

## Building Relationships with our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters

*by Michelle Sanche with Sr. RéAnne Letourneau*

This past August our Archdiocese pioneered a new program for seminarians called "Formation for Indigenous Relations and Ministry." 8 of our seminarians, along with interested priests, sisters, deacons and laypeople, spent 15 days over a 3-week period connecting with and learning from Indigenous Elders and leaders. As Seminarian Chris Lindenbach put it, "It was an opportunity to learn and encounter my First Nations brothers and sisters and learn about their culture and history, and develop friendships with individuals to journey with in search of truth and reconciliation."

Archbishop Don Bolen and Sr. RéAnne Letourneau collaborated with Indigenous leaders including Joanna Landry and Elders Lillian Piapot, May Desnomie and Robert Bellegarde, to plan and organize the program. With the additional involvement of 20+ Indigenous community members as well as Non-Indigenous leaders and friends, the team put together a rich array of learning activities and opportunities for friendship and connection. The feedback received at the end of the program helped clarify what worked well and what could be improved in future.

### Learning to understand

Attendees participated in a Treaty workshop presented by Susan Beaudin and Joanna Landry. Sr. Patricia Orban commented: "During the workshop, Susan shared from her own personal life many painful stories that resulted from the way the Canadian government carried out their side of the treaties. In recent years, what helped her through some anguishing times was the unconditional kindness and welcome of Fr. John Weckend at St. Cecilia's Parish."

Ruth and Albert Robillard explained some basic terminology of what it means to be Indigenous. The Blanket Exercise, facilitated by Ruth and her students from the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, was an interactive way of experiencing 500 years of history with Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

Another meaningful learning experience was listening to Dennis Omeasoo and artist/Elder Wayne Goodwill as they



shared about the Winter Count Buffalo Robe Bundle, which is to be gifted to the Pope as a gesture of good faith and reconciliation. This buffalo hide has hand-drawn images by Wayne Goodwill, the only known pictograph artist in southern Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Archdiocese of Regina, the Regina Catholic School Division began this project as a response to the TRC calls

to Action, with the hope of building "mutual relationships of respect and reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples, the Catholic faith community and the Catholic Church."

### Native Valley Ministry

Participants visited Lebreton and heard Sr. Bernadette Feist and community members share about Native Valley Ministry. As Sr. Patricia put it afterwards, "I felt Sr. Bernadette was in tune with the people and loved them, sharing their joys and suffering. Her deep understanding of their culture and deep faith shone through her stories and relationship with the First Nations people."



A highlight for many participants was their time at Peepeekisis Reserve. There was Mass, and time to meet parish and community leaders. Robert Bellegarde shared about the meaning of the Pipe and led the group in a sacred Pipe Ceremony. He also taught about the meaning of the teepee and what each pole represented, while his son and grandson set up a teepee. The seminarians and deacons then got into teams and had a friendly competition to see who could set up the best teepee and the fastest. Transitional Deacon Anthony Tran Phung appreciated this hands-on



approach to learning, noting that information can be learned by reading, but the experience of doing something can have a deeper impact.

Jason Agecutay gave teachings on the meaning of the drum. He invited whoever wanted to among the seminarians, deacons, and priests to gather around the large drum as he taught them Pow Wow songs. A special moment came when he sang and hand-drummed a song he had created for Pope Francis. Transitional Deacon Parker Love said: "It opened the integration of Catholic spirituality and Indigenous culture to me in a way I had never experienced before."

Participating in the Peepeekisis Pow Wow was also part of the experience. Seminarian Chris Juchacz commented: "Our presence there was vitally important because it shows that the church is not just talking the talk, but rather that it is actually striving to walk the walk. This experience illustrated to me that what we need to do as church is be present; it's not always about doing, instead it's more about being present and loving our First Nations people."

### Residential Schools and their Aftermath



At the site of the former Lebret Residential School, participants heard the powerful stories of a former student of that school, Noel Starblanket. They later viewed the film "It Had to be Done" about the Lebret Residential School, created by Tessa Cook. Seminarian Reed Miller said: "We sat with Elders, kokums, and residential school survivors. Each one shared a piece of their own life that revealed pains and struggles as well as joys and hopes." Chris Juchacz added, "I never fully grasped the gravity of the residential school experience until I heard several survivors share their stories. This experience has motivated me to try to be a bridge of healing and reconciliation for my Indigenous brothers and sisters who have been hurt by the church."

The effects of colonization and residential schools are still felt strongly, and have resulted in high numbers of Indigenous children in foster care and Indigenous adults in prisons. After visiting the Justice for our Stolen Children Camp, Deacon Norbert Gaudet said; "The Justice Camp session furthered my understanding of the underlying systemic problem we have with our social and child welfare system involving Indigenous peoples." Sr. RéAnne echoed this: "It is important to face the wounded parts of the church if we are entering into the

wounds of people. We need to acknowledge where and how we have hurt many within our institutions and communities. 'Truth' needs to come before 'Reconciliation', and justice is the crucial piece that can lead us in that direction."

On August 10th, Prison Justice Day, participants met with members of 'Friends on the Outside', a group offering friendship, support, hope and encouragement to inmates and former inmates and their families.

### Connection and reconnection

At Holy Child Parish, Archbishop Emeritus Jim Weisgerber shared about his experience of growing in relationship with the Indigenous community, and showed a video of being traditionally adopted into an Indigenous family when he lived in Winnipeg. Later, when Elder Harold Lavallee led the formation group in a sweat lodge ceremony in Piapot Reserve, he was enthused to welcome his old friend 'Fr. Jim' (Weisgerber), whom he hadn't seen for over 30 years. According to Lavallee, "I spent a lot of time talking to Fr Jim many years ago...He was the one that really helped me in my journey of reconciliation."

### Food, prayer and celebration

Food was definitely a big part of the experience, including treats such as bannock bison burgers and Indian tacos. Susie Desnomie and team at Peepeekisis and the Presentation Sisters on Pells Drive in Regina helped with meals for the program. The group was especially grateful to Doreen Topp for her delicious fried bannock. Transitional Deacon Ricardo Escalante commented that it brought back good memories of his family eating fried bread back in Trinidad and Tobago. Seminarian Andrew Lindenbach was glad to help: "Simply spending time with the grandmothers and listening to their stories was a wonderful experience. I truly enjoyed making bannock." Doreen herself commented: "Seeing how open they



were to learning about our culture and trying to understand where I was coming from really touched me, and as a Residential School Survivor I experienced a lot of healing; I'm starting to learn how to forgive and for that I want to thank them with all my heart!"





There was food for the spirit during many celebrations of the Eucharist on Pells Drive, and when the kokums (grandmothers) gathered for the Rosary, with May Desnomie teaching the group the Our Father and Hail Mary in Cree.

Attendees were in for a treat after a potluck supper at St. Cecilia Parish as world-champion hoop dancer Terrance Littlelent put on a workshop that included an exhilarating performance. When he invited a couple of audience members to give it a try, Sr. RéAnne and Transitional Deacon Chinh Vu energetically joined in the fun.

There was a return to Peepeekisis on the last day for a closing Pipe Ceremony and Feast led by Robert Bellegarde, to give thanks for all that was experienced. The food prepared by Susie Desnomie and friends was plentiful, symbolizing the Creator's lavish generosity. It was an abundant way to end the journey.

### Post-program thoughts

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #60 encourages churches to educate clergy about Indigenous spirituality, the history and legacy of residential schools, and our shared responsibility to build respectful connections with Indigenous families and communities. Engaging with that Call to Action was the inspiration for the decision to set up this program for those in leadership or en route to a leadership role in the church.

When all was said and done, and participants and helpers had moved back into their studies and work, they were asked what had stayed with them.

Elder May Desnomie shared: "I was impressed that the seminarians were willing to learn about our Indigenous culture and traditions, and I think that this is going to be very beneficial to them in their future ministries. I never thought that at my age, as an Elder I would see something like this, and I felt incredibly honoured to be part of this experience. We need leadership like this in the church to allow for these kinds of things to happen in responding to the TRC Calls to Action".

Deacon Arron Polk commented: "The immersion created lasting personal relationships and friendships where there

were none initially. To see people's hearts transformed nearing the end of the time spent was proof that the Spirit was moving when we were open to listening to the hard truths of another's life experiences. The immersion enabled people to begin to move forward together - out of love for one another."

Agnes Parisloff said: "My experience was profound, humbling, made me angry at times, heartbroken at times, hopeful for the future. I was touched by the stories of the Elders, their courage to tell all no matter how painful. I was touched by their relationship with Mother Earth, with nature, with all that the Creator has given us."

Andrew Lindenbach commented: "The times that I could speak and interact with others or learn from people who are within this ministry and the ways that they implement the faith stood out for me."



Faye Helmerson added: "I feel privileged to have been in a circle in which people felt free and safe to share their stories of life in Residential Schools and how that has contributed to making them and their families who they are today. It is important that as many folks as possible share in these stories."

Reed Miller remarked: "The most important thing I have taken away is how Christ is already at work, performing his healing ministry through dedicated men and women responding to the Lord's call for love and reconciliation, and this is something that we are all called to do."

Chris Lindenbach reflected: "What stays with me is the people: some that, despite having been hurt by the Church in the past, welcomed us seminarians into their communities to share their stories and culture, despite what the broken humanity within the church did in the past to some. It makes me excited to be preparing and discerning for ministry in Regina."

Sr. April Mireau summed up: "When I think of the whole 3 weeks, what wells up within me is HOPE! Hope for these seminarians who will be wonderful priests soon, hope for our Archdiocese, hope for the relationship of the church with Indigenous Peoples, hope for our world in such need of authentic relationships which bind us together in Christ!"



## Arch Regina Congress - 2018 - "Be Joyful In Hope"

**By: Frank J. Flegel**

The First Annual Archdiocese of Regina Congress was held at St. Elizabeth's Catholic School in Regina on September 22, 2018. A true gathering of the Regina Diocese, the event drew pastors and parish leaders from rural and urban centers throughout Southern Saskatchewan.

The theme of the Appeal is "Be Joyful in Hope." The announcing of this year's goal of \$1.6 million was the first order of the day followed by keynote speaker, Leah Perrault. Break-out sessions covering a variety of areas of parish life and governance followed in the afternoon.



DCG Philanthropic Services Inc., Saskatoon represented by Don Gorsalitz, was introduced as the company that will be working with this year's Annual Appeal group. He and his company successfully raised the capital funding to build Saskatoon's new cathedral and pastoral centre.

"It is this Appeal along with parish assessments that supports the Archdiocese's ministries to the Archdiocesan faithful," said Deacon Barry Wood, Archdiocesan Chief Financial Officer.

In past years the Appeal launch has primarily involved pastors and parish Appeal representatives. This year's



event coupled the launch of the Appeal with presentations and workshops whose focus was on providing additional supports, inspiration and networking opportunities for a larger cross section of parish leaders.

"We hope participants are able to go away with some solid information and tools they may be able to use for leadership, for growth, and be able to take them into any ministries in their parishes," said Director of Pastoral Services, Lisa Polk. Several attendees said they had definitely picked up some pointers they would take to their own parish. In that sense, the Congress was a success.

Leah Perrault's keynote examined the Appeal's "Joyful in Hope" theme through the lens of our Catholic identity in a post-Christian culture, and the responsibility parishes have for the people within their geographic boundary,

whether or not they attend services at that local parish. "We are responsible for the souls of everyone within that geographic boundary."

Perrault is Director of Mission at Saskatoon's St. Paul Hospital. She also served seven years as Director of Pastoral Services for the Saskatoon Roman Catholic Diocese. She is an accomplished motivational speaker and consultant.

She talked about her own faith in the face of personal tragedy and heartbreak. With inspiring courage she opened up about her miscarriage in 2017 followed not long after the murder of her twin sister. "We have to remember we are all beloved," she said, and included even the man who killed her sister.

Dr. David Kopriva of Regina's St. Anne Parish was deeply moved by



Perrault's description of counting the fingers and toes of her miscarried daughter and said, "I began tearing up listening to her talk, her faith and strength."



After lunch, breakout sessions were offered on four subjects: Urban and rural finance with Deacon Barry Wood; Pastoral Councils and parish Governance with Lisa Polk; Evangelization was covered by Deacon Eric Gurash, Archdiocesan Director of Communications, and Evangelization and Catechetics led by Laura O'Reilly, Pastoral Assistant at Christ the King Parish.

Archbishop Bolen was pleased with the turn-out and with the way the day went. "It is a great joy when people from all quarters of the diocese are able to come together.

Everybody here is deeply involved in and committed to the Church," he said, and, "It's very life-giving and encouraging to be together."



# Archdiocesan Annual General Meeting June 2018

**By Frank Flegel**

The Regina Archdiocese is in good financial shape according to financial officer Reverend Mr. Barry Wood, and the Archdiocese is developing plans to build its own pastoral centre. These were two main issues reported at the June 16th Archdiocese Annual General Meeting held at Our Lady of Peace Church.

The financial picture and reports from pastoral services and the various ministries are available to the public in the annual report which has been distributed to all parishes and is also available on the Archdiocesan web site.



The Youth Ministry coordinators Michelle Braden and her assistant Braden Kuntz gave a brief report, describing one journey with a young person, as an example of their support with parish youth groups.

Dr. Brett Salkeld spoke briefly about the permanent diaconate program and the nine candidates who were ordained the evening

previous at Holy Rosary Cathedral.

Salkeld said the new deacons are prepared for ministry, "and will have a dramatic impact in the parishes to which they have been assigned."

Salkeld said he is working with the Saskatoon Diocese concerning their interest in establishing a permanent diaconate program.

New Deacon Lamont Dyck described his formation journey noting he had a lot of love and support. He asked the parish representatives at the meeting "to put us to work." Deacon Dyck is assigned to St. Joseph Parish, Moose Jaw.



The Pastoral Centre and Archdiocese offices are currently located in the former St. Anne School. The Catholic School Board has increased the rent in the last few years to such a point that now the capital and operating costs of an efficiently designed building are comparable.

The Archdiocese has begun the design development process for a facility on Holy Rosary Cathedral property. Stantec of Regina is contracted to provide initial architectural services and a major capital/fundraising campaign study is expected to begin in the fall of 2018 with the campaign to begin in early 2019.

Locating the Pastoral Offices of the diocese on Cathedral grounds will bring the diocese together with its mother church. "The Cathedral also has a parish hall and several meeting rooms that we can use very efficiently and therefore require less space in the new Pastoral Centre," said Financial Officer Wood.

The year ended with a deficit of \$148,000 on revenues of \$3.5 million, said Wood. "We aim for a break-even each year but there are always unexpected expenses. The financial committee looks at deficits over the longer term, five and 10 years and it usually evens out to a break-even." A \$1.4 million unrestricted reserve fund is available when needed. There are also restricted reserve funds; the interest from these funds is available for some ministries and pastoral services.

Archbishop Donald Bolen initiated public AGM meetings last year in order to make all Archdiocesan activities more transparent. In his opening remarks, Archbishop Bolen said last year he had met with all priests and other groups including pastoral council chairs. "It's been a frenetic year. We had many blessings and the Spirit is at work in our diocese."

## Compassionate Healers Mass

Each year the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS ) celebrates the health professionals across the Archdiocese with the Compassionate Healers Mass. Caregivers at all levels including doctors, nurses, chaplains, volunteers, staffers, health board members, some caring for the sick at home or who are themselves sick and need support, all came for a special Mass and reception held on September 13th at Resurrection Parish.



Archbishop Don Bolen and Fr. Rick Krofchek greeted and blessed each caregiver's hands while saying, "Will you go forth into the community to be the presence of Christ?"

In his homily Archbishop Bolen said, "You are there, easing their pain, showing dignity, you are there helping, listening, offering support in a thousand nameless ways, but remember the Lord is always present, calling us to growth, He puts a vision before us, embracing us so that we might be transformed."

As the Archbishop acknowledged the healing efforts of those present he also recognized the wounds caused by the Church, for the way it has victimized others, and its need for healing. He said, "Christ focused on teaching and on healing while on earth yet in spite of the joy that was expressed, he still experienced opposition." The opposition Jesus faced for healing on the Sabbath is not unlike the urge to protect the Church of today as being more important than protecting and healing of the victims. So let us listen to the wounded and the victims. He ended with the words of Leonard Cohen's lyrics to "Come Healing."



# Confirmation Season 2018



**By Frank Flegel**

"In all my years as bishop, Confirmations have never gone quite as well," said Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen. The Archbishop conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation in 29 parishes throughout the Archdiocese this year.

Bolen made the focus of each occasion, "the many ways in which we can come to trust that God loves us, starting with how creation speaks to us, and how the human condition itself is an expression of God's love, and culminating in the boundless love of God revealed in the dying and rising of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Spirit." The children were engaged in a question-and-answer format that invited them to think about the many ways that God enters into a loving conversation with us, including the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

He said he is always mindful in Confirmation homilies that he is striving to speak to the kids at an age level they can understand, but also speaking to parents, some of whom who may have only a loose association with the church, and so "this is an opportunity to try to talk about the integrity and credibility of the faith to the parents as well."

Asked why he thought the season went so well, he thought it was the dialogue format and the simple question of the ways in which God loves us. He also thought he was getting better at talking to young children.

"I have no training in teaching young children. Most of the kids are seven, eight, nine years old, and understanding the Incarnation is not an easy thing, so some of the answers were pretty funny," said the Archbishop. "I'm learning but it's been a steep learning curve."

During the Confirmation question-and-answer sessions, he usually sat on the front step of the sanctuary and the Confirmation candidates sat on the floor around him. "It was a kind of informal conversation on the ways in which we know that God loves us and the kids are delightful."

The informal setting didn't work as well with large groups, so in those situations the format was more traditional. Holy Family Parish in Regina had more than 90 candidates and was the largest group the Archbishop confirmed. It was held over two nights.

One of several highlights in his Confirmation journey was going as far as St. Stephen's Parish in Consul. Consul is in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan, near the U.S. and Alberta

borders. It is the furthest parish in the Archdiocese from the Archdiocese office – recorded in Google as 467 kilometers from Regina, a 4.5-hour drive. It's near the Cypress Hills and Grasslands National Park.

"It's a beautiful place. I was there shortly after Easter. I went for a little walk in the evening and heard the Meadowlarks singing. It was a reminder of the beauty of the province in springtime."

He described St. Stephen's as a little parish that perseveres. It is served out of Maple Creek about 80 kilometers north of Consul. "It was a reminder of the Church's resilience and the resilience of the people of God trying to keep their parishes going and strong."

Another highlight was a one-on-one he had with the only Confirmation candidate at the Lestock annual pilgrimage. "I asked him if he would like to stay in his pew or join me in front of the congregation at the pilgrimage site. He was confident in his faith and said he would like to join me. I told him, if he wished, he could answer my questions quietly but he said, no, he would speak into the microphone, so we had a delightful conversation in front of the congregation and he did very well and the people were obviously very proud of him."

Bolen started the Confirmation season shortly after Easter at Consul and ended at Claybank near the end of June. Archbishop Bolen has clearly enjoyed the Confirmation season this year, and particularly his interaction with the candidates.

## Our New Director of Pastoral Services

*By Frank Flegel, special to Grandin Media*

The new Director of Pastoral Services for the Archdiocese of Regina has a good understanding of servant leadership.

Lisa Polk began her 11-year church career rather humbly, as a part-time custodian at Resurrection Parish.

"My interview consisted of, 'Hey, she can clean toilets, let's hire her,'" she says with a laugh.

After 18 months, the pastor asked her to take on the role of Sacraments Coordinator for the parish, which has the largest



*Lisa Polk,  
Director of Pastoral Services*

## Our New Director of Pastoral Services Cont'd

population of any in the archdiocese. She served in that role for seven years before becoming Pastoral Assistant in 2016.

Effective August 1, Polk will be starting a new and challenging leg of the journey, directing pastoral services for Regina's entire archdiocese. The position is currently responsible for nine offices, including the Permanent Diaconate Program, Health Care (hospital chaplains), Lay Formation and Evangelization Program, Youth, Social Justice, Resource Centre, Responsible Parish Ministry, Communications, and Archives.

"It's like looking forward to the unknown," says Polk. "I am, however, looking forward to providing servant leadership for the archdiocese."

She believes her love of the Church and an urge to share Christ's message are the biggest assets she brings to the position.

"I think the place where my heart really lies is helping to bring Christ to people."

Polk succeeds Robert Kowalchuk in the Pastoral Services position. Before him, it was traditionally filled by sisters of a religious order.

In addition to her parish service, she brings an eclectic work experience to the position, and knows more than a bit about teamwork. After high school she trained as a legal secretary and worked at a law firm in Parksville, B.C. She was also a cheerleader for the BC Lions football club, an experience that led her to form her own cheerleading and stunt club while owning a cheerleading gym. "I had three competitive teams."

After marriage she did some babysitting and ran a day care to boost the family income. She and husband Arron moved to Regina in 2007, when Arron was posted to RCMP Depot division as an instructor. They are parents to two daughters, aged 17 and 22, and celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on August 21.

Both had been active in their Parksville parish, and they expected to do the same when they moved to Regina. They chose a house close to both St. Gabriel School and Resurrection Parish. Polk volunteered at the school, and then noticed that the parish was looking for a part-time custodian, and began her career with the Church.

Polk also served one term as a trustee with the Regina Catholic School Board in 2012-16, and is currently a member of the Campion College Board of Regents.

She expects to do a lot of listening in the first few months.

"I want to be part of a team," she stresses. "I'm not going to come in and give a lot of direction. I want to make sure we are all using our gifts and powers in the right way, and I can't do that without getting to know people and letting them know who I am."

**Note: Frank Flegel is a freelance writer for Grandin Media, based in Regina. He was a reporter for the Prairie Messenger from 1997 until the newspaper's closure this year.**

## JOY IS 'AN INVALUABLE SIGN OF BEING CATHOLIC,' Their children led them to Couples for Christ.

By Frank Flegel, Special for Grandin Media

Joel and Jo Ong's children joined a CFC youth group at their local parish in Regina. Now the Ongs themselves have joined



— and, in fact, lead — their local chapter of Couples for Christ, a worldwide association focused on charity and strengthening Christian families.

"They have a good program for kids ... and the Church teachings help us to grow as a couple," said Joel Ong, noting that the Regina chapter of CFC has grown to 98 couples from two in 2009.

Couples for Christ advocates traditional marriage and family values, believing that strong marriages lead to strong families which — in turn — build a strong Catholic Church and society.

CFC originated in Manila, Philippines, and today is a lay ecclesial community of more than a million members in 122 groups worldwide. In Canada, CFC has 14,000 members, most of whom have a Filipino background.

"An invaluable sign of being Catholic is the joy" said Michael Ariola, the global president of CFC who was in Regina for a three-day regional conference July 13-15 designed to "recharge the batteries."

The regional conferences are structured like retreats with Couples for Christ sessional speakers followed by testimonials and theme workshops. The focus, organizers say, is centred on the family.

"We value family and faith in God so much," said Chelo Ravasco, who credits her children for leading her — and husband Greg — to Couples for Christ nine years ago.

"It's also personal development and at the same time get the view of what is our mission and our training towards evangelizing. And, opening our minds towards our neighbours," Greg added.

CFC's charity organization, ANCOP (Answering the Call of the Poor), raises funds for community development and humanitarian relief programs for local and foreign projects, in support of the poor.

Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen added: "God's love is no more powerfully revealed than in families."

CFC is a Catholic organization but is open to married couples of other Christian denominations.



## 'Thinking Faith!' Podcast Celebrates 2 Years of Faith-filled Conversation

By: Deacon Eric Gurash

A bit of coaxing, a return to broadcasting roots, and a love of good, faith-filled conversation between friends paved the way for the Archdiocese of Regina's 'Thinking Faith!' podcast.

It was impossible to predict how a series of off-the-cuff discussions in the hallway would begin a creative process whose result would be the first-ever podcast produced by the Archdiocese of Regina. It began simply enough: on some days Archdiocesan Theologian Dr. Brett Salkeld would pop his head into my office excited and energized by a new article he had read, and occasionally I would stick my head into his office just a few doors down with some scriptural insight that had become stuck in my brain.

In either case, we would more often than not find ourselves engaged in very animated, fruitful and often hilarious conversations around scripture, theology, the weird things about being Catholic and the challenges of living a life of faith in a modern context. At some point, it struck us that others might enjoy being part of the conversation. I knew we had some basic recording equipment on hand and I had a bit of broadcasting experience from several years ago to fall back on.

The biggest initial hurdle was in convincing Brett to co-host it with me. "When (you) first asked me about podcasting, I was nervous. I am used to writing things that can be reread and edited before they go out to the public. Podcasting is different...It has taken me some time to get used to the idea that my words are going out more or less unfiltered."

Debating on September 20, 2018, our biggest concern initially was whether or not we'd be able to come up with enough content to do at least a bi-weekly show. Within the first few weeks our goal of providing thought-provoking Catholic conversation - hence the name 'Thinking Faith!' - quickly expanded. Even though our initial audience was small, they were a vocal lot, and it wasn't long before emails, phone calls and face-to-face requests and questions started coming in.

There was a growing desire for teaching resources for Catechists, priests, parish ministers, RCIA and other faith sharing and formation groups. It was obvious that there was a hunger for good, locally produced Catholic content. We also began to showcase the amazing ministry work and events that go on through our Pastoral Services offices and in parishes and other apostolate groups around the diocese.

Over and above providing faith information and conversation, it has become a way of bringing this very vast diocese together.



With all of this material rolling in, we've had more than enough to fill a half-hour to forty-five-minute slot every single week for more than two years and 100 episodes (our 100th episode officially aired August 15, 2018).

It's been an interesting experience for a few reasons. Having spent a couple of years in broadcasting right out of high school, I never expected to be in a situation where I would be

using those skills again. I've had a lot of fun rediscovering the joy of broadcasting in general and this new artistic medium of podcasting. Also, I'm thrilled to be able to use this new form of digital media to spread the Good News of our faith. In the First Century of our faith, St. Paul the preeminent evangelist had access to a new and culturally transformative network of Roman roads and shipping routes to use in fulfilling Christ's commission to "Go forth and make disciples of all nations." I like to think he'd be a big fan of these new, digital 'highways' we have access to.

What's been most surprising is how often people will come up to us and introduce themselves as fans of the podcast, especially in our more rural settings. Brett and I both do a fair bit of speaking and traveling throughout the diocese and most everywhere we go we meet individuals who enjoy listening to the show. It's surprising because, even though we had the idea for doing a show like this, I'm not sure we really expected all that many people to listen. Co-host Brett agrees, "It's a great way to use new technology to build up the community in our Archdiocese, all while building up people's knowledge of their faith!"

To date, we've had close to 13,000 downloads with an average weekly audience size of about 230 listeners. While it's not quite at the level of some podcasts which see 1000's of downloads each week, if I do a speaking series in a parish where 230 people show up each week, I call that a huge success.

Our biggest prayer going forward is that Christ might continue to bless this work that we do in his name. We hope that it might bear good fruit in the lives of our listeners, their family and friends, and their parishes and that in some small way this little podcast might help people become more comfortable talking about matters of faith and Catholic, Christian life with others.

The Archdiocese of Regina's 'Thinking Faith!' podcast releases a new episode every Tuesday and can be found on the Archdiocese of Regina website at [www.archregina.sk.ca/thinkingfaith](http://www.archregina.sk.ca/thinkingfaith). You can also find it on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, TuneIn Radio, and iHeart Radio.



## Rama Shrine Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae

Submitted by,  
Marcy Millette, Nipawin, SK



The 50th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae at the beautiful shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Rama, SK was recently celebrated by One More Soul Canada and the Rama parish of St. Anthony. Parents, clergy and professionals

sought support and guidance in Christian marriage and family life while the children enjoyed crafts, entertainment, sports and games supplied by Rama's balloon man, Steven Halifax, the Myriam Sisters of Regina and Saskatoon Diocesan Youth Coordinator, Colm Leyne.

The July 13-15th celebration in Rama focused on the keys to a happy, healthy marriage as Blessed Pope Paul VI wrote in 1968. "*Of Human Life, (Humanae Vitae)*" clarified and restated the 2000 "year old" teaching of Holy Mother Church which seeks only the good of her children.

Although Humanae Vitae is often associated with Natural Family Planning, the prophetic document was much more, as the Conference Speakers attested.

Dr. Brett Salkeld directed us to his Youtube talks on Couples Connect: <https://youtu.be/iHhZr1ple-I>. "Marriage makes us holy by forcing us to see God more perfectly". Dr. Salkeld explained the various levels of intimacy which include social, emotional, spiritual and physical.



"The key to happiness is to fulfill each level at the right time," he said. His stirring words on the blessings of children encouraged the families



present as they pondered the Church's healthy attitude toward children. "Children are not a commodity", he explained. "Children are not a product to be made, but a gift to be received. Using NFP helps us to see them as gifts."

Dr. Martin Owen recalled the history of Natural Family Planning in this country. "In the early 50's, NFP was making progress throughout the world and even enjoyed some financial support from Health Canada." The Pill, however, turned the world upside down these past 50 years. Dr. Owen continued with hope by saying, "This culture, through the use of the smart phone, is now surprisingly embracing the 'natural solution' largely thanks to environmental concerns."

He spoke about a app called: Fertility Education and Medical Management (FEMM) which now boasts over 400,000 users. While FEMM pales in comparison to the billion-dollar Pill industry, this fertility awareness app may finally 'spawn' increased respect for women which has been seriously lacking since the onset of the Pill.

Article 17 of *Humanae Vitae* prophetically cited three serious consequences of artificial contraception which have been proven many times over:

#1 Artificial contraception, such as The Pill and/or sterilization, would increase the probability of conjugal infidelity and a general lowering of morality. (*Divorce, co-habitation and abortion rates confirm this prophecy*).

Indeed, the testimonies, given at the end of the day, were tragic examples of the resulting victims in the wake of this societal disaster. Nancy Gare's personal account on abortion gave hope and healing to all those who may have suffered from past abortions. Nancy's

pro-life work continues in the classroom and at numerous events throughout the country.

Percy and Roseann King attested to the humbling and merciful love of God's forgiveness following the grave sin of sterilization in their marriage. "By far the biggest cross that we've had to bear in our marriage, was sterilization. What we thought would be our sexual freedom, became our sexual bondage. Percy ended with these poignant words: "Sterilization plays with a person's manhood. I was fearfully and wonderfully made in the Image and likeness of God and I chose to mess with that perfection."

Due to illness, Fr. Jeffrey Stephaniuk was unable to speak at the conference. His hand-out was a summary we take to heart: "What the Church wishes above all is to help Christian husbands and wives perfect one another, to purify their love, to taste the happiness of a married life lived in the sight of God and in complete respect for His law...."

Then, directed to clergy, the hand-out exhorts, "...in the confessional and in the pulpit,...every necessary pastoral effort needs to be made that no ambiguity exists among the faithful or in public opinion concerning the Church's position in this serious matter."

One More Soul Canada wishes to thank Bishop Mark Hagemoen for celebrating Mass in the Shrine and sharing his profound insights. Fr. Michal Pajek, St. Anthony's parish priest, led the attendees through Friday's Stations of the Cross and Adoration as well as the Mass to close the weekend on Sunday. Desiree Nieckar ably MC'd the weekend's talks, Mary and Joseph Kowalyshyn and St. Anthony's parish worked ceaselessly to make this Shrine one of the most beautiful in the province.

One More Soul Canada resources can be found at: [www.omsoul.ca](http://www.omsoul.ca).





# HURRAY FOR HOLLYWOOD!



**by Michelle Braden, Archdiocesan Youth Coordinator**

"Hurrray for HOLYwood" was the theme for this year's Archdiocese of Regina Leadership Camp. 60 students aged 12-18 along with 20 leaders, joined us in mid-August out at Glen Harbour Camp.

Participants were greeted upon arrival with a trip down the red carpet and the unrelenting attention of the paparazzi.

These fun-filled days continued with music, drama, "famous people" and awards shows ...just like Hollywood! But unlike Hollywood, we were also challenged to look at what we actually value, what we actually stand for and who our actual role models are/should be. We hiked, swam, ate great food, played crazy games. We held a cardboard boat regatta. We played night games, sat around bonfires out under the stars and made life-long friendships.

There was opportunity each day to celebrate Mass and to start and end the day with prayer, opportunities for silent prayer, and opportunities for shared worship, Adoration and learning the rosary.

There was also time for honest reflection and conversations as participants were called to take a very real look at both the challenges and blessings of life today.

The Holy Spirit was generous with His gifts! It was a blessed time which made many memories and bore much fruit. Our camps are always held in mid-August and any young person in the Archdiocese of Regina (and their friends!) is welcome to join us! Watch for registration forms in the spring!!