Words from The Archbishops

A Lenten Retreat in the Wilderness

I was recently asked to preach the yearly retreat for the men who are discerning a possible call to the Permanent Diaconate. They came, eleven in number, representing the three Latin archdioceses in Manitoba, with their wives, and the Permanent Deacon leadership team, gathered at Chemin Neuf Retreat Center in Winnipeg.

The retreat theme was based on the Biblical story of the temptations of Christ in the wilderness. I find that whenever I’m asked to do a series of talks for a retreat, it is a good opportunity to become more acquainted with both Scripture and those present on the retreat. In a certain sense, I was on retreat with them as we all meditated on Jesus’ spiritual battle with temptation during forty days without food in that harsh Middle Eastern wilderness.

It also occurred to me that these men were, in a certain sense, living a wilderness experience as well, as they seek to listen to the voice of God in their hearts and struggle with what God might very well be calling them to do. Having said that, it was a real joy to spend time with them and their spouses. All eleven men come from totally different backgrounds and life experiences.

I offered a meditation on Chapters 3 and 4 in the Gospel of Luke. We began with the event of the Lord’s Baptism in the Jordan River by John. It was here that Jesus publicly came to accept his mission as Son of God to save humanity. The intense temptations that Jesus underwent in the wilderness were all aimed at destroying his dedication to this mission and his fidelity to his identity as Son of God. Having overcome the tempter, Jesus proceeded to Nazareth where he publicly identified with Isaiah’s prophecy that the Messiah would, “bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke4:18-19).

I encouraged these potential deacons to consider one’s own baptism and how we are often spiritually challenged to lose the sense of who we are as a baptized Christian. Ultimately, we need to struggle in this world to remain faithful to God and, please God, to embrace our Christian identity as an anointed person. What follows is a discernment of how God wants us to serve him, and this was the precise point of the retreat. It is interesting that for the Permanent Deaconate, this discernment is normally made by both spouses together, as Holy Orders within a family involves that family.
The inclusion of the Biblical account of Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth was a little bit of an afterthought in my mind. However, when you think about it, this mission of Our Lord to go out to those in need, is precisely what the Permanent Deaconate is all about. The attraction to do this ministry for others is an important part of the discernment itself.

+Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg

Words from Deacon James

The last two years have been trying to say the least. I was so pleased to see that the pews were occupied with so many people, this last Sunday. With a lot of hope and anticipation of a post-pandemic time and with the anticipation of Easter and spring, (if it ever comes), it is a time for a new beginning, and to be mindful of all that have suffered loss. Loss of the things that we enjoyed before covid 19, in our communities and parishes.

We participated in the aspirancy retreat on the weekend of the 19th of March, at Chemin Neuf, in Charleswood. The excitement and anticipation experienced by all involved, including Monica and myself, was electric and productive. Let us enjoy the new life Easter promises.

The hope of spring is eternal.

Have a blessed Easter,

Deacon Jim and Monica
Reflections by Tara

Hello to all,

I was wondering when I would be approached to offer a reflection and if Deacon Rick did not need technical support to join meetings, I may have missed the request…Rick needs to build up his technical abilities lol. Truthfully it is not hard for me to openly share verbally but putting into words is somewhat a little challenging at times.

As a married couple Rick and I have grown together through RCIA, being involved in church ministries and attending retreats. I was involved in helping with up youth ministries for 6 years. I will never forget all that I learned from our youth, but what stands out in my mind is they just want to be included and accepted.

Obviously over the past 2 years, ministry work in the parish has been put on hold, but I am fortunate to have the ability to minister in my profession. I have worked for the past 27 years with individuals with developmental and physical disabilities, in fact 1 year longer than Rick and I have been together. Every day at some point I see the face of Jesus when I interact with those individuals I support. This is more than a profession but a calling, and I come home at times full of joy and share with Rick what I experienced.

During the pandemic we finally got our ducks in a row and committed to praying together as a couple, along with our one cat who joins us every time. So, with this in mind, it’s time to end my reflection and go to pray.

Peace,
Tara Ryzner

The picture I have attached is from many years ago. My favorite picture of myself and my cousin, well my second cousin but much closer to me than some first cousins. Unfortunately, in December 2020 he contracted covid and passed away. I still miss him greatly as he was the one family member, I saw daily for 20 plus year, as he was a participant at the day service I work at. And every time he saw me would hold out his arms saying "It's you" for a big hug.
UKRAINE

At present there are approximately 4 million Ukrainians who have fled their homes in Ukraine. Most have fled to parts of Europe though some have found their way to North America.

Canadians want to do their part to support and assist those Ukrainians who have had to uproot their lives and who do not know when or if they will be able to return to Ukraine. This is at present an evolving situation but as it stands now the Canadian government has authorized emergency travel which allows for Ukrainian nationals and family members (spouse, dependent children) to travel to Canada on a free, extended temporary basis that allows them to work, study and stay in Canada until it is safe for them to go home. They still must apply for a temporary visa and still must have background and security checks. The Canadian government has said it will fast track these requests but there are holdups where the Ukrainian national or family members do not have the right documentation. The Canadian government is considering alternative ways for displaced Ukrainians to enter Canada such as through family reunification, reuniting family members who already live in Canada with their relatives from Ukraine. These ways are still under consideration and no announcement has been made yet.

We do expect that as more Ukrainians arrive in Canada, they will have needs that have to be met. This would include clothing, food, accommodation, schooling, employment, health care to name a few. The Archdiocese of Winnipeg has reached out to the Archeparchy of Winnipeg offering to assist in whatever way we can. We also hope that the Federal Government will open a path of refugee sponsorship which will allow us to sponsor families to live in Winnipeg and the surrounding area. Writing to your member of parliament may be a way to get this done.

In the meantime, one way to help is to donate to the following:


Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba Provincial Council. At https://uccmanitoba.ca/2022/02

Canadian Red Cross. https://donate.redcross.ca/page/100227/donate


Please pray for the people of Ukraine and for the end to this war.

Patti Fitzmaurice

Social Justice Coordinator for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Suggestions or comments:

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