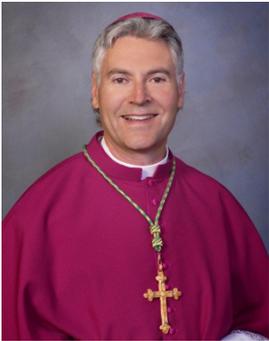


Deacons of Manitoba Newsletter

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Words from The Archbishops



In all our ministry I think it is important from time to time to step back and have an honest look at our motivations. Be prepared to see some things you do not like! None of us have completely pure motives. Being aware of the layers of our motivation can help make us safer and healthier missionaries.

An example:

Lila Watson, an Australian Indigenous artist and activist, writes:

"If you are coming to help me you are wasting your time.

But if you are coming because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together."

When I am honest I know that some of my service of Indigenous peoples I work with can satisfy my need to help and flow out of my false ego.

How is my liberation bound up with the people God calls me to serve?

I am still learning some of the answers to that, but these are three things I know:

1) I have learned to be more generous from the people God calls me to accompany.

I remember being surprised at how much sharing would go on in our communities. Sometimes I would share some candy and kids would ask for one for their brother or sister. I would go "yah, right, you just want another candy." They would look at me shocked and say "no, it is for him" and they were truly insulted that I thought they were stingy or selfish. I was catching a boat ride to a pilgrimage on a hot summer day. The driver handed me an ice cream sandwich. I knew enough to have some of it and then pass it on to others; not to eat the whole thing myself. While this is not great for Covid times, it is a healthier way for me to live my life always thinking about sharing.

2) I have learned to be more relaxed about time.

I can get pretty driven and focused on 'getting things done.' That approach does not get me very far in Indigenous communities. I was surprised when they did not really have a way in dene to say, "sorry I'm late." Anyone who has worked with Indigenous peoples (and many other peoples!) know that time is considered very loosely. I had to learn to relax more and be more patient and less accomplishment driven. I still have things to learn in this area, but it has challenged and helped me.

3) I have learned to have my spiritual antennae turned on more.

The people are always looking for signs from God. It can be in the animals, or the weather, or in frost on the windows. They also pray before every meeting and they often are willing to take a long-time praying. I remember when we were blessing the new Hospital in Stony Rapids, SK. Many bigwigs and politicians from the South came up and they asked (not me) but one of the elders to lead an opening prayer. The elder took his role very seriously and said some words in Dene and then pulled out his rosary and led everyone in a whole rosary! It made me smile. Working with Indigenous peoples I like to think I am more attentive to God's presence and signs than I used to be.

So, I invite you to look at your own ministry and your motivations. What needs slight adjusting? Our own personal liberation is bound with the people God calls us to accompany. Are we letting them make us better Christians?

Archbishop Murray Chatlain
Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas

Words from Deacon James

Loss of Many Rituals

Easter is one of my most favorite times in the church calendar, with all the pageantry, symbols, and rituals that accompany the celebration of the resurrection.

The pandemic we are in, and having lived through, and will continue to experience for quite a while to come, have forced the government to restrict our customary ways that we are going to conduct this Easter season: no fire, blessing of the light, washing of the feet, procession of the palms, blessing and sprinkling of the holy water, welcoming the Catholics that come for Christmas and Easter only, and filling the pews with people. Some of these symbols and rituals have been part of our Easter for centuries, and they are going to be missed and we will mourn their absence for sure.

Like all loss, it will be noticeable and leave us wanting. The followers of Jesus experienced this. I am sure the loss for them must have been traumatic. The difference is that we have the assurance that the death is not the end, or even the final act of our existence, but the continuation of something greater. The grain of wheat that dies to one self to become something beyond itself is well explained in scripture.

So, hope in life everlasting is promised, and the Easter celebration, in any form, is a time for great joy and positive grace, for all believers.

This is the day the Lord has made, so let us all rejoice and be glad.

Deacon Jim Frater



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Sanctity of human life

*“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”*

180-149. On March 11, 2021, one hundred eighty members of parliament voted for the expansion of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). This includes access to euthanasia and assisted suicide for people who suffer with mental illnesses such as depression. Where St. Paul asks, “where, o death, is your victory,” that night it was too easy to feel the sting of death in a culture that sells and packages it so prettily, and so unapologetically disposes of life.

How painful it must also be, when people feel as though their death is the solution to their burdens and sufferings. How hurtful it must feel for our legislation to imply that it is “better off to be dead” than to live through suffering with support and care. Now in the face of the Passion and death of Christ, we are invited to reflect on how Jesus must have felt. The sting of death must have been so excruciating in the Garden of Gethsemane.



But we know that the story does not end there. The sting of death is swallowed up by Christ’s victory. We have hope because Life wins. When we feel defeat because our society is engrained with death, we must cling on to the Truth that Christ is victorious over death. As deacons, families, and as individuals, what can we do?

- 1. Service of the Word:** Know how God views life. Read the Scripture with a lens of life, and do not fear sharing the Good News to those you minister.
- 2. Service of the Liturgy:** Offer masses for those who find themselves in their “agony in the garden” - women in crisis, the preborn, the elderly, the disabled, caregivers. Through the offering of Jesus’ body, blood, soul, and divinity, hearts and minds can change to choose life. Is there a time in the month, week, day where you pray specifically for those who are affected by abortion and euthanasia?
- 3. Service of Charity and Justice:** Advocate for healing for post-abortive men and women, basic palliative care for those nearing the end of their lives, and for the protection of the preborn. Be equipped with life-affirming apologetics through Life’s Vision and discuss the issues within your communities.

I pray that through the rest of this Holy Week, we may reflect on how Christ’s heart breaks for the preborn who are not given a chance to live, for post-abortive men and women, for those who prematurely end their lives through medically-assisted death, and for those whose hearts need conversions. And as Easter comes upon us, may we remember St. Paul’s encouragement:

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

1 Corinthians 15:55, 57-58

Life's Vision is a pro-life educational resource that is dedicated to equipping churches and individuals to speak for life. We facilitate events, study guides, and provide pro-life resources. Together, we can restore the culture of life! To learn more about how you can be more involved or support our work, please contact Justony Vasquez at justony@lifesvision.ca or visit our website at lifesvision.ca.

Justony Vasquez
Program Director
Life's Vision

WISHING ALL A HAPPY EASTER! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

Suggestions or comments:

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