

CATHOLIC MOUNTAIN STAR

SUMMER 2026



Manila Mission

Step out of your comfort zone, trust God's plan, and allow Him to work through you. For in Him, what seems impossible becomes possible--**MISSION: I'M POSSIBLE.**

30TH ANNIVERSARY

Let's Celebrate

You are invited to join us for the
30th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination
of the Most Reverend Gregory J. Bittman
Bishop of Nelson

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026

**★IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH★
KELOWNA, BC**

*Mass 5:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:30 p.m. (Parish Hall)*

Let us gather as a Diocesan family to
celebrate God's gift of the priesthood.
Scan the QR code to purchase tickets or
click [here](#)

If you require assistance,
go to your parish office.
\$20/person



SCAN ME



HOLY CHRISM MASS

“The Lord anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, And to give them the oil of gladness.”

Isaiah 61.1-3a, 6a, 8b-9

On Monday of Holy Week, March 30, Most Rev. Gregory Bittman celebrated the Chrism Mass in unity with priests from across the Diocese who concelebrated the liturgy. The whole Church seemed to hold her breath as she witnessed the renewal of Priestly promises. For some in attendance, it was as though they caught a small glimpse of the beauty of heaven.

BLESSING OF OILS

The following oils were brought to the Bishop:

OI - Oil of the Sick (*Oleum Infirmorum*)

The oil was blessed and consecrated so that all who are anointed with them may inwardly be transformed and come to share in eternal salvation.

OC- Oil of Catechumens (*Oleum Catechumenorum*)

The oil was blessed to grant fortitude to catechumens, that they may more deeply understand the Gospel of Christ and generously undertake the labours of Christian life.



SC - Sacred Chrism (*Sanctum Chrisma*)

All Concelebrants extended their right hand toward the Chrism until the end of the prayer, in silence. The Oil was blessed that those reborn through the spiritual bath of Baptism— a holy sign of the fullness of life and salvation—may, through the sanctification imparted by this anointing, and with the corruption of their first birth now cleansed, be made a temple of God’s majesty and give forth the fragrance of a life of innocence pleasing to Him.

This Oil becomes the Chrism of salvation for those who will be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, making them partakers in eternal life and sharers of heavenly glory through Christ Our Lord. The Bishop then breathed over the oil. We are blessed to have a photograph capturing this most cherished moment.

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He calls His Church back to the wells of redemption, where genuine joy, strength, and rejuvenation can be found, at every stage of ministry.

MISSION: I'm Possible



Mission Team of Immaculata Journeyed in Faith, Hope, and Love in Manila



By Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong, 2026

A Mission of the Heart

Our recent mission trip to Manila was not simply a journey across miles, it was a pilgrimage of the heart. In the vibrant yet challenging realities of the communities we encountered, we witnessed the living Gospel proclaimed not only in words, but in acts of love, compassion, and solidarity. We came thinking we would serve, yet we found ourselves deeply transformed by the faith of the people. In the simplicity of their lives, their joyful resilience amid hardship, and their unwavering trust in God, we encountered Christ in a profound and humbling way. Every smile, every shared meal, and every prayer became a sacred moment of grace.

A Personal Call to Mission

This mission is deeply rooted in a personal story. In 1995, during the 10th World Youth Day in Manila, I was blessed to see Pope John Paul II. Surrounded by millions of young people, even seeing him from afar filled my heart with joy and moved me to tears. His message continues to echo in my heart: a call to become a missionary. From that moment, I carried within me a desire—"I want to become a missionary." Yet questions arose: Is it possible? Where do I begin? Am I capable?

In time, the Lord answered these questions gently and faithfully. Through prayer and discernment, I came to realize a powerful truth: in mission, I'm possible.

The Church: Missionary by Nature

This same call is extended to all of us. As taught by the Second Vatican Council, "the church is missionary by her very nature" (Ad Gentes). Mission is not optional; it is our identity as Christians. Inspired by this truth, I have continually encouraged young people to respond generously to God's call. It has been a great blessing to journey with the Mission Team of Immaculata Regional High School, which has faithfully embraced missionary work for many decades. Under the dedicated leadership of Ms. Rhonda Sali, whose zeal is truly inspiring, students have served in communities in Mexico and within the Diocese of Nelson. This year, guided by the Holy Spirit, the mission led us to the Philippines.

A Journey Prepared in Faith

Beginning in July 2025, preparations unfolded, from logistics and programming to spiritual formation and mission orientation. What began as a simple idea gradually took shape into a living mission.

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The JJ26 (John Paul II) Mission Team was composed of twenty courageous student missionaries, three teachers, two chaperones, and one chaplain. On January 26, we departed from Kelowna, carrying with us the blessing of Bishop Gregory Bittman and hearts full of hope. Upon arriving in Manila, we were warmly welcomed and brought to our home for ten days at the Legion of Mary House. A joyful welcome gathering followed at Jollibee Restaurant filled with music, laughter, and fellowship setting the tone for the days ahead.

Encountering Christ in the Poor

The days that followed were filled with authentic missionary experiences. We visited orphanages, shelters, and communities including Laura Vicuña Foundation, Home for Joy (Mother Teresa Community) for Children and Elders, Hospicio de San Jose, Bahay Tuluyan Laguna, Two Hearts Foundation, Barangay Imok Laguna Community, Bahay Bukluran Las Pinas. Mano Academy and Gawad Kalinga communities. In these places, we encountered not only need, but profound love. The religious sisters, priests, and lay workers served

tirelessly, seeing Christ in every child, every elderly person, every soul entrusted to their care. Their witness reflects the spirit of Mother Teresa, who reminds us: “Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” Through daily acts of service like feeding, cleaning, listening, and simply being present, we discovered that mission is not about doing extraordinary things, but about loving faithfully in ordinary moments.



Learning Through Culture and Faith

This mission trip also included rich educational and cultural experiences that deepened the understanding of our missionaries. The team visited the University of Santo Tomas, one of the oldest Catholic universities in Asia, as well as the historic Manila Cathedral and Fort Santiago. A visit to the province of Laguna offered a glimpse into the beauty of Filipino life beyond the city. The Missionaries were deeply touched by the strong faith and rich culture of the Filipino people, which became an essential part of their formation. We also witnessed the modern side of Manila through visits to large commercial centers such as SM Mall of Asia and Bonifacio Global City. Remarkably, even within these bustling spaces, there were chapels and ongoing Masses—places where people paused to pray, reminding us that faith remains at the heart of daily life.



Transformed by the Experience

The mission was not without its challenges, as it demanded physical effort, emotional openness, and a spirit of surrender to God's grace; yet, through these very demands, it became profoundly life-changing experience for all who took part. The voices of our student missionaries beautifully reveal the depth of this transformation, as they describe the mission as "not just an experience, but life-changing and eye-opening," a journey that reshaped their priorities, opened their hearts to encounter God in the poor, and revealed that even in places with so little, there exists a remarkable spirit of joy, gratitude, and deep faith. Many returned home more aware, more grateful, and with a renewed desire to serve others with generosity and compassion. These reflections remind us that mission is not only spirit of joy, gratitude, and deep faith. Many returned home more aware, more grateful, and with a renewed desire to serve others with generosity and compassion. These reflections remind us that mission is not only about what we give, but even more about how God transforms us through each encounter, inviting us to grow in love, humility, and faith.



Conclusion: Called to Mission— Now is the Time

As we reflect on this mission, we are reminded that it was never simply about the places we visited or the tasks we accomplished, it was about encountering Christ and allowing Him to transform our Hearts. The experience has taught us that Christ is truly present in the poor and the forgotten, inviting us to recognize His face in those who are most in need; that love is the greatest missionary force, for it is not the greatness of what we do but the depth of love with which we do it that changes lives; and that we are all missionaries, called not someday, but today, to bring hope, mercy, and faith into the world around us.



From Shadows to Sanctuary My Journey since Grief to Grace

“Grief to Grace was the most profound experience of my life”



The Diocese of Nelson sponsors Canada's only Grief to Grace program. Grief to Grace is a five-day overnight healing retreat. It offers a profound spiritual and psychological journey providing safety and hope in the midst of emotional chaos.

Facilitated by mental health professionals and centred on Jesus Christ. It aims to help those who have suffered from abandonment and neglect, as well physical, emotional, sexual and clergy abuse find healing.

It helps participants focus on correcting distorted perceptions of themselves and breaking patterns which keep them trapped in old survival mechanisms. This trauma-informed model of care truly is therapy for the soul.



*The following testimonials say it best. If you'd like to learn more visit
Grief to Grace website*



“As a young child I experienced emotional abuse and as an adult I experienced abuses in the work force 3 decades ago. For decades, the weight of past abuses and deep seated grief defined who I was. I felt trapped in a cycle of pain that I couldn't escape on my own. But through Grief to Grace, everything changed.

The program provided a safe, sacred space to finally confront wounds I had carried so long. Through their compassionate and specialized approach, the “grief abuse” that had dictated my behavior began to lose their power. Most importantly, this journey has brought me to the foot of the cross. I was able to see the face of Jesus more clearly than before.

Today I stand as a testament to the fact that no matter how many decades have passed, it is never too late for the grace of God to rewrite your journey no matter the abuse(s) you have experienced! Blessings of Jesus be with you!”

“Grief to Grace was the most profound experience of my life. I received a lot of healing and continue healing with every passing day. I recommend it as highly as possible. I am so thankful for the grace of healing God gave me and is continuing to pour out on me.”

“Grief to Grace was the most important experience of my life. And considering I have six beautiful children whom I love beyond the stars and the moon, **that** is saying something. The Miracle of my coming to life again inside the intensity of G2G (Grief to Grace), and subsequently, is frankly beyond words—but is a **miracle**. Truly, a miracle.”

“Grief to Grace was the healing experience I didn't know I needed. I have done many things over the years to help heal from past traumas, but this was different. It's hard to find the words. The entire process from start to finish has been designed to support deep inner healing in a profound way. God is in it! If you want to experience true lasting healing; if you want to be transformed from the inside out by Jesus, this is where you need to be.”

NEXT RETREAT

KELOWNA, B.C.

Sept 22—Sept 27, 2026

Connect with us

<https://www.griegtogracescanada.org/retreat>

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR OUR PRIESTS

Canadian Martyrs Parish, Invermere
St. Joseph Church, Radium Hot Springs
Mission Akisq'Nuk Native Reserve/Band,
Windermere (Formerly Columbia Lake
Shuswap Band/Reserve (Shuswap Nation
(Secwe'pemc) (Kinbasket/Kenpesq't people)
Rev. Fr. Francis dela Cruz

St. Rita Parish, Castlegar
St. Anthony Mission, New Denver
St. Mary's Mission, Slocan City
Rev. Fr. Aaron de Dios

Holy Cross Parish, Creston
Most Holy Redeemer Mission, Riondel
Lower Kootenay Band/Reserve (Yaqa Nu'kiy),
Creston
Rev. Fr. James McHugh

Sacred Heart Parish, Rossland
St. Rita Parish, Fruitvale
Sacred Heart Mission, Salmo
Rev. Fr. Paul Joseph Thymootil, CMI

St. Francis of Assisi Parish Revelstoke
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Nakusp
St. John the Baptist Mission, Fauquier
Rev. Fr. Shaiju Kunjuvareed, CMI

St. Anne Parish, Osoyoos
Christ The King Parish, Oliver
Our Lady of Lourdes Church/Mission,
Chopaka Native Reserve
(Lower Similkameen Band) (semelk'mexw)
St. Gregory Mission, Inkameep/Nk'Mip
Native Band
Rev. Fr. Peter Tompkins

Sacred Heart Parish, Kimberley
St. Anthony Mission, Canal Flats
St. Joseph Mission, Jaffray
Rev. Fr. Sylvester (Obi) Ibekwe

Sacred Heart Parish, Grand Forks
Sacred Heart Parish, Greenwood
Our Lady of the Lake Mission,
Christina Lake served from Grand Forks
Rev. Fr. Ruben Buela

Holy Family Parish, Fernie
St. Bernard Mission, Elkford
St. Michael Parish, Sparwood
Rev. Fr. Thomas Kakkaniyil, MST

Cathedral of Mary Immaculate, Nelson
Most Rev. Gregory Bittman, Bishop of Nelson
Rev. Fr. Lawrence Kanickaismy, Rector
Sacred Heart Mission, Kaslo
Sacred Heart Mission, Procter
Rev. Fr. Lawrence Kanickaismy

St. Charles Garnier Parish, Kelowna
Rev. Fr. Gerald Sekanga

Corpus Christi Parish, Kelowna
Rev. Fr. Pat Monette

Holy Trinity Parish, Trail
Rev. Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong

Sacred Heart Parish, Golden
Rev. Fr. Paul Irumba

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, West Kelowna
St. Patrick Mission, Westbank
First Nation (Tsinstikeptum) Westbank
Native Reserve
Very Rev. Fr. Cerlouie Jimenez

Christ the Servant Parish,
Cranbrook
St. Mary's Parish, Cranbrook
St. Mary's Native Reserve/Band
(?Aq'am) St. Eugene's Mission,
Cranbrook
Rev. Fr. Rex Velmonte



St. Peter Parish, Princeton
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Keremos
St. Ann Church/Mission, Hedley Native
Reserve (Upper Siimilkameen Band)
(semelk'mexw)
Rev. Fr. Dominique Trinh Do

Immaculate Conception Parish, Kelowna
Rev. Fr. Maurice Okolie

Our Lady of Lourdes Mission, Okanagan Falls
Holy Child Parish, Summerland
Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chinnaperiannan

St. Ann Parish, Penticton
St. John Vianney Parish, Penticton
Penticton Okanagan Band/Reserve
(Sn Pin'Ktn)
Sacred Heart Mission, Penticton Native
Reserve
Rev. Fr. Neil Lustado

Latin Mass Society of Kelowna
Latin Mass, Immaculate Conception Parish
Rev. Fr. Edwin Neufeld

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson
Seton House of Prayer and Retreat House
Rev. Fr. Marcel Coté
St. Pius X Parish, Kelowna
Rev. Fr. Biju Antony, CMI

St. Edward's Parish, Winfield/Lake
Country Winfield Okanagan Band/Reserve
(S-Ooknankhchinx)
Rev. Fr. Biju Antony, CMI

RETIRED PRIESTS

Bishop Emeritus Eugene Cooney
Bishop Emeritus John Corriveau, OFM Cap

Very Rev. Fr. Sebastian Puthepura, Vicar General
Rev. Fr. John Kellogg
Rev. Fr. Wayne Pfliger

Rev. Fr. Harry Clarke
Rev. Fr. Dave DeSouza
Rev. Fr. Jack de Verteuil

WALKING WITH CHRIST

Deanery Youth Gather in Faith this Lenton Season

By Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong, 2026

The season of Lent is a privileged time for prayer, reflection, and renewal. A sacred invitation for every believer to journey more closely with Christ. Embracing this spirit, the Diocesan Youth Ministry organized a Deanery Youth Stations of the Cross, a gathering that sought to deepen in young people an appreciation for prayer and a more personal encounter with the Paschal



Jesus.” The reflection invited the young people to remain close to Christ not only in moments of joy, but also in times of struggle and uncertainty. In a world filled with distractions and challenges, the call to “stay” becomes a powerful reminder of fidelity, trust, and love echoing the very journey of Jesus toward the Cross.



Mystery of Christ.

The program, led by Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong, Diocesan Youth Coordinator, was thoughtfully designed to engage both the hearts and minds of the participants. It began with a warm orientation and an interactive “getting to know you” activity, creating an atmosphere of openness and belonging among the youth coming from different parishes. What started as simple introductions soon blossomed into a sense of community reminding everyone present that faith is not lived alone, but together. This was followed by a short yet meaningful talk on the theme “Staying with



At the heart of the gathering was the meditation on the Stations of the Cross. With deep reverence, the youth journeyed from one station to the next, prayerfully reflecting on Christ’s suffering and sacrifice. This was not merely a recitation of prayers, but a lived experience, an invitation to see their own stories reflected in the passion of Christ. In His falls, they recognized their weaknesses; in His perseverance, they found strength; and in His sacrifice, they encountered a love that knows no bounds.

The spiritual richness of the event was further deepened through the celebration of the Holy Mass,

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These moments offered the youth a profound opportunity to encounter Christ in the Eucharist, to rest in His presence, and to experience His mercy in a personal and transformative way. In preparing their hearts for Easter, they were reminded that Lent is not only about sacrifice, but about grace about returning to God and being renewed by His love. Beyond the structured program, the gathering became a space of genuine fellowship. Friendships were formed, faith was shared, and a sense of belonging was strengthened. The joy and enthusiasm of the youth were evident, revealing a Church that is alive and

hopeful. Indeed, the Deanery Youth Stations of the Cross was more than just an event; it was a journey of faith, a moment of encounter, and a celebration of community. As these young people continue their Lenten journey, may they carry with them the grace of having walked closely with Christ, and may they inspire others to do the same.

All Photos: St. Rita Parish, Castlegar, Christ the Servant Parish, Cranbrook and St. Ann Church, Penticton



Diocese of Nelson Youth Ministry
 Rev. Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong
 Youth Ministry Coordinator
 For more information, please contact us:
 Email: youth.coordinator@nelsondiocese.org

ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL, TRAIL:

Fully Alive in Christ Through Faith, Excellence and Service



By Carol Ann Foyle, 2026

"The glory of God is the human person fully alive."
St. Irenaeus

At St. Michael's School, our goal is for students to become fully alive in Christ. Through Him, they can reach their full potential as beloved children of God. We have much to celebrate as we see our students grow in faith, excellence, and service.

Proclaiming our Faith

The CISND theme for the 2025-2026 school year has called students to grow in holiness by taking ownership of their faith and proclaim it. They have joyfully undertaken the invitation to shine God's love through participation in school Masses, assemblies, and religion classes. Communal prayer has also given a peaceful rhythm to each day, with morning prayers, Angelus at noon, and closing prayer in the afternoon.

Liturgical Season

During each liturgical season, special devotions are proclaimed over the PA system, such as litanies, The Memorare of the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Regina Coeli, and a decade of the Rosary. Even the youngest pupils proudly proclaim God's Word and lead reflections and prayers, as the very eloquent Grade 1's did during Holy Week. Moreover, assemblies provide opportunities for the entire school to gather together and experience a blossoming of faith. Assembly themes have included One Million Children Praying the Rosary, a Remembrance Day service, the

Blessing of the Advent wreaths, Catholic Schools Week, Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy and Earth Day. Further assemblies will include May Crowning, the Living Rosary, and Pentecost. The gatherings that seemed to be enjoyed the most, however, were those that included food, particularly the ever-popular Shrove Tuesday Pancake Lunch and the Prayers and Pretzels during Holy Week. Students in Grades 5, 6, and 7 were privileged to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Mary Immaculate in Nelson during the final days of the Jubilee Year in December 2025, and it truly was a time of great blessing. Most importantly, the school community is always excited to witness and support the faith journeys of students receiving the Sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

The Hallmark of Catholic Education

At St. Michael's School, excellence is a hallmark of Catholic education and this excellence encompasses academic, athletic, and personal development.



Literacy

Improving literacy is an objective of the school, and teachers delight to envelop students in literature rich environments that foster meaningful learning and progress.

Science

Some exciting and informative science projects:

- Raising of salmon for release into the wild
- STEM rollercoasters
- Digestive system models
- Making electrical circuits,
- Fire Bubbles lab.

The Science Fair was a resounding success, and several of the winners advanced to the school-district finals.

Social Studies

A highlight from social studies: senior students transformed their classroom into an Ancient Egyptian Museum with various archeological “rooms”, the entire student body, parents, and the parish priests visited the museum and had their “passports” stamped at the end of their tour.

The Grade 6/7 class also took part in the CIVIX (Citizenship and Informed Voting Initiative) program called Youth Voices, at the end of which they completed a survey, and the results will be compiled and read by federal Members of Parliament.

Fine Arts

Easter

The fine arts continue to be alive and well at the school, and the children express their God-given talents beautifully through creating and crafting beautiful artwork that adorns the classrooms and hallways. Whole-school liturgical art, such as Easter trees (*Ostereierbaum*), Paschal candles, and Marian shrines, decorate the prayer tables in classrooms. A unique “buddy” activity was the Easter Sidewalk Chalk art scene where multi-grade groups decorated specific areas of the school yard with Easter messages and art.

Christmas

At the Peanuts Christmas Concert, our accomplished actors captivated the audience.

Speech Arts

St. Michael's has a history of excellence in the speech arts, and the annual Speech Contest in June is a legacy event that draws a large crowd.

Athletics

Sports are perennially popular at St. Michael's. Our students have continued to demonstrate superior sportsmanship and athletic prowess.

Cross Country Run

There was a strong showing by St. Michael's School in the local Cross Country Run, and all students finished their respective races.

Volleyball/Basketball

The girls' teams swept to top place in both volleyball and basketball and were a powerhouse when competing with their counterparts in the public schools. The boys' teams also did well in volleyball and basketball, and they won all games, but one, in the local Play-Day basketball tournament.

Track and Field

Currently, the students are training in track and field, and they are eagerly anticipating the annual track meet, in which our school has always placed very well.

Higher Levels of Sport

Several of our students also compete at higher levels of sport. There are those who play on the girls' provincial volleyball team, who ski as Red Mountain Racers, and who play “rep” hockey, soccer, and all-star baseball. Wherever and however our athletes compete, they embody the values of St. Michael's School and are role models for all.

Acts of Service

Through acts of service students of St. Michael's put their faith into action through a myriad of activities.

Terry Fox Run

The Terry Fox run was a smashing success, and significant funds were raised to help combat cancer.

Truth and Reconciliation

The Grades 5 and 6/7 Classes attended the Louis Riel Flag Raising and experienced the vibrancy of Métis culture.



“The glory of God is the human person fully alive.”

- St. Irenaeus

St. Michael's Choir

The angelic voices of the St. Michael's Choir rang out with joy at Christmas functions and in care-homes.

Catholic Schools Week

The senior students held a Chili Cook-Off and then sold the chili to school families and parishioners. There was also a well-attended Cakewalk in

which the lucky winners were rewarded with delicious confections. All the proceeds from the Chili Cook-Off and the Cakewalk, as well as the monies donated through the Lenten collection boxes and the Grade 2 bake sale profits, amounted to over \$2,000, and this has been given to the Holy Childhood Association.

Continued on page 18



Their acts of charity remind others of God's love.

Seniors Care Home

The Grade 3's visited a care home and made cards for seniors, and most classes made cards or letters for care-home residents and parish shut-ins, in order to give them good cheer and to remind them of God's love.

Outreach to those in Need

There was also outreach to the needy through food drives and to parishioners at all four churches—Holy Trinity (Trail), Sacred Heart (Rossland), St. Rita's, (Fruitvale), and St. Rita's (Castlegar)—when the children made cards and bookmarks and then prayed a Rosary for the intentions of those parishioners.

The Coldest Night of the Year Project

The Grade 4 class participated in The Coldest Night of the Year project and raised funds to assist the unhoused people of the Greater Trail area. Thank-you letters to Father Xaviour, Father Paul, Father Aaron, and Sister Norma were sent, because their life-giving vocations are very much appreciated by the students and staff.

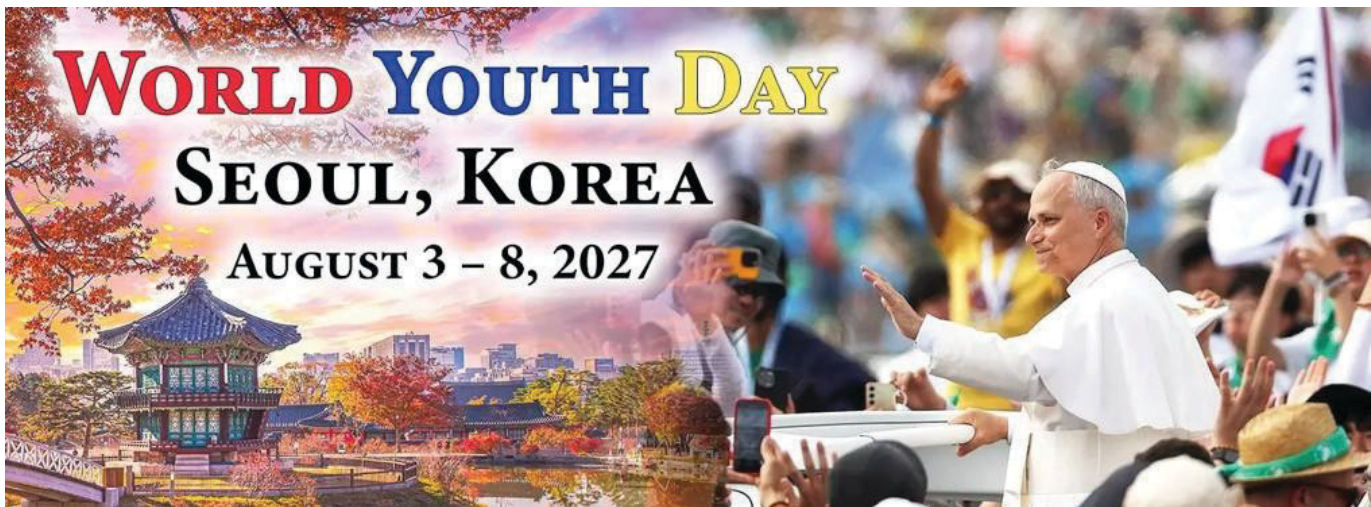
Letters to the Seminarians

The Grades 5, 6, and 7 students also wrote personalized letters to the seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton, and it has been reported that the seminarians greatly enjoyed reading these letters and are even archiving them.

Undoubtedly, the students at St. Michael's freely serve Christ in others and take seriously the call to be His hands and feet in the world. Indeed, faith, excellence, and service abound to enable St. Michael's to be a Catholic school in which the children are fully alive in Christ.







Young Adults of the Diocese of Nelson

World Youth Day 2027 is from

July 27th, 2027 - August 11th, 2027 in Seoul, Korea

**Dates include both Days in the Diocese and WYD*

Join Pope Leo XIV and hundreds of thousands of young Catholics (18 - 35 years old) from around the world for the World Youth Day Pilgrimage!

Participants will grow in their faith and their appreciation for the power and presence of Jesus in the Church today.

Priest Chaplain: Fr. Ferdinand Bayarong

Interested? Please contact:

Deacon Rod Attwell

rod.attwell@nelsondiocese.org

for more information

“Take courage!
I have overcome
the world.”
(John 16:33)



A Season of Prayer, Sacrifice and Service *at Holy Cross, Penticton*

By Claire Cacchioni, May, 2026

“Little children, let us love not in word or speech
but in deed and truth.”

(1 John 3:18)

Together, the school community of Holy Cross in Penticton expressed much love this Lent by their acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The children and staff were witnesses of the faith through their many sacrifices, helping others and intentional times of prayer.

The school and parish community came together to start the season of Lent with the Ash Wednesday service at St. Ann's parish officiated by Father Neil Lustado. Prayer was the heart of our Lenten journey. Students participated in various forms of prayer such as daily prayer, stations of the cross, in quiet reflection during Eucharistic Adoration.

The school community also strengthened their self-discipline through various forms of fasting. Most students sacrificed small comforts of sweet treats like candy and chocolate and even precious screen time from youtube and video games! The sacrifices were made to remind us to put God first in our lives.

The school also engaged in the gracious act of service toward those in need. A special collection of much needed items was organized for Canadian Food For Children. Through acts such as these, the children are growing in their compassion toward others, learning that their small acts of service can have a large impact in the lives of others.

Throughout the journey, the school community grew stronger in faith and unity. During our celebration of Easter, we carry forward our growth in virtue in our acts of kindness, compassion and care for one another. God is good!



Bring your gifts Become a Sister of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame!



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NOTRE-DAME

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Educación liberadora

www.cnd-m.org

Want to get in touch?
Sr. Susan Kidd, CND
902-218-6413
vocations@cnd-m.org



A Blessed Journey

CND Sisters Visit Holy Trinity Parish in Trail



Back row, left to right: Ken Wiesner, Doreen Gowans, Diane Nadeau, Tammy Fox, Father Xaviour, Maruice Nowoselski, Teresa McKerral, Bob Cheramy, Pat Weicker, Lorne Raymond, Roger Nadeau

Middle: Bill Gowans

Front row, left to right: Rick Jones, Ellen Jones, Sr. Maura, Sr. Norma, Sr. Jo, Janet Nowoselski, Rosemarie Mandoli, Maureen Wiley, Theresa Takacs

Photo: Holy Trinity Parish, Trail, B.C., on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

By Elizabeth Stephens, 2026

The West Congregation of Notre Dame (CND) Sisters and Associates gathered in Trail, B.C. from May 1-3 for their annual meeting, one of three regional stops. Sister Maura, of Montreal, Que., and Sister Jo, of Toronto, Ont., were among those attending.

The group began their journey this year in Innisfail, Alta., with the associate group, travelled to Trail and concluded in Cranbrook with a presentation. The gatherings date back to the early 1980s, beginning at Silver Star Ski Resort, later moving to Naramata for 25 years, followed by Cache Creek, Seton House of Prayer in Kelowna, and now Trail. About 22 people attended including Sister Maura McGrath and Sister Jo Badali, both of whom came west on mission in the late 1960s. Also present was Sister Norma Gallant of Holy Trinity Parish, who arrived in 1988 and is the last remaining CND Sister in Western Canada.

The retreat concluded with Mass on Sunday at Holy Trinity Parish, followed by a brunch hosted by the West Kootenay Hospitality Group of Associates.

"Our mission is to proclaim the Good News, directing our lives toward the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent."

Mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

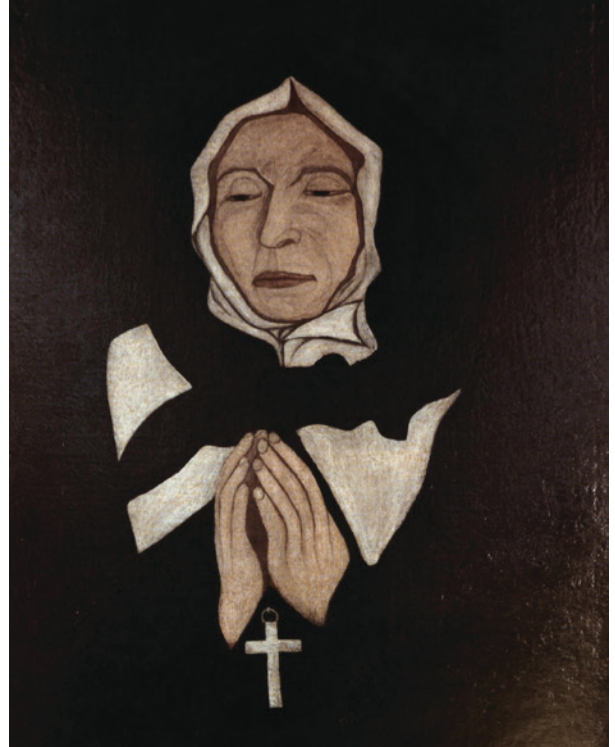
[Homily adapted for print.]

By Rev. Fr. Xaviour Mulakkampilli Chakku, CMI,
May 3, 2026

The Congrégation de Notre-Dame was the first non-cloistered women's religious community in North America. Founded during the 17th century in Montreal by Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, the Congrégation de Notre-Dame has long worked to educate girls and boys at all school levels. In Saint Marguerite's time, the Congregation was made up of French and North American sisters. The Congrégation has endured and is now in Canada, the United States, Japan, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, France and Cameroon. Women from these countries have joined the Congregation and, as in Saint Marguerite's time, undertaken the work of "liberating education" in many forms.

CND Associates are women and men committed to their baptismal call who are inspired by the spirituality and mission of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys and share the mission of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame. Rooted in Jesus, they follow in the footsteps of Saint Marguerite, striving to be a more visible presence of God in the world. Associates choose to enter into a personal and communal journey of ongoing faith formation as they participate in prayer, nurturing relationships, gathering in community, and cultivating their capabilities and gifts.

The CND Associates in the West Kootenays, Okanagan and Caribou areas came together for a weekend retreat in Trail. This retreat was facilitated by two of the CND sisters: Sr Maura McGrath and Sr Jo Badali. We welcome the sisters and all the CND Associates to our community. Their retreat included time for prayer, input, reflection and sharing—all in an attempt to better understand what God is asking of them as they strive to be faithful witnesses to their baptismal call. Let us continue praying for them in the Eucharist.



Portrait of Marguerite Bourgeoys by Pierre Le Ber, circa 1700.
Wikimedia Commons

CATHOLIC MEN CHALLENGED TO AUTHENTIC DISCIPLESHIP



By David Ziebart, 2026

160 men from across the province — along with some participants from Alberta — gathered at Immaculate Conception Parish in Kelowna for the second annual Nelson Diocesan Men's Conference. Centered on the Church's theme for the year, One in Christ, United in Mission, the conference challenged and encouraged men to deepen their faith and live with renewed conviction as Catholic disciples.

The keynote speaker, Fr. Larry Richards — author of the bestselling book, *Be A Man* — delivered a direct and inspiring message, calling men to embrace authentic Catholic living in their homes, workplaces, parishes and communities. His talks

combined practical wisdom, humour, and a strong spiritual challenge that resonated deeply with participants throughout the weekend.

One of the most powerful aspects of the conference was witnessing the faith of the men gathered there. Long lines for Confession on Friday evening, the sound of hundreds of men's voices praying together, and the lively energy of the table discussions all reflected a genuine hunger for deeper conversion and fraternity. The atmosphere throughout the weekend was both reverent and encouraging, leaving many men renewed in their faith and strengthened in their mission as Catholic husbands, fathers and leaders.

This conference was truly for all men — single





and married, young and old—an opportunity for fellowship, spiritual renewal and encouragement in living out the Catholic faith more fully.

A special thank you goes to our Clergy for their presence and assistance throughout the weekend, as well as to the Knights of Columbus organizing committee and our generous conference sponsors whose support helped make the event possible.

Plans are already underway for next year's Men's Conference. Mark April 16–17, 2027 on your calendar and stay tuned for more details in the months ahead!

*“The most important thing
you will ever do is seek
God.”*

By Larry Richards

YOUNG MEN DISCERNING A CALL TO PRIESTHOOD

*“Simon, son of John, do
you love me?”*

— John, 21: 16

THOSE WHO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS,

serve in the name
and in the person of Christ
in the midst of their community.

The ordained ministers exercise
their service for the People
of God by teaching, divine
worship, and pastoral governance.

Since the beginning, the ordained
ministry has been conferred and
exercised in three degrees: that of
bishops, priests, and deacons.

*“The priesthood was instituted for
the preaching of the gospel and for
the reestablishment of communion
with God through sacrifice and
prayer; its deep source is a love for
Christ above all else:”*

— Robert Cardinal Sarah,
Catechism of the Spiritual Life,
2022, EWTN Publishing, Inc.

**If you are discerning a call to Ordination, contact
the Diocese of Nelson Vocation Director,
Fr. Rex Velmonte (250-426-4266)**

A VOICE RESTORED

My Testimony of Faith, Silence, and God's Grace

By Brother Jeffrey Loma, 2026

There are moments in life when faith is no longer simply about believing in God during good times, but about holding on to Him when everything seems lost. For me, as a seminarian preparing for the priesthood, that moment came unexpectedly through the loss of something most people take for granted: their voice.

Twelve years ago when I was in the seminary, I lost my voice. I was diagnosed with a severe neurological disorder called Spasmodic Dysphonia. It is a condition caused by nerves in the brain that affect the vocal cords, causing them to tighten and strangle whenever a person tries to speak. Speaking became painful, difficult, and almost impossible. The doctor told me words that shattered my heart: "You may never speak again for the rest of your life, for there is no discovered cure yet with your condition."

At that moment, my world crashed down. It was a strong test of faith for me, given that I was in the seminary studying to become a Priest. How can I serve if I do not have the voice? Of all people, I asked God, why me? What good will this bring to me and to your people? I kept repeating these questions in prayer. I was struggling to understand why God would allow this suffering to happen while I was preparing myself to serve Him and His Church.

The silence became more than physical suffering; it became a spiritual trial. There were moments when I felt abandoned and broken, wondering if my dream of priesthood had ended before it truly began. Yet deep within that darkness, one thing remained: faith. Even if it felt as small as a mustard seed, I refused to let go of God.

Every day and every night, I spent long hours in prayer and discernment. I cried before the Lord in silence

because I could no longer express myself fully. Yet even in silence, God heard every prayer of my heart. I continued my seminary formation even if I could not speak. I attended classes silently. I fulfilled requirements silently. I joined community life silently. Imagine being surrounded by people while being unable to speak. It was painful. But God kept whispering in my heart: "Continue the journey."

So I continued. I even started studying sign language on my own just to cope with daily life. I learned to adapt. I learned patience. Most importantly, I learned humility. My illness became a test of faith. A test of how long I would continue even without certainty. A test of whether I would trust God amidst suffering. A test of perseverance and my desire to become His servant.

One day, while I was praying alone in our chapel, something suddenly came into my mind: "Check your Facebook." At first, I ignored it. But the thought became persistent. So after prayer, I opened Facebook and searched for "Spasmodic Dysphonia." then a support group appeared, and I joined it.

For the first time, I realized that I was not alone. There were so many people around the world struggling with silence, pain, and loss of their voice. Their stories gave me hope and strength. In that support group, I discovered a doctor from Japan who specialized in studying vocal cord disorders. His family and ancestors pioneered studies on this condition. I immediately sent him a message and asked, "Can you help me? I cannot speak." By God's grace, he replied immediately. He told me that there was one Filipino doctor trained in Japan who could perform the operation. To make the long story short, I decided to take the risk. The success rate of speaking again was only around five to ten percent. Many people would probably say it was too risky.

But faith sometimes requires courage. Faith sometimes means stepping forward even when the outcome is uncertain.

During the operation, I was awake because the doctor needed to hear my voice while operating on my vocal cords. Imagine that moment: my throat was open, the surgery was happening, and the doctor kept instructing me to speak.

Then suddenly, I heard my voice. A miracle. Tears immediately fell from my eyes inside the operating room. It was not my old voice anymore, but it was a voice. After 4 or 5 years of silence, I could finally speak again. The doctors inserted a metal implant into my vocal cords to help me speak. This voice you hear today is not my original voice. It is different. But it is the voice God allowed me to have so I could continue my mission.

And God restored my life beyond what I imagined. I was able to finish my theology studies. I was able to teach in college and university for 5 years. I was able to continue serving people despite everything that happened.

That was when I realized: my greatest test of faith was my voice. The questions I once asked God were finally answered. “How can I serve if I do not have the voice?” “Why me?” “What good will this bring?”

Now I understand. God never abandoned me. In every moment of suffering, He was there. He was suffering with me, carrying me, guiding me, and teaching me to trust Him more deeply. Sometimes God allows us to lose something so that we may discover that our true strength comes not from ourselves, but from Him. My story reminds us that God never abandons His people in suffering. Sometimes the Lord allows pain not to destroy us, but to transform us.

Sometimes He permits silence so we may learn to hear Him more clearly.

Today, my testimony stands as a message of hope for anyone carrying heavy burdens: faith can survive suffering, hope can survive silence, and God can bring beauty even out of brokenness. Indeed, what once seemed like the end of a dream became a powerful witness to the enduring love and faithfulness of God.



“From God the doctor has wisdom, and from the king he receives sustenance. Knowledge makes the doctor distinguished and gives access to those in authority. God makes the earth yield healing herbs which the prudent should not neglect; Was not the water sweetened by a twig, so that all might learn his power? He endows people with knowledge, to glory in his mighty works, through which the doctor eases pain, and the druggist prepares his medicines. Thus God’s work continues without cease in its efficacy on the surface of the earth. My son, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to God, for it is He who heals.”

— Sirach 38:2-9



CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Osoyoos Renewal Conference, April 24 and 25, 2026

By Marcia Lawrence, 2026

We were blessed to have Fr. Jack Michelchuk, Pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Smithers, B.C. travel to Osoyoos to minister to those who gathered for the conference.

Fr. Jack is Calgary-born but served in Louisiana, U.S.A. for many years before relocating back to Canada, bringing the colloquialism, "y'all" back with him which he peppered his talks with throughout the weekend!

Fr. Jack assured us there is "Hope;" not to give in to discouragement or despair. But rather invite the Holy Spirit into our lives, daily. Jesus not only loves us but more than that he likes us. Part of that love causes Him to initiate encounters with us. These encounters bring about "re-creation." The bible is chock full of examples of these life-changing "re-creations." The Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5-28), the conversion on the road to Damascus, which marks the beginning of his transformation from Saul to Paul (Acts 9:1-31; Acts 13:9), and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:11-13) are just a few examples. The sacrament of the Eucharist is an encounter with the Lord bringing healing and wholeness. Fr. Jack likened healing to a kind of—Spiritual Chiropractics; bringing something that is out of order, into order. Because of this encounter with Jesus, this invitation, we in turn are to go out and invite others.

We are "designed" to respond to the voice of the Lord; "the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:3). Fr. Dan Rehill recounts travelling with a bus load of seminarians in the Holy Land. While stopped for a break, he went over to speak with two shepherds. They were looking after about a thousand sheep and told him, "It's really two flocks." One of the seminarians asked, How do you know whose is whose?" The shepherds laughed and replied, "Because they know who we are." The seminarian pressed further,

"What do you mean?" So the shepherds walked about 50 yards apart from each other and called out. The whole flock split, and the sheep divided to one shepherd and the other.

Fr. Jack said we are all called to be saints which requires total surrender; the giving our whole heart to God. "We cannot save ourselves, only God can save us." "We are totally dependent on him for growth in the spiritual life." (Pope Benedict XVI said, "there is no "static" state for a Christian, every decision we make either brings us closer to God or farther away from him.) Fr. Jack urged us to never tell Jesus, "no" again. "When the gold is put into the fire (our struggles, our crosses, our sufferings) the gold bubbles but once all the impurities are burned off the gold can exist peacefully in the fire." "...Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego into the burning fiery furnace.... walking in the midst of the fire and they are not burnt." (Daniel 3:12-94) Jesus never promised us a life without suffering but He did promise "...I Am with you always until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) What the Lord has in store for us is worth it !!!

Father urged us to pursue holiness and cited the burning bush, when God tells Moses "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is Holy ground. (Exodus 3:1-5) What "sandals" in my life keep me from intimacy with God? What old sins haven't been put to death? Which "sandals" have to be removed so I can come closer to our Lord?

One statement that he made that I have pondered since the conference is, "You have to make yourself indifferent to all created things." I take that to mean, put God first and foremost and he will provide for all our needs. Our Lady, in her quiet faithfulness, must have practiced such a maxim and in consequence became a channel of grace for all mankind.

(There is much in my life that are “wants,” not “needs.”) “...the King came in to meet the guests, he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.” (Matthew 22:11) What shape is our wedding garment in? The repentance, or change of heart, we experience as we grow in our relationship with Jesus needs to be concrete in giving rise to good works: the corporal works of mercy, almsgiving, prayer and fasting. The “clothing” of our souls will be a clear conscience and a holy life. “Otherwise the rest of the world will not benefit from your holiness.”

In closing, we heard very clearly, during the conference “Don’t procrastinate! ...we entreat you...now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation.” (2 Corinthians 6:1-2)

Gathering in the Spirit 2026



Seton House Registrants

Tuesday evening through until Saturday night
including meals from Wednesday to Saturday
Cost: Nelson Diocese \$547
Non-Nelson Diocese \$647
(Extra night is available to those who require a
Saturday night stay \$90.00)

(There is limited subsidy from the Pilgrimage of Faith for
those in the Nelson Diocese, please contact Alexa Dolor
250-448-2725 for details).

Commuters

The cost for commuters
\$308.00

Contact for info & registration
ndccrs2020@gmail.com

Gathering Starts/Finishes

September 16, Wednesday morning
at 8:00 a.m.
Finishes on September 19,
Saturday at 4:00 p.m.

September 16-19
Seton House of Prayer, Kelowna, B.C.
Guest Speaker: John Connelly
***"Draw Near to My Sanctuary—Abundant
Life and True Love Await"***

Contact for info & registration
ndccrs2020@gmail.com

Hosted by the Charismatic Renewal

ANNUAL MASS for Life, May 7, 2026

Honoring the Sanctity of Life

By Eileen Collins, 2026

The National March to Respect Life was held in Ottawa, Ontario on Thursday, May 14, 2026. This day marked the 57th Anniversary of the Legalization of Abortion in Canada. Today we mourn almost 5 million preborn babies whose lives have been sacrificed to abortion.

The theme for this year's Annual March and Mass was "Follow Me." (Matthew 4:19-20) Immaculate Conception Parish hosted the Annual Mass to respect life on Thursday, May 7, 2026. The challenge to each advocate for Life is: Can you drop your fishing nets (jobs, shopping, socialization...) for one hour each week and witness to the sanctity of life?

Most Rev. Bishop Gregory was the main celebrant. Concelebrating were Rev. Fr. Maurice, Rev. Fr. Cerlouie and Rev. Fr. Pavlo Myts, assisted by Deacon Rod Atwell and Brother Jeffrey Loma. A new Catholic family from Nigeria, now settled in Kelowna brought up the Offertory Gifts. Uche and Victor Aniagboso have settled into St. Pius X Parish.

Abortion in Canada has no legal restrictions. It is legal for any reason, throughout all 9 months of pregnancy, until the baby has left the birth canal. Then it is recognized as human, with legal protection. A woman is entitled to an unlimited number of abortions, completely funded by the Health Care System. Canada has no criminal abortion law, while Communist China allows state sponsored abortions.

(Abortions in Canada, Government of Canada and Is Abortion Legal in China? Laws and Restrictions)



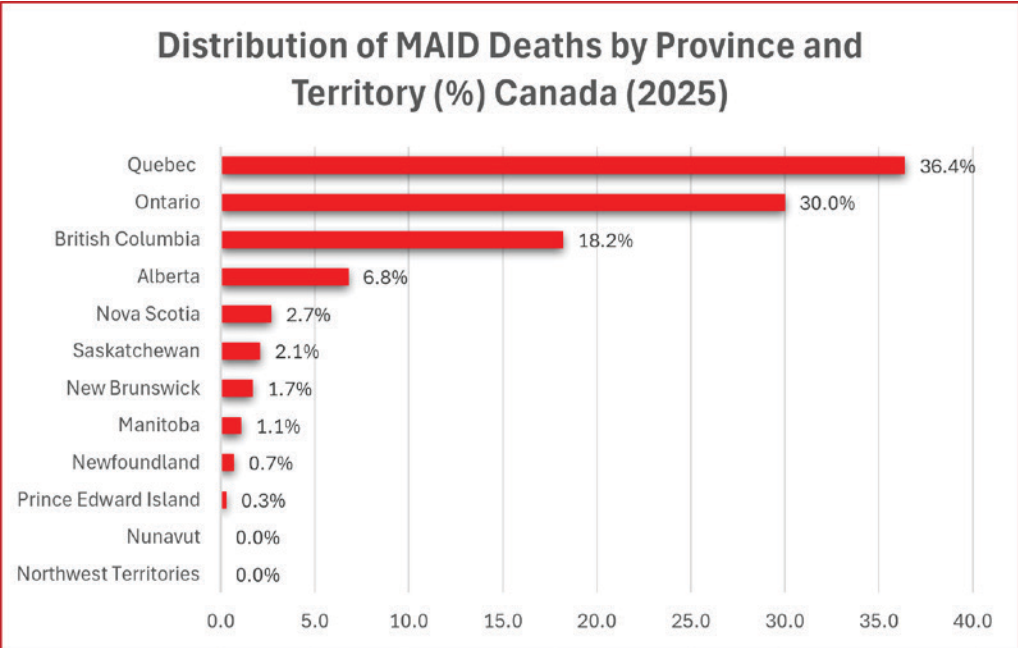
"Follow Me!"

—Matthew 4:16

Euthanasia and MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) in Canada were addressed with a video in the hall following Mass. The video along with resource tables and refreshments provided an opportunity to share and discuss Canada's moral decline in the slippery slope of abortion and Euthanasia/MAID. Canada is one of the leading countries in the world enabling MAID. By December, 2025 over 100,000 deaths were attributed to MAID. We have much to pray for.

The annual Mass for Life hosted by the Immaculate Conception Parish in Kelowna was an inspiring opportunity for reflection!





Source: Health Canada, Sixth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada, (2025), Appendix C1.

EARTH DAY PLANTING AND BLESSING

at St. Mary's Grotto Renewed in Summerland



Photo: Holy Child Parishioners with Rev. Fr. Gabriel Chinnaperiannan for the blessing of St. Mary's Grotto on Earth Day, April, 22, 2026.

By Claire Nowen, 2026

St. Mary's Grotto at Holy Child Church in Summerland has been beautifully renewed through the loving efforts of our Catholic Women's League. What once was a simple, quiet corner has been transformed into a peaceful, prayerful space that reflects our deep devotion to Our Blessed Mother.

The planting and blessing of the grotto took place on Earth Day, April 22, 2026.

FAITH FORMATION



CALLED & GIFTED WORKSHOPS

Forgiveness and the Charism of Mercy *A Personal Story*

By Dshamilja-Egli, 2026

I have been fortunate to participate in the Called & Gifted Workshop and Discernment Process. Through this program, I have become more aware of having the charism of mercy, and it made me realize more fully why I feel compassion towards anyone suffering, whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. It has shown me what it is that drives me to saving every little bug I see in distress (though small, they are a precious life in God's eyes too), or smiling and greeting a homeless person on the street, or supporting someone who struggles emotionally. It has made me reflect on how God uses each of us through our gifts, and how He knows where we are at, where our comfort zone is, and how we can grow by using our charisms, despite our limits. In my own experiences, someone as reserved as I, can still use their charism of mercy, and God knows how to use each of our personalities to better the world in some way. Through this discernment process and praying for guidance, I have learned that you will encounter people needing your help; you will be guided to meet those people who can further and help the mission you have been called to – God sends us the encounters; and your gifts help to recognize suffering in its different forms and support those needing what God has given you to offer.

Fr. Pierre Descouvemont writes that “[St.] Thérèse frequently urged us to practice great charity in judging others, for, as she used to point out to us, that which seems to be a fault in another is often an act of heroism in the sight of God.

The unfinished task of a nun who may be over-tired or suffering interiorly, she told us, often brings more glory to God than a duty meticulously completed by another nun robust of soul and body. In other words, it is effort and not success that counts most with God. We should judge our neighbor favorably in every circumstance, therefore and make it become a habit of our lives to overlook his faults.”

(Descouvemont, 2023, 183) Descouvemont, Fr. P. (2023). Thérèse of Lisieux Secrets of Joy. The Cenacle Press.

I have also experienced forgiveness to be essential in practicing the charism of mercy. We cannot judge someone for something they may have said on one bad day. We must move on from it, and still see the human with their own feelings and emotions. We cannot always assume we understand everyone's past or think we know why they are hurting. We must meet them where they are at and show them the mercy God wants them to receive through us. Having this understanding of the charism of mercy allows one to see the good in others and to feel pain with them, and help them out of it. God asks each of us to be a light in the world to others.

CALLED & GIFTED WORKSHOPS



Comments from Called & Gifted Participants

“The content and delivery surpassed all my expectations—I had no idea how good this would be.”

“I wasn’t sure what to expect when I came. So I didn’t know I had charisms—WOW more to learn about.”

“The delivery of the content was very good. I was invited to the process but I didn’t know what it was. I am excited to move forward with my call and gifts.”

“Just simply loved it.”

“How to describe...it’s not charisms like waving your hands in the air. It’s a practical way to discern and practice your supernatural gifts—the gifts you really received at your baptism—how an average Catholic can understand the Holy Spirit, God’s gifts, and the joy we can receive and share with others.”



Interested in learning more?
Nelson Diocese Webpage:

NELSON DIOCESE CLERGY RETREAT 2026

Renewed at the Wells of Salvation



Nelson Diocese Clergy Retreat 2026

*Renewed at the Wells
of Salvation*



By Jeffrey Loma, 2026

The annual Diocesan Clergy Retreat took place at the Regent Hotel in the stunning alpine city of Revelstoke from May 11–15, 2026, bringing together the clergy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson in a spirit of prayer, camaraderie, and rejuvenation. Cardinal Thomas Christopher Collins' presence and spiritual leadership made this year's retreat particularly significant. Throughout the week, the clergy were inspired by his lectures and reflections.

The retreat carried the theme, "Oases to Sustain Us on the Desert Journey: 'With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.'" (Isaiah 12:3) The theme beautifully captured the purpose of the gathering: to provide moments of spiritual refreshment and renewal for those who dedicate their lives to the service of God and His people. The retreat turned into a haven of prayer, introspection, healing, and camaraderie amid the numerous pastoral duties that clergy members must fulfill.

Bishop Gregory Bittman, the priests of the Diocese of Nelson, deacons, and seminarian attended the retreat. Bringing together individuals working in parishes and ministries throughout the diocese's large territory, the event demonstrated the solidarity and fraternity of the diocesan clergy. The presence of seminarian also served as a hopeful reminder of the future of priestly ministry and vocation within the local Church.

Throughout the five-day retreat, participants followed a prayerful and enriching schedule centered on Christ and the life of the Church. Each day included the

celebration of the Holy Mass, communal prayer, the Holy Rosary, Eucharistic Adoration during the Holy Hour, opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, conferences, meals shared in fraternity, and evening socials that strengthened the bonds among the clergy. The retreat also included a Priest Council meeting, providing an opportunity for pastoral dialogue, collaboration, and discussion regarding the mission and future direction of the diocese.

Cardinal Collins' talks provided deep spiritual insights based on Scripture, priestly identity, and pastoral steadfastness. He considered the significance of discovering "oases" in the spiritual life—moments and locations when priests and ministers can experience the Lord again and get the grace required to carry out their work with joy and faithfulness—based on the retreat subject. He emphasized that prayer, the Eucharist, fraternity, and trust in God are essential wells of salvation that sustain clergy through the challenges and demands of ministry – most importantly, the alignment of the identity of Christ in the person of clergy.

Additionally, Cardinal Collins also encouraged the clergy to remain steadfast in hope and joyful in their vocation. He reminded participants that while the journey of ministry may at times resemble a desert marked by fatigue, sacrifice, or uncertainty, Christ continues to walk with His priests and servants. Through prayer and communion with God, the desert itself can become a place of grace, transformation, and deeper intimacy with the Lord.

The Catholic Mountain Star

The retreat atmosphere fostered not only spiritual renewal but also fraternity among the clergy. Shared meals, conversations, and evening socials allowed priests, deacons, and seminarian to reconnect with one another beyond the daily demands of parish life. These moments of fellowship strengthened the sense of unity within the diocesan family and reminded participants that they do not journey alone in ministry.

The retreat's contemplative atmosphere was further enhanced by Revelstoke's location, which is surrounded by the serene mountain scenery and the splendor of creation. Participants were able to delve deeper into prayer, quiet, and attentive listening to God's voice while away from the hectic pace of everyday life.

The clergy left the retreat on May 15 with a revitalized sense of purpose and a stronger resolve to serve God's people throughout the Diocese of Nelson. The days they spent together in prayer, introspection, and camaraderie turned into a source of grace and support that will sustain their ministry in the coming months.

The Nelson Diocese Clergy Retreat in 2026 was a potent reminder that the Lord never stops giving His

Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson

people living water. He calls His Church back to the wells of redemption, where genuine joy, strength, and rejuvenation can be found, at every stage of ministry.



Giving TO YOUR PARISH

You can donate to your parish in many ways:

- In the collection basket at Mass.
- Drop off your envelope to the parish office.
- Pre-authorized giving (PAG)
- E-transfer to:
etransfer.pof@nelsondiocese.org.
- Credit card via QR Code (Square)



- Online via canadahelps.org.
- [Visit the nelsondiocese.org website](http://nelsondiocese.org) and click “Donate Now”.
- [Contact POFAdmin@nelsondiocese.org](mailto:POFAdmin@nelsondiocese.org).

*Each person should give what they have decide
their heart to give, not reluctantly or unde
compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7