

Northern Catholic News

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Spring 2014

Past and present give hope for the future

By: Bishop Stephen Jensen

This week two events recall important moments in the history of the Diocese.

On Sunday, February 16th the rebuilt church of St. Mary Magdalene in Hagwilget (Hazelton) was opened in a memorable celebration that recalled the original church building, erected over 100 years ago.

Father Johmer Faderanga and I offered Mass with an overflowing congregation.

The new edifice is a faithful reproduction of the original structure with modern improvements to make it more energy efficient and comfortable. Much of the original wood was beautifully repurposed in the new church.

The project was led by the enthusiastic leadership of Chief Dora Wilson, with the complex technical and structural work done under the expert direction of Phil Tremblay, the great-grandson of the builder of the original church.

The splendid results will be featured soon on the diocesan website (www.pgdiocese.bc.ca). On behalf of everyone in the Diocese, I offer congratulations to the community of Hagwilget on a wonderful achievement.

On Saturday, February 22nd, Sacred Heart Cathedral was presented with a Historic Places Award to recognize the significance of the cathedral parish to the life of the city. This recognition is being made in the year of the 90th anniversary of the parish's founding.

Besides these reminders of our past, two more things happening tell us about the future.

On the weekend of February 14-16, two young men from the Diocese attended the Vocations Live-in at the Seminary of Christ the King in Mission. This hopeful sign reminds us that God may be calling young men in our parishes to priestly service in our local Church.

Another sign of grace is a group of more than 20 young people who are participating in a new Faith Studies series at the University of Northern BC. More details are featured elsewhere in this edition of the Northern Catholic News.

Please join me in encouraging all our students to be part of the good things being organized on the campus by Eunice Hii, our Youth and Young Adult Ministry Coordinator.

The past and the future are God's gifts to us. Memories of blessings and hope for the future should make us more determined to live generously for God today.

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

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

Email:
majamin@pgdiocese.bc.ca
Editor:
Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin
Layout:
Lisa Weber

Church art is more than decoration

By: Diane Fuller

PRINCE GEORGE - Bishop Stephen Jensen and current pastor, Rev. Chris Lynch, along with Rev. Jack Michalchuk, co-director of the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, joined Immaculate Conception parishioners on December 7, 2013 as they gathered to celebrate the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception.

Bishop Jensen blessed two new stained glass windows during the Eucharistic celebration.

Later commenting on church art, he said, "The church building is more than a hall and should reflect the liturgical mysteries that are celebrated within it."

"In the liturgy we are united with the worship of God that is celebrated by the angels and saints in heaven, as described by St. John in the Book of Revelation. In the church building we get a glimpse of heaven and the artistic images are meant to help connect us with the perfect worship given by the Son to Father in the New Jerusalem."

"Stained glass windows remind us of our connection with the communion of saints who share their worship with

us. Church art is more than decoration; it should speak to us of heavenly realities."

Speaking on behalf of the Parish Council, Finance Chairperson Gary Samis thanked Bishop Jensen, the school choir and everyone who participated in the celebration.

He also thanked David and Margaret Fuller for their generous financial donation for the windows and all those who helped with the project. Harold Belliveau, Pat Hauck, Ed Stella and Ron Walsh were responsible for the installation of the windows.

Immaculate Conception Parish's previous pastor, Father Tom Shymko, well known for his love of beautifying the church - some say it's due to his Ukrainian, Russian and Polish ancestry - commissioned local artist Rita Moehler to construct the windows.

Gary introduced and thanked the stained glass artist as well.

After Mass and the blessing of the windows, parishioners moved into the parish hall to delight in each other's company and enjoy a great feast at the pot luck supper which concluded the celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Rev. Chris Lynch stands with altar servers beneath the stained glass window as Bishop Stephen Jensen blesses this newly installed addition to Immaculate Conception Parish.
PHOTO BY:
Arlene Zobl



Inspired by windows in Germany

By: Diane Fuller

PRINCE GEORGE – Artist Rita Moehler was commissioned by Immaculate Conception Parish to make two stained glass windows.

One depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the parish, and the other is of Jesus reaching out to the children as a sign of the importance of Catholic Education in the parish.

Currently living in Salmon Valley, Rita grew up in Munich, Germany and worked as a painter for Nymphenburger Porcellan, a manufacturer of china for hundreds of years. With her artist husband, Albert, she painted original landscapes based on old designs on to the china.

Rita and Albert moved to Prince George in 1983 where she finally had room in her house for a stained glass workshop. Inspired by the beautiful windows in old buildings and churches in Germany but without teachers of the art in Prince George, she taught herself from books and eventually built a small business doing windows and tiffany lamps.

Several years ago Rita made stained glass windows for Christ Our Savior Parish. She

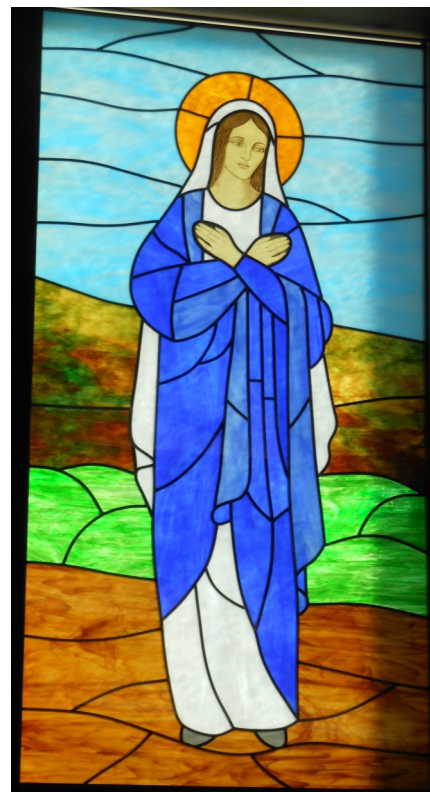
also made the round window in the Domano Chapel, which Joy Cotter commissioned in memory of her daughter.

The large stained glass windows Rita made for Immaculate Conception Parish challenged her engineering as well as artistic skill. Besides the weight of the glass, and the lead channels needed to support the pieces of glass, plywood was required to keep everything in place while turning the windows to work on both sides.

At the completion of the project, Rita arrived to witness the installation. This was an anxious time as she feared something might break. It was an exciting moment when the window was in place.

It is always a surprise to see how different the window looks when it is up and the light passes through it. “A weight is lifted off my shoulders” she said as she saw her work completed.

RIGHT: Morning light illumines the stained glass window, one of two made by artist Rita Moehler for Immaculate Conception Parish in Prince George. PHOTO BY: Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin



Art enhances sacred space

By: Diane Fuller

PRINCE GEORGE - Works of art in the Catholic Church have been used over the centuries to teach about faith. In the early years of the Church many of the faithful gained knowledge of Scripture and the saints through this art which became known as the “Poor Man’s Bible.”

Stained glass has proven to be an exceptionally beautiful artistic medium in this teaching role, giving new expressions of that beauty with the differing shades of light passing through the art work with each hour of the day and season of the year.

The early Church Fathers recognised that good religious art raises the soul and mind of the beholder to the realm of the Spirit in prayer. Quoting St. John Damascene, the Catechism of the Catholic Church notes that, “The beauty of the images moves me to contemplation, as a meadow delights the eyes and subtly infuses the soul with the glory of God.”

The Catechism goes on to say, “Similarly, the contemplation of sacred icons, united with meditation on the Word of God and the singing of liturgical hymns, enters into the harmony of the signs of celebration so that the mystery

celebrated is imprinted in the heart’s memory and is then expressed in the new life of the faithful” (#1162)

Immaculate Conception Parish has a wonderful history of volunteers and benefactors anxious to contribute their talents and financial support for the beautification of the church and school. The beautiful Stations of the Cross, carved in Northern Italy were one of the first artworks.

Father Nicholas Forde OMI, pastor of Immaculate Conception from 1979–1995, engaged local tradesmen and artists in an effort to beautify the sanctuary. The wood paneling and the floor of the sanctuary were installed in the 1980’s by Ed King.

David Honeyman’s father Andy Honeyman built the baptismal font. Local artist Jim Somerville designed and carved wooden statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Our Lady of the Forest and St. Joseph the Wood Worker (1990–1993). Jim later carved the matching crucifix which hangs in the church today.



ABOVE: Woodwork, carvings and stained glass windows give witness to the commitment parishioners at Immaculate Conception Parish have to creating a beautiful sacred space. PHOTO BY: A. Zobl

Happy 25th anniversary

By: Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin

PRINCE GEORGE -

Parishioners and invited guests celebrated with Rev. Volodymyr Dmyterko and his family on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of ordination to the order of priesthood at St. George's

Ukrainian Catholic Church, January 11, 2014.

Most Rev. Ken Nowakowski, Eparchial Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster, was in Prince George to celebrate the Pontifical Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving.

In his homily the Bishop noted that although by the time Father Volodymyr was ordained in November 1988 the "iron curtain" had fallen, when he began his priestly formation it was under very difficult circumstances in the Ukraine.

He commended Father Volodymyr, his wife, Vera, and their family for the decision they made to persist in the faith, not knowing what the future would hold in the "Church of the catacombs".

He also thanked Father Volodymyr for his willingness to leave his homeland and come to Prince George when the need arose for a pastor at St. George's Church.



Father Volodymyr Dmyterko, his wife Vera, along with their children and grandchildren, pose with their Bishop, the Most Rev. Ken Nowakowski, following a Pontifical Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving. Also pictured in back row, left, is Father Piotr Dudek, OMI, pastor of St. Mary's Parish.

Parish celebrates its own Olympics

By: Anna Marie Pond

FRASER LAKE – In anticipation of the upcoming world-wide sporting event, St. Andrew's Parish held its own Olympics on Family Day, February 10th.

Over 70 people from the parish and community enjoyed the fresh snow at Ray and Therese Steiner's hill, participating in tobogganing, tubing and snowboarding.

The bonfire kept the spectators warm and when event participants took a break, everyone enjoyed roasting wieners for lunch.

It was a gold medal day for young and old alike.

RIGHT: Father Vincent James, OMI, enjoys a warm fire on a cold day at St. Andrew's Parish Olympics in February.

FAR RIGHT: Olympians make their way up the Steiner Hill.



Return to me

The increasing hours of sunlight suggest that the season of winter is loosening its grip. Longer days remind us that Easter is fast approaching.

On Ash Wednesday the prophet Joel gives voice to the desire of God that we come home. Where have we gone? For Joel it would seem that we have forgotten who we are, what we are called to do and to whom we belong.

Joel strides into our Church and invites us to 'return to God with all our heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning.' Joel invites us to 'rend our hearts and not our clothing.'

In the Ash Wednesday text, he sets before us a way of returning to our God. The program begins with the acknowledgment that today our hearts which ought to belong to God, do not fully belong to God.

Joel suggests that we effect a change by rending our hearts: repenting, stripping them of everything that prevents God from influencing our behavior towards the poor. If our hearts are divided, sin will grow within us. If God is not at the centre of our hearts our daily actions will create darkness rather than life.

It is important therefore that we look closely at our hearts. What we focus on, where we spend our resources and what we give our energy to reveals the 'god' of our life. Joel reminds us that we belong to the Living God and we need to return to our God.

As I reflected on the prophets in general, I was struck by the fact that they call us back to the God who created us, the God who entered into a covenant with us. This return to God is not a matter of words or rituals; it is a call to action.

The return that Joel calls for has practical repercussions for our daily life. It is not a call to return to liturgical worship, beneficial as that is. The return that the prophets call for is a return to goodness and justice.

Joel calls for a change of heart, that we see our brothers and sisters in a new way and ensure that justice is realized on their behalf. These actions are a reflection of the God who loves us.

A close look at our local community reveals people marginalized by those of us who have power, money, education and social status.

How many people in our local community lack food, clean water, adequate shelter, access to education, health care and the opportunity to praise the God who created them? We take note of the poor around the world, but we often miss the poor who stand at our door or who gather with us for Sunday worship.

As this Lent unfolds, sacred Scripture will remind us that God wants to take possession of our hearts. We will be called again and again to turn away from our sinful ways and focus our hearts on God.

This is not an abstract journey. It is a practical journey and it will

lead us to the cross where, in the midst of our own suffering, we will be called upon to liberate others, to forgive others, to give up our life that others may live.

In order to do this, we must notice the suffering around us and we make a commitment to do something about it. The prophets remind us that the promise of the messiah will be realized, the saviour will come.

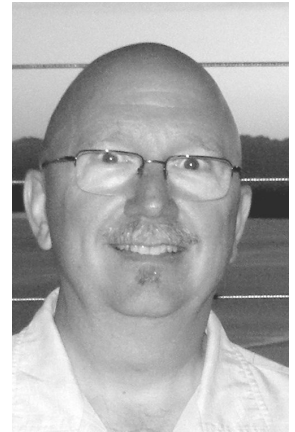
Our faith tells us the messiah has come. Jesus has died, is raised from the dead and has ascended to Our God. Our faith tells us that what happened to Jesus will happen to us, we will rise again.

The promise of the messiah, of resurrected life, is made visible when we use our hands to make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters. Paul says the time to make a difference is now.

Joel assures us that God is 'gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.' As I continue my Lenten journey to Easter, God invites me to 'rend my heart' so that I too might become 'gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love'.

Our actions of grace and mercy exercised throughout the Lenten season will bring forth new life as Easter morning dawns within my heart and my home.


As the sun sets on this day, I turn my head and heart towards the God who welcomes me home! I return to a God who is gracious and merciful, who lifts me up when I falter, who raises me up when suffering and death overtake me!




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New executive installed

By: Pat Forster

FORT ST. JOHN – After two days of snow and -26 C temperatures, it was cold outside but very warm inside Immaculata Centre for the Catholic Women's League Christmas social on December 3rd.

Open to all women of Resurrection Parish, the social saw 52 women, including eight between the ages of 80 and 93 years, join-

ing Spiritual Advisor, Father Venerando Sabacan, for an evening of Chinese food and carol singing.

Each woman was asked to bring an item for a baby shower in support of the North Peace Pregnancy Care Centre. When thanking the CWL for their contribution, the Centre said they were overwhelmed with the generosity of our members.

During the previous month the Catholic Women's League held elections and on February 2nd Father Vener, pastor of Resurrection Parish, presided at the Mass where the installation of the 2014-2015 executive took place. Current President, Pat Forster, presented Lynn Halverson with her Past President pin at that time.

The newly elected Resurrection Parish CWL executive, back row: Imelda Plemel, Marie Napier, President Pat Forster, Past President Lynn Halverson; front row: Josephine Pimm, Helen Gordon, Secretary Linda Gibos, Annette Jones and Treasurer Jana Leslie. PHOTO BY: Lorna Nyffeler



With thanks



At the end of January Simone Kwast retired after 14 years working at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre. PHOTO BY: Carla Wolitski

BURSARY



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The Sisters of St. Ann are offering a Bursary named in honour of their foundress, Blessed Marie Anne Blondin. This bursary offers assistance to women seeking education in theological and ministry studies that promote justice, peace, integrity of creation, healing, holistic living and a healthy life style.

Priority will be given to a candidate from BC, the Yukon or the Northwest Territories who is connected in some way with the Sisters of St. Ann. Preference will be given to one who is on limited income and who sees the educational opportunity as a means of employment training or personal growth.

For an application form, please contact:

administration@ssabc.ca or 250-592-3133

CWL offers \$500 bursaries

By: Evelyn Rigby

KELOWNA - At this time of year many graduating students and others are looking for financial assistance to help realize their plans for further education.

The BC and Yukon Catholic Women's League Provincial Council is once again happy to announce that there are \$500 bursaries available through the Molly Boucher Bursary and the Life Members Art & Culture Award.

Because letters of reference are required along with the pastor's signature applicants are advised to start working on these now. The completed Application Forms and other information requested must be submitted to the BC & Yukon Provincial Chairperson of Education and Health, Caroline Ann-Alter, by March 31st.

The second of these bursaries, funded by the CWL Life Members of BC, is for someone involved in or entering the field of art and culture.

An article written by a former winner of this award who used this bursary to help finance her studies, along with the criteria and application forms, is available



Caroline Ann Alter, Education and Health Chairperson for BC/Yukon Catholic Women's League, is ready to receive bursary applications.

on the Provincial CWL website: www.bcyukoncwl.com.

It should be noted that other levels of the Catholic Women's League of Canada offer bursaries with different criteria. For example, the National Bursary Fund provides financial assistance to CWL members with a minimum of three consecutive years of service to pursue studies within Canada in adult faith formation and/or youth ministry.

Several parish councils in the Prince George Diocese offer bursaries of \$500 or \$250. Further information about these is available through local CWL councils with contact personnel listed in parish bulletins. Most deadlines for application are March 31st.

Winners of the 2014 bursaries will be honored at a banquet during the upcoming BC/Yukon Provincial Convention, June 5-7 in Kamloops.



Knights donate wheel chairs

Christ the King Knights of Columbus Council #5148 presented the Kitimat General Hospital with four wheel chairs for use in their multi-care facility. Pictured here are Grand Knight Frank Mauro, along with Derick Stinson, making the presentation to Hospital Administrator, J. Cooper. PHOTO BY: Max Patzelt

Returning to Spirit

Twenty-two participants along with three trainers gathered at the Diocesan Centre in Prince George for the latest Returning to Spirit workshop, February 17-21. PHOTO BY: John Connelly



Farewell Susan Campbell

By: Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin

PRINCE GEORGE – After over 18 years as Director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Susan Campbell bid farewell to the Diocese at the end of December 2013. She is currently enjoying a sabbatical year and preparing for future ministry.

Coworkers and friends had two opportunities to thank Susan for her years of service among us: a Diocesan farewell at St. Mary's Parish on December 2nd and a staff farewell luncheon on December 20th.

Speaking at St. Mary's Parish, after Mass where Bishop Stephen Jensen presided and local priests concelebrated, Claire Petrucci outlined the many ministries Susan was involved in during her years of service in this diocese.

Of particular note was the Lay Formation program wherein 17 groups of people took part in the two-year program in four locations: Prince George, Camp Emile at Moberly Lake, Smithers and Terrace. "There are now 300 of us who have completed the program" since it began in 1994, she said.

"The Scriptures were opened for us, the beauty and meaning of the liturgy was revealed as the 'source and summit' of our faith and we were given a deep sense of community," Claire said of her experience in Lay Formation. "Susan's teaching was always clear, well researched and of great depth and the presenters she provided were amazing, the very best."

"We came away from our weekends knowing what those first disciples experienced when they said, 'Were not our hearts burning within us?'"

Claire worked with Susan on the Diocesan Liturgy Committee and the Pastoral Planning process based on the Diocesan Vision. She noted the number of times Susan "crisscrossed the diocese giving workshops". And, Claire said, thanks to the work Susan put into the implementation of the new Roman Missal, "I think we were one of the best prepared dioceses in the country."



Susan Campbell is pictured here with the wood relief depiction of Our Lady of the Annunciation at the Diocesan Centre. PHOT BY: Mary-Anne Lewis Jamin

Among Susan's many contributions is her involvement in the effort to further reconciliation and healing with our First Nations brothers and sisters in light of the legacy of Residential Schools through Returning to Spirit. She is both a workshop trainer and seminar facilitator and at the farewell, Terry Luggi-Sabo thanked Susan for her commitment to this process.

Sr. Mary-Ann Bates, RSCJ, worked with Susan in the Diocesan Pastoral Centre from the time Susan arrived in Prince George in 1995. "What stands out for me in those 18 years is that we truly were a team, each one with her or his specific portfolio, yet working together and always on hand to support and to encourage one another," she said.

Sr. Mary-Ann noted the eight Diocesan Assemblies and nine Diocesan Pastoral Study Days they helped facilitate.

Sr. Irene Baker, CSJ, left and Sr. Dorothy Ryan, CSJ, right acknowledge Susan Campbell's spiritual contribution to the diocese at a Shawl Ceremony during the staff farewell luncheon. Here they present Susan with the shawl in recognition of her service both to God and to the believing community. PHOTO BY: Lynn Monteith



She pointed out that Susan served two terms as Chair of the Canadian Association of Ministries Program and several years on the National Advisory Commission for Adult Faith Formation. "This association developed and published, 'On Good Soil' in 2012, a resource to be used by dioceses and parishes to assess and to strengthen local initiatives in adult faith formation."

Along with her many accomplishments are the personal qualities "that remain and continue to be shared, qualities that far outweigh whatever ministry we may be engaged in."

Looking directly at Susan, Sr. Mary-Ann said, "You are a woman of integrity; you live what you profess. Your faithful prayer life nurtures your convictions and shapes and flavors your daily living."

"You are a consummate professional," she continued. "Ministry at the diocesan level presents many challenges, difficult situations and moments of conflict and confrontation. You always take the high road, Susan, respecting the dignity of each, giving each one the benefit of the doubt, always searching for a resolution that is true, fair and just."

"We gather this evening to thank you, Susan, trusted colleague, dear sister and friend. We gather to wish you fond farewell and to bless you."

Sacred Heart Cathedral receives historic recognition

By: Arthur Williams
Reprinted with permission, Prince George Citizen

PRINCE GEORGE - Sacred Heart Cathedral was recognized by the Prince George Heritage Commission for nearly 90 years of history.

On Saturday, February 22, 2014, the commission presented the Cathedral with the Heritage Citation Historic Places Award for 2014 in a ceremony at The Exploration Place. Sacred Heart Cathedral, located on Patricia Boulevard, was originally consecrated as a parish church on Christmas Eve in 1924.

"The parish of Sacred Heart has been there nine decades in that spot," local historian Valerie Giles said. "There has been two churches on that site."

The current building was consecrated in 1961 and rededicated as a cathedral in 1968, Giles said in a written statement.

Bishop Stephen Jensen said the award is a recognition of the people who built the church and made it a part of the community and their lives.

"This is a wonderful initiative and we need it more now than ever," Jensen said. "People of faith have always had the impulse to act... to make the world more just... The history of our diocese in Prince George shows that. People of faith saw a need and took action."

Despite having more access to historic information and more ability to document history through electronic media,

Jensen said, people today "know less of our history... than it used to be."

One of the accomplishments of Sacred Heart Parish was the creation of a credit union to provide loans and mortgages to people who needed access to them, he said. That credit union has since become Spruce Capital Credit Union and continues to operate today.

Retired architect Trelle Morrow, who designed the current cathedral, said the cathedral is an example of the changes happening in building design during the 1950s and '60s.

"In the 1950s we were going through an architectural revolution. It's the ideas that really were important in church work," he said. "In Sacred Heart we went with a vertical theme. That's why it is 60 feet high inside."

Morrow said the committee he was working with at the time also felt it was important to use local materials - to put an emphasis on wood construction. The prominent use of wood has returned as a building theme, he said, and modern architects should look at the work he and his contemporaries were doing 50 to 60 years ago.

"What it does is express how we were thinking in the 1950s and '60s," Morrow said. "Most of the churches in Prince George were built in [that time.] I was fortunate to be part of that."



One of the architectural features of Sacred Heart Cathedral is the high ceilings, evident in this 2010 picture of the Christm Mass. PHOTO BY: Frank Jamin



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Attention all Lay Formation Alumni!

It's 20 years since Lay Formation started in the Prince George Diocese. All Alumni are invited to the Lay Formation Alumni weekend on June 13-15, 2014 with Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI.

Details can be found in the Domano Renewal Centre brochure and online at www.domanorenewalcentre.org

An update from the Youth Ministry Office

By Eunice Hii

PRINCE GEORGE - In the famous Scripture story of disciples on the road to Emmaus, two of Jesus' followers failed to recognize the risen Christ while on their journey.

It was not until Jesus broke bread with them that they recognized him and said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?"

Whether we know it or not, all of us, young and old, yearn for Christ, to be near him as were those first apostles.

Diocesan Youth Conference 2014

This Scripture passage not only sets the stage for the theme of the upcoming 19th Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC), but points to a greater desire we have, that all our young people may experience this burning within their hearts for Jesus Christ.

Mark your calendars and plan to be there! This year's DYC, *Catching Fire*, will take place at the Diocesan Centre in Prince George, April 25-27.

We are excited to welcome Ken Yasinski, founder and president of Facetoface Ministries and Lighthouse Catholic Media as our keynote speaker. A Saskatoon-native, Ken is passionate about bringing young people to a place of en-

counter with Jesus and stresses the joys of a personal relationship with him.

We are also excited to introduce a new schedule to DYC and will be opening this year's conference to Grade 7 students in our diocese. Stay tuned for more details! Registration opened at the end of February.

Young Adult Ministry

We have seen strong beginnings for young adult ministry in Prince George at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). We launched small-group faith studies on campus using resources from Catholic Christian Outreach.

Currently 4 leaders with 21 participants from both UNBC and the local

College of New Caledonia on campus participate. This is very exciting for a first round!

Another great success in our office has been the increase in the use of social media and technology. Please continue to share our Facebook page 'PG Youth Ministry' with youth and young adults.

We have also most recently been able to host a conference call connecting all youth ministers in our diocese from Prince Rupert to Fort St. John! What a blessing that has been.

Please continue to pray that hearts may catch fire in this diocese especially in our young people! In the words of Pope Francis, "Have the courage to swim against the tide."

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The God of surprises



By: John Connelly,
Co-Director of
Evangelization and
Catechesis

God is full of surprises. Last summer I was quite convinced that I would probably be leaving the

Prince George Diocese and moving to Alberta. Then Bishop Stephen Jensen came to us on what turned out to be a surprisingly provisional visit.

He mentioned the development of a new Office of Evangelization and Catechesis here in the Diocese.

My colleague Rev. Jack Michalchuk, my wife Tracy and I decided to pray about the possibility of applying for the position. As we prayed, we all had a nagging sense that God might be calling us be a part of his unfolding plan for the Diocese.

Father Jack and I eventually decided to apply to be Co-Directors of this office. It was a surprise to be called, it was a surprise to be chosen and I am certain there will be many surprises on the path ahead!

God loves to surprise us with new dreams, visions and possibilities. Jesus said of his own ministry, "Behold I make all things new." God is always doing new things if only we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

On our first day in this new office we received a copy of the Apostolic Exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel. We believe this document is a prophetic and encouraging vision for the Church in this Diocese and throughout the world.

This document has come to us all as a grace filled surprise. Here is one example of the fresh vision of Pope Francis: "I invite all Christians everywhere at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. No one should think this invitation is not for them..." (#3)

Imagine if all of us had a meaningful encounter with Jesus every day, an encounter that renews us, transforms us

and opens us to new possibilities in our lives.

Jesus is filled with surprises. He takes ordinary people and reveals to them the extraordinary, life changing love of God.

Recently we shared the Pope's vision of renewal with about 40 people at the Domano Renewal Centre. It was exciting to see how this vision of encountering Jesus stirs people's hearts and minds. Deep down we all want to be surprised and transformed by the love of God.

Encountering Jesus daily in prayer, sacrament and in our relationships with others is one of the primary themes we hope to spread through this office in the coming year.

Another new development is the Discovery Faith Study from Catholic Christian Outreach that our Youth Director, Eunice Hii and my Co-Director, Father Jack are giving to about 20 young adults in Prince George. God is stirring these young people's hearts in a dynamic way.

We see wonderful signs of hope and renewal in this Diocese and throughout the world.

We are also working closely with our school Superintendent Chris Dugdale and Bishop Jensen to provide an updated vision of catechetical resources for children and youth in schools and parishes. This will be forthcoming in the next couple months.

The Lay Formation program also has an enthusiastic group of participants and we are working closely with them and coordinator Mary Anne Lewis Jamin. We see many encouraging signs as we journey day by day.

One final thought to ponder: What could happen in this Diocese if we all actively seek a daily encounter with Jesus? What surprises might Jesus have in store for you and me?

Father Jack, Eunice, myself and all who work with us look forward to journeying with you and the God of surprises.

Jesus come surprise us all.



Discovery Faith Study leaders Eunice Hii, Melodie Vandermeer, Father Jack Michalchuk and Alyssa Dugdale,



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 Ph: 250-692-5805
 Fax: 250-692-7779
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SMITHERS – St. Joseph's Parish is observing its 100 year jubilee with a number of events throughout the year, and you are invited!

Rev. Rectorino Tolentino, pastor of St. Joseph's, and the Anniversary Committee invite all parishioners and former parishioners, families, friends and members of parishes across the Diocese of Prince George to come to Smithers and join us as we celebrate this special year.

A number of events will be held throughout the year (see the Jubilee Calendar of Events at <http://stjosephsmithers.com>). The high point of the year will take place on the weekend of May 24-25, 2014 with special celebrations honoring the past, present and future of the parish.

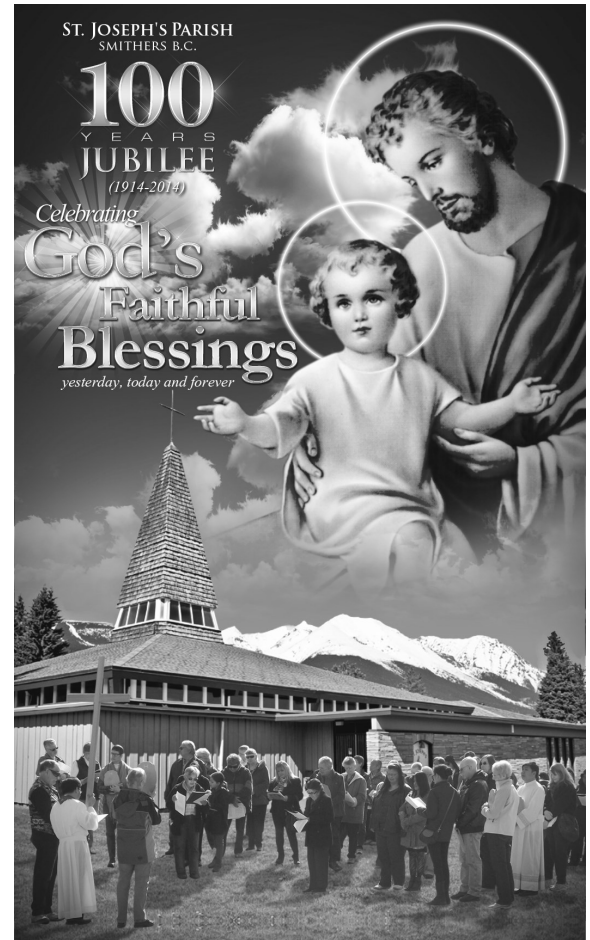
Most Rev. Stephen Jensen, Bishop of the Diocese of Prince George, will preside at a Solemn Eucharistic Celebration on Saturday at 5 p.m. This is followed by a banquet and evening social featuring highlights from the past 100 years of parish life.

The next morning Bishop Jensen will preside at the 9 a.m. Mass where the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion) will be celebrated.

The parish community looks forward to welcoming visitors throughout the year. Drop in to see the church located at 4023 First Avenue in Smithers at any time or plan your visit to allow you to celebrate Mass with the community: Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 9 a.m. See our website or call the parish for weekday Mass times.

We look forward to welcoming you in our parish community. For more information and ticket reservation for the banquet, contact Eileen Bouvier (bouviere@telus.net) or the parish office (250-847-2012 or sjparish@telus.net).

May the prayers and intercessions of St. Joseph, our patron, continue to bless you and your family!



Community rallies to support typhoon victims

By: Therese Steiner

FRASER LAKE – Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines on November 7, 2013 causing unbelievable devastation. Thousands were left dead and millions homeless or displaced.

Parishioners of St. Andrew's Parish, along with people around the world, watched the news coverage with shock and great concern for the people of the Philippines. As the Catholic community in Fraser Lake, we felt we needed a concrete way to express our love and support for those experiencing such suffering.

On November 24th, following Sunday Mass, the local Filipino people prepared a luncheon as a fundraiser. The people of St. Andrew's Parish and others from the community of Fraser Lake gathered together with them to show support through attendance and donations.

The donations from the luncheon totaled \$2,067.35; additional donations were sent directly to Development and Peace. All donations were matched by the Government of Canada.

The people in the Philippines remain in our prayers.



Members of the Filipino community of Fraser Lake raised funds to support those devastated by Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines in November 2013. PHOTO BY: Therese Stafford

School marks BC Catholic Schools' Week 2014

By: Nuala Power

PRINCE GEORGE - Sacred Heart School celebrated BC Catholic Schools' Week well despite the arrival of the coldest week of winter so far!

The week began with students and staff from the school providing ministries for the monthly Parish/School Mass on Sunday, February 2nd.

This year's theme for the week is a quote from the Prophet, Micah: "Walk Humbly With Our God". A prayer service led by Principal Rebecca Gilbert ended with the hymn, "Companions on the Journey", which reflects the theme.

Monday saw the school gathered for an "Acts of Kindness" Assembly. Each student and staff member received a colored heart on which they were invited to record an act of

kindness they completed for another student or staff member.

The hearts were hung in our Assembly space for all to admire.

Mr. Gillis and his Grade 4/5 students led the school Mass on February 6th. While cold weather did not allow the annual Winter Olympics Day to go ahead, the Parent Support Group came through with the hot lunch as planned.

The Grade 5/6/7 ski trip also had to be postponed until the end of February due to the plummeting temperatures. Ms. Johnston came to the rescue by organizing a terrific team scavenger hunt which was greatly enjoyed by all participants.

The week ended with a "Princesses & Super Heroes" Family Dance in the gym on Friday.



Lainey (Kindergarten) stands beside the altar display for BC Catholic Schools' Week at Sacred Heart Cathedral. PHOTO BY: Chelsea Hann

School lends many hands to St. Vincent de Paul

By: Nuala Power

PRINCE GEORGE - Have you ever wondered how thousands of price tags are prepared for clothing which is sold at the St. Vincent de Paul Store in Prince George?

Perhaps not!

They are printed in sheets of 49 tags at Speedee Printers. These are then cut into individual tags which are tied together in bundles of fifty, ready for use.



Lucas (Grade 4) hands over thousands of price tags to Lisa Weber for the St. Vincent de Paul Society's Thrift Store in Prince George.

PHOTO BY: Nuala Power

Recently students, staff and family volunteers at Sacred Heart School pitched in to help out with this time-consuming task. This act of service frees staff at the St. Vincent de Paul Store to get on with other work.

If you have some spare time, please consider assisting with this important job. It can be completed in your own time in your own home. Contact the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store (250-562-5136) if you can be of assistance.

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Sacred Heart School opens its doors to International Students! Welcome Allen to our Sacred Heart School Panther family! PHOTO BY: Chelsea Hann

Students from Sacred Heart School show they are people of "Heart and Peace" when it comes to School Pride. Just one more reason to celebrate at Sacred Heart School! PHOTO BY: Chelsea Hann



Izabella Roderick from Sacred Heart School hosted a cupcake sale at Sacred Heart Cathedral on February 16th, which raised \$342.70 for the SPCA. She has been a top fundraiser for animal welfare in Prince George for a number of years. Well done, Izabella!

Isaac helps with the Kindness Hearts at Sacred Heart School



Mustache Day was a popular day for students and staff at Sacred Heart School! PHOTO BY: Chelsea Hann

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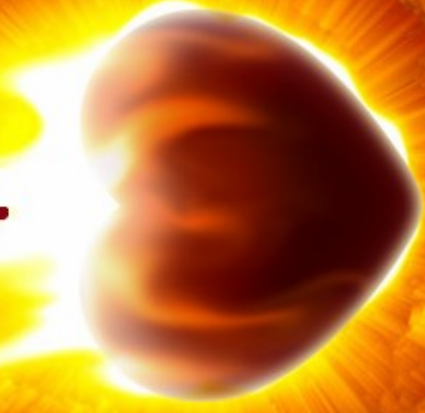
**BY BISHOP JENSEN
To A Diocesan Summit
Saturday, April 26th
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
The Diocesan Centre in
Prince George**

Knitters “bomb” school with color

To mark Catholic School’s Week in Prince Rupert, Little Knitters from Annunciation School worked with some Annunciation Parish knitters to yarn “bomb” (graffiti with knitting) the tree in front of the school. Colors were chosen were from past and present school uniforms which, surprisingly, when knit together reminded everyone of the Canuck’s! The great response ensures this will become an annual tradition at the school. PHOTO BY: Beth Armstrong-Bewick



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