women’s League (CWL). The files consisted of correspondence from women and priests from across the diocese and an Austrian Princess Franziska (Fanny) von Starhemberg. My curiosity was piqued! I was already familiar with the diocesan Catholic Women’s League archives, so combining the information from both Bishop Fallon’s papers and the CWL papers gave me an opportunity to piece together an extraordinary part of our diocesan history.

The Catholic Women’s League formed in England in 1906. The League found its way to Canada in 1917, with the Archdiocese of Montreal being the first chartered Canadian CWL. The Archdiocese of Toronto followed suit in 1918, the Diocese of Halifax next in 1919, and the Diocese of London in 1920. It would be another three years before the London branch of the CWL was chartered—only the third in all of Canada.

But what does a princess from Austria have to do with this story? Bishop Fallon travelled to Europe twice between 1918 and 1920. It’s uncertain when he would have met Princess Fanny, but there is no doubt that on one of these overseas voyages he met a very influential and dynamic woman who was a princess and a member of the Upper House of the Austrian parliament.

Through correspondence, it is clear that a relationship, steeped in social justice, developed between the princess and our bishop. Princess Fanny sought support from Bishop Fallon for clothing and monetary gifts to help with the humanitarian crisis in Austria after the First World War. Princess Fanny described in her letter how her people were starving and destitute. By early 1921, efforts were made to ship large quantities of clothing to Austria. The women of this diocese assisted with this relief effort.

In 1918, at the request of the Canadian Government, Bishop Fallon spent time between May and September in England and France. He visited Canadian soldiers and chaplains in camps and at the front. He was there on official duty as the Head Chaplain for English Speaking Catholic Chaplains during the War. While in England, Bishop Fallon witnessed the CWL in action as they served British and Canadian soldiers.

“The CWL had a hut for the recreation and refreshment of the soldiers,” wrote Bishop Fallon in his diary on June 15, 1918. There were a number of additional entries in his diary where he makes mention of the CWL hut and the services to the soldiers. This was very likely the first exposure Bishop Fallon had to the workings of the CWL, and there is no question that he realized the value of such an organization.

The first group photo of the Diocese of London CWL was taken outside of St. Peter’s Cathedral, London, in June of 1920. The effort to grow the CWL in the diocese revealed itself by fall 1921, when the first diocesan conference was held. In a directive from Bishop Fallon, October 6, 1921, he urged his parish priests to invite women to get involved and attend the first official CWL meeting on October 25, 1921, at St. Peter’s Cathedral parish hall.

Any priest who did not support the advancement of the CWL in his parish would receive a curt letter, and that was the end of that! Because of Bishop Fallon’s ardent support of the League, he became the national chaplain of the CWL in the 1920s. He was frequently asked to travel across Canada to help various dioceses establish their own CWLs. Bishop Fallon was met with great success.

From its earliest years, the Catholic Women’s League, was established to get women involved in social, political, and public affairs. The earliest documents of the CWL reveal that the members “hit the ground running” and, in my opinion, have never stopped since. It is impressive and almost surprising that the programs and services they established early on still endure; initiatives such as:

- Establishing Girl Guides and Brownie groups at the parish level;
- Establishing summer camps for girls ages 5 to 18;
- Providing scholarships for teenage girls to attend university;
- Implementing school medical and dental clinics;
- Insisting on medical inspectors and that nurses visit local schools;
- Ensuring that every school had a first aid kit and a bed;
- Ensuring that children were attending school;
- Clothing drives for students;
- Mothers’ Clubs;
- Current events, book clubs, and spelling and oratory clubs;
- Visiting the aged and orphaned;
- Visiting jails and hospitals; and
- Assisting and financially supporting immigrants.

The CWL did not limit their support and programming to Catholics; they helped those in greatest need as they still do today. This history does not end here and could go on for pages. The joy of being able to share a story where a princess is involved is almost fairy-tale like. But an even greater joy is piecing together a story that has as much relevance in our diocese and local communities today as it did back when the CWL was first established.
**The Catholic School Boards serving the Diocese of London**

wish to thank all the parents, volunteers, parishes and community leaders who support Catholic education!

---

**Being a mission-oriented parish sometimes means not being afraid to try new and creative things to reach more people, and bring them into relationship with Christ and His Church. This is easy to read but more difficult to do.**

At Good Shepherd Parish in Lakeshore, Ontario, a team of lay volunteers has taken on the mission of welcoming children to church, and are doing it in a fun and engaging way that brings the Gospel message to over 80 kids each Sunday. Imagine; instead of parents dragging and fighting with their kids to go to Mass each week, children are instead asking their parents and grandparents when they can go back to church!

One of the reasons Good Shepherd was losing young families to other Christian churches, or to no church at all, was not an uncommon one: parents felt that their kids were not being ministered to in an engaging and effective way. Good Shepherd Parish wanted to address this challenge, so that parents would feel comfortable bringing their kids to church, and could participate more fully in the liturgy, instead of giving up on church all together.

Over the past year, Good Shepherd Parish has transformed their traditional Sunday School model into a new model that welcomes kids of at least one year of age, and up to Grade Six, to their own unique programming on Sunday morning. The three programs are:

1. **“Little Lambs Child Watch”**: Our littlest friends, ages one to four, enjoy colouring, playing, and fun interaction in a safe space while their parent’s participate in Mass;
2. **“The Flock Children’s Church”**: An exciting atmosphere that is perfect for kids ages three to Grade Two. We read the same reading from Mass, with an explanation and debriefing, videos, music, crafts, colouring, and games;
3. **“The Shepherd’s Kids: Exploring the Gospel”**: Children in Grades Three to Six who are too cool for the kids’ fun and games, join in their own Liturgy of the Word that includes group discussion specifically for this age.

Good Shepherd Parish has changed what it does, but still retains its focus on the Sunday Gospel reading. While each program is different, in order to minister to groups of different age and abilities, everyone is focused on delivering an experience based on three main goals:

1. **Kid-Friendliness**: Using fun and exciting games, crafts, videos and technology, the Gospel message is explained in a way that kids understand and can take home;
2. **Simplicity**: One message per lesson, reinforced in multiple modalities and methods;
3. **Connection with Parents**: Building relationships with parents both in person and online, and providing them with easy-to-understand, modern resources that help bring home the message, for example, tips for discussion on the ride home, and easy activities for the coming week.

Some tangible things that we tried include moving away from a school-based atmosphere. This is Church, not school. Their weekly outlines are fun and relational, and are relevant to current culture and media. The topics that stem from the Gospel reading are always simple and appropriate to the age of the kids. High-energy music greets kids when they walk in. Gospel stories are read and shown via video. Kids play games and move around to help them reinforce the message.

Kids want to have fun and a big part of our success has been merging fun and faith!

For more information about these programs, visit the parish website at GSLakeshore.com/Kids; or email Claire Bondy in the Family & Youth Ministry Office at cbondy@dol.ca to get connected with some of the lay volunteer leaders.

---

**Contributed by Kyle Shafer, Volunteer Kids Programs Coordinator, Good Shepherd Parish, Lakeshore.**

---

**Reaching Kids, Reaching Parents**

When you reach kids, you reach their parents: How one parish is getting kids to drag *their parents* to church

---

**The Catholic School Boards serving the Diocese of London wish to thank all the parents, volunteers, parishes and community leaders who support Catholic education!**
“Celebrating a century of women leading at Canada’s only women’s university”

The end of the First World War brought forward a new era of optimism and a period of social and economic change in Canada. At this time of transition, as soldiers returned from the battlefield, women were being instructed to yield their jobs and resume their homemaking responsibilities. It was at this pivotal time in history that a remarkable group of women, the Ursuline Sisters of Chatham, Ontario, defied the societal odds to found what is today Canada’s only all-women’s university: Brescia University College.

The Ursulines’ mission in London was clear from the beginning: to establish a Catholic-based women’s university committed to social justice, community service, and the development of women. With the support of Bishop Michael Fallon of the Diocese of London, the Ursulines successfully embarked upon this mission, and Brescia proudly welcomed its first seven students in 1919. Today, as the University celebrates a century of women leading boldly, it remains true to its Catholic roots and continues to educate its students to lead with wisdom, justice, and compassion in a changing world.

While Brescia has evolved over the past 100 years, the tenacious and empowering spirit of the Ursuline Sisters remains embedded within every decision that is made at the University. The Ursuline Sisters were founded in the 16th Century by Saint Angela Merici in Brescia, Italy. St. Angela’s vision was to establish a companion group that was dedicated to educating young women about religious and family life, the first group committed to women’s education in Catholic history. The Ursulines became widely acknowledged and celebrated for their influence in women’s education—and were natural leaders and advocates for Brescia.

The Ursuline Sisters aspired for Brescia to be a high-quality educational institution. In doing so, the Ursulines and Bishop Fallon created an affiliation agreement with The University of Western Ontario. This agreement permitted women to study at Brescia and obtain their degree from Western, which allows Brescia’s students to enjoy a small and compassionate learning atmosphere while taking advantage of the resources and programs at Western’s main campus.

“In 1919 the Ursuline Sisters had the remarkable foresight to create a university where women could learn, grow and lead in a compassionate and spiritual environment,” remarks Dr. Susan Mumm, Brescia’s twelfth Principal. “One hundred years later, we are proud to continue their vital work by providing a student-centred, whole-person approach to educating and graduating the women leaders of tomorrow.”

Since Brescia’s inception, the Ursuline Sisters took immense pride in delivering a student-centred experience for every young woman who chose to study with them. The Sisters worked tirelessly to ensure students were supported both academically and financially. This was demonstrated immediately in the early 20th century, when Mother Clare, Brescia’s Superior General, would reduce student fees when she noticed a student was in great financial need. Today, Brescia continues this important work by providing a nationally-recognized scholarship program to its growing population of domestic and international students.

The University’s international connections have expanded over many decades, all beginning with one student: Rosalina Saez, who graduated from Brescia in 1935. Saez was the first international female student to graduate from Brescia; she was also the first international female student to graduate from a Canadian university. Rosalina Saez was the first of many international students to call Brescia home, as the diverse environment now welcomes students from over 35 countries around the world.

First-year student, Trinity Couto, studying in the School of Humanities says, “Brescia’s unique and uplifting atmosphere not only allows students to feel comfortable to connect with their faculty and peers, but also supports a culture of equality—everyone, no matter where you come from, feels equal at Brescia.”

Since its first group of seven students arrived at Brescia in 1919, the campus has continued to build its culture of empowering the voices of women. One hundred years later, the student body has flourished to 1,500 students, while the University still maintains a small 14:1 student/faculty ratio.

In recognition of Brescia’s growth and prosperity, the University launched its Centennial Opening Ceremonies on January 27, 2019. Occurring on the Feast of St. Angela Merici, this celebration welcomed over 300 guests to
Brescia for a Centenary Mass, led by Bishop Ronald Fabbro, as well as opened the first of four Centennial Art Exhibitions. Designed to capture Brescia's spirit over the past 100 years, the Art Exhibitions follow in the Ursuline tradition of encouraging students' intellectual and spiritual progression.

As the University looks toward a promising second century, it has much to celebrate: 1,500 bold student leaders, 15 diverse programs, a strong international connection, close to 8,000 empowered alumnae world-wide, its foundational Catholic roots, and its continuing to lead as Canada's only women’s university.

To learn more about Brescia University College, visit www.brescia.uwo.ca.
Six New Families of Parishes

In 2017, Bishop Fabbro named and activated two ‘pioneer’ Families of Parishes (Chatham and Norfolk) and over the last 18 months we have been journeying with these Families, and learning from them.

At the beginning of January, 2019, Bishop Fabbro announced that the following six Families of Parishes are to be activated on July 2:

- One in London Deanery: Our Lady of Sorrows, Aylmer; Holy Angels and St. Anne, St. Thomas; and St. Mary, West Lorne; including St. Helen Church, Wallacetown
- Two in Windsor Deanery: 1) Our Lady of the Atonement, St. John Vianney, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Anthony of Padua; and 2) Our Lady of Guadalupe, Most Precious Blood, St. Theresa, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Slovak Parish, and San Juan Diego of Guadalupe Hispanic Catholic Community
- One in Essex Deanery: St. Joseph, River Canard; Sacred Heart, LaSalle; and St. Paul, LaSalle
- Two in Kent Deanery: 1) Our Lady Help of Christians, Wallaceburg; Holy Family, Wallaceburg; Sacred Heart, Port Lambton; and St. Michael, Dresden; and 2) North American Martyrs, Thamesville, St. Michael, Ridgetown; and St. Mary, Blenheim; including Summer Season Mass Sites at Erieau and Rondeau Park

Recap: Why the Family of Parishes model?

With prayer, discernment, and input, our Bishop saw a need to help our parishes, and the Diocese of London itself, to become mission-oriented. In order to be faithful to the mission of the Church and address the needs of the faithful, we needed a model of parishes to give us the stability to go out and make disciples.

The Family of Parishes “Task Force”

In 2014 Bishop Fabbro established The Task Force on the Future of Pastoral Care in the Faith Communities of the Diocese of London. It comprised clergy, representatives from St. Peter’s Seminary and the Institute of Ongoing Formation, diocesan personnel, and several parishioners from various parishes across the diocese.

After much work, consultation and discernment, the Families of Parishes model was chosen as the best way to assure the stability needed to be a Diocese of mission-oriented parishes that form disciples of Jesus.

If we are open to the Holy Spirit, then things will have to change. But, what will not change is our desire to live as disciples of Jesus. During this time of transition, pastors, pastoral teams, and the diocesan staff will focus on the mission of the Church and the needs of our parishioners. We will continue to call on the gifts of the faithful to join us in this work.

How are we preparing Pastors, Pastoral Teams and the Faithful?

Once the model was chosen, Bishop Fabbro wrote a letter in June 2015 to the people of the Diocese of London, “Growing Together as Disciples to Serve Others: Future Directions for the People and Parishes of the Diocese of London.”

Since then, news has been communicated through a variety of means, including this diocesan newspaper, presentations on Intentional Discipleships to parish representatives in November 2017, a diocese-wide handout in 2017, and a series of five informational handouts throughout 2018.

On Ascension Sunday, May 10, 2018, Bishop Fabbro sent out a Pastoral Letter to the faithful announcing the establishment of a commission named, “Equipping the Saints for Ministry: The Diocesan Commission for the Families of Parishes”. This commission will help us move towards being a mission-oriented diocese with mission-oriented parishes. The Commission has already begun its work.

Additionally, over the last few years, the themes for the Pastoral Study Days and the Priests’ Study Days have been utilized to renew our parish pastoral teams in the mission of the Church, and to prepare for the Families of Parishes Model.

In the fall of 2018, working with the Archdiocese of Boston, we held three one-day “Forming Disciples in Mission” workshops throughout the diocese. We are planning ways to presently bring this workshop to various locations around the diocese.

After Bishop Fabbro named the new Families of Parishes and the priests who will serve them, Bishop Fabbro and Bishop Dabrowski gathered these priests for a two-day period of prayer and orientation in an ongoing effort to support and prepare our priests for the new model, and for renewal in the mission of the Church.

Over the next six months, the staff of the Diocesan Centre will journey with, and prepare for, the activation of these parishes.

With our eyes on the mission of the Church, we the people of the Diocese of London plan on being a mission-oriented Church that forms disciples of Jesus.

Bishop Fabbro’s new Commission: “Equipping the Saints for Ministry: The Diocesan Commission for the Families of Parishes” (see Eph. 4:12)

Mission: Inspiring Parishes to make disciples of Jesus

Vision: Being mission-oriented parishes that make disciples of Jesus

You can help change a life forever!

For a child in need, education changes everything.

Chalice sponsorship enables children to attend class every day and have the supplies they need to complete their education, grow up healthy, and reach their full potential.

$37/month

CALL OR GO ONLINE TODAY

1.800.776.6855 chalice.ca
Our Lady of Guadalupe Home: A Refuge for Mothers

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to the Aztecs in modern-day Mexico beginning in 1531. The Patroness of the Unborn taught that while her only Son was also sacrificed, that He was sacrificed for all, and that He was the only sacrifice needed. Mary was someone to whom they could relate, and someone who changed the view of a society that practiced human sacrifice, revealing that in order to have a life filled with peace, they need not sacrifice their children. In fact, Mary, in her maternal love, demonstrated to the Aztec people that a mother’s love was being extended to their own children.

Today, Our Lady of Guadalupe continues to extend this message to all mothers who are experiencing difficulty raising children as single parents, and it is being manifested in the Our Lady of Guadalupe Home in Windsor Ontario. “I’m so happy I made the right choice to have the baby…you can push through…you have God, as long as you have God anything is possible,” one of the mothers living at Our Lady of Guadalupe Home explained. She says she had nothing, yet God nonetheless still provided for her. “Don’t think your life is over…that is when you need God the most, because He will show you things you can’t even begin to imagine” she explains.

Every individual at Our Lady of Guadalupe Home has their own experiences, challenges, and background. Another woman, living in a shelter at the time, had a child who was born prematurely. For her to find a safe place to take care of her child was important, and a social worker gave her a flyer for Our Lady of Guadalupe Home. The mother spoke about going through the process of being welcomed to the Home, saying, “The safest place, full—full—of care. To be honest, even my family, they didn’t give me that much care. I believe that family is not in the blood only. Family who save you, who care about you, who give you the full attention, especially to have a baby. I never imagined that someone would treat my baby like grandparents. I’ve found all of that at Our Lady of Guadalupe [Home].”

Another woman, who wishes to become a nurse, hopes to be able to go back to school. She had her daughter prematurely and was facing numerous difficulties. Living in the Home, she said, “has given me a more positive look on life. Everybody is pretty good. They are always there to help… any advice…it’s like a family.” She hopes she can accomplish her goals, and hopes one day “to give back.” She explained that she knows other people might be in her situation, and she would be happy to help them. “There is a lot of support [here]; there is a lot of hope.”

Many thanks are due to Sister Linda Dubé, OSU, one of the co-founders of this Home; yet she credits God: “I would have never imagined I would do something like this. It was all God.” She explained that God kept speaking to her in prayer, and inspired the whole process. She also commented that while serving 50 women and their children (some with more than one child), they have greatly depended upon God to provide for them from the generosity of various donors.

Sister Linda sees the Home as being successful so long as donors continue to contribute. Generous donations have come from the Catholic Women’s League, the Knights of Columbus, and parish collections. These and others have greatly helped fund the Home.

If you would like to contribute to the real financial needs of Our Lady of Guadalupe Home, please visit their website at www.ologhome.com. If you know of any woman in need of a support network, please consider sending her the contact information.

All support is accepted with gratitude for that which can be done to practically support the women and children in need, and to teach the world that when the Church comes together, there is always hope, especially when Our Lady brings to us the love of her Son.
What is our mission as the Church today, for the young and for all?

Contributed by Julian Paparella, Canadian auditor at the October 2018 Vatican Youth Synod

Remember that Jesus, Mary, and all the saints were young people themselves. Among today’s young are the wives and husbands, mothers and fathers of families, popes, bishops, priests, sisters, and deacons of tomorrow.

A Church without young people is a Church with a very short future! We must have a particular focus how we can better serve young people in our parishes, schools, and communities. But we cannot stop there, we must also engage, involve, and empower young people. What can we do to better include them in leadership, on parish councils, in liturgical ministries, in planning youth ministry, sacramental preparation, and social justice initiatives? Why not have parish youth councils or even a diocesan youth council?

To involve young people, one cannot simply wait for them to come to us. One cannot simply repeat decades-old programs and strategies, hoping that they will still work with each new generation. Even though the Church’s mission of connecting people to God will always be relevant, the methods and language we use may become very irrelevant. A homily, or even this newspaper, must be intelligible, relevant, and meaningful for their lives. The Church must be attuned to their situation, questions, and concerns.

As missionary disciples of Jesus, we must constantly adjust and innovate our ways of doing things. Most of all, we ourselves need to be living witnesses to our faith in the love of God; we need to be people who demonstrate the same closeness and compassion that Jesus shows us in the Gospels. We need to get our hands dirty getting close to people and the real situations of their lives. We need to connect more closely with people in order to help them connect more closely to God.

The clearest image offered by the Synod was the Risen Jesus who encounters the disciples on the road to Emmaus three days after His death (see Luke 24:13-35). Jesus goes to the disciples and meets them exactly as they are: disheartened, returning home after having lost all hope. Jesus begins by asking them a simple question: “What are you discussing with each other as you walk along?” (24:17) He begins a dialogue with them that stirs something deep inside their hearts; later they say: “Where not our hearts burning within us as He talked to us on the road?” (24:32) Jesus walks with them even as they travel in the wrong direction, heading home to Emmaus instead of staying with their fellow disciples in Jerusalem. He walks with them and at last they recognize Him. This personal encounter with Jesus sends them back to Jerusalem with haste, to community and to mission!

Jesus is our greatest model and constant help in accomplishing the mission He has entrusted to each one of us. Young people need God, all people need God! God sends us to witness to His love and presence. How effective are we in this precious mission entrusted to us?

May the Risen Jesus share with us in our time the capacity to ignite hearts to burn as we communicate our faith to those around us, walking on the road today with young people and with all people.

To read Julian Paparella’s Synodal Intervention, courtesy of Salt and Light Catholic Media, see http://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=86151.
Catholic Schools: A Deep and Abiding Love

I often reflect upon the kitchen table as a symbol of the life of a family. Meals are celebrated, lessons are learned, and important conversations about life focus on the sacred dignity of humanity. The kitchen table is a place where homework happens and both laughter and tears teach us about God’s calling to a life of service. Our Catholic schools are an extension of the love that is shared around the kitchen tables of our homes.

I have a deep and abiding love for Catholic schools. I have had the privilege to serve students, families, parishes, and educators during the past 31 years as a Catholic teacher and leader. As I transition to a new calling by God, I offer with humility a view of the sacred blessings that exist in the life of our Catholic schools.

We Proclaim the Glory of God:

We are all God’s children. We are souls seeking to understand God’s love and celebrate our covenant. Catholic schools are places of grace that provide time and space for the sacred. Our classrooms are blessed with beautiful works of mercy and prayer. Visitors to our schools see that the hearts of students are alive in prayer. Our curricula, teaching and learning are rooted in the gospels of Jesus Christ.

I have walked together with generations of parents who chose Catholic education because of our focus on prayer, sacraments, and high standards for achievement.

We teach:

- A faith that is rooted in bringing children and youth to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- A Christ-centred embrace of the sacredness of human life, the dignity of the human person and a preferential option for the poor.
- Prayer and a vibrant sacramental life that are central to our lives.
- Corporal and spiritual works of mercy in accordance with the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our goal is simple. We work with families, priests, and pastoral teams to lead students in a life of prayer. We nurture students to understand the graces of Baptism as a Child of God. We work toward full initiation into the Catholic community with regular participation in Holy Eucharist. We follow the same road that Christians have witnessed for the past 2000 years in the words of Jesus Christ to be people of justice.

We proclaim the glory of God. This is an immense gift. This is also a responsibility that we accept in unity with home and parish. Catholic schools welcome, honour, and bless the trust of parents to continue this path of excellence.

We Nurture All Souls To Be People of Faith and Social Justice:

Catholic schools look upon the world with soft eyes to reach out to those who are marginalized or in need of spiritual care. Our students develop a meaningful understanding of poverty. They learn through personal experiences how to be Christ’s vessels of love and to accept love through the gifts of others.

Our Catholic schools teach concern and respect for the public forum with critical logic and academic integrity. We help students discern an important focus on both faith and reason. Our Religious Education and Family Life program ensures that students have resources based on the realistic lives of contemporary families and the person God is calling them to be.

We are progressive school systems that use research-informed strategies to support mental health. We welcome a fully inclusive model of special education in order that the gifts of all students are valued.

We are one family. We celebrate the Holy Family. We gather around one kitchen table to pray, learn and grow.

Our Catholic schools are beautiful and sacred. I am thankful for the blessings of service: to act justly, love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. For this reason, I kneel before the Father...from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. (Ephesians 3:14-15)

Suggested Reading: For Additional Learning About Catholic Schools: Renewing The Promise: http://iceont.ca/news-and-updates/renewingthepromise/
St. Joseph’s Hospitality Centre

St. Joseph’s Hospitality Centre, at 707 Dundas Street in London, is essentially a “soup kitchen” serving almost 400 meals per day to those in need in our city. Just as importantly, we offer community to a growing population that is often isolated.

We are able to do this with the help of the financial dedication of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Joining the Sisters’ dedication are more than 120 volunteers who help to serve over 90,000 meals per year. The Hospitality Centre has two full-time staff and two part-time staff to help guide volunteers in the kitchen.

Some 36 years ago, in 1983, the Sisters of St. Joseph saw a growing need in the city of London. Unemployment was high and they were moved to open a kitchen to help those falling through the proverbial cracks.

I started volunteering 25 years ago and I have never witnessed the depths of those suffering with poverty, substance abuse, and mental health issues, as we see today.

Our breakfasts rotate between eggs and cereal but all include toast, fruit, coffee, and more. Lunch can range from the basic but filling soup-and-sandwich, to hot beef sandwiches, and bigger meals.

To this day, the Sisters of St. Joseph continue to operate the “soup kitchen” without receiving any funding from any level of government. It appears that governments, since the early 1980s, have relied on heavily on religious groups to help people who are in need.

We do ask guests using our kitchen to pay a small fee of 50¢ for breakfast or a dollar for lunch. Some may question why we charge, but it works on many levels. No one is left to go hungry but it gives our guests a voice and the dignity of paying for something that they receive. Also, it discourages the notion that guests “should just be happy with whatever they get because it’s free.” Of course, food is not free and staff and volunteers do their best to provide great value.

The St. Joseph’s Hospitality Centre serves breakfast and lunch to a diverse population which comes from all walks of life. They may be people who are: senior citizens, unemployed, the “working poor,” homeless, those suffering with substance abuse, or those with mental health issues. Often guests may be challenged by several of these issues.

The unemployment and poverty issues, especially among senior citizens, are here to stay. The substance abuse and mental health issues appear to have become much worse in the past year. It is a tragedy being witnessed daily with no apparent help in sight.

Whether our guests are loving, kind, compassionate, scared, or angry, they are all sacred people whom we serve with great dedication. I am always left so impressed by the perseverance, understanding, and generosity displayed by our guests.

If you are moved, there are many ways to get involved. One way to help is to support us with prayer. You could also help by donating some of items we use every day, including but not limited to coffee, hot chocolate, tea, sugar, coffee whitener, peanut butter, jam, margarine, and napkins. You can also help with a financial donation made in care of the Sisters of St. Joseph. And finally, you can help by volunteering your time and offering your personal gifts in service. Simply contact me, Bill Payne at stjosephshospitalitycentre@gmail.com or feel free to call us at 519-432-0660.
Embracing Jean Vanier’s Vision

L’Arche 50th Anniversary

Contributed by Ray Dilling

Jean Vanier’s Vision

In 1964, Canadian philanthropist and theologian, Jean Vanier met two men who were institutionalized because of their intellectual challenges. Deeply impacted by the injustice he saw, he invited them to live with him at L’Arche (“the Ark”), his small but aptly-named home in France. He quickly discovered that the two men whom he had befriended had much to offer him, and to teach him about life.

This act of kindness was the seed that has grown, a half a century later, into one of the world’s leading organizations that supports people living with intellectual disabilities. Jean Vanier established L’Arche Canada in 1969. L’Arche communities now exist on six continents with L’Arche Canada playing a role in assisting its international work.

Widely recognized for his humanity, Jean Vanier is a member of the Order of Canada and, in 2015, was awarded the highly prestigious Templeton Prize, which recognizes individuals who have significantly impacted the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of others.

L’Arche believes that each person has value and is blessed with special gifts to share with the world. This belief is fundamental to L’Arche and is at the core of its mission.

Intellectual Disabilities: A Critical Issue

For 50 years L’Arche in Canada has been a caring and trusted friend to Canadians living with intellectual disabilities. Meaningful relationships, compassionate support, and unconditional acceptance are at the core of what makes L’Arche one of the most special and unique organizations in Canada today.

Approximately 750,000 Canadians live with intellectual disabilities and need safety and support to reach their full potential. For them and their families, L’Arche Canada offers hope and peace of mind.

A Parish Community Working Together

St. George Parish, London, is a place of welcome and belonging in the city of London to individuals with intellectual disabilities. The parish family has whole-heartedly supported the community in many different ways over the years. The Knights of Columbus has held an annual Cabaret, the proceeds of which benefit L’Arche London. The Catholic Women’s League has faithfully supported the Annual Banquet. Over the years the administration team has provided free spaces for meetings and events. The parish family have been valued partners in embracing the vision of Jean Vanier in the city of London.

Father John’s words on the partnership: “L’Arche London is very important for me personally and for our entire parish family. Their faithfulness, participation, and witness remind us to love tenderly, serve humbly, and embrace everyone around us as brothers and sisters. They show us the heart of the Gospel, that is, to love each other without limits or conditions and to honour each other as true gifts. We are a better, stronger, and more loving parish because of our L’Arche friends!!”

L’Arche Stratford

L’Arche Stratford was founded in 1973 by Marjorie Pickersgill and opened to become the fourth L’Arche community in the world. Her son Ron, worked with Jean Vanier in the original L’Arche community in France. The original L’Arche Stratford facility was a 2 storey dormitory style building, a former convent, adjacent to St. Joseph’s Catholic Church. It is noteworthy that it was the Ursuline Sisters who donated the convent to L’Arche Stratford and their support continues to this day.

Today, L’Arche Stratford has four homes providing a variety of support services to people living more independently throughout the city. Additionally, it offers day program support to several core members and other individuals with disabilities requiring specific support services and programs.

The community gathers regularly to worship, celebrate, and share their respective gifts together. The L’Arche community of Stratford emerged from the Catholic tradition but today recognizes many different faiths.

Meeting Tomorrow’s Needs

The demand for services continues to grow. As evidenced by the waiting lists, it is estimated that hundreds of individuals with intellectual disabilities are awaiting a multitude of much-needed services. To address this serious challenge, the Stratford Board of Directors approved the purchase of a 20,000 square-foot former Montessori School. Once extensive renovations are completed, the facility will enable L’Arche Stratford to provide a spectrum of community support services such as life-skill training, cooking, activity rooms, and multi-sensory room. There is a gym to accommodate a range of activities and there are also plans for six one-bedroom suites.

The preparatory phase of a capital campaign is well underway. We welcome and encourage your input, continued support, and heartfelt prayers throughout this process.

L’Arche Mission Statement: L’Arche believes that each person has value and is blessed with special gifts to share with the world. This belief is fundamental to L’Arche and is at the core of its mission.

For additional information, please visit www.larche.ca or contact Ray Dilling at raydilling@hotmail.com.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

MENEAR WORRAD & ASSOCIATES

- Lawyers Specializing in Service -

Michael A. Menear
Wills, Estate Administration
Real Estate, Corporate Law
Michael H. Murray
Family Law

Daniel J. McNamara
Wills, Estate Administration
Employment Law
Karen E. MacDonald
Wills, Estate Administration

- CONTACT -

478 Waterloo Street, London ON N6B 2P6

519.672.7370 519.663.1165 www.menealaw.com
CATHOLIC CEMETERIES OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON
Serving the needs of the faithful in Southwestern Ontario

Our array of pre-planning options allows you to choose how you wish to be remembered.

For more information, please call your area Catholic Cemetery or visit our website at www.CatholicCemeteries.on.ca

SARNIA
Resurrection Cemetery and Crematorium and Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery
519-542-2623

WINDSOR
Heavenly Rest Family of Catholic Cemeteries and Crematorium
519-969-4836

LONDON
St. Peter’s Cemetery and Holy Family Chapel Mausoleum
519-451-9120

And more than 65 parish cemeteries serving local communities from Windsor to Woodstock and from Goderich to Port Dover.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT