

St. Michael's Parish Newsletter

A welcoming Eucharistic community, sharing Faith and reaching out to all...

Christmas, 2014



My Dear People:

When we think about Jesus' first coming as a baby on Christmas Day, we can't help but be overcome with joy. Thinking about the manger scene in Bethlehem reminds us of how much God loves us. We feel a natural impulse to want to celebrate, to gather with loved ones and to think about God's desire to come and live with us. We feel moved to celebrate the fact that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God became human so that He could redeem us.

The Incarnation is a very powerful mystery that none of us could possibly grasp, yet there is still a simplicity to it that even young children can appreciate. This mystery tells us that God, who is all powerful, made a great sacrifice when He accepted all the limitations that come with having a human body. It tells us that God loves us so much that He willingly gave up the glory of heaven and came to us as a helpless infant so that He could redeem us.

continued on page 2...

Our Christmas Schedule

Christmas Eve Celebrations (Carols one half hour prior to each mass):

Wednesday, December 24th: 5:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm and 12:00 midnight

Midnight is the traditional time for Mass

when He, who is light, breaks the darkest time of the year and night

Christmas Day Celebrations:

Thursday, December 25th: 8:30am, 10:30am and 12:30pm

Feast of Mary, Mother of God (Holy Day of Obligation)

Wednesday, December 31st: 5:00pm

Thursday, January 1st: 10:30am & 12:30pm

Christmas Reconciliation Schedule

Friday, December 12th: 8:30am – 7:30pm

*Tuesday, December 16th & Wednesday, December 17th:
10:00 – 11:00am, 3:00 – 4:00pm, 7:00 – 8:00pm*



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Father Murray continued...

There is more to Christmas than the fact that God became a human being. Jesus subjected himself to the limitations of human life; He also accepted death on a cross for our forgiveness. Christmas can never be separated from Easter. The more we see the connection between Christmas and Easter, the more clearly we will understand that Jesus came to set us free, not just to tell us that God loves us.

When we celebrate Christmas, our hearts are drawn to thank God for our redemption. We are drawn to give God praise for being faithful to His promise to redeem us, even if it cost Him His Son.



As we prepare to celebrate this Christmas which leads to Easter, perhaps we could pray:

"Lord, I Love you, I am so grateful that you came to us as a baby so long ago; I ask you to come into my heart, and fill me with love. Come, and let my family know your presence. Pour out your blessing on the Church. Stir up in us a deep yearning for you. Come, Prince of Peace!"

Friends, I invite you to come and raise your voice in song to give God praise and thanks with those songs that are so familiar to us. The entire Pastoral Team and Staff wish you the blessings of this Christmas Season. May you be blessed to know that you are loved by God.

Fr. Murray Sample
Fr. Murray Sample
Pastor

To Our Readers

by the Editors
Keith Rodrigues and Paul Tremblay

Perhaps the most important message in this Newsletter is captured in Fr. Murray's prayer "Come Prince of Peace." It is easy to feel lost at times, especially when we look around at all the suffering and war in our world. But we pilgrims on this journey know who we are in Christ.

This issue of the newsletter includes another diverse selection of articles witnessing to the ongoing activities from our parish family. In addition, we are proud to feature a comprehensive booklet of over fifty ministries at St. Michael's. This Time, Talent & Treasure booklet is like a catalogue. Who hasn't been excited to receive their favorite catalogue and start circling or highlighting items and saying "I need that, and this, and a second one of those!" Well, with the same level of enthusiasm, feel free to start shopping for ways to use your skills, talents, expertise, or to simply indulge your willingness to serve your sisters and brothers.

At the end of this booklet is a response form on which we encourage your responses to a number of questions about our parish. Please return your completed sheet to the office or drop in the box on the Welcome Desk by January 18. If you prefer you can access and complete the response form from our website at www.stmichaels.dioceseoflondon.ca. There is something for everyone, young and old. Not fitting in is not an excuse. Consider yourself in; you have been invited to the same banquet as everyone else. You will also find a letter on the back of the response form introducing the Give to Grow Campaign.

Let us all pray for each other - to be blessed by the grace of God and to be shepherded by this Prince of Peace along our journey in the new year.

Our **Newsletter Team**: Carmen Gicante, Keith Rodrigues, Louanne Henderson, Angela Townend, John Noonan and Paul Tremblay.
Newsletter Design: Joanne Tremblay

Please note: This will be the final newsletter that is mailed out to all. The parish is committed to the newsletter as one part of keeping our parish family informed of life at St. Michael's. We thank the newsletter team for giving of their time and talents to its production and to our sponsors for their support. It will continue to be published in 2015 on the same schedule of Easter (April), Fall (September) and Christmas (December), but will now be available in the Church and from the office. It will continue to be available first from the website at www.stmichaels.dioceseoflondon.ca. If you feel it necessary that you have a copy mailed to you, please contact Doug Manners at 519-433-6689 ext. 205 or at dmanners@dol.ca.

Thank you.

Fr. Seejo's Bible Study Group

by Keith Rodrigues



The Church "forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful ... to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ," by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

- Catechism of the Catholic Church 133

We are all called to read, to understand and to contemplate upon the Word of God. Saint Paul wrote - *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.* (2 Timothy 3:16)



In St Michael's Parish, we are blessed and very grateful to have, in our own pastoral team, a valuable resource like Father Seejo John. He is uniquely qualified to be able to share his knowledge of Scripture with all of us. Father Seejo has a PhD in Christology and has taught in different seminaries in India.

Here at St. Michael's, Father Seejo has been conducting an enthralling weekly Bible study class on Thursday nights. Apart from being a storehouse of historical

and contextual information which allows him to put the lessons of Scripture into their spiritual and social contexts, Father Seejo also brings a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to his lectures. His love of the material is very obvious and he also has an apparently unlimited arsenal of touching and amusing personal anecdotes and experiences to share with us.

About fifteen to twenty of us have been getting together to participate in learning the Good News of the Holy Gospels for the past few weeks.

Our journey with the evangelists began with a very interesting overview of the history of their four gospels, in which we learned about the men who wrote these beautiful texts, when they were written, whom they were addressed to, and why.

We then immersed ourselves in an analysis of each of the gospels, beginning with John, and then moving on to Mark, Matthew and Luke. The gospels are an account of the life and teachings of Jesus, including their authors' reflections, tailored to their specific sociological settings. It is these sociological and historical details that help to bring clarity to the theology and truly beautiful message of these timeless sacred documents.

This study group wraps up in early January 2015. It has been a very rewarding program and we hope Father Seejo will begin another group soon.



If interested in participating in a future bible study group, please contact Father Seejo at sjohn@dol.ca.



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Coping With Grief at Christmas

by Angela Townend

"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength"
2 Timothy 4:17

Coping with grief and loss during the Christmas season is especially difficult with its emphasis on family and sharing memories together. As we drive past colorful tree-lit parks or hear familiar Christmas hymns, we face the struggle between having a "Merry Christmas" and earnestly praying for January 1st to arrive! Learning to live with loss is a universal experience.



However, as we return to everyday life, we can feel alone with our pain and sorrow, imagining our world without this person...a parent, a spouse, a friend, even a child. Despite the loss, as Christians our faith can be renewed during the Christmas season as we rejoice in the Savior's birth, remembering that He came as the "hope" for the world.



Here at St. Michael's we are working to energize the Bereavement Ministry. Father Murray wishes to expand its services and meet the unique needs of our parish. Earlier this year the leadership team organized a series of speakers to discuss a number of topics including funeral planning, financial issues and caregiving. The team then ran a pilot bereavement group and as membership grew, participants were asked what set this group apart from other bereavement services they had attended.

Their answer? The "Catholic perspective". Members felt it was vital to avoid separating the faith perspective from the grieving process, that true healing comes by integrating the two.

In keeping with the spirit of this ministry, below are five faith based strategies for healing that we hope can help you now and in the season ahead.

1. Demonstrate self-compassion. Prayerfully ask for guidance this Christmas. Perhaps spending time with friends is restorative and healing but the thought of sending Christmas cards is overwhelming. Spiritual and physical rest are important during your grief journey. No one ever walked the earth that had as important a job as Jesus, yet over and over we see Him take time to rest and, most importantly, to pray and be with God. Christmas will arrive with or without the tinsel, the shortbread and the meticulously wrapped gifts. As Jesus bids us in Matthew 11:28, *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."*

2. Remember your spiritual habits. Grief can overwhelm the most committed prayer warrior. Fatigue, discouragement or simply not knowing what to ask for can disrupt our time with God. Prayer, bible study, attending mass, spiritual readings...hold on tightly to practices that are key to your faith. Pain and suffering



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Coping With Grief continued

are part of life but can be instrumental in your spiritual growth. Psalm 34:18 reminds us, *"The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

3. Comfort and be comforted. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, *"...the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble"...* Reach out to others and allow them to comfort you. Consider joining the bereavement group here at the parish. Our parish's current strategic plan is focused on evangelization of our faith. Through reaching out to others, you too can contribute towards this spiritual endeavour. John Paul II was no stranger to grief, having lost his mother as a very young boy, his only sibling three years later and then at the age of 20 finding his father dead in their home. Yet he was a prayerful and joyful man whose compassion for the suffering was likely shaped in many ways by his own early losses.

4. Give. Deuteronomy 16:17, *"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."* It's true. Sometimes the best way to deal with our own suffering is to offer ourselves up to others in need. Mother Teresa once said that the greatest poverty is loneliness. There is not a church, workplace or neighborhood without the lonely, especially during the Christmas season. Is there a ministry at St. Michael's, a community service for the needy, a lonely friend or neighbor, who would welcome your time, talents, or simply your friendship?



"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you." It's true. Sometimes the best way to deal with our own suffering is to offer ourselves up to others in need. Mother Teresa once said that the greatest poverty is loneliness. There is not a church, workplace or neighborhood without the lonely, especially during the Christmas season. Is there a ministry at St. Michael's, a community service for the needy, a lonely friend or neighbor, who would welcome your time, talents, or simply your friendship?

5. Express thankfulness. Amidst your suffering, ask for God's guidance to see the gift of this person He allowed into your life. Reflect on how they've enriched your spirit. Sometimes we are so burdened by our grief that we can forget our blessings. Take time at Christmas to focus on the gifts of the Father, and most importantly the gift of His son Jesus.

As you journey through your loss this Christmas, know that you are walking in God's will and your loved one is praying for your healing. In a song he wrote after the death of his young wife, Christian worship artist Jeremy Camp reminds us that ours is a sovereign God as he sings *"...I will walk by faith, Even when I cannot see, Well because this broken road, Prepares your will for me"*. Merry Christmas and remember, Emmanuel means "God is with us".



"For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love."
Lamentations 3:31-33



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My name is Madelaine Coelho and I am a Grade 12 student at Mother Teresa who has been a part of Mother Teresa's Chaplaincy Team since Grade 9.

Chaplaincy is a school club that is open to new members throughout the whole year. If you so please, you can join the last meeting of the school year. Chaplaincy runs during the entire school year and is run by our school's wonderful Chaplain Brad Lewis. Chaplaincy is the one school club where everyone belongs and everyone is included. We have Special Needs students attending regularly as well as students with varied interests. Even though every student is so different, they are all united by their faith.

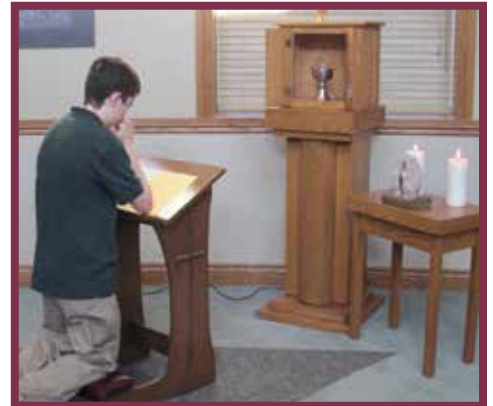


The Chaplaincy Team at Mother Teresa was formed because students longed for a Catholic output within their school community. This year chaplaincy consists of approximately 45 students from Grades 9 to 12 who meet over the two lunch periods every Tuesday. Our mission on Chaplaincy is "Made to Serve" or MTS, which works really well with our school's initials. Throughout the school year we try to reach out to our local and school community in every way we can. This includes making Christmas decorations for senior citizens at the local nursing home down the street from MTS.

We also contribute to our school community by making Care packages to get our Grade 9 students through their first round of exams. I remember receiving this same Care package when I was in Grade 9, and it was incredibly supportive and caring. Another school event our chaplaincy team leads is prayer crawl. Think of a pub

crawl; now remove the pubs and think prayers. A group of approximately 30 students visit places all over the city and pray with them and for them. The places range from the Men's Mission, Children's Aid Society, and with Robert Pio Hajjar from Ideal Way.

This year we began to pray for the larger community and created an initiative to say one Hail Mary for every fallen soldier. This is the first year we decided to take on this task. We



wanted a way to remember all those lost fighting for our country and for peace. We began brainstorming ideas such as pennies and paperclips. Our school chaplain, Brad Lewis, who created this initiative, decided upon a Hail Mary for every soldier. Taking every fallen soldier into account, we came up with the total of 114,475. For one person, saying a Hail Mary for all the soldiers, would take them far too long. So we began to pray a Hail Mary over



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Mother Teresa's Chaplaincy Team

the Morning Announcements throughout the Month of October. Also, students said Hail Marys as they walked to school or from class to class. The Chaplaincy Team especially encouraged Hail Marys within the classroom and during students' own personal time.

Other schools across Ontario were sending in their Hail Marys as well! Before the end of October, we reached our goal of 114,475 Hail Marys. This expanded from just our Chaplaincy Team to others in our school because everyone has a special connection to these soldiers who fought for our freedom. It expanded further to schools across Ontario longing to remember all those who fell in a special way. We all long for peace but those men and women took the extra step and fought for it. For that everyone is eternally grateful. This gives us the chance to dedicate one singular prayer for one single prayer.

Although you do not know who you are praying for; your prayer is still dedicated to that one special soul within your heart. This initiative has got even students who typically do not pray to recite the Hail Mary every morning. A topic like this inspires everyone because war is something that deeply touches the nation. It specifically inspired me as it pushed me to pray the Hail Mary more often, incorporating the Rosary into my everyday prayer life.



These initiatives strengthen us as a Chaplaincy Team and as a school community. Although we are a Catholic school, the Catholic message tends to fade from time to time. However, activities like this strengthen our Catholic identity and make us proud to be Catholic. Everyone stands tall and proud as they say the Hail Mary over our Morning Announcements. This outreach defines who we are as we are called to make a difference and spread our gifts. This is something the whole school community can

relate to as we are blessed with the gifts we have and the opportunities we are given at Mother Teresa.

Throughout all the outreach, activities, and prayers, Mother Teresa's Chaplaincy Team is definitely "Made to Serve".

To view more on Mother Teresa praying Hail Mary's for fallen soldiers, you can view the video from CTV News at:

<http://london.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=468342&binId=1.1137796&playlistPageNum=1>



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Hospitality North was formed In 1997 when St. Michael's Parish joined three other churches (Colborne United, Trinity Lutheran and New St. James Presbyterian) in a mission to provide a hot meal and hospitality to the less fortunate in our community.

The meals would be provided on a weekly basis with each church responsible for one meal a month. In the beginning an anonymous benefactor subsidized the programme at two dollars a meal for each of the churches. Today, Sealtest donates the milk and the London Lawyers group provides an annual grant with the remainder of the costs carried by the individual churches. We also need to thank both the Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus for their donations to this Ministry.



Prior to September 2014, the meals were served at Trinity Lutheran Church and New St. James Presbyterian Church. After a lengthy review process by both the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee a decision was reached that St. Michael's would host the meals every Monday starting in September 2014. The other churches were in agreement and plans were put in place to migrate the serving of meals to St. Michael's.

At St. Michael's the meal includes meat, potatoes, vegetables and dessert served sit-down style. There are even seconds on those evenings when the volunteers believe they have enough to provide for all guests who might show up.

To kick off the 2014/2015 season, St. Michael's hosted an ecumenical prayer service for the clergy and volunteers from all four churches. This was followed by a pot luck meal where the 80 individuals in attendance mingled.

The majority of the guests are from within the St. Michael's Parish boundaries. These are individuals with low incomes, some with mental and or physical

disabilities, and some just lonely and looking for social warmth and contact for a while each evening.

The St. Michael's volunteers, about 40 each week, prepare and serve their meals on the first Monday of every month. They cook the meat, mashed potatoes and



vegetables, set the tables, welcome the guests, serve the meals and clean up the hall. Some parishioners from St. Michael's have been volunteering for over 15 years since the inception of Hospitality North, while others are first time volunteers for this Ministry. On 'meal day' some volunteers come in the early afternoon for the prep work, cooking and table setting. Another group of volunteers arrives in time to serve the meals and yet another to help with the cleanup. Confirmation candidates in addition to helping serve the meals also provide decorative place mats with topical themes such as Remembrance Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. These frequently spark comments and compliments from the guests.

While it may seem like a lot of hard work, the volunteers are quick to respond that it is also an on-going, living example of the adage that you always get more than you give in terms of satisfaction when you set out to and provide help to others. All find helping and serving the guests a very fulfilling experience.





A wonderful new program began in our Parish this fall. **RCIC** is the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. This is a learning process which prepares older children and young people to receive the three sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. Through this process and the reception of the three sacraments the children are welcomed into the Catholic Church.

The program is primarily intended for children who were not baptised as infants, and now, having reached the age of reason, are able to enter into the catechetical process leading to the three sacraments of initiation.

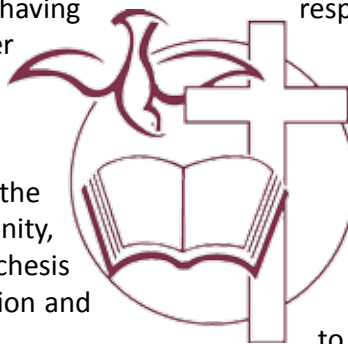
The RCIC is also for children baptised in the Catholic Church or another Christian community, who have not had the opportunity for catechesis and wish to celebrate Eucharist, Confirmation and their welcome into the Catholic Church.

The RCIC program is modelled after the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) and consists of a series of weekly classes. Children learn about the mysteries of our Faith, Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation in detail. They are also introduced to the Sacraments of the Sick, Marriage and Holy Orders, as they begin to understand that sacraments are Christ's special way of remaining with His people throughout life's journey.

Classes are designed to meet children where they are in their spiritual journey. Time is allowed for Scripture, Bible stories, discussion and prayer. Children are guided

in their developing understanding of personal prayer, as well as learning some of the beloved prayers of our Catholic tradition.

Children respond to the concrete symbols of our Faith. They learn about the white Baptismal garb and Baptismal candle and how these symbolize our rebirth in Christ and our mission to be Light for the world. They tour the church, learning about the sacred meal around the altar, as well as the invitation to prayer in the Eucharistic chapel and to pray before our mother Mary. Children are taught to understand the Church as a place where God's people gather and to understand the benefits and responsibilities of belonging to this church family.



Discussion time focuses on our Catholic mission to serve others and practical ways that they can put this service into action in their families, schools and community.

This year St. Michael Parish has 14 children in its RCIC program, ranging in age from 7 to 13. These children experience a welcome into the Catholic Church at Mass when they receive the three sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, supported by their families and assembled parishioners.

It is wonderfully encouraging to see these newest members come forward and join the St. Michael family. Our parish welcomes them warmly into the new life of the Church. We welcome them through our prayer and by encouraging them to become involved in Ministry as altar servers, lectors, youth participants and advocates for social justice.

We are all blessed as we see the visible sign of the Holy Spirit moving through the lives of these young people.

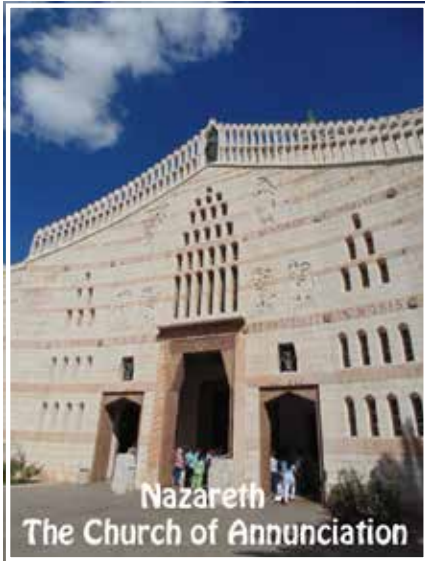


Pilgrimage To The Holy Land

by Louanne Henderson & Philomena Jacques

A special invitation went out to our Parish and beyond in early January 2014. "Have you ever wanted to visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the River Jordan or celebrate Mass on Mount Tabor, Church of the Nativity?"

Father Murray would be the spiritual leader of this pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and Joan Bolt, of International Heritage Tours, would act as the knowledgeable and experienced guide.



An information meeting was held on January 26, 2014. Interest continued to grow throughout the spring and on a sunny September 4, a group of over 30 pilgrims set out on pilgrimage to the Holy Land...a memorable trip.

By all accounts the tour was a resounding success – a true spiritual journey filled with memories to last a lifetime. Some of the highlights included visits to Nazareth, the ancient site of Zippori, thought by some to be the home of Mary's parents, Capernaum and Caesarea Philippi, the Mount of Olives and Garden of Gethsemane, the tomb of Lazarus in Bethany, Bethlehem and of course, Jerusalem. We know that all of us at St. Michael's will be blessed by the prayers and experiences of our pilgrims.



In the words of one pilgrim, Philomena Jacques: My trip to the Holy Land was indeed a very Blessed and Amazing Experience... No words can justify the lasting effect it will have on the rest of my life...both mentally and SPIRITUALLY... The daily Bible readings will never

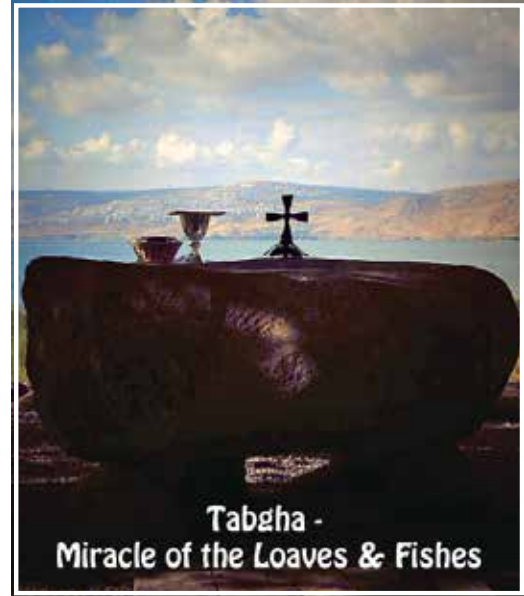
ever be "boring" again...I can now "visualize" all of the cities and places that Jesus actually walked and talked and preached and taught and lived and finally died in... What an honoured privilege it was to make this Amazing and Spiritual Journey...I will forever be grateful for the opportunity.



The group of 33 people whom I accompanied were wonderful and I believe we each came back with experiences of our own. On the first leg of our trip we stayed at a hotel right on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and every morning I woke up at 6:00am and took a quiet walk down to the shore, and waded in the water where Jesus asked St. Peter to walk on the water toward him. I cannot find words to express the "feeling" that evolved within me...I closed my eyes and actually "experienced" that miracle...and suddenly shoals of fish surrounded my feet and legs (and gently nibbled at my skin...an exuberating feeling)... Again this experience reminded me of the time when the fishermen had spent their whole day and evening casting their nets and they caught next to nothing and when they grumbled to Jesus about it, He beckoned them to try again and when they "reluctantly" did, their nets were so full to capacity they had difficulty



Pilgrimage September 4-17, 2014 continued



reeling them in...I actually, for the first time, “physically understood” their Awe reaction...WOW!!!



It made me realize that whatever our problems or challenges in life...as long as we hold our FAITH in Him, He will see us through!!!...what a vivid experience and strengthening realization!!! And then on our second leg I was actually asked to do the Reading at the Mass that Fr. Murray officiated atop the mountain where Jesus performed the miracle of the multiplication of Loaves and Fishes. What an honour!!

These are but only two of the many experiences I had on this most memorable trip of my life...!!! And the Holy Land was Peaceful. We saw or felt nothing of all the chaos that the media was advertising at the time of

our departure...God was good to us...We had the best weather (pretty hot at times, though, but well worth the endurance)...I loved and enjoyed the different foods and the history and people of Bethlehem and Jerusalem and all the surrounding areas. What a privilege to have visited and prayed at the Wailing Wall...to have visited the Garden of Gethsemane and got to spend a few minutes kneeling and praying on the very rock Jesus spent his last few hours before his crucifixion...



Yes I was indeed blessed with this opportunity of a lifetime...!!! My spirituality has certainly “been fed” and “rekindled further” for sure, and I know it will carry me through the rest of my Journey in life with a new and more enthusiastic spirit!!

Joan Bolt, with her immense knowledge of the history and experience of the Holy Land and her deep love and acquired knowledge of the scriptures, was indeed the best value of the Pilgrimage. I would whole-heartedly recommend this trip with her as your guide...anytime...

Photos by Natalie Hleba

Seniors On The Move

by Angela Townend

For those parishioners looking to keep fit in a group setting, St. Michael's boasts a very popular and well attended exercise program called Seniors on the Move. Founded by Ollie Wolanski, this program is entering its 20th year, and shows no signs of slowing down. Ollie is a long-time member of St. Michael's and was the group's first instructor. She now enjoys being a participant and notes that the current leader, Pat Greenlaw, is talented and inspiring and is always happy to see new members try out her class.



The benefits of joining Seniors on the Move, however, seems to reach far beyond an improved fitness level. Over the years the program has cultivated a strong social atmosphere as the group, which numbers about 30 members, not only exercises together but also organizes a monthly luncheon as well as two annual banquets. They even make day trips like a recent one to Niagara on the Lake. As Ollie notes, the group for her in particular has been a strong source of social support and networking and she believes it provides the same benefits for many other members. While most of the members are retired, there are some widows and even some working couples who regularly attend. Regardless of the age of its participants, it's evident that many friendships have flourished as a result of attending the program.



For those interested in joining, the 45 minutes class runs for 32 weeks of the year (summers excluded) on Wednesday and Friday mornings and costs each member \$45 for the full year. If fitness classes are not your preference, there is also Young at Heart, the parish's program for those who enjoy playing cards. If you are interested in Seniors on the Move you can contact Ollie at 519-455-1078. If you are interested in Young at Heart, please contact Mary Bambrick at 519-433-3763.

New Immigrants

by Coleen Leckie

English learners continue to have small classes. Some learners attend regularly, others sporadically—weather seems to be a factor. In the past three years, three people have completed their instruction. Two faithful volunteers, Jane Mastrandrea and Joy Peterson have been with us for two consecutive years.

The highlight of this year was Confirmation. Inspired by Helen Green, and with the help of Natalie Hleba's lesson plans, two of the original students were prepared over four months for their Confirmation. They were confirmed February 9, 2014 by Father Murray Sample. A joyous occasion!! One challenge that still remains is reaching those who would benefit from the class/ program.

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Social Justice Committee Teams Up with Mom's Group to Deliver the Development and Peace "Sow Much Love" Campaign

When looking for volunteers to help deliver the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace's Fall Action Campaign, the St. Michael's Social Justice Committee considered enlisting the help of the Mom's Group.

It didn't take long to convince the women of Mom's Group to get behind this fall's campaign, entitled "Sow Much Love". This clever play on words epitomises the campaign's focus on family farming in the poorest nations as a solution to world hunger. Both St. Michael's groups have shown themselves eager to answer Pope Francis' call to right the injustice of hunger that affects 1 billion people.



"Sow Much Love" is a campaign focused on raising awareness of the role of family farmers as stewards of the world's seeds, a necessary component to sustainably provide food to the world's hungry. Today, only three companies control 50% of the global commercial market for seeds[1].

The introduction of genetically modified (GM) seeds, which can be patented and controlled by these large corporations, can cause farmers to incur insurmountable debts. Companies can prohibit farmers from saving GM seeds for the following harvest, or require them to purchase specific fertilizers and pesticides in order for their GM seeds to grow. Through education and action



of Canadians, the Development and Peace campaign aims to support the rights of individual farmers from the menace of corporate control of seeds.

The St. Michael's Mom's Group knows that this campaign allows them to stand in solidarity with their sisters of the Global South and is hopeful for positive change. Almost half of farmers in the Global South are women. Unfortunately, these women contend with limited access to land, water, seeds, and other agricultural necessities. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization, "if women gained equal access (to agricultural necessities), they could increase yields by 20-30%, which would eliminate hunger for 100-150 million people"[1].



Canadians can do "sow much" to address global hunger and it can start with the food you put on the table for your family. Simple changes include:

- ⚙ Buying locally-grown produce when in season.
- ⚙ Choose organic foods which avoids genetically-modified seeds.
- ⚙ Purchasing fair-trade products, which ensures farmers have been paid a living wage for their work.
- ⚙ Plant your own garden; practice saving your seeds!

Source: [1] Sow Much Love: Backgrounder. Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. Accessed from: www.devp.org/en/education/fall2014/materials November 2014.





Society of Saint Vincent de Paul London Particular Council



When people think of the city of London what often comes to mind are the institutions of higher learning, world class medical facilities, and insurance companies. However, despite these affluent images, City of London statistics show the unemployment rate stands at 8.5% which is above the national and provincial averages. The poverty rate in our city is about 32% over the national average. The numbers are even worse for single parent families and new immigrants. Some of the poorest areas of London are within our own parish boundaries. The St. Michael's Parish Society of St. Vincent de Paul reaches out to help those affected by poverty in our community.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is an independent international organization whose mission is to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy. As a grass roots organization we provide food, clothing and furniture directly to those in need within our own Parish boundaries. The "Loose Change" collection - that takes place at Mass every second Sunday of the month - helps pay for these supplies.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is able to pass on a higher percentage of received donations directly to those in need than most other charitable organizations. The main reason for this is that virtually all members of the Society are volunteers. The only local exceptions are at the St. Vincent de Paul store where the manager and a few workers receive a modest wage for their efforts, which is offset by the store sales.

On April 12, London hosted an Ontario wide meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Justin's Parish. It was inspiring to hear about the wide range of support that the Society provides across the province such as disaster relief, prison ministry, advocacy for the poor, social justice concerns, thrift store operations and much more. It was even more inspiring to listen to the enthusiasm of the many volunteers who shared their experiences with following their call to a ministry of service.

So far in 2014, volunteers from our Parish have visited 176 families bringing assistance to 352 adults and 219 children. This year we have given away food vouchers nearing \$10,000. And in partnership with the St. Vincent de Paul Store we have helped supply families with furniture, clothing, beds and kitchen wares worth over

\$15,000. In fact, we are the only charitable organization in London that offers direct assistance with furniture and bedding. We coordinate with the Social Justice committee to help out those who struggle to pay their heating bills each spring, and we coordinate with the Knights of Columbus and other parishes to bring winter clothes and jackets to those in need. Yet after all of this, our busiest time is fast approaching – Christmas!

Every year we are very moved by the outpouring of generosity from those in our parish who donate gifts to as part of our "Angel Tree" Christmas program. Last year we tried something a bit different. Instead of putting packages together and delivering them to families, we invited families to come to the church. Upon arrival they were greeted by a volunteer who assisted them in picking out the perfect gifts for their own children from all the items donated. Other volunteers were there to wrap the presents. There were refreshments and treats available to round out the festive feeling. This "Christmas Store" approach was so well received that we just had to share the idea with other parishes in town. We are really looking forward to hosting this event again this Christmas.

We would like to thank all the members of St. Michael's parish for their generous support throughout the year. The monthly loose change collections help us with all our efforts. We'd like to remind you that there are special St. Vincent de Paul envelopes available at the back of the Church for those who wish to be issued a donation receipt.

If you feel a call to Christian service, and the work that we do inspires you to give some of your time to the poor, we invite you to become a member of our society. We meet every third Tuesday of the month at the Parish, and you can call the main office for more information. For even more details on the history and actions of the St. Vincent de Paul Society you can read further at www.ssvp.ca.

We are called "Vincentians". Our primary goal and purpose is to serve and to minister to all the poor, making no distinctions of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions; and to promote their dignity in accordance with Christian values. We seek to be friends to those who need a friend. We see Christ in others so they can see Christ in us.

Parish Photos



Parish Information

St. Michael's Parish, 511 Cheapside St., London, ON N5Y 3X5

Phone: 519-433-6689 • Fax: 519-433-2301

E-mail: stmichlon@dol.ca • www.stmichaels.dioceseoflondon.ca

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.



Sunday Masses

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Weekday Masses

Tuesday & Thursday: 12:00 noon

Wednesday & Friday: 8:00 a.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.

African Caribbean Catholic Community Mass (St. Josephine Bakhita)

4th Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Free Bus Service to 10:30 a.m. Mass



The route . . .

9:50 a.m.

- 64 Wyndham
- Blackwater east of Adelaide - bus stop
- Grenfell just east of Blackwater
- Fanshawe/Trossacks - bus stop on corner
- 770 Fanshawe Park Rd east of Fremont - bus stop
- Fanshawe Park Road - west of Fremont
- Adelaide/Fanshawe - bus stop south of Fanshawe
- Kipps Lane/Adelaide - bus shelter just east of Adelaide
- Kipps Lane/Barker
- Kipps Lane - bus stop east of Barker
- Kipps Lane/Kenmore Place - bus stop
- 295 Briarhill
- Cheapside/Boullee
- Huron Street - bus stop east of Wedgewood Drive

10:15 a.m.

- Royal Oak Apartments - 3 stops
go to St. Michael's Church

The bus will stop at regular bus stops or wherever it is hailed along the route.

Pastoral Team

Father Murray Sample, Pastor

msample@dol.ca

ext. 202

Father Seejo John, Associate Pastor

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Father John Sharp, Weekend Ministry

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Helen Green, Pastoral Minister

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ext. 215

Natalie Hleba, Coordinator of Youth Ministry

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Staff

Doug Manners, Business Administrator

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Pat Estabrooks, Receptionist/Office Assistant

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Jolanda Squire, Secretary

jsquire@dol.ca

ext. 208

Sid Wocks, Hall Coordinator

swocks@dol.ca

ext. 210

Parish Council Chairperson

Gail Brown

Children's Ministries

Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass

Liturgy of the Word: Grades 2, 3 and 4

Sunday School: Aged 3 to Grade 1

Babysitting: Infants to age 3

Calendar of Events

Christmas Day	December 25
Feast of Mary Mother of God	January 1
Parent Meeting - First Eucharist	February 12
Wedding Anniversary Celebration	February 15
Family Day	February 16
Pancake Supper	February 17
Ash Wednesday	February 18
Marriage Prep Weekend	Feb. 27, 28 & Mar. 1
Family Skate	March 16
Easter Confession - All Day	March 25
Mass of Chrism	March 30