As I write this article for the Fall Newsletter I am aware that a new school year is upon us, and with a new school year there is a new energy to become engaged in different ways. We take the summer months to re-energize and now it is time to think about the ways that I will be engaged in life this Fall, Winter and Spring.

So I ask myself, and I hope you do also, how can I be a more authentic Disciple of the Lord, inviting more and more people to know Jesus and follow Him?

I find myself wrestling with questions. What makes a group of people the Church? What is essential if a group of people are to be a Church? I am convinced there is no one single answer. One of the most important things a Church does is worship. To be a Church we must have a relationship with God. Worship is not just about “Mass” on Sunday. Worship takes place any time and in any way we take time to acknowledge that God has supreme power over everything and that we offer God our profound praise. Consider ways that you might help us to be Church when we worship. Consider raising your voice in song by joining one of the choirs or offering your musical skills with your gift of an instrument. We are told that in the Temple the sound of harp, drum, violin, trumpet were heard giving God praise.

Beyond worship, the true church is always gathered around the Word of God. The Word of God is revealing of himself to us. Jesus Christ is the living Word. Jesus is the self-revelation of God, for Jesus is God living among us as a human person. The Church experiences the living Word through the written Word, “the Bible” and the proclaimed Word. You might consider joining the Bible Study which is focused on the Psalms this year, or journeying with the R.C.I.A. group to come to know Jesus as the Word of God.

The third area that marks a Church is “Fellowship.” This is the relationship that the members of the Church have with one another. Ralph Waldo Emerson once asked this question, “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” What kind of evidence would they need to convict you? How are Christians identified? How are Christians different from those who are not Christians? It is not about simply saying “I am a Christian.” It is not about those who go to church on Sunday, or those who speak and act pious.

When Jesus was preparing the disciples for his death, he gave them the mark of identification. “You should love as I have loved and the world will know you are mine.” Jesus didn’t give them a T-Shirt or a cap or a flag. Being a Christian is all about love. “Love God – love your neighbour – love yourself.” What Jesus said is, we have to do it the way He does it. Jesus gave us a new commandment, “Love one another as I have loved you.” Our love must mirror the love that Christ has for us.

There are many ways that we can embrace this love for one another, mirroring Christ’s love. Perhaps in serving the brothers and sisters who have needs in Hospitality North, the Refugee Committee, St. Vincent de Paul, Social Justice, in assisting with Children’s Liturgy, babysitting on Sunday, instructing children for the sacraments or walking with the Confirmation candidates, lending a helping hand with Edge for young people, or being that warm welcome on a Sunday with Hospitality.

A new year and invitation to be Church in new ways!
This is an article that truly is a joy to write. 2019 marks the official conclusion of the Give to Grow – Foundations for Our Future Capital Campaign! It has been a whirlwind time of seemingly constant projects, disruptions and requests for support. We have completed the list of main identifiable projects and have even completed some that were not on that original list. Most incredibly, through your considerable generosity and the power of prayer, we should have all of these projects paid for by year’s end. This is an amazing achievement and an incredible blessing!

We thought it would be interesting to summarize all of the projects that have been completed at St. Michael’s since October 2014, and the cost for each: we replaced the boiler in the hall, installed a new copper roof to the nave and re-roofed the flat sections of the original building, installed a completely re-engineered HVAC system in the nave, installed a security system for the church, renovated our public washrooms, updated our new air handling unit and air conditioning in the hall, updated the emergency lighting and the outdoor lighting for security, renovated the St. Michael hall with new paint and an A/V system, and even completed emergency repairs to the main plumbing system in the rectory. The total of all of these projects (less HST rebates) is $1,745,425. Add our existing debt at the beginning of the campaign and the total amount that has been paid for capital improvements in these 5 years is $1,849,764!

This success is directly attributed to your commitment to invest in our parish home for the long term and your direct generosity. The ‘regular’ Capital Donations for 2018 were $180,521 - an exceptional number as it shows that pledges to the Give to Grow Campaign are still being fulfilled after 4 years. We make special mention of the fact that a significant portion of this success came by ways of a bequest received from the estate of late Agnes Wray McAdam. Ms. McAdam’s love of St. Michael’s was further displayed in her gift of $203,097.

We again need to thank the members of the Give to Grow organizing committee, and all of the parish volunteers who committed themselves to ensuring that this campaign was a great success. We could not have achieved such lofty heights without them. Of course, every donor to the campaign also needs to be thanked, and we are pleased to honour our Archangel and Angel donors on the permanent plaque at the back of the church. Each person, every family who donated to the fund is a very important part of our shared accomplishment. We did it together and we could not have done it without you! Let us not forget the gift of our faith in this result. Because we are a community of believers and because what we do here matters to so many, the fruits of our faith in action are being harvested.

Keep an eye on our video boards for the latest updates on the campaign, as well as information on a future celebration as we achieve this goal! Lastly, please continue to make contributions to the Give to Grow Capital Fund and we thank those for continuing to fulfill their pledges.
Taken from a homily given on the second Sunday of Lent – March 17th, 2019, based on the Gospel of Luke 9:28-36

Back on the second Sunday of Lent and more recently on August 6th, we heard the story of Jesus’ Transfiguration. The Transfiguration of Jesus appears as one of the more unique events in the Gospels. If we read it from face value, there doesn’t seem to be any great or important message from it on the surface. It appears the main thing that comes from this event is the miraculous nature of it. It would seem that there is almost nothing to learn from it. Some people might seem to think that it is simply Jesus showing off His Divine Nature. That might seem out of character for Jesus who never seeks to gain from the power He has. But it is from Jesus showing off His Divinity that we are able to learn something.

One of the most important things to take away from the Transfiguration is the very fact that Jesus does have a great power and that He is something greater than has ever come before. Perhaps the main importance of the event of the Transfiguration can be taken from the voice of God coming from the cloud – “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him!” God Himself tells us that Jesus is not some ordinary man, not a special prophet, not just a guy with a good teaching. Jesus is the Son of God and it is this that sets Him apart from everyone who had come before Him in the Old Testament, and it is that fact that still is having an effect on us today.

In Canada, typically after the homily, we pray the Apostles’ Creed, but for those who have attended Mass in the U.S. or other places, you may have noticed that they will oftentimes pray what is known as the Nicene Creed. This Nicene Creed is a version of our profession of faith that most Christian faiths accept and profess. Within that version of the Creed, as our faith in Jesus is professed, there is one of those big theological words – consubstantial. We say Jesus is consubstantial with the Father, or, put more simply, Jesus is of the same substance as God the Father and this is what really makes Jesus so important to us. Moses and Elijah were both regular human beings – they shared the same substance that we are made of. But because Jesus shares in God’s substance, as well as our own human substance, that means Jesus is something far greater and more important. This is something that has been argued and fought over for centuries. This is something that people have been forced to leave homes for, lost family and friends for, have even been martyred for.

So why does it matter? There are a few more things we can gain from this moment of the Transfiguration to help us understand. Peter, James and John notice that Jesus is standing with Moses and Elijah, and these two figures are telling us something also. Both Moses and Elijah were given a specific mission. They were to bring together God’s chosen people, turn them towards God and then free them from the evil that had been brought upon them. For Moses, he was to free them from their slavery to the Egyptians and Elijah had the role of turning the leadership of Israel back to God when they had turned away and followed other gods. Both Moses and Elijah’s mission were focused on just the Israelites, but through Jesus, God had much bigger plans.

In the text of the Gospel, Jesus is said to be discussing with Moses and Elijah, the “exodus” that Jesus would accomplish at Jerusalem. Oftentimes when we think of an exodus, we think of Moses leading the people out of Egypt. The exodus that Jesus is about to accomplish is that Jesus is about to lead the world out of sin and bring all of God’s people to the Promised Land that is God’s Heavenly Kingdom. And it is this change from “just the Israelites” to “every single human being” that makes Jesus’ work so much more important, so much greater a burden than what had come before.

Both Elijah and Moses suffered a great deal as they sought to bring God’s people out of sin, out of their suffering and back to God. But neither of them died for those sinners. Both did eventually end their mission and die but only after a long life. Jesus, on the other hand, will also suffer for the people of God, but He is prepared to take it even further than Moses and Elijah. Jesus is prepared to take His mission to the Cross, and while other prophets sacrificed a great deal, Jesus would give His very own life, He would give everything that He
had been given by His Father in Heaven and willingly and freely give it up, for people that had not even been born yet. He gives His life for us because we need Him to. He gives His life because He wants to. In the garden before His crucifixion, Jesus asks that if it is possible that He not have to suffer the pain and agony that will come, because His human nature knows it is going to be awful, but because He knows that God His Father needs Him to do it, He does it out of love.

The Transfiguration of Jesus is an opportunity to understand just who exactly Jesus is and why that matters to us. Jesus is God’s Son but He is also God. In all the other covenants that were made throughout the Old Testament, God asked for sacrifices from us, to complete them, just as Abraham was asked to do in the book of Genesis, as Moses told the Israelites to do during their exodus, as the prophets and the Old Testament laws commanded during the time of the Temple. But with Jesus, God has changed things. This time it is God that offers the sacrifice. One of the great problems that occurred before Jesus arrived, was that the sacrifices God asked for were supposed to be perfect, without blemish, but that didn’t always happen. The Israelites were lazy, a little selfish, maybe didn’t want to give up the best things they had. This time, God would make sure that the sacrifice was perfect, by giving it to us so that we couldn’t try and slip something by. That’s why Jesus on the mountaintop is transfigured before Peter, James and John, so that they would be witnesses to who Jesus truly was.

Whenever we gather at Mass, and during the entire Church year, we are always called to remember the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. I encourage you to think about what it says in the Nicene Creed, how it is so focused on making it clear that Jesus is not just some ordinary person but that He is God, that His sacrifice on the Cross is a sacrifice made by God, for us. Whenever we pray that creed, I encourage you to think about what it means for God to sacrifice from Himself for us, that He would give up something as special as His Son for all of us out of His the incredible love that He has for us, and then, keep that thought with you throughout your day, your week, really throughout all your life. Whenever you find yourself in a situation that requires you to sacrifice, remember that God did just that when He sacrificed for us, His Only-Begotten Son on the Cross, and who keeps offering Himself every time we celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice so that just like the Israelites, we can be free from our sin and be brought to a land that flows with the goodness of God.
One may ask himself or herself how powerful the word “YES” might be in one’s life. In our lives as Christians, our memories recall many such “yeses” to God’s call. The Blessed Virgin Mary’s “yes” was the one that opened the way to the conversion of many, now called Christians. I suspect that everyone experiences the outcome of his or her own “yes”. Saint Peter, when asked by Jesus three times if he loved Him, answered: “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” “Feed my lambs,” said Jesus. “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” “Tend my sheep.” Once again, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” For this third time, Peter said: “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep”. After this exchange, Jesus’ last words were: “Follow me.” How many times do we hear this question from the Lord?

As Peter, likewise, Mr. Glen Ball, in his lifetime, responded “YES” to God’s call. Yes, indeed, to feed God’s lambs; yes to tend God’s sheep, and yes to feed God’s sheep. Finally, “yes” to follow the Lord. In the very beginning, it was as though Mr. Glen Ball wanted to avoid hearing this call; he was afraid to take a step further in that direction. But, something was moving, making the call stronger. The vocation to priesthood was on the way. Once working on the farm with a truck, he felt a voice saying: “open yourself to God”. It took a couple of years to build his courage. He was looking for guidance. Once, responding to the Capuchins’ invitation for vocation discernment, he found himself to be the only one who showed up. Born the second of three boys in the family, Mr. Glen Ball obtained a BA in Geology Science before heading to St. Peter’s Seminary with a strong belief that God would provide.

When the Holy Spirit pours His anointing on you, the Pentecost will dwell permanently in your life. It was one Sunday, in the Sacristy at St. Michael’s Parish; a team of Seminarians were vested, and ready to serve. My eyes went around, and on the corner I saw a young man who introduced himself as Glen. And I said “I am Deacon Gaston”. Since then, we knew each other because his team came frequently to St Michael’s. After a Spirit-filled formation at St. Peter’s, Mr. Glen Ball was ordained Transitional Deacon on May 10th, 2016, and one year later, on May 13th, 2017, Deacon Glen Ball was ordained a priest with all faculties by Bishop Ronald Peter Fabbro.

On July 1st, 2017, Fr. Glen started his ministry at St. Michael’s Parish as Parochial Vicar. At the same time, I returned to St Michael’s as Permanent Deacon, from my previous appointment at Ste. Marguerite d’Youville.

Fr. Glen has been a good shepherd to the parishioners of St. Michael’s. Very quickly, he embraced his role in the parish with wisdom, knowledge and openness of heart. Through his different ministries at the Parish and with parishioners, he showed his ability to overcome his fear of public speaking; this showed in his powerful reflections when hearing confessions and in his well-structured and inspired homilies.

Fr. Glen leaves us with a feeling of a quiet man ready to serve, and unwilling to exhibit his internal frustration or anger: a big gift of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Glen’s last words to me were “I have no ambition, and will go where God calls me.” From St. Michael’s, says Fr. Glen, “I will bring knowledge and wisdom as I learned my ministry.”

Dear Fr. Glen, on behalf of the entire St. Michael’s community, I wish you the very best for your ministry. Pray for us. AU REVOIR!
I am currently enrolled in the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry program at St. Peter’s Seminary, and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about it. This three year program is offered for those who are seeking formation and training in ways that will foster and enrich their service in the Roman Catholic Church.

First, a few definitions: pastoral in its original meaning referred to shepherds, and we still call our parish priests Pastors. Pastoral Ministry in this Certificate Program refers to a preparation to assist God’s shepherds in caring for His people and walking alongside them in their Catholic Christian formation. Our formation as individuals is ongoing, even beyond the sacraments, and lasts a lifetime. This Certificate Program encourages and shapes women and men as they journey toward a life of evangelization and pastoral service. This vibrant resource prepares people for work in newly emerging roles for the Diocese’s plan for families of parishes.

This three-year program of study and Christian formation is based on the foundation of the four pillars of Catholic principles that involve the whole person: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. In year one we cover Theological Foundations, year two is devoted to Sacred Scripture and year three is dedicated to Foundations for Ministry. We meet with those preparing for the Permanent Diaconate for ten monthly Saturday sessions from 9:00 am. to 7:30 pm. at St. Peter’s Seminary. Our day commences with prayer, followed by two lectures, noon Mass, three more lectures, evening prayer and an evening formation topic. Seminary staff feed us sumptuously with nourishing, beautifully presented meals and refreshments throughout the day.

The main focal point of the academic sessions can be summed up in my understanding of “covenant”, which was prominent in our family story of the Old Testament. God’s very personal relationship with our ancestors was based on covenants, jointly agreed-upon commitments, where He promised to be the One True God who would be with them always, and they would be His chosen people. Because of Jesus we have a Eucharistic Covenant through His cross, Resurrection and Ascension. Prophets were confusing for me because I thought they predicted the future; not so. They did however, tell the people what would happen if they failed to live up to their covenantal alliance. Prophets, then as now, call us to change and not be passive recipients of a particular religion, but to be proactive co-creators with God. The enduring image and challenge for us today is their call to justice, their vision of a world of freedom for all, and their direct expression of our human need for God.

The Gospels are an outcry for social action which requires an analysis of “see, judge and act”. May we follow so closely in Jesus’ footsteps that we are covered in His dust. The study of the Gospels elevated my grasp of Jesus’ humanity more realistically so that as a disciple I can readily follow Him.

There is another term we hear a great deal: Intentional Disciple. This is an individual who has chosen to make a conscious commitment, a covenant, to follow Jesus in the midst of His Church as an obedient pupil, and to reorder their life accordingly. The humanity of Jesus seems more evident to me now because I can identify with His way of caring, especially to the lowly, the outcast and the forgotten.

The evening formation was primarily a faith-sharing opportunity to continue to enlighten our faith development through a variety of pertinent topics. This opened up some great discussions and encouraged input from other participants’ experiences and wisdom. All of these classes were of value in that they could be used immediately in our respective parishes as we interact with fellow parishioners. The one concern that kept being raised, and certainly this concern is nothing new, is how to get parishioners involved in their own faith development, liturgy and church activity. A few clear points that were evident were the need to have clear, focused objectives, to have manageable goals, and to evaluate the outcome. We must connect with parishioners relationally and learn to delegate and invite shared responsibility to help them live their baptismal grace.

The Mass and evening prayer were gathering moments away from lectures and studious work which allowed some breathing space to recollect oneself and assemble as a family in God’s very presence. Liturgy is the foretaste of the Kingdom, when humanity lives in the way God intended. The parish is a covenant between God and the people and the liturgies are an expression of our need to praise, seek pardon, gain strength and be fed on the Word and the Eucharist.
In May, Debbie Walsh moved to London from Bradford Ontario, a growing community where she lived for the past 28 years and raised her three children.

In her new position as Pastoral Minister, Debbie is responsible for working with the Pastoral Team to develop and support the Liturgical Life of the parish and, through giving public witness, to serve in Christ’s love, which is the Christian mission. Since her arrival, Debbie has embraced her new role with enthusiasm, greeting and meeting parishioners at Masses, the key she believes to building strong relationships and vibrant parish communities.

Debbie, a life-long learner, has been involved in continuing education since 2003. She received a Diploma in Ministry at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. In 2020 she will complete her Pastoral Education Program at the Toronto Centre for Psychotherapy and Counselling Education (TCPCE). Debbie also continues to work on her Master of Arts in Ministry and Spirituality at Regis College. Her 30 years of experience working in healthcare (mostly administration in cancer care), and her passion for palliative care, combined with her role as mother and grandmother, inspired Debbie and ignited her faith journey. Debbie’s 18 years experience in implementing RCIA for adults and children as a team member of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate has also prepared her for coordinating Education and Catechesis in the parish. This experience opened the door to a whole new life for Debbie. The RCIA provided a deeper understanding of baptism and our life in Christ. Journeying with each candidate enabled Debbie to grow in her own faith – a journey she is now continuing with parishioners at St. Michael’s.

Debbie’s extensive experience in compassionate care, counselling and walking with many adults, children and families in faith will greatly assist her to provide Pastoral Services to strengthen and enhance the spiritual life of our parish. Familiar with the challenges, joys and heartaches of family life in today’s world, Debbie recognizes that we live the Paschal mystery and celebrate the Paschal mystery each Sunday when we gather as a community. It is through Scripture and sharing life stories that we come to know one another and share God’s love.

As a member of the Pastoral Team, Debbie meets regularly with team members to discuss goals, objectives and activities affecting parish life. Through integrating her education and spirituality with lived experiences, Debbie is energized and humbled when invited to share the sacred path of life with parishioners. Debbie’s door “is always open” and she encourages us to “drop by”.

St. Michael’s Parish Welcomes Debbie Walsh by Corrie Gicante
Father Pio D’Oria joined St. Michael’s Parish on July 1st 2019, as parochial vicar, coming from St. John the Divine Parish in London, where he was pastor for eight years.

The title “parochial vicar” may be new to some. A parochial vicar is assigned by the bishop to assist the pastor in the care of the faithful. The Code of Canon Law defines the office as follows: “Parochial vicars are priests who render their services in pastoral ministry as co-workers with the pastor in common counsel and endeavour with him and also under his authority” (545.1). Given the size of some parishes, parochial vicars are essential in helping the pastor fulfill his obligations for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parish.

Father Pio was born and raised in London Ontario. His parents John and Angela D’Oria immigrated to Canada from Italy, a few months before he was born, in 1973. He has been blessed with a happy and loving family, including three brothers, Nick, Mike and Rob, their spouses Lina, Vicky and Cristina, and five nephews and three nieces.

If you were wondering about the name Pio, yes, Father was named after St. Padre Pio, as his parents came from the same part of Italy where he lived; a small town called San Giovanni Rotondo. So it was easy when he wanted to become a priest, apparently telling his parents, “you have to let me become a priest because you named me after Padre Pio”!

On his inspiration to become a priest, Fr. Pio states, “I had a sudden conversion to my faith in the fall of 1993. I began to question the meaning of life and what I wanted to really do with my life, so I turned to my Catholic faith for the answers. I began to read the bible, pray and develop a personal relationship with Jesus and Mary. This grew and led me very quickly to desire to become a priest. When I realized that Jesus was truly present in the Eucharist, I had a great desire to share the gift of the Eucharist with others. I was also very inspired by the life of the saints, in particular, learning about my namesake St. Padre Pio.”

Fr. Pio studied for eight years at St. Peter’s Seminary and was ordained on April 27th, 2002, at St. Peter’s Cathedral. He served his first Mass on April 28th, 2002, at St. Mary’s in London. Over the past 17 years he has served as associate pastor in parishes in Windsor, Leamington, London and Stratford. He served for one year as a hospital chaplain at Victoria Hospital, and his most recent role was as pastor of St. John the Divine Parish in London for the last eight years.

He cherishes the eight years at St. Peters Seminary and is particular in noting the importance of the academic aspects of his learning in solidifying his religious vocation and his relationships with his fellow seminarians. He truly enjoyed their company and his interactions with them. He and some of his fellow classmates meet every five years for a week or so in various locations across Canada to relive their lives as seminarians, and to celebrate their lives as priests.

Fr. Pio plans to focus on the traditional role as parochial vicar-assisting Fr. Murray in celebration of the sacraments – baptism, first communion etc., and is especially looking forward to celebrating Mass in the schools in St. Michael’s parish. He states his Catholic faith and his relationship with Jesus is by far the most important thing in his life. He looks forward in the days ahead to getting to know the St. Michael’s community, sharing his faith with them, and he especially looks forward to parishioners sharing their faith with him: “wonderful things happen when faith is shared.”

While he has been with us for only a short while he is already impressed with the large, active faith community at St. Michael’s - both amongst parishioners and staff - and being part of it is an affirmation of his faith journey. Over the past few months many parishioners have had the opportunity to meet Fr. Pio and experience first-hand his deep faith and his engagement with and commitment to serve the St. Michael’s faith community.

Lastly, Fr. Pio enjoys going for long walks, so if you live in the St. Michael’s neighbourhood and see him roaming about, he wants to reassure parishioners that he is not lost.

Welcome Fr. Pio!
At St. Michael’s, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adult (RCIA) process begins when adults express their desire to explore the Catholic faith. Formal inquiry sessions begin this September and will continue throughout the year culminating with the three sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. It is a journey that takes as long as it takes and this depends on the participant in the process. Adults, with their sponsors and RCIA team, meet as a group weekly to explore and deepen their relationship with God through the Holy Spirit at work in their lives. While each has an individual sponsor, we as a parish community live out our baptismal commitment and bear witness to their journey through our presence and prayers. The parish community is an integral part of the initiation process.

The RCIA is not something new. It is a return to the earliest traditions of our Church which took place between the second and the fifth centuries of the Christian era! The RCIA takes place step by step in the midst of the Christian community. The whole community is called to reflect upon the value of their faith, to renew their own conversion, and by their example, to lead those who are searching to be open to the presence of the Spirit in their lives. (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, 2019, RCIA)

The RCIA process has several steps and periods throughout which the inquirer / catechumen discerns their faith journey.

Inquiry: A time to come and see who we are and how we worship as Church. It is a time to ask questions, hear the sacred scripture stories and integrate them into daily life. Many have said they feel like they have found their ‘spiritual home’ as they begin the period of Inquiry. For some individuals this period can take many years and for others it may occur over a much shorter period of time. Individuals come from many backgrounds as they may have been raised without any exposure to Christianity

Catechumenate: An open inquiry time allows us to have a year-round catechumenate. This respects and reflects the truth that the spirit works in each of us in God’s time. During the catechumenate period, church doctrine is explored and what it means to live a Catholic way of life. It is a time to be formed in Word, Prayer, Liturgy and Community and the catechumens are kindly dismissed following the Homily to feast on the Word of God through Breaking Open the Word as the baptised feast at the Eucharistic Table.

Purification and preparation: Begins the first Sunday of Lent with the Rite of Elect. This a more intense period of preparation for the sacraments of initiation. It is an intentional time of practicing the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. While the elect are preparing to meet Christ in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, those already fully initiated are living the season of Lent in the same way, preparing to renew their baptismal promises in the sacred waters of Easter.

Initiation: At the Easter Vigil Mass, one receives the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. For those who have previously been baptized, they will be Confirmed and join all at the Eucharistic Table.

Mystagogy: While it is known as the final period of the initiation process, it is something each of us are called to. It is a time to reflect on the meaning and fullness of each sacrament received and discern how each neophyte (Greek for ‘new plant’) and every fully initiated Catholic is called to live out our role of discipleship. It is a process through which we ask ourselves: What did I see? What did I hear? What does this say about church? What does this say about God? Ongoing mystagogy leads to ongoing conversion in our own lives.

RCIA could not take place without the involvement and commitment of a number of individuals including the RCIA team. The overall role of the RCIA team is to organize and facilitate the many steps that occur during these stages. This includes:

1. Hospitality – to organize and facilitate the sessions which may include bringing in guest speakers, preparing each session, presenting and providing resources.
2. Liturgy Preparation – to work closely with all others involved in the parish’s liturgical celebration.
3. Communication – to coordinate communications with the pastor, parishioners and other parish members, including sponsors and anyone involved helping with the RCIA.
4. Prayer leaders – prepare for and model during sessions the importance of prayer, and the many prayers and types of prayers tied to liturgical feasts and seasons.
5. Overseer Sponsors – the RCIA team may help select and appoint sponsors as well as supporting them also during their catechumens’ journey.
6. Spiritual Direction – some of this Ministry’s leaders may be able to offer spiritual direction or in some cases refer catechumens to others in the parish or community who can provide this support.

In RCIA, sponsors come from our parish. They journey with the candidates in their faith discernment process.
They provide companionship, guidance and an open ear while offering an understanding of the Catholic faith and most importantly, the role of prayer.

The journey allows the candidate to explore and temper their commitment until the Rite of Election, on the first Sunday of Lent when the candidates are presented to the Bishop and sign their names in the Book of Elect. This Rite that takes place at the Cathedral affirms it is God who calls these individuals to the waters of Baptism at the Easter Vigil. Called by God, affirmed by those who have been journeying with them in faith, the elect as well as the Church have committed to the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. This past year, St. Michael’s saw twelve candidates journey through the RCIA process under the leadership of Angie MacEachern, Yana Adkinson, Rick Townend and Anne Coelho from our parish as well as being assisted by two seminarians from St. Peter’s Seminary, Damian Frederick and Carlos Diaz.

This faith journey is a beautiful blessing. If any parish member would like to be a sponsor next year for one of our RCIA candidates, please call the parish office and ask to speak with Debbie. It is an excellent way to be involved here at St. Michael’s, to answer Pope Francis’ call to be “evangelizers” and to renew your own faith.

Youth Ministry
“All who believed were together and had all things in common.” (- Acts 2:44)

For the past eight years, the Diocese of London has been actively working to prepare for the future. Following the outcome of a 2011 report commissioned to review numerous pieces of data such as finances and demographics, concerns continue to grow regarding the availability of parish priests in the coming years. In 2014, this report resulted in Bishop Fabbro’s appointment of a Task Force, which was asked to address two issues: firstly, how best to become “mission-oriented” parishes, and secondly, how to develop a parish model that accommodated the decline in the number of priests.

One recommendation of the Task Force was to adopt a “Family of Parishes” model, and in May 2017, Bishop Fabbro announced that the two “pioneer” Families of Parishes would be developed by January 2018, namely, Catholic Family of Parishes in Norfolk, and Chatham Catholic Family of Parishes.

We are calling these groupings a “Family of Parishes”. In a way this name is very apt, illustrating as it does the main work of every parish community. Like a family, a parish is bound together in a communion; and like a family that teaches and models a life a service, a parish is a spiritual home that forms disciples to go out into the world.

(Bishop Fabbro’s Introductory Handout, Family of Parishes Model, June, 2015)

In May 2018, A Diocesan Commission named “Equipping the Saints for Ministry: The Diocesan Commission for the Families of Parishes” was formed. It has since been working diligently to continue bringing this model to life. The Commission has endeavoured to align this model with our Pastoral Plan, and in particular, the principal belief that every one of us should be evangelizers of our faith.

What does a parish family look like? First, it is comprised of the pastor, and leader, of the family of parishes, who oversees the other priests and the pastoral team. This model hopefully also includes a second and possibly third priest to assist with these duties. Some parish families may have permanent deacons, a parish life coordinator or a pastoral minister, but these roles will be determined by the leaders of these families and reflect the needs of their parishes. However, what they will share in common is their call to be an “evangelizing community”, abiding by our Holy Father’s call for us to be “agents of evangelization”, and to actively and prayerfully reach out to our community, especially the poor and vulnerable. A full diocese-wide integration will take place over time. Until then, we will learn a great deal from the first two families and their feedback. Those in Chatham and Norfolk are truly the forerunners of this new model for our diocese and we spoke to two of those individuals who have been involved in this transition, asking them to share their thoughts.

“I have been privileged to have been on the ground level of the Family of Parishes in Chatham, with the Pastor Fr. Jim Higgins, to make this vision a reality. With a combination of direction and collaboration, it has been a positive experience especially when we witness parishioners attending different Mass times at different churches within the family, and the various events held within the parishes. The Catholic idea of the common good starts to take place. Are there challenges to overcome? Sure, especially when it comes to adjusting Mass times that provide for the families’ common good, but it works with the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

- Fr. Don Pumputis

“To prepare seminarians for the upcoming Families of Parishes in the Diocese of London, the seminary has encouraged us to lead in a manner that fosters working relationships with our parish staff and parishioners through communication and collaboration. As we move towards changes as a diocese, I am confident that my priestly formation, guided by Bishop Fabbro, has equipped me to help meet the needs of my future parishioners and to form disciples of Jesus Christ.”

- Deacon Rob Renaud

While some of our Family of Parishes are underway, all parishes have been assigned to their grouping or “family”, and are encouraged by Bishop Fabbro to begin their partnerships and “undertake a project of mission beyond the family, one that all parishes can share in equally – a project that is outward focused toward the larger Church or larger community, a project that benefits others beyond the parishioners of the parishes involved”. (Growing Together as Families of Parishes, June 2017). We are all disciples of Jesus and this new model provides an ideal platform on which to collaborate our efforts beyond the “bricks and mortar” of our parish buildings and share the Good News.
Earlier this year, the Notre-Dame Cathedral fell victim to a major fire which left the main spire and the roof almost completely destroyed, and caused serious damage to the interior. Right now, the French government is trying to get the cathedral restored within five years, a schedule that some have said is unrealistic.

This isn’t the first time Notre-Dame has needed major work. Commissioned in 1160 under Bishop Maurice de Sully, the cathedral wouldn’t be officially completed until 1345, almost two centuries after it was started. Over the years it became an icon of French architecture with its two massive towers, giant stained glass windows and ten massive bronze bells. In the almost seven hundred years since then, it hasn’t always been as cherished as it is today. During the French Revolution, most of the cathedral’s statues were destroyed and most of its treasures stolen. Following the Napoleonic Wars, Notre-Dame was left in such a state of disrepair that the city of Paris was planning to just demolish it.

In 1831, the same year the sacristy was looted and a number of stained glass windows were destroyed, Notre-Dame was saved by an unlikely ally. This was the year novelist Victor Hugo, who had a lot of love for the cathedral, wrote his famed novel, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, in hopes of saving it from being torn down. The novel’s massive success renewed interest in Notre-Dame, and in 1844, King Louis-Philippe commissioned a restoration of the church that would take twenty years to complete.

Since then, there have been a number of restorations and repairs to the building. Several pieces of medieval stained glass were destroyed during World War II, and had to be replaced. In 1963, the entire exterior was cleaned of centuries of built up soot and grime. In 1991, another decade-long restoration of the exterior began to repair the erosion damage caused by air pollution. This pollution damage had caused a number of gargoyles and other decorations to come loose and fall off during the 1980s.

The outpouring of support for restoring Notre-Dame after the fire has reminded us of some important things we need to remember. Our churches, big and small, centuries old or brand new, are our responsibility and we need to take care of them. A church may be a house of God, but without a congregation to support it, it will decay just like any other building. From massive works like the restoration of the Sistine Chapel to much smaller jobs like the roof here at St. Michael’s, it’s the support of the Catholic community and its congregations that keep these churches alive and vibrant.
Inspired by the Holy Father’s 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si [Praise Be To You], The Catholic Women’s League of Canada has chosen Care for Our Common Home as its national theme. In 2019, the CWL’s aim is to raise member awareness on ways to protect water. Pope Francis calls us all to an “‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us]. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”

Unfortunately, we see the evidence of the destruction of God’s handiwork all about us. On the news and in documentaries, there are disturbing reports of plastic waste in our oceans and lakes. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an island of waste three times the size of France, is just one of three trash patches circulating through the world’s oceans. Closer to home, the Alliance for the Great Lakes reports that more than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes each year. This plastic breaks down into smaller particles called microplastic, which never go away. Instead, they end up in the drinking water of 40 million people.

We could feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem, but, as Pope Francis reminds us, “there is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.”

The CWL is working at all levels to answer the Pope’s call to care for our common home, and we at St. Michael’s are inviting parishioners to do the same. At the national level, the CWL has enacted a number of environmental resolutions such as the 2018 resolution, Setting a Standard for Products Marked as Flushable, and the 2004 resolution, Water Use in Canada.

At the parish level, at St. Michael’s, we are implementing practical solutions to environmental concerns. Our parish kitchen invested in dishware, glassware and cutlery for parish events in order to avoid the use of throw-away products.

This spring the CWL ran a successful water conservation project. Members were challenged to monitor and curb home water usage through some simple changes such as: keeping a jug of tap water in the fridge for drinking and refilling reusable water bottles, turning off the tap while brushing teeth and washing hands, and using short cycles for laundry/dishwasher and running them only when full.

Tallies were totalled at the end of one month and an estimated 7,395 gallons of water would be saved over one year among members, who also noted savings on their water bills.

What can we do on an individual level? Every individual effort, every “little daily action” to curb the overuse of plastic helps. The first step is awareness. As we look around our homes we can identify unnecessary plastic containers and products we use. Then we can begin to search for alternatives. Household plastic is a relatively new invention, but one which is destroying our environment. What can we use instead? Glass, paper, and cloth are all examples of re-usable materials. Can
Please join us in the parish hall for
St. Michael’s Christmas Bazaar
Saturday, November 16th
from 9:30am - 3:00 pm.
You’ll find a wonderful selection of
Christmas gifts, crafts and baking.
Help support St. Michael’s
Social Outreach Programs.

Volunteers (Elves) needed for
Christmas Bazaar! Can you knit,
crochet or sew? Do you bake or
make preserves or candy? Are you
crafter or woodworker? Want to help
on the day? Contact Karen Owens at
owensk@rogers.com for further information.

A prayer for recycling

Father, we thank you for the resources of the world,
and for the many goods available to us.
Grant us wisdom and restraint in our spending and
consumption; grant us inspiration in the re-use and recycling
of resources. Bless those who collect our waste and those who
work to recycle it.
In your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Source: Diocese of Newcastle

Protect Our Water - You Can Help (continued)

we become more consistent in our recycling practices?
The three Rs: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, are familiar
to us. Can we begin to practise the two additional Rs of
repurpose and refuse? We are reminded in Laudato Si
that “purchasing is always a moral – and not simply an
economic act”, and that today, “the issue of environmental
degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle”. If we
create a critical mass of engaged citizens who are finding
alternatives to household plastic use, we can make a real
difference in how products are packaged and we can tame
the overuse of plastics in our domestic environments.
The environmental threats to our water supply
may seem insurmountable, but we shouldn’t give up
hope. Other environmental problems have been solved
through technological advances and combined personal
and governmental action. Lakes destroyed by acid rain
are beginning to thrive again, and the UN reports that
the ozone layer is gradually healing itself thanks to the
banning of harmful CFCs used in aerosols and coolants.
By working together to answer Pope Francis’ call for an
ecological conversion to care for God’s handiwork and
our common home, we can save our water too.

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ecological conversion to care for God’s handiwork and
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Stay informed and in
Touch! Subscribe to our
NewsLetter online!
stmichaelslondon.ca
Parish Photos
Parish Information

St. Michael’s Parish, 511 Cheapside St., London, ON N5Y 3X5
Phone: 519-433-6689
E-mail: stmichlon@dol.ca • www.stmichaelslondon.ca
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Masses
Saturday: 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m.

Weekday Masses
Tuesday & Thursday: 12:00 noon
Wednesday & Friday: 8:00 a.m.
Saturday: 9:00 a.m.

African Caribbean Catholic Community Mass
(St. Josephine Bakhita)
4th Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Free Bus Service to 10:30 a.m. Mass
The route . . .
9:35 a.m. (new time)
- 64 Wyndham
- Blackwater east of Adelaide - bus stop
- Grenfell just east of Blackwater
- Fanshawe/Trossacks - bus stop on corner
- 770 Fanshawe Park Rd east of Fremont - bus stop
- Fanshawe Park Road - west of Fremont
- Adelaide/Fanshawe - bus stop south of Fanshawe
- Kipps Lane/Adelaide - bus shelter just east of Adelaide
- Kipps Lane/Barker
- Kipps Lane - bus stop east of Barker
- Kipps Lane/Kenmore Place - bus stop
- 295 Briarhill
- Cheapside/Boullee
- Huron Street - bus stop east of Wedgewood Drive
10:15 a.m.
- Royal Oak Apartments - 3 stops
go to St. Michael’s Church

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

Pastoral Team
Father Murray Sample, Pastor
msample@dol.ca ext. 202
Father Pio D’Oria, Parochial Vicar
pdoria@dol.ca ext. 306
Deacon Gaston Mabaya, Deacon
gmabaya@dol.ca
Debbie Walsh, Pastoral Minister
dwalsh@dol.ca ext. 203
Sylvain Patry, Coordinator of Youth Ministry
spatry@dol.ca ext. 206

Staff
Doug Manners, Business Administrator
dmanners@dol.ca ext. 205
Mary Egan, Parish Secretary
stmichlon@dol.ca ext. 201
Jolanda Squire, Administrative Assistant
jsquire@dol.ca ext. 208
Laszlo Molnar, Custodian/Hall Manager
lmolnar@dol.ca ext. 210

Parish Council Chairperson
Gerarda Smith-Hillier

Children’s Ministries
Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass
Liturgy of the Word: Age 4-9
Sunday School: Aged 3 to Grade 1
Babysitting: Infants to age 3

Calendar of Events
Confirmation Parent Meeting Sept 25
First Reconciliation Parent Meeting Sept 26
Feast of St. Michael Sept 28/29
Children Initiation Parent Meeting Sept 12
Thanksgiving Mass - 9 am Oct 14
Ministry Fair Weekend Oct 19/20
Mass of Healing Nov 12
Christmas Bazaar Nov 16
All Day Confessions Dec 18