

Deacons of Manitoba Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 6 March 2026

Words from the Archbishop



Dear friends,

At the beginning of Lent at the Rite of Election for the francophone catechumens of our diocese, I observed a regular every week activity that outshone any homily I could give on that day. As the mass ended, the Cathedral parish St. Vincent de Paul Conference distributed bread and other baking as well as other food stuffs to all in need. No identification cards to be presented or records kept. There was a limit on how much a person could take, but no one was refused. Over 200 people must have been served that day, and that quickly and efficiently with smiles all around. This every Sunday activity was the child of Deacon Alphonse Tran of blessed memory. Many of you would have known and seen his practical dedicated support to the poor, and in particular to newly arrived Canadians, refugees or otherwise.

The St. Vincent de Paul team was so happy to show me all they did and I obviously thanked them and blessed their work of charity. However, truth be told, I considered myself and the whole Church blessed by their testimony. And testimony that was so powerful for the new elect about to engage in the last sprint of their preparation for their Christian initiation this upcoming Easter Vigil.

And all of this because of a permanent deacon, just like all of you. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that throngs approached the apostles to be baptized “because they saw how the Christians loved one another.”

Such a lesson must not be lost on all of us, permanent deacons, pastors, parish pastoral councils and indeed all the baptized. So I ask you to discern how, through your particular diaconal service to the poor, the vulnerable, the lonely, and the hurting, you might be a driving force in your parish to promote and perhaps marshal those activities that would bring many people to also declare, “see how they love each other.” Charity, justice and solidarity, compassion and inclusiveness will always be the strongest most powerful tools of evangelization.

Consider how you can ignite the fire of love, the flame of the Holy Spirit in your parish.

A Blessed Easter season to all of you!

Alleluia!

+Albert LeGatt
Archbishop of Saint Boniface

Words from Deacon James

This Spring will see the completion of a five-year Diaconate Formation Program, a program that our local dioceses have sponsored and developed to form and develop deacons to work in our parishes and communities. Their work will be to serve those in need.

For me this has been a special privilege to accompany and be a small part in their formation, the harvest is great, but the laborers are few.

Like any ending of life's journey, this signals a beginning, understanding that the importance of the diaconate in the Church will enhance the service to the marginalized and those that are in need.

These men accompanied with their wives, have committed a great deal of time and personal investment that will only benefit the Church and individual parishes where they are placed.

Please continue to pray for them and their families. It is the service, love and commitment of all men and women in our parishes, that with humble hearts our Church continues to share God's love.

This Easter may we all rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord.

Formation Team Member,

Deacon Jim Frater



Deacon's Retreat February 13th to 15th, 2026 St. Charles Retreat Centre

The theme of the Retreat was Dilexi Te “You are Loved.” It was led by Sr. Lesley Sacouman of the Sisters of the Holy Name. The theme is a continuation of Pope Francis' reflections in “He Loved Us” on the human and divine love of the Heart of Christ. Pope Leo offers Dilexi Te “I have Loved you” on Christ's love for the poor. The Deacons and their wives and friends found it a time of renewal, and reflection and growth in the always present Spirit, and a big thanks has to go to Sr. Lesley for her spiritual direction of the Retreat.

A big thank you goes to Carol Mackenzie CWL for leading us in song. Also, moucho thanks to Rick and Chantal DeBin and Maui Zamora for their service during the Liturgy and during our meals.

Thanks also goes to Archbishop Legatt and Archbishop Chatlain for presiding over the Eucharist and leading their flocks. “He or she who sees the Bishop, sees the Church”. Last, but not least, thanks to the Executive for organizing such a wonderful Retreat.

“I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal, both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cries.”Sister Geraldine MacNamara.

Pax & Bonum ! Deacon Larry Campbell





Carol's Pilgrimage (Part 2)

As I left off at the last newsletter, we were in Vietri, a colourful town on the south coast, and was enroute to Monte Casino and Rome.

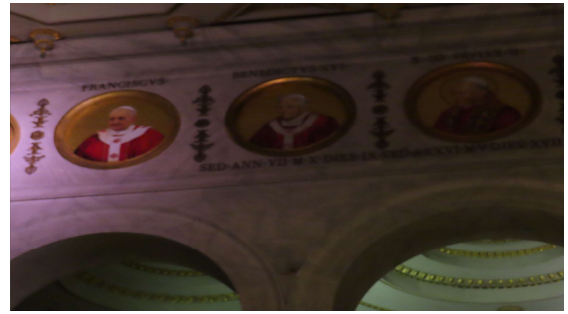
I had always wanted to go to **Monte Casino** because I am a Benedictine Oblate and there was always great excitement at St. Benedict's Monastery whenever one of the nuns came back from Monte Casino. In fact, Monte Casino on the itinerary was a big motivator for me in going on this pilgrimage.

We were blessed to have mass in a small chapel at the tombs of St. Benedict and Ste. Scholastica; I even got to touch the tombs—what a blessing for me!

From Monte Casino we drove to Rome, stopping at the **Catacombs of St. Calixto**. We had a guide, because they didn't want us to get lost. People have gotten lost in the catacombs. We were not allowed to take pictures in there since it was the resting place of so many Christians of the early church in Rome. It was also dark, dank, and uneven flooring and a bit dangerous, but it was none the less moving to be in the place where so many of the early faithful had been buried and were perhaps still buried.



From the Catacombs into Rome itself to **St. Paul Outside the Walls**, and through the **Holy Door** there. John and I were there in 2017, so I did not take many pictures. One notable difference is that **Pope Benedict's and Pope Francis' pictures** are now on the wall of popes.



The next day it was off to St. Peter's Basilica, St. John Lateran, and the Holy Steps. Our hotel was very close to the Vatican so we walked there. We thought we had left early enough to avoid crowds, but there is no way to avoid crowds in Rome at any time, as far as I could tell.



Papal General Audience. Pope Leo read out the countries of the English speaking pilgrims and when he said **Canada**, we all shouted and cheered. Even though we were so far away, he heard us, because he paused and looked up. Next time we will bring a big flag to wave.

At St. Mary Major, we saw the **Holy Cradle** and Tombs of many of the popes. **Pope Francis' tomb** was very plain, white with a small cross. Most popes are buried in St. Peter's and we saw many very elaborate tombs there, but you may recall that Pope Francis wanted to be buried at St. Mary Major.



A visit to Rome wouldn't be complete without a visit to the Colosseum.

SHROUD OF TURIN



I never thought of the Shroud as being so big, but it is actually two-sided, showing the front and the back of Jesus. The Shroud is only taken from its protective case once a year.

The last stop on our tour was Milano, the fashion centre of Italy, not that we had any opportunity to go shopping. The people of Milano seem to pride themselves on being different from other Italians. Their main dish is risotto; their language is different, and according to our tour guide, their liturgy is different. I did say to the guide that their Cathedral, Duomo shown below, reminded me of the Dom von Koln, and didn't look like the other

big cathedrals to the south. She agreed that it was more like the Dom.

We flew to Rome the next day and then to Winnipeg. It was a very worthwhile pilgrimage. I saw many inspiring sights, heard many inspiring stories of saints, was amazed at the spirit of all the pilgrims, not just the ones in our group, but pilgrims from all over the Catholic world. It really takes my breath away to contemplate it all.



Thus ends my story of my pilgrimage. I encourage anyone who has never taken a pilgrimage to Rome and Italy, to do so. It really opens the eyes to the beauty of the Faith, the different expressions, the devoutness of the people.

As for community news, I sent an RIP Mass card to Deacon Doug Meakin expressing the Communities' sorrow on the death of his wife Jean. I also arranged a Thinking of You card for Deacon Rudy, which many of you signed at our retreat. Margaret Barre has recently moved from Virden to Victoria Landing in Brandon.

A blessed Easter to you all. God loves you!

Carol Mackenzie

Words from the Deacon Candidates



Hello my brothers and sisters in Christ. My name is David Foidart. Have you ever been called by God, and have you answered that call? I received not one but two calls. The first, in my late teens where I felt the call was not strong enough then, many years later God called again only this time the call was so strong it made me look further for answers. I was sure that God was leading me somewhere, but I had no idea where. So I followed this link and after reading the brochure immediately began my application.

<https://www.archsaintboniface.ca/media/Vocations/Brochure-2024-11-19a4.pdf>

If you're in your thirties or older, married or single I would encourage you to follow this link and read the brochure, to discern if this is where God is calling you. If you are not fully convinced allow me to tell you about the most amazing journey I have shared with others from the St. Boniface Diocese, the Winnipeg Diocese and from Keewatin La Pas Diocese. You will not be disappointed and your entire family journeys with you.

This is a beautiful gift given to us by God. As a cradle Catholic I thought I knew lots about our faith. I have served in many ways over the years in many parishes, but nothing compares to the spiritual growth and expansive joy that being immersed in many different teachings and reviews of what we all have been part of in our parish lives has brought me. It is not that I didn't know about the things we learn and are given to use but the depth and information learnt to be able to fully explain when, where and why we do what we do and the history behind it makes my faith life so much richer and rewarding.

This is not a journey you experience on your own as you discern your call, guided by the Holy Spirit. You will experience a wonderful spiritual and faith building pilgrimage that will touch your very soul if it doesn't transform it as well. You are led by a team of permanent Deacons and their wives and outside speakers to elevate the basics of prayer to new ways of listening and understanding. I have been part of a group of ten couples from all different areas of the province with different parish lives. Over the years you start as friends but that bond has grown to the point of being family. I still reflect on the growth we all have made over the years and look forward to what God has in store for us next.

I am blessed to be part of a dynamic multicultural parish that has so much passion for Christ. It has made my journey that much more rewarding to share my growth and teachings. It will not stop there, as you may not know a Deacon's main call is that of service. Most of this is done outside of the parish that they belong to, but also within the parish and at masses. So I ask that you reflect and pray on where God is calling you.

I have been asked by some why the diaconate "The simple answer is that I felt then, and still feel today, after almost 5 years of study, that God calls me to be a Deacon".

In Christ,

David Foidart, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Archdiocese of St. Boniface



It's Been a Truly Blessed Journey...

Our final in-person formation took place on March 20th and 21st. There was something bittersweet about it, as I'd gotten used to these monthly events over these last five years. So much has changed since our very first time together! It's been a joy to have complete strangers become friends in faith, and finally brothers. And sisters too! The spouses of the candidates have journeyed with us, contributing equally to our discussions as well as supporting their husbands. Thank God for their presence and insight.

And thank God for His calling us to service in faith! We've all grown, spiritually, emotionally and intellectually as we've deepened our prayer lives, plunged into Scripture and opened our hearts to the Spirit. Whatever the outcome of our journey together, I know I am forever changed by Christ and our gathering in deep fellowship. And now, one final time together in June as brother candidates, as we gather for a three-day silent retreat. I ask for your continued prayer and support as we journey toward ordination.

For myself and on behalf of all the candidates and their wives, I wish to thank the Deacon Mentor Couples that have journeyed us. And a heartfelt thank you to Deacons Gilles Lorteau and Michael Thibert, Co-Directors of the Diaconate Formation Program. Your time, your teaching, your support have been a blessing to us all.

In Christ,

Daniel Bahuaud, Saints-Martyrs-Parish, Archdiocese of Saint-Boniface

Suggestions or comments:

Please do let us know how to do better with the newsletter through email: fraterjim218@gmail.com or michaelmartincordova@yahoo.com