



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 18; February 16, 2018

OUR SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM is offered several times a year in various parts of the Diocese. Last weekend fourteen couples gathered at Immaculate Conception Parish here in Peterborough for an enriching and informative couple of days. I am told that they were a very “engaged” group (ouch!) who showed lots of keen interest. Sincere thanks to Father Paul Massel and Deirdre Thomas and the various volunteers who contribute their time and talent to ensure that our couples are well prepared for the Sacrament of Marriage.

THE SEASON OF LENT BEGAN WITH ASH WEDNESDAY this week. Churches were crowded as Catholics gathered in goodly numbers to commence this annual time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving leading up to Easter. I was impressed to see the 300 plus who assembled for the noon Mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains. And I was privileged to celebrate the Mass for Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School here in town, with even more hundreds of students and staff. I pray that everyone may have a blessed Lenten season: one piece of that would be to read Pope Francis’ Message for Lent 2018, which you can find by clicking [here](#).

POPE FRANCIS HAS ASKED THAT NEXT FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, the whole Church observe a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. Both countries have suffered corruption, violent ethnic clashes and poor economic conditions. I invite you to join your prayers to those of the Holy Father and the entire Church, asking that God’s grace may touch the hearts of many in those war-torn lands.

OUR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION COMMITTEE IS MEETING TODAY, in their ongoing task to develop a Diocese-wide Confirmation Program for our parishes. The Peterborough city parishes (along with St. Michael Parish in Coburg) are into the second year of a pilot project to establish this program. I appreciate the work of the Committee and of the various pastors, parish staff members and catechists who have been engaged in this important task.

I had the pleasure to meet with the Leadership Team of the **CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH IN CANADA** today. Their organizational structure was revamped back in 2012 when the various C.S.J. communities from Pembroke, Peterborough, Hamilton and London merged to become one new congregation. It was great to hear about their ongoing apostolates in our diocese and across the province. After the meeting, I celebrated Mass for the Peterborough Sisters community at “the Mount,” offered for the repose of the soul of my father at the kind request of the Leadership Team.

I look forward to being with Fr. David West and Parishioners of **ST. MARY PARISH IN GRAFTON** this weekend, as they celebrate the completion of the major re-construction of the church bell tower. After that, I will be on the road for a bit, giving the Day of Recollection to the Priests of St. Catharine’s Diocese, and then celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation in Hamilton.

Pax et Bonum, † Daniel