

Deacons of Manitoba Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 4 October 2020

Words from The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

In a response to the tabling of Bill C-7, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said that the proposed legislation of Bill C-7 remains deeply flawed, unjust, and morally pernicious. The Bishops of Canada called on Catholics and all people of good will to make their voices heard in opposition to the Bill. Similarly, all Canadian legislators should recall that no law that permits the taking of innocent human life can ever be morally justified. Such a law would always violate the intrinsic dignity of the human person.

(Statement by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to the re-tabling of Bill C-7, 20 October 2020.) <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CCCB-statement-on-Bill-C-7-20-October-2020-EN.pdf>

Please see link to the joint letter from Religious Leaders in Canada opposing Bill C-7.

https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MAID_Religious-Leaders-in-Canada-oppose-Bill-C-7_EN_FINAL.pdf

Words from Deacon James

A response to the pandemic

We are about to enter the season of Christmas in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. We had to adapt our Easter celebration, Thanksgiving and Halloween because of restrictions to protect ourselves and others from this pandemic. And I am afraid that Christmas will be the same.



The way we have offered our service as deacons has changed. One positive consequence of this whole experience is that we have more time to observe, and in my case, in listening to the news, and others. There is a multitude of people that are suffering and, quite a few who have died. This pandemic tragically, has brought to the forefront many cases of neglect and lack of basic human needs. Some people have been unemployed, the food banks that have helped, have been affected, nursing homes understaffed, restricted visiting, even elective surgeries postponed or canceled, and many more changes to our understanding of what is normal.

This is a time that the love of the Lord is needed more than ever. I ask the question. How have you responded to the need that is greater now, than ever? Maybe you could share with the community the innovative ways that have worked for you.

Blessing and stay safe.

Deacon Jim Frater

Words from history



According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ (1Cor3:10-11)

Deacons, who are clergy, exercise the ministry of Christ the Servant for the members of the Body. The word deacon (diakonos) means minister or servant. The original deacons received the laying on of hands from the Apostles chosen by the Historical Jesus. Paul was chosen by the resurrected Christ or Corporate Christ on the road to Damascus. In A.D.63, Paul mentions both Bishops and Deacons (Phil1:1) and also later he mentions in (1Tim3:8) the qualifications of a Deacon. According to the constant tradition of the Catholic Church the narrative of Acts 6:1-6 describes the first institution of the office of Deacon. The Apostles called together the multitude of disciples and chose seven of them to minister to the table of the Lord so that the Apostles could give themselves totally to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. St. Irenaeus speaks of the martyr Stephen as the first of the seven Deacons.

It is said that the two arms of the Bishop are the Deacons and the Presbyters (priests) so that wherever these two are, the Bishop is present. Deacons have three main responsibilities. The first is to their families and this must always remain their first priority. This can never be their second or third priority. The second priority is their ministry of service. They are a bridge between the Church and society...they are a sign of a Church of outreach of the Good News. The ministry of Deacon is very diverse i.e.; hospital, reconciliation, prison, soup kitchen, education etc....these and many other ministries of Social Justice. The service of ministry of the Deacons evolved into the third aspect which is their service at the Altar. They are to go forth and preach the Gospel by the way they live their lives in the community. Vatican II has called all the faithful to be a sign of the presence of the Peasant carpenter of Galilee who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

You can always recognize a Deacon in a liturgical setting because his stole runs diagonal across his alb and he usually reads the Gospel when he is present. If you want to know more about the Diaconate, ask your local Deacon and if he doesn't have the answer he can refer you to someone who does know, such as the Formation team.

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Deacon Larry Campbell

Words from Deacon Rudy



Brother Deacons,

I was asked to write an article on the Covid-19 pandemic. The first thing that comes to my mind is that this virus has turned the world upside down and has catastrophic damage to our world and the impact on all of the social systems. Health, Education, Religions, Economics and Government systems are struggling to contain the damage in countries until a vaccine is discovered. The impact of this turbulent happening leaves us in a state of constant anxiety and fear on a daily basis.

The question that is raised: How are we coping? Well, the medical and government systems are doing their job by offering daily briefings and we are asked to distance ourselves, use face masks, sanitize our hands, and reach out to others who may have to isolate themselves at home with virtual entertainment and education programs that are offered. What I have mentioned above may be a societal directive, but there is more that can be done. For example, some people do baking, knitting, and crafts - you name it - and something will show up in the newspaper or on the TV screen. What I have discovered for myself is that I use my tablet and open it on YouTube to find a rich supply of spiritual resources given by well-known masters, for example, Thomas Merton, Richard Rohr, Thomas Keating, Fr. Bing, James Finley, Fr. Jacques Philippe, Henry Nouwen, Rowan Lawrence Freeman. Please take a look and see what you may find that appeals to you - excellent material that could be of use for your "Covid Study Days" or "30 Minutes" or "Retreat". You will also find exciting music to close your meditation - see the Mormon Tabernacle mix which has some Gregorian chant that will lift up our minds and hearts - that, in spite of the frightening time we are in, there is the reality that God is there to shepherd us in this time of pandemic - the Gift of Hope.

In closing, most of us are aware that in doing centring prayer we become conscious of our breathing as we use a mantra. As a boy we had a man who worked for my grandmother and his famous passage from the Bible was that "God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a Living Soul."

In the names given above, prayer goes beyond words only, but leads into relationship with God. For me during this time of Covid 19, what I have become highly aware, as I move around, is the constant awareness that every breath I take is a Prayer for myself and the world - especially during this time of Covid-19.

Peace in Christ,

Deacon Rudy Le Maître

Words from Deacon Gilles

Hello Diaconate Community,



I hope this update finds you well during during this beautiful Fall which seems symbolic of many changes that have no doubt occurred in this season of our lives. The disruptions in our personal lives, work, and ministry reminds us that we are all impacted by the effect of this pandemic at some level and our response can change from day to day.

I miss ministering to the elderly, sick and dying at the Misericordia Health Center due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. However, the change in schedule allowed me to spend more time working on the renewal, restructuring and revamping of the Diaconate Formation program as a member of the Diaconate Formation Team. Continuing to serve as the Perpetual Prayer Ministry Coordinator at the Adoration Chapel of the Divine Mercy at my home parish of St. Gianna's, I am grateful to be able to participate in, and help others to offer spiritual outreach thru intercessory prayer support for not only local people but also those in need from various places in the world. In my work as an Optometrist, I seem to have more opportunities to minister to my patients these days...many people are struggling.

A couple weeks ago my wife and I went on one of our bikes rides thru some trails in a forest. It was a spectacular day with the Fall foliage showing the full array of colours, the temperature was perfect and there was no wind for a change! I was reminded of God's love, presence and care for me as I enjoyed this day. I marvel at how beautiful His creation is and how it all works to sustain us thru whatever we are living at the moment. What a life-giving experience.

The increased demands at work have contributed to me feeling more tired and has shown me the importance of continued self-care which includes a deepened commitment to my prayer life. This has helped me have a heightened awareness of the importance of being present to the moment, grateful for all God's blessings in my life, and recognize ministry opportunities with the people we encounter on a daily basis and are called to serve.

I pray for Our Lord to keep you, guide you and sustain you in His love.

Deacon Gilles Lorteau

Suggestions or comments:

Please do let us know how to do better with the newsletter email: jrfrater@mymts.net or michaelmartincordova@yahoo.com