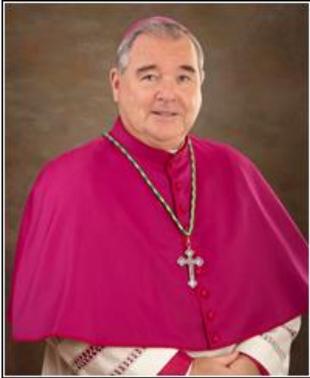


Deacons of Manitoba Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 12 September 2021

Words from The Archbishops



Dear Deacons,

It is a pleasure for me to write a few words for the Deacon's Newsletter, September edition. I think a note of thanks should be extended to Deacon Michael Cordova for his stewardship in making sure that this publication is put together and distributed throughout the year.

The words of Mother Theresa come to mind immediately as I put fingers to keypad (I should say, two fingers only). St. Theresa of Calcutta's feast day was celebrated this month, on September 5th, and I had the honour of celebrating this festive day with the Missionaries of Charity along with parishioners of Holy Ghost Parish. The words of Mother Theresa that I'm thinking of quoting are: We are called to do small things with much love. This is at the center of her apostolate, and it serves as a remedy to the idea that we really do not have the ability to make a real Christian difference in the world. Mother Theresa obviously look at it in a different way. Would Mother's idea not be especially relevant for the Deaconal ministry? Perhaps she should have the title, "Patroness of Deacons"!

Mother Theresa would teach her new sisters that when they go out into the streets of Calcutta, they must treat all those they meet in the same way as the priest handles the Eucharist at the altar, with love and tenderness. Would this not also apply to Deacons, preaching the Word of God, encountering parishioners or people in the wider community, helping out in any number of charitable works whether these be in pandemic times or not? After all, a Deacon is meant to be a sign of God's love in the midst of the Church, and whatever he does, he does as a representative of the Church, regardless of however humble his action may be: We are called to do small things with much love.

During my homily at Holy Ghost Parish, I asked the Missionaries of Charity: After whom was Mother Theresa named? They quickly responded: After the Little Flower-St. Therese of Lisieux! This is interesting because it was this great saint who discovered that her vocation was to be love in the heart of the Church!

Having said that, allow me to quote another Theresa, St. Teresa of Avila, a Spanish mystic, reformer and Doctor of the Church. She once said: Christ has no body but yours. No hands no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Should not our prayer be, not only to have a more loving heart towards others but to realize more sincerely, in whose body we act and live?

+Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg

Words from Deacon James

As fall rolls out and summer ends, we continue to be anxious over the oncoming of the fourth wave. I am personally excited to be part of the diaconate formation team. It has been exciting to see all the hard work of developing and plotting the new and improved diaconate programming, plus to meet the 10 new aspirants along with their wives. Being mindful of the government guidelines and respect for the personal safety, we are going to begin with in person workshops and move to plan “B” if those change. Please keep in your prayers these people that are entering a year of discernment towards becoming deacons of the church.

As an executive we have scheduled a workshop because of distance and covid restrictions in a zoom format. Covid has changed a lot of our normal and has created challenges but, it has given us an opportunity to expand our scope of digital communication. Please watch for the zoom link and partake. It is reassuring to be part of a larger community and catch up with old friends and meet new ones, and maybe learn something.

Above all, our ministry is more important in times of extreme and continues to be important. This is not the time to take an unscheduled holiday but, to become more a person of service. There is a lot of work to be done amidst the hurts around us. In-person visits and attendance in church are severely curtailed. This should not prevent us from phone calls, visits by zoom, facebook, etc. to reach out and make effort to keep up the good work.

Blessings,

Deacon Jim



Words from a Deacon's Wife



We had been married for almost 10 years before my husband, Jim, who was baptized Anglican, announced that he was thinking of becoming Catholic. And so began this incredible journey of growing spiritually along with my husband. Our girls were young when we started the RCIA program. When we decided to take the Nathanael program, our grandchildren were young!

It was important to Jim and I that we set aside the time to enjoy these classes together. Similarly, when Jim decided that he wanted to become a deacon, I was happy that the wives were to participate. The workload was tremendous. I was given the task of editing essays, and now, proofreading homilies. I am amazed at the words of wisdom that Deacon Jim has. It must be something to do with the ontological change that took place at his ordination.

Getting together with the wives of other Deacon candidates helped me better understand this new dimension in our marriage. We were there to support our husbands and each other. As a wife of a deacon, I feel blessed to be included in spiritual activities such as study days, retreats and small group masses.

Deacon Jim's calling to the diaconate, the sacrament of Holy Orders, the Imposition of the Laying on of Hands, and the sacrament of our marriage has brought us closer together. The Holy Spirit is indeed a mysterious presence in our lives. We are truly blessed with the gifts we have received, and God's grace continues to work in our lives.

Deacon Jim's ministry includes ministering to those who are grieving. Compassionate Companions is the name of our support group. We continue our journey with others to find hope and heal our hearts. This last year has been a very trying time, but one of continued spiritual growth. We wish every Deacon and every Deacon's wife, a continued safe and happy journey.

Many Blessings,

Monica Frater

Words from Deacon Michael

Perhaps the Church needs to add another colour to the Liturgical Calendar

Greetings to you all,



I am honoured to have been asked to submit another article to our Deacon Community newsletter. Deacon Michael Cordova indicated to me that perhaps I could write something about Orange Shirt Day or the recent news discovery of unmarked graves surrounding now closed residential school sites. Meegwetch Michael for becoming the Hallow Bone through the Great Spirit speaks, as do you all.

The University of BC's Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre shares the origins of Orange Shirt Day...

'Every year on September 30th, people across Canada wear orange and participate in Orange Shirt Day events to recognize and raise awareness about the history and legacies of the residential school system in Canada. Orange Shirt Day originates from the story of Phyllis Webstad from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation. In 1973, on her first day at St. Joseph's Residential School in Williams Lake, BC, Phyllis's shiny new orange shirt was stripped from her, never to be seen again.

40 years later, on September 30th, 2013, Phyllis spoke publicly for the first time about her experience, and thus began the Orange Shirt Day movement.' <https://irshdc.ubc.ca/orangeshirtday/>

It is a glimpse into a part of our past, as a country and as a church. The concept that 'Every Child Matters,' highlights the reality that at many points in our church's history we did not acknowledge the beauty, wonder, and mystery of God within Creation outside the teachings of the church. Our church held views that lead to atrocities of physical, mental, spiritual, and sexual abuse towards a group of innocent children who through no other choice than God's were born into the First Nation community and developed their own relationship with the Creator, much as the Israelites did some 5000 years ago with Abraham.

September 30 marks an opportunity for all of us to take a moment and reflect upon our past choices, seek wisdom from God as to how do we move forward in the 'Spirit of Reconciliation' to build a trusting bond with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Not to assume the continuous role of being the saviour; but to do as Jesus did with the lost and forgotten. We need to go into the world, be present to the needs, hear the stories, listen to the pain, sit in the muck to find a way for both sides to welcome each other to the table – whether that be Christ's or the Great Spirit.

Perhaps one way could be to add the colour Orange to the Liturgical Calendar. Once a year prior to or after September 30, we could as a Community of Deacons, wear an Orange Stole depicting the importance of how 'Every Child Matters.' Include a prayer in our intercessions and invite a Residential School Survivor to speak to our communities about their experience. Orange Shirt Day is more than a day, I believe it is God's blessing, allowing us the opportunity to listen to their stories, teach our children the importance acknowledging our past, and leave our offering at the altar to reconcile our relationship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Blessings+ to you all.

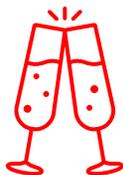
Meegwetch, Merci.

Thank you being the servants that you all are.

Your Brother in Christ,

Deacon Michael Thibert
Two Suns – Wolf Clan

Congratulations on your retirement



A word of congratulations to Deacon Philip Durant on his retirement to the diaconate! We wish you all the best on this momentous time and we pray for you and Joan's continued good health!

Action request

- A. October 5-7, 2021 Clergy Study Days for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg (please check your emails on the latest update). Deacon's reading assignment is Pope Francis' encyclical Fratelli Tutti, chapter 4: A Heart Open for the Whole World. Deadline for submission of reflection is September 28, 2021. Please email to michaelmartincordova@yahoo.com
- B. October 16, 2021 Deacon's Study Day via zoom. Reminder to block off this date.

Suggestions or comments:

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