

# Northern Catholic News

SPECIAL EDITION

JANUARY 2013

## *Msgr. Stephen Jensen appointed Bishop of Prince George*



On January 3, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Msgr. Stephen Jensen, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, as Bishop of the Diocese of Prince George. He succeeds Bishop Gerald Wiesner, OMI, who, after over 19 years, offered his resignation to the Holy Father in Jun 2012 when

he reached the age of 75, as required by the Code of Canon Law.

Bishop-elect Stephen Jensen was born May 30, 1954 in North Vancouver, BC. He attended St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario where he received his BA in Philosophy in 1976 and a

Master of Divinity in 1979.

He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Vancouver on May 24, 1980. From 1984 to 1998 he was a pastor in three parishes: Immaculate Conception and Corpus Christi in Vancouver and St. Ann's in Abbotsford.

Since 1984 he has served on the Catholic School Board, overseeing a total of 46 elementary and secondary schools in the Vancouver Archdiocese. He was named a Prelate of Honour in 1996 and Vicar for Education in 1997, assisting with elementary and secondary Catholic schools, as well as adult catechesis.

In 2001 he earned a doctorate in Education, specializing in educational leadership, at the Jesuit University of San Francisco. In 2009, the Most Rev. J. Michael Miller, CSB, Archbishop of Vancouver, named him Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

He has also been Moderator of

the Curia and Vicar for Evangelization and Education, a member of the Archdiocesan Finance Council, Chair of the Steering Committee of the archdiocesan annual appeal, and a member of archdiocesan advisory boards for Catholic cemeteries, evangelization, stewardship and vocations.

Bishop-elect Jensen was a trustee of Vancouver College and St. Thomas More Collegiate schools – both non-parochial high schools originally run by the Christian Brothers – and a member of the board of the theological school St. Mark's College and the undergraduate liberal arts program Corpus Christi College – both affiliated with the University of British Columbia.

He was a trustee of Providence Health Care, the largest Catholic health care organization in Canada.

*Shortly after his appointment as bishop of the Diocese of Prince George, Msgr. Stephen Jensen made a brief trip to the diocese to meet with his new staff at the Diocesan Centre. Pictured here with Msgr. Jensen, centre, are the Director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Susan Campbell and Diocesan Administrator Father Richard Beaudette, OMI. PHOTO BY: Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin*



*Northern  
Catholic News*

Published by the  
Diocese of Prince  
George

6500 Southridge Ave  
Box 7000  
Prince George, BC  
V2N 3Z2

Phone: 250-964-5644  
Fax: 250-964-2101

Email:  
majamin@netbistro.com

Editor:  
Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin  
Layout:  
Stacy Gaal

## *Tireless priest moves north*

By Nathan Rumohr  
*Reprinted with permission from  
The B.C. Catholic*

Msgr. Stephen Jensen grew up serving the Church and he's never stopped.

The Bishop-elect of Prince George has always kept service and obedience to the Lord close to his heart. His friends and colleagues know he will bring that attitude to the people of Northern British Columbia.

"It's all God's grace, not our personal abilities," he told *The B.C. Catholic*. "We can't be under any illusions on where it comes from."

The archdiocese's vicar-general knew he wanted to serve Jesus relatively early in his life. Growing up in North Vancouver in the 1950s and 1960s, he attended Holy Trinity Church with his parents Kathleen and Mark (both deceased) and studied at Holy Trinity Elementary School.

"In those days North Vancouver was like a small town," he recalled. "It was much less developed than it is now, so you recognized a lot more people you saw on the street."

It was a close-knit community. Parish life, he added, was a great influence on him. He saw "the Church at its best."

"In that parish there was a great tradition of service," he said. "Altar boys would serve in large numbers at weekday masses. It was just part of growing up there; it wasn't seen as exceptional."

He said this was probably where the "seed of vocation was planted." He also credited his parents for being good examples of how to be faithful Catholics.

"Church was very important to them, and the priesthood was revered." He said his parents didn't hinder him from the priesthood but didn't put any pressure on him.

"The family sets the framework for your world; if family life is conducive to faith and vocation than it's possible to hear the call."

Bishop-elect Jensen, as he will be known until his episcopal ordination, was also influenced by his pastor Father John Kilty, who inspired him to serve God's faithful.

Once Bishop-elect Jensen decided to pursue the priesthood he was sent by former Archbishop James Carney to St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario. He obtained a master of divinity degree in 1979.

"I thoroughly enjoyed St. Peter's," he recalled. "The priests and seminarians were really fine people."

He said his class of seven seminarians was a tight-knit group. "It was remarked at the seminary that that the class was an extraordinary one because we really all were friends and, I would like to think, a positive influence."

One of his classmates, now Bishop Brian Dunn of Antigonish, NS, will be on hand at Bishop-elect Jensen's ordination Mass.

Bishop Dunn described his friend as a solid, insightful, firm and reliable man. "In the seminary he was very quiet, but whenever he spoke you got to the core of the truth he was talking about. He had a wonderful way of penetrating the reality of the situation."

Bishop Dunn said his for-

mer classmate's mastery of catechesis and religious education will not only be a great contribution for the people of Prince George, but also for the entire country when he becomes a member of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop-elect Jensen returned to Vancouver in 1980 and was ordained by Archbishop Carney. He was assigned as an assistant pastor at Corpus Christi Parish in Vancouver and later at Assumption Parish in Powell River.

From 1984 to 1998 he served as pastor at Immaculate Conception and Corpus Christi parishes in Vancouver and St. Ann's in Abbotsford.

"The good people were always inspiring and edifying to priests," he said.

He had the chance to work for four "outstanding archbishops," he added, from Archbishop Carney to Archbishop J. Michael Miller.

He was named a prelate of honor with the title monsignor in 1997 and in 2009 Archbishop Miller appointed him to his current post as vicar-general.

The bishop-elect appears to keep somewhat to himself and maintain a certain level of privacy but his coworkers within the chancery know him as a witty man with a sense of humor and a good heart.

Bishop-elect Jensen will face his new appointment with humility and a reliance on the Lord. "It's not going to be my abilities or skills that do it; it's only by God's help. We're not sufficient ourselves, but God is."

## “Catholic education equips us for mission”

Bishop-elect Stephen Jensen served education in the Vancouver Archdiocese as a member of the Catholic school board and currently sits as vice-president.

“Catholic education, in a school or parish setting, is really a continuation of the ministry of Jesus, so we can know and respond to God’s goodness

to us,” he said. “It equips us for mission, to be witnesses so that others may come to know and serve God, too, in the family of the Church.”

In 1997 Archbishop Adam Exner, OMI, appointed him vicar of education in the archdiocese. At the same time he earned a doctorate in education leadership from the Jesuit University in

San Francisco.

“He’s a wonderful vicar of education,” commented Bobbi Duncan, office manager of the Catholic Independent Schools office of Vancouver Archdiocese. “He always has the schools as his first priority. He’s a wonderful man and Prince George is lucky to have him.”

### What people are saying ...

*Most Rev. J. Michael Miller*  
*Archbishop of Vancouver*

The appointment is “a great blessing to the Diocese of Prince George,” but “a loss for the Archdiocese of Vancouver.”

“The Holy Father has chosen a worthy shepherd and successor to Bishop Wiesner, and we shall all pray that his ministry will be fruitful for the entire People of God entrusted to his care.”

The Archbishop described Msgr. Jensen as “indefatigable in carrying out his priestly ministry” and said those who know and work with him “shall miss his exemplary simplicity, his wisdom and his wit.”

“He is an inspiration to us all.”

*Rev. Richard Beaudette, OMI*  
*Diocesan Administrator*  
*Diocese of Prince George*

Father Richard said he was delighted with the news of Msgr. Jensen’s appointment.

“He will have quite a task ahead of him in our northern diocese - adjusting to a new environment, long distances between parishes, adverse weather conditions, the great diversity within our communities - all of these will present a challenge to the new bishop.”

“At the same time, after having met with him for the best part of a day to discuss plans for his ordination and ministry among us, I believe he will truly be a blessing in our diocese. I look forward to his installation as our bishop, which I believe bodes well for the future of the diocese.”

*Barb Dowding*  
*Vice Chancellor*  
*Archdiocese of Vancouver*

“It’s going to be huge loss for us.” She said she wasn’t surprised by the monsignor’s appointment. “He has such a sense of duty to the Church and will bring his gifts to the diocese (of Prince George) and do a great job there.”

*Lynn Monteith*  
*Accountant*  
*Diocese of Prince George*

“Each person brings their talents and treasures to their particular situation. It will be interesting to see how Msgr. Jensen’s will shape our diocese. After nearly 20 years with Bishop Wiesner this will be different, but it will also be exciting. I look forward to working with Msgr. Jensen.”

*Msgr. Mark Hagemoen*  
*President of Corpus Christi College*  
*Principal of St. Mark’s College*

“He is a loyal and faithful steward of the Church and a reliable co-worker in her service. You can always rely on Msgr. Jensen for wisdom and patient endurance, especially when it comes to dealing with challenging or difficult tasks and issues.”

Msgr. Hagemoen worked with Msgr. Jensen from 2004 to 2011 and described him as a “bright and capable theologian” who is “well-read and well-versed in Catholic teaching.”



While in Prince George for a day, Msgr. Jensen was introduced to the Diocesan Centre Staff. Those who were on hand were pictured at the lunch they shared with the bishop-elect.

PHOTO BY: Carla Wolitski

## *Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

The Year of Faith we are celebrating at the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI is a gift to each of us and to the whole Church.

As you know, it commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, what Pope Paul VI called "the great catechism of the twentieth century."

This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, a beautiful synthesis of the Council's teachings and an expression of the Church's faith that comes to us from the Apostles.

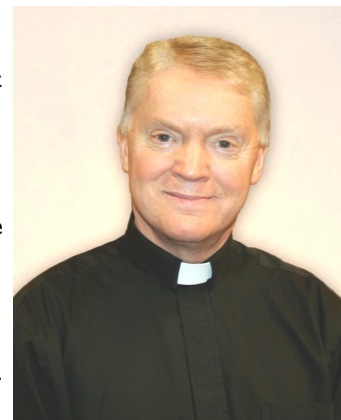
This year is a call to renewal for each of us personally, to deepen our knowledge of Christ and live more fully by the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). At the same time, the Year of Faith is an opportunity to reflect on our corporate efforts to grow in understanding the Faith and witnessing to Christ as parishes and a diocesan community.

Pope Benedict wrote that this special time in the Church is intended "to give new impulse to the mission to guide all people out of the desert towards the place of life and friendship with Christ" (*Porta Fidei*).

I look forward to sharing this great work with the priests, religious and lay faithful of the Church in Prince George. I ask you to pray for me, as I do for you, that God may give us the desire, wisdom and energy to embrace this mission and live together as his friends and witnesses.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Monsignor Stephen Jensen  
Bishop-elect of Prince George



## *Diocesan Administrator elected*

Pictured here are members of the College of Consultors who met on Saturday, January 5, 2013 to elect a Diocesan Administrator: Fathers Pier Pandolfo, Venerando Sabacan, Richard Beaudette, OMI, Thomas Shymko, Michael Anyasoro and Rectorino Tolentino. Missing are Fathers Louis Kwena (on sabbatical leave) and Vincent James, OMI (detained by parish duties).

Together they elected Father Richard Beaudette, OMI, to the position.

Bishop Wiesner's resignation became effective on January 5, 2013 when the Holy Father appointed

Msr. Stephen Jensen as bishop of the Diocese of Prince George. At this time both the Council of Priests and the office of Vicar General cease to exist.

To ensure governance of the diocese during the time between the appointment of a bishop and his ordination and installation, canon law requires the Consultors meet to elect a Diocesan Administrator.



*Episcopal Ordination of Most Rev. Stephen Jensen  
April 2, 2013 at Sacred Heart Cathedral*