



Divine Infant Parish

Annual Report

June 2020



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Pastor's Message

“A Church which is family is also able to show the closeness and love of a father ... a Church of children who see themselves as brothers and sisters, will never end up considering anyone simply as a burden, a problem, an expense, a concern or a risk. Other persons are essentially a gift, and always remain so, even when they walk different paths. The Church is an open house, far from outward pomp, hospitable in the simplicity of her members. ... This Church can indeed light up the darkness felt by so many men and women. She can credibly point them towards the goal and walk at their side, precisely because she herself first experienced what it is to be endlessly reborn in the merciful heart of the Father.”

Pope Francis

Dear Friends in Christ,

I invite you to read this year's Annual Parish Report through the prism of this beautiful term, FAMILY. This difficult time of pandemic challenged us all to stay connected, to truly remain together and united. Even though this report is mainly for the year 2019, many ministries chose to include the time of Covid-19 pandemic. They stayed active and very much “connected” in so many ways: through on-line activities, social media, phone, trying to reach out to others to keep our Parish Family together and strong.

I'd like to thank everyone for being so great and so dedicated. Our every ministry and parish group is a true gift and a blessing to all of us, always giving so much with completely selfless love. God Bless you for that!

This report, given our present situation, is another way and an opportunity for all of us to stay connected, and to truly remain a FAMILY. Dear Friends, let us continue to keep each other in our prayers and don't forget to reach out to your brothers and sisters. Our parish is not only what you can see outwardly but also what you carry with you in your hearts.

In Christ

Fr. Waldemar Podlasz SDS
Pastor



Pastoral Council

Alisa Valks, Leader

Throughout this year, the Pastoral Council has continued to work with the priorities and goals outlined in the Pastoral Plan. A number of initiatives continued to be worked on collectively as a parish, which demonstrated the fruit of the efforts over the last few years for parish ministries to work together for common goals. In particular, the publication of a Parish Pamphlet that outlined a general year-long overview of parish events was due to be printed the week that the COVID-19 Pandemic closed down our city.

We are blessed to have a vibrant parish with so many diverse ministries that come together for the common mission to bring everyone closer together and closer to God, in the spirit of faith, service and community.

I would like to thank this year's Pastoral Council members for their great efforts and dedication to the parish. The members include: Fr. Waldemar (Pastor), Fr. Anthony Nwaohiri (Associate Pastor), Deacon Gerry Panes, Jeff Orser, Nathan Walker, Laura Kiraly and Cynthia Kearns-O'Hara.

As representatives of the parish, we are here to help serve the parish in the best way possible. Please contact any of the members for any concerns or ideas and we are committed to assisting in any way we can.

Finance Council

Dcn. Jeff Le Bane, Parish Manager, Susan Galarneau, Chair

The Finance Council is an advisory body to the pastor. Its responsibilities include attending to the temporal affairs of the parish, developing administrative and financial policies, and ensuring the proper maintenance of the parish complex. It consists of the Pastor, a Chairperson and five members as well as ex-officio members such as the Associate Pastor and the Parish Manger. Over the past year, the Chair had agreed to a one year extension to her term.

Earlier this year, Terry Bolduc, one of our members passed away. Colleagues on the Council remember her with much affection for her dedication, knowledge and skills she brought to meetings. Terry will be sorely missed as we seek to identify a replacement.

While the 2019 fiscal year ended in a fully satisfactory financial position for the parish, current in all its payments and the transfer to the Archdiocese of all diocesan ordered collections through the year, there were many challenges that had to be met. Because a tax exemption had not been approved by the Archdiocese for the 2018 Renovations Fund Campaign given new guidelines in place, all donations received were taxable. This resulted in the parish having to pay just over \$102,000 in taxes in 2019. This was a very heavy burden for the parish. Normally payment would have been made on a quarterly basis but given the amounts, we had to make almost monthly payments. A second major factor was the large increase in cost of insurance coverage for the Church. This was not unexpected as the Archdiocese had provided advance knowledge to parishes over the previous two years, but this was the first year it was in full effect. Then, there were several occurrences that could not be foreseen but had to be dealt with immediately to ensure the well-being of the parish complex. These included: repair to the cupola that had been damaged by a tornado, replacement of a parish furnace and an air-conditioner. While our insurance policy covered the repair work necessary to the cupola, the deductible was significant.

Some of these heavy financial expenditures were mitigated by benefit of the rental agreement the parish had signed with TELUS, which provides for a regular 3% increase in the annual growth of rental income. This was further enhanced late last year when TELUS provided the parish with a one- time back payment

Because of the need to replace our much used old tractor, approval was sought from the Archdiocese to purchase a new tractor, through a parish fund raiser. The Archdiocese fully approved our submission, including a tax exemption for all donations received. With approval to run the campaign through November 15, the target was reached early in the month and the parish was able to purchase a Kubota all seasons tractor, with extra implements that in the long term will reduce property maintenance expenditures.

Cash on hand at the end of 2019 was \$58,656.77. Deposits to the Diocesan Loan Fund totalled \$145,988.29. Receivables for deposit amounted to \$5,222.29. Parish Equity as of December 31, 2019 totalled \$209,868.35.

Summary of 2019 Renovations and Major Projects

Annual cleaning and restoration work to the complete parish facility

Repair work to the sound system

Enhanced LED lighting in the Church interior

Repair work to the Church cupola as a result of the tornado

Repair work to the Church pews

Purchase of new, Kubota all seasons tractor

Purchase and installation of a new furnace

Purchase and installation of a new air conditioner

Liturgy Committee

Marilyn Geis, Chair

The Liturgy Committee are the ones who work closely with the Pastor and Clergy to bring together the various parts required to mould each liturgical celebration into an act of worship by Christians gathered to celebrate the mystery of Christ.

The Liturgy Committee is comprised of Children's Liturgy, Music, Altar Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors, Ushers and Sacristans. Leaders of each ministry have submitted individual annual reports as shown on the following pages.

Ushers/Greeters

Stephane Therrien, Leader

At every Mass the ushers are there to greet the people and assist them in finding seats. They also help when someone becomes ill or needs special assistance. Ushers work from a schedule so that they do not have to be on duty every weekend, but because of a shortage of volunteers this is not always possible.

There is a real shortage of ushers at all Masses and volunteers would be most welcome. During the Covid-19 pandemic it was necessary to ask for additional volunteers to help with ushering so that it would be possible for the church to reopen and adhere to the restrictions of spacing and other special requirements.

*"Be the reason someone feels welcomed,
valued, loved and supported."*

(Anonymous)

Children's Liturgy

Debbie Olsheskie, Leader

Children's Liturgy is held during the 9:30 am Mass on Sundays from September until June. There is no Children's Liturgy on the first Sunday of each month as the Knights of Columbus host their monthly breakfast.

We follow the same liturgy as the grownups do but in children's language and we encourage the children to participate. The children celebrate the Word of God through song, skits, crafts, discussions and kindness.

DO GOOD BE GOOD! Keep Jesus in your hearts. Instead of a traditional Halloween party we celebrated All Souls/All Saints with games, trivia and a luncheon. For thanksgiving the children wore the traditional pilgrim hats and we discussed the first thanksgiving where pilgrim families and indigenous families joined together to give thanks to God for the great harvest.

Christmas Eve the children presented the Nativity with beautiful voices from Divine Infant Choir. We are so fortunate to have a group of parents so committed in helping to make sure we can present the Nativity each year.

Some of the children put on a skit about an apple tree who wanted to be a star. In the end the apple tree saw that she had many stars - Jesus blessed the apple tree with many apples and when one fell off the tree and spit open the apple tree could see the star in the apple. We have a lot of stars in our Children's Liturgy group.

We had so much planned and then the doors to our beautiful church were locked. A share the bowl day was planned (learn about poverty around the world), a special tea to celebrate the gift of mothers, a puppet show explaining Holy Week and the meaning behind Easter. The Easter Egg Hunt did not take place so we will just have it next year. I must admit that being able to attend Mass and seeing the children is the best part of Sunday. We have just postponed everything.

I have continued planning for next year and I am doing a lot of practise with puppets and I can hardly wait to introduce my new friends to the children. The puppets are excited to talk to the children about a treasure chest we all have - the treasure chest in Heaven where we can keep treasures that last forever. There are also a few puppets who are excited to talk about the last train to Heaven - will we be ready when the call comes: "All Aboard."

Children's Liturgy wouldn't be possible without Matthew, Louise, Lynn, Renee, Maria and Joel. We are very fortunate to have their help each week and I look forward to seeing them all again soon. High fives to all of them and also to the parents who help each week.



Children's Liturgy
Christmas Pageant

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

Diane LeBlanc, Leader

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, also commonly referred to as Communion Ministers, distribute the Body of Christ with dignity and humility. They assist the celebrant Priest in serving communion at regular weekend masses, daily masses, and on special occasions. New and returning ministers are commissioned, under the authority of the Archbishop, each fall during weekend masses.

Currently, there are approximately 55 devoted volunteers assisting in this most important ministry. Schedules are prepared well in advance by dedicated coordinators for each of the five weekend masses. A strong, consistent core of ministers is necessary to meet the needs of special occasions such as Christmas and the Easter Triduum.

The number of Eucharistic Ministers varies at times due to individuals entering or leaving the ministry. As well, summer months and other Holiday periods throughout the year often present a challenge to insure a full complement of Ministers at each mass. New Ministers are ALWAYS welcome.

This is truly a ministry of love and a blessing for all who are a part of it.

Lector/Reader Ministry

Kres Jadan, Leader

The Lector ministry is made up of approximately 69 individuals who are all lay persons. The lectors are responsible for reading the Word of God (the first and second readings and the prayers of the faithful) at Mass. Lectors are also responsible for reading the opening announcement and occasionally reading the psalms if no choir is present. In addition, the Lectors will either read or assist the priests in reading special readings on Church feast days such as Easter and Christmas. Direction and instruction is also received from the priests and deacons.

The parish assists the Lectors in their work by providing materials such as instruction manuals and missals which the lectors use in preparation for the readings and also to hone their craft. The lectors generally meet in plenary about once a year at a workshop that Father usually attends. The workshop offers the opportunity for the entire parish lector team to discuss and contemplate the meaning of the Lector ministry and to refine and improve the finer points of its responsibility that stems from the unique setting of our particular church. It also provides an opportunity to train new lectors and update everyone on new changes in procedures.

The parish lector ministry is divided into sub-teams for each of the Sunday Masses. Each Sunday Mass has a coordinator that handles the scheduling of readers for their specific Mass. The parish coordinator interacts with all the teams and relays instructions and messages from Father. Weekday masses do not have specific coordinators and the readings are performed on an ad-hoc basis by parishioners who volunteer on the day of the Mass. However, a couple of weekday Masses do use schedules for lectors and communion ministers. The Sacristan of the day coordinates scheduling for weekday Masses.

Those who have the privilege and honour of being a lector take great care in discharging their responsibilities and are thankful for having the opportunity to do so. The lector team's membership is constantly changing as people move in and out of the parish. As a result the ministry is always looking for dedicated new members who wish to give of their talents to the whole Parish.

Sacristans

Marilyn Geis, Leader

Sacristans arrange the books needed for the proclamation of the Word and the presider's prayers, set out the chalice, paten, cruets, bowl, altar linens, hosts and altar wine. Doors must be unlocked, altar and chair cloths appropriate to the liturgical season or feast day are laid out, lights and the sound system turned on, and candles filled and lit. To do this they usually arrive almost an hour before Mass begins.

During special celebrations such as Christmas or Easter, extra diligence is necessary to ensure that everything goes as it should. At funerals, daily Masses, and sometimes when altar servers are not available, sacristans must not only see to the preparations for the Mass but also act as altar servers.

At present we have 16 sacristans to cover the 5 weekend Masses as well as the daily Masses. There are 4 of these sacristans who help with funerals as needed. These same sacristans also volunteer for extra week-day Masses during Advent or Lent. A new sacristan has joined our ranks, but more sacristans would be welcome for replacements for those who must be absent or retire from the ministry due to personal circumstances.

Altar Servers

Blessilda Donoghue, Leader

The Altar Server ministry continues to be a special and fulfilling ministry for our youth who participate. Our heartfelt prayer is that through this ministry, all our servers grow in love of their neighbour and in their relationship with God.

Altar Serving remains an important ministry and an integral part of liturgies (from Sunday Masses to First Communions and Confirmations, to weddings etc.) at our parish. We are very pleased to report that we continue to grow in numbers with children ranging in age from the elementary grades through high school. We hope to continue expanding in numbers.

The Altar Server Mass coordinators are:

- Michele Hollick 17:00 mass
- Angela Kuntz 10:00 mass
- Anna Thompson 11:15 mass
- Christie Charles/Blessilda 18:30 mass

We are still looking for a volunteer to coordinate the 08:00 mass.

Victoria Pusiak continues to support this ministry by coordinating the Altar Server requirements in regards to First Communions and Confirmations.

We had our first thank you luncheon for the altar servers last February. We had a wonderful time having pizza and watching a movie together. The event was enjoyed by all. We are hoping to have this Thank You event next year.

Parish and Community Life

Marilyn Geis, Leader

The Parish and Community Life team was not required to look after any events this year as some groups look after their own events. This team does, however, ensure that the kitchen is always well stocked with supplies for the various groups to use at their meetings or get-togethers. When things return to normal after the current pandemic is over, we will once again resume our hospitality role.

RCIA/RCIT

Dcn. Jeff Le Bane, Leader

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – RCIA

Rite of Christian Initiation for Teens - RCIT

The RCIA and RCIT programs prepare adults and teens to join the Church's community of worship through the three sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

But ultimately RCIA and RCIT are an experience of a deepening relationship with God the Father, his only Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. These programs are an opportunity to discover the deep richness of the Catholic faith. They explore and explain faith, scripture, prayer, the sacramental life of the Church, our relationship with Mary and the Saints, the meaning of the Mass and much more. They introduce the treasures of tradition and touch on social justice issues which remain as deeply relevant today as they ever were. They develop a sense of what it means to live as a Christian in the world today.

Weekly RCIA sessions normally begin in September. A shorter program of RCIT sessions begins a few months later. The three sacraments of initiation are normally received at the Easter Vigil, and full preparation for life in the Church completed a few weeks later.

The schedule for 2020 has been severely disrupted, however, by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our current RCIA family of two adults and four children have nonetheless completed most of their program. They were able to complete the Rite of Acceptance and the Rite of Election, two preliminary rites leading up to being fully received into the Church. They are now looking forward to completing their RCIA and RCIT journey of faith as soon as possible after churches have reopened.

In the meantime, the RCIA and RCIT programs continue to welcome new enquiries from anyone who is actively considering becoming fully Catholic. Anyone simply seeking more information should also be encouraged to contact us. In addition, we would like to hear from anyone interested in volunteering as an RCIA/RCIT team member for the coming year.

Baptism Ministry

Linda Moyle, Leader

The Baptism Team is made up of 4 sub-teams. The Presentation Sunday Team has 2 members assisted by Dcn. Steve Donoghue. The Parent Gathering Team has 4 members and Dcn. Steve is the Spiritual Leader. Baptismal Team 1 consists of 4 members while Baptism Team 2 has 3 members.

During the year there were 19 ceremonies held and 70 baptisms took place. These were mostly babies, but they also included 16 school age children and one private baptism. Our volunteers work hard to ensure that baptismal ceremonies and meetings during the year are the happy and reverent occasions that they should be.

Marriage Preparation

Deacon. Mike and Josiane Seguin

For the past three years we have been following the “Marriages for Mary” format with our marriage preparation program.

Both my wife and I have been actively involved in this ministry during the virus lockdown period. We facilitate online courses via ZOOM for couples from throughout the diocese. We typically have five couples for each session,

The course revolves around preparing the couples for real life difficulties and how to deal with those situations through a Sacramental approach.

We have seen conversions to Christ during many of these sessions, where the young couples encounter the truth about Christ and are asked to open their heart to the Lord.

Truly the Lord is blessing this ministry of love.

Money Counters

Raymond Ouimet, Leader

Over the past year, our parish has benefitted from a dedicated team of money counters who meet every Sunday morning to count the previous week’s collection and prepare the parish’s bank deposit.

The team consists of a coordinator and three team captains who each supervise a group of four to five members. These members are scheduled on a bi-monthly basis. Many of them volunteer on multiple teams, and we have a few husband/wife tandems.

This past year has been a challenging one for this ministry as some of our experienced volunteers have had to step down, but a recent recruitment campaign has been very successful and we have a good complement of volunteers again. We always welcome new members.

Library

Nina Regimbald, Leader

The Divine Infant Library resource collection consists of a wide variety of subjects with more than 2000 titles. The online library catalog continues to be available to reserve a book, CD, or DVD. There are many Biographies, books for Children & Young Adults, books on Prayer, on Mary and Jesus, Spiritual Healing & Spiritual Life, Papal documents, Faith Development, the Catholic Church, Sacraments, Liturgy, Theology, and so much more. Hundreds of new and used books, DVDs and CDs have been generously donated and continue to grow this parish resource.

Library Services is dedicated to proactively providing Divine Infant Parishioners of all ages with comprehensive faith building reference and general interest material.

We are seeking volunteers to join us to reach the library goal of remaining open Saturday's after 5pm Mass and after each Mass on Sunday (closed during summer months). Thank you to Jennifer Goldstone for her ongoing support. All volunteers are welcome to assist with library services, kindly drop by and speak to us after mass or please email us at:

dilibraryservices@gmail.com.

Sacramental Preparation

Victoria Pusiak, Leader

The year of perfect vision 20/20 has been a year to remember for sure. Like most ministries in the parish, all was halted in March with a hope for things to resume in a near future. We could not, nor did not, realize the extent of this pandemic and how dearly it would impact our well thought out and scheduled plans but most importantly, our own relationship and love of the Father and reception of the Holy Eucharist.

The First Eucharist families began preparation in October. Preparation is:

- In the school classroom as part of the grade 2 curriculum
- In the church with some Wednesday night preparation meetings, (with instruction from Fr. Waldemar), an enrollment ceremony and multiple supports, events from the parish for families
- At home with their families working through the assignments and parish provided workbooks

This is a true triangle of preparation. I liken the triangle approach to preparation as a stool, a stool cannot stand on one leg, even two, however, with three legs to support the stool, it provides a sturdy and solid foundation. I see this same sturdy and solid foundation being given to our students.

We celebrated First Reconciliation in January and early February. We were blessed to have 6 to 7 priests available to hear the children's First Reconciliation and were able to allow parents to also receive Reconciliation, providing witness to their children of God's unfailing mercy and forgiveness available to all of us.

We were also pleased to welcome into the faith 8 school age children in baptism and another 4 through a profession of faith. This is for those students who were baptized in a recognized valid Christian faith and have converted to Catholicism, one of the parents must be a Catholic for the profession of faith to occur.

We have 151 students eagerly waiting for the day when they can receive their First Eucharist.

Confirmation

We have 135 candidates registered for Confirmation.

Our preparation includes the preparation in the classroom by the grade 6 teachers following the curriculum, culminated with visits to the classroom and presentations by Fr. Anthony and rounded off with assignments and parish hosted gatherings and retreats, enrollment Masses and youth group.

Although we were unable to formally complete the preparation for Confirmation we will develop a schedule to assist with the remaining instruction and allow the opportunity for the candidates to continue to grow in love and understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit they will soon undoubtedly receive.

Some students completed a patron saint project at school to submit to the parish while others took the time of isolation to work on this project. The students enjoyed a Confirmation retreat at the parish and were presented with a Mass journal at the enrollment ceremony to journal their thoughts as they pray and listen during Mass.

When things began to close, Fr. Waldemar and Fr. Anthony sent a letter to all the students who are preparing for the sacraments providing information and encouragement.

The Archbishop also sent a letter and a video message to the sacramental preparation students which we happily shared with the schools and families.

I would like to take this time to personally thank our Pastor, Fr. Waldemar and our associate Pastor Fr. Anthony for the care, support and guidance they provide to our students of all ages. Their example of love, kindness, patience and understanding are a testament to all the Lord has to offer to us.

We are also so very grateful to all our principals and teachers who gently guide and nurture the students in faith and for so readily welcoming us in their classrooms.

A special appreciation to Natalie Desjardins and Vicki Bell who selflessly give of their time to instruct the students of our parish program, we are so very grateful to you for sharing your gifts with the parish children.

A thank you to Suzanne Chamberlain who assists me in the office when needed. Thank you for being the second set of eyes J

To all that help to make this ministry so enriching and vibrant, I thank you. Although we do not know when we will be able to celebrate and share in these important sacraments we do know these children's hearts are longing to grow closer to our Lord.

The desire to receive Holy Eucharist and to be strengthened in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are with all of us, please continue to pray for these young Catholics that they may be able to fully enjoy these gifts very soon.

Youth Ministry

Hunter Langill and Fernanda Cano, Leaders

Hello whomever is reading this, we hope that you are doing well given these strange times. Fernanda Cano and myself (Hunter Langill) are the youth coordinators here at Divine Infant and we would like to give you an update of what we have been up to this past year. Due to COVID-19 we cannot meet as a youth group in person anymore unfortunately, however we have still been able to meet in smaller groups virtually on a weekly basis with some of our youth. This has been a tremendous joy and blessing.

We have as well been running a weekly online youth night in conjunction with NET Canada every Friday night on NET Canada's Instagram and YouTube. Before COVID-19 pandemic occurred we were running a junior youth group for grades 6-8 every Friday night and a senior youth group for grades 9-12. In total we had around 45 youth attending our youth nights! Hopefully we will be able to return to in-person youth nights in the fall, however we still are cherishing the moments we have been given to invest and spend time with our youth through different means than we are used to, but through God equally impactful!

God Bless and stay safe! Hunter and Fernanda

*"I plead with you!
Never, ever give up on hope.
Never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged.
Be not afraid.*

(St. John Paul II)

Divine Infant Choirs

Maureen Ahern, Leader

The Children's Choir has had a great 2019-20 up to the point of the shutdown due to Covid 19. We had been singing regularly at the 9:30 am Mass each Sunday and held a rehearsal every Thursday evening from 6:15-7:15 pm. Prior to Advent, we had taken on a few extra events. First, we sang for the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass in November, followed shortly thereafter by our participation in ChoirFest 2019 which occurred on the first Sunday of Advent. Our children rose to the challenge for both occasions in both attendance and in the quality of their singing. Another highlight of the fall has been that we have had the time and the talent to begin to sing harmony in some songs, which adds a new complexity and level of interest for the children in their singing. I have been very proud of the commitment of the children in the choir, and have been very fortunate and thankful to have families that are so committed to having their children involved and out singing at rehearsals and at Masses so regularly!

The Adult Choir has been very active also during 2019-20 up to the point of the shutdown due to Covid 19. We sang regularly at the 11:15 am Masses on Sunday with our rehearsals every Thursday evening at 7:30-9:30 pm. We worked regularly on part singing, vocal production and balance and blend of our sections, and loved our rehearsal evenings. We also participated in the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass in November, and performed again after a few years of absence at the ChoirFest 2019. That involved some extra rehearsals for the massed choir pieces, meeting and or re-connecting with members from other choirs, and strengthening our base of vocal exercises and warmups. Choir members were thrilled to be back and to be part of that very special fundraising event. We hope to continue with ChoirFest in the future and look forward to resuming activities whenever that is safe and possible.

Sadly, until the pandemic is nearer to an end, we do not know when choirs will be able to resume singing at church. We know that the act of singing is a risk to choir members and to the congregation as more air is expelled and inhaled and that can lead to spread of the Covid virus more than just talking. We have also just learned that due to the Covid 19 pandemic, there will be no ChoirFest 2020. As organizers explained, we have no way of knowing at this time when choir singing may be safe to resume. When it is safe, we surely hope to resume our rehearsals and singing at Masses and look forward to this special way of participating in the Mass.

Shepherds of Good Hope

Allen Harvey, Leader

Summer of 2019 was another success regarding feeding the needy at Shepherds of Good Hope. Recruiting of volunteers was staged on two weekends in June. The weather was favourable and people were very generous with their intentions to help.

Additional recruiting was done by e-mail and telephone. A total of 160 Divine Infant volunteers participated.

On the Sundays of July and August, food for hundreds of meals was prepared for cooking and serving throughout the summer. In addition, volunteers assembled thousands of sandwiches to be handed out at the door.

A total of 1887 wholesome meals were served. The number of meals eaten on any given Sunday in July or August ranged from 196 to 300.

Unfortunately, the COVID -19 pandemic forced a cancellation of volunteering for the 2020 campaign but next summer our services will likely be in demand full-force.

God gives everyone gifts and talents so that we may enjoy life, but also so we can share with others.

Bereavement Group

Diane Jemus, Leader

The Bereavement Team continues to be a proactive force in its service to both the parish and community at large. Our services include individual and group counselling as well as hosting a number of social and liturgical events. Specifically, we offer three group sessions per year – two ten week sessions and one evening session focus on on the first Christmas challenges. Individual counselling sessions are also offered throughout the year. Both phone conferences and one-on-one sessions are available.

Liturgies include the celebration of All Souls Day and the opening and closing of the Memorial Garden events. The 2019 All Souls Day Celebration theme was “bridging heaven and earth.” Father Waldemar often refers to this theme in his Celebration of Life services. It is a comforting thought. St. Therese of Liseaux promised “to spend her heaven showering the earth with roses,” meaning granting favours from Heaven. She is the example and our family members can do the same. As Father Lunney preached “our family members may not be physically with us, but always spiritually with us.”

Other liturgies continue on the same theme incorporating testimonies from participants from the program. Each liturgical event is followed by a social enhanced by the musical contribution of Roseanne Duluca and hospitality provided by Blessilda Donoghue and her fabulous team. Roseanne and Angela Lavictoire’s musical contribution to our liturgies set the stage. At the All Soul’s Day Mass, we encourage all parishioners to participate in a nine day novena ending on Remembrance Day, a group we also honour.

Our clientele have the opportunity to share their journey in articles to the Divine Messenger such as Ms. Doyle-Harmer’s eulogy of her father. Our clientele also organizes a monthly dinner at a local eatery. Our outreach effort includes articles in the Divine Messenger on subjects like suicide, ways to honour our dearly beloved and photos of our groups and labours of the Foran grandkids with strong man Dave Langdock picking stones at Laporte’s for the Memorial Garden.

We have established a relationship with the Moms Morning Out Ministry, hoping to provide support to those suffering the loss of a child either by miscarriage or after birth. We are in the planning stages and welcome any enquiries or input. Individual counselling is available.

There have been personnel changes in the leadership of the Monthly Bereavement dinners. Cofounder Vince Amelotte has left, moving to another location. Joining cofounder Maria Huard is Beth Paige. We have left the Legion and will return to commercial restaurants, e.g. The Tap Room.



*“My mind still talks to you
and my heart still looks for you.
But my soul knows
That you are at peace.”*

(Anonymous)

Madonna Tuesday Tea

Dolores Cyr, Leader

Our dedicated group of volunteers have been visiting the residents at Madonna Care Community every Tuesday afternoon for over 27 years. We even have a former staff member who continues to give of her time to the residents as a volunteer. Right up until March 10, 2020 we were visiting weekly unless there was a quarantine and we were unable to attend.

On Tuesday afternoons we entertain the residents with music and song, the facility provides the tea/ coffee and dessert for the residents and we assist in bringing a resident to the dining room and serving them and in doing so have a chance to get to know the residents and their friends and or families in attendance. We see firsthand how much they enjoy the music and interaction of the volunteers. It's amazing to see someone who may not be communicative yet their foot or finger may tap in time with the music and we have witnessed that happen many times.

Madonna Care Community always have themed celebrations such as Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day etc. so we always made sure to enhance the occasion with music. They also acknowledge the birthdays of their residents and we would make sure to sing to each one individually with the dignity they so deserve.

Aside from the Tuesday Teas many volunteers give of their time participating in other activities such as the Knitting/Crocheting Group with the residents, the Prayer Group that meet on Saturday morning, we have those that assist with feeding, and portering residents for their eye appointments within the facility. Our gifted pianist will go to play the grand piano just for *their* entertainment. We have volunteers that assist the Priest with Mass on the third Friday of each month and bring the Eucharist to those who are unable to attend. Some of us are in Pastoral Care Ministry which do the readings and bring the Eucharist to the residents on a weekly basis. Visiting with the residents on an individual basis we learn so much from their photos and stories of their lives which they love to share. Needless to say all these activities have been suspended with the lockdown since Covid-19 arrived.

On another note I would like to express a huge gratitude of Thanks to Marg Boeckler who has lead our volunteer group since 1998. For the past 22 years she and Therese Sweeney have organized the Christmas gift project through Divine Infant for the Madonna residents. As a group we have shared many memories of **all** the special holidays together and in doing so have formed many long time friendships through the act of giving of ones time for another in need.

In closing I also want to acknowledge that we as a group remain in contact with each other and as we mourn the loss of 43 souls since April at Madonna Care Community we also pray for them and their families. Needless to say all these activities have been suspended with the lockdown since Covid-19 arrived.

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Divine Mercy Cenacle

Stan Siok, Deacon Mike Seguin, Cynthia Kearns-O'Hara, Leaderas

Our Divine Mercy Cenacle, which started in January 2016, met every Monday following the 7 p.m. Mass. Twenty to thirty Cenacle members normally gather with songs of worship, select weekly readings and discussion on portions of St. Faustina's Diary, the Bible as well as the Catechism. We also pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The main purpose of the Cenacle is to grow spiritually and in leading a merciful life. This had manifested in many members performing spiritual and corporal acts of mercy and becoming actively involved in other parish ministries, Pastoral Care and the Divine Infant Youth Group, to name a couple. The Cenacle is also represented as of last year, as a full member of the Pastoral Council.

With the restrictions imposed on us all due to Covid-19, we could no longer hold our regular Monday evening sessions. Zoom technology has, however, enabled our Cenacle to gather every evening; and we have done that faithfully over the past three months! We are grateful for the dedicated leadership of our brother Francis Evangelista and Deacon Mike Seguin who, without fail, provide this platform for praying and sharing! We also have had occasion to have live-stream transmission of the Blessed Sacrament, and we have had Eucharistic Adoration with songs of worship and offered up various intentions while praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, including special Eucharistic prayers for particular liturgical Feast days. It is a blessing that we are consistently able to attract at least 20 Cenacle members to these nightly sessions and with Zoom, we have also been able to welcome participants from beyond the parish and out of province.

In these times of uncertainty and anxiety, it is comforting to be able to share our concerns and pray for each other. We believe God is calling us, in this time of tribulation and isolation, to examine our lives and see how we can change our regular routines to get closer to Him.

Our Cenacle celebrated Divine Mercy Sunday by showing the new movie on St. Faustina (Love and Mercy). On Pentecost Sunday, we held a two-hour session with special prayers for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is amazing how the Holy Spirit can make His presence felt, even by Internet!

It has been great for our group to stay in touch and pray with one another and for the intentions of our parishioners, our priests, our families, loved ones and those who are struggling. It has, in fact, brought our Cenacle family closer together. What a blessing in these troubling times!

Please join us any evening you are able starting at 8:00 p.m. You will find a warm welcome and discover a very special community. To obtain the ZOOM joining credentials, please contact Francis, Deacon Mike, Stan or Cindy. The prayer session format consists of the following on ZOOM:

8:15 pm – Opening Prayer and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament online

8:20 pm – Opening Song

8:25 pm – One by One prayer intentions

8:35 pm – Prayer of the Divine Mercy Chaplet

8:45 pm – Prayer for the Pope's Intentions

8:50 pm – Closing Song

8:55 pm – Word from the Lord, usually taken from the Diary of St Faustina

9:00 pm – Closing prayers, Spiritual Communion

Until we meet again, be assured you and your loved ones are included in the daily intentions of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. We are in this together. Keep well, stay safe, and God bless you



Catholic Women's League of Canada

Dana Richardson and Laura Kiraly

Divine Infant's CWL is a 62-member strong council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, a sisterhood of faith, fun and fulfillment. Our national organization is rooted in gospel values calling members to holiness through service to the people of God.

Our theme for 2020 continues to be "Care for Our Common Home". The League is making efforts to become attuned to our need to protect the beauty of our common home, with a particular view to conserving water. We keep prayer in our efforts to serve our parish and our community.

In this last year, as in every year, we have worked in aid of several initiatives and charities. Our fundraising efforts have included a Christmas Bake Sale and the production of the 2020 parish calendar. Through these activities, and helped by our generous and caring parishioners, we provided assistance to the Shepherds of Good Hope, Hospice Care Ottawa and the St. Joe's Women's Centre. We also collected donations of non-perishable food items and money for the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Further, members offered shamrocks for donations to raise funds for St. Patrick's Retirement Home.

As part of the Ottawa Diocesan Council, the Divine Infant CWL hosted the annual Advent Retreat: a day of prayer, reflection and learning, open to all members of the diocesan CWLs. Divine Infant members also gathered this year for our 2nd annual Epiphany get-together breakfast – a time to enhance friendships and look forward to the coming year.

Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic situation that hit Canada in March, we have been unable to do many of our planned activities and events with the parish and community. That said, our members have been praying with our faith community for the resolution to the virus, and we have been fortunate to use social media to maintain our spiritual bond.

Given the unusual circumstances, we cannot properly prepare for the remainder of 2020. However, toward Christmas, we hope to again raise funds from among our membership for Christmas meals for the homeless and support the women at the St. Joe's Women's Centre.

Physical distancing has given our members plenty of time to rest and rejuvenate, and we have seen many ideas and plans come together for when we are allowed to go back to normal.

We would love to see our council grow and it would be wonderful to have more members to volunteer within the parish and community. Once meetings resume, they are held every 4th Tuesday of the month starting with Mass at 7 pm followed by the general meeting. The CWL truly is blessed to have the support of our parish.

*"The value of life does not depend
upon the place we occupy.
It depends upon the way we occupy that place."*

(St. Therese of Lisieux)



Pastoral Care

Jennifer Millenor, Leader

MINISTRY PURPOSE

Pastoral Care is a ministry of presence and outreach to those among us who are sick and/or housebound and unable to attend weekly Mass at church. Parishioners or their family members usually call the parish office with a request for a home visit and we respond to these requests which are focused on the Eucharist. We endeavor to convey our parish community spirit of care and concern to those we serve. We collaborate with the Deacons by enhancing the amount of time and number of facilities that the Parish can serve. We also are a liaison between the parishioners we serve and Divine Infant Priests to initiate Priest visits for other Sacraments such as Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Sick.

The Covid-19 global pandemic affected our Pastoral Care Ministry by ceasing all visits to retirement residences in March 2020 and changing our home visits to phone visits for homebound parishioners. We look forward to being able to safely resume our services when we are able. Our services may be late to resume because the parishioners we serve tend to be especially vulnerable to the potential impact of contracting the Covid-19 virus. We are following all requirements as laid out by the Archdiocese.

PARISHIONERS SERVED on your behalf: Approximately 200 individuals

Home visits: Served 6 Individuals (Currently 2 as of June 2020)

This year we visited 6 private homes = appx 90 collective hours of service

Retirement and Nursing Home visits: Serving almost 100 seniors (appx 260 hrs of collective service)

Madonna Nursing Home (St. Joseph Blvd)

Bi-weekly Monday Communion Service to **approximately 40 residents**

Bi-weekly Saturday Rosary Service to **approximately 10 residents**

Promenade Retirement Residence (Tenth Line at the River)

Weekly Sunday Communion Service to **approximately 20 residents**

Queenswood Villa (Kennedy Lane East in Queenswood Heights)

Bi-weekly Tuesday Rosary & Communion Service to **approximately 12 residents**

Symphony Senior Living (Lumberman Way in Convent Glen)

Bi-weekly Thursday Communion Service to approximately 15 residents

Annual Mass for the Sick: Serving approximately 100 individuals

Annual Mass for the Sick (and Reception afterward) ~ Saturday, February 8, 2020

Approximate attendance of 120 people from within and beyond the Divine Infant Parish

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

We continue to be members of a community group called the **Orleans Community Pastoral Care** which unites many Christian Churches (Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist, United, and others). We meet quarterly to share our common goals to serve those in need of Christian love and support in Orleans.

One Ministry member also participates as a trained member of the **Emergency Spiritual Care Assistance Team** which is a multi-faith emergency response group run by The Ottawa Hospital.

FUTURE GOALS

Although some plans this year were postponed or derailed by the global events of 2020, we would still like to add weekly or bi-weekly service to the Bruyere Residence and perhaps other facilities in our Parish catchment. There are many retirement homes that do not currently receive service from our Parish and new ones are being built all the time. We also would like to be connected to more housebound parishioners who are unable to attend Mass on either a short term recovery basis or on long term basis. Both of these efforts are currently challenged by a need for additional members in the Ministry.

Cursillo Movement

Robert Chamberlain, Leader

The worldwide lay movement of the church known as Cursillo originated in the 1940s on the island of Mallorca (east of Spain, in the Mediterranean Sea). Cursillos (or short courses) were first introduced to the young men of catholic action as a week-long preparation for a great national pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. Through the efforts to organize the pilgrimage, the Cursillo was formed. Many people go on pilgrimages and follow the Camino de Santiago or the Way of St. James as a form of spiritual path or retreat for spiritual growth. It is also popular with hikers and cyclists and other tour groups.

The Cursillo movement is a powerful instrument of renewal in the Catholic Church. Its aim is to concentrate closely on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. During the year there are many meetings, Cursillo weekends and Ultreyas. The Ultreyas are held at various parishes in the area and begin with Holy Mass, followed by witness talks, announcements, refreshments and fellowship.

While these activities were held as scheduled during 2019, because of the Covid-19 all planned functions had to be cancelled but we hope that we will soon be able to resume our normal functions.

*“If God sends you many sufferings,
it is a sign that He has
great plans for you and
certainly wants to
make you a saint.”*

(St. Ignatius of Loyola)

*“Faith in action is love -
And love in action in service.”*

(St. Teresa of Calcutta)



Pro Life Committee

Johanne Brownrigg, Leader

The Pro-life committee has seen a change in the shared leadership. Angela Lavictoire stepped down in January due to family responsibilities and Johanne Brownrigg is heading the committee alone.

In the last year, the committee attempted to recruit more volunteers through a bulletin outreach with brief descriptions of the work and by personal invitation from committee members. No new volunteers came forward.

Last fall the D.I. prolife committee facilitated the parish participation in the following campaigns: 40 Days for Life, Life Chain and Christmas Cake sales. We also hosted a Diocesan Pro-life mass.

Our last meeting took place January 2020. Changes were made in the campaigns we would be able to participate in. Some of these changes may be temporary based on number of members we have, some are permanent. We participated in the Pastoral Council brochure and submitted a fresh piece for the Divine Messenger.

Our assistance is invaluable to the following pro-life organizations: Campaign Life Coalition, Action Life, 40 Days for Life, the Diocesan Pro-life monthly mass, and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. The pro-life committee is busiest supporting pro-life movement initiatives in the spring and fall. We also coordinate with the parish office to have The Spiritual Adoption program and 9 monthly pro-life masses ending on the Feast of Holy Innocents.

A new initiative which began last year, was continued. A weekly bulletin insert meant to lead up to the National March for Life, was written by Johanne and approved by Father Waldemar. We hope to educate, inform and influence parishioners with these digestible bits of information. This year's was based on Stephanie Gray's book, Love Unleashes Life and addressed how to speak to someone about abortion.

We were set to support participation in the Hike for Life (April) and the NMFL again (May). Due to COVID 19 these activities were unfortunately cancelled. After very low D.I. interest and after speaking to CLC, Coins for Life and Little Feet pro-life fundraising initiatives for CLC, are being discontinued here. CLC is reviewing their value as well.

Due to the limited size of the committee, we had decided to step back from some formerly planned or newly suggested initiatives: hosting a Dying Healed seminar, Diocesan Week for Life, showing the movie Unplanned and no seminar was being planned for this spring.

As committee chair, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the incredible support given to the committee by Margaret Heuthorst in the parish office. Her unwavering and very helpful support has been instrumental in helping us reach parishioners, either through the bulletin, slides or booking space. I would also like to thank Fr. Waldemar, who is deeply committed to the cause and provides many opportunities for the pro-life message to permeate Divine Infant parish.

*“Take care of your body as if you
were going to live forever,
and take care of your soul
as if you were going to
die tomorrow.”*

(St. Augustine)

Refugee Sponsorship Committee

Guy Savard, Leader

THE SYRIAN ALHURIA FAMILY UPDATE

The Alhurira family has settled and integrated quite well into our parish, community and Canada. For them, the highlight of the year has been the baptism of their daughter, Tia Maria – name chosen in their devotion to Our Virgin Mary.

A challenge for the Alhurira's, as for all of us, has been to cope with the novel Coronavirus crisis. However, the family has also had to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on their families and friends living in war-torn Syria as well as with their family (The Abo Saad's) who are refugees in Lebanon and awaiting the approval of their sponsorship to Canada.

Baptism of Tia Maria Alhurira

On October 27th, 2019, Father Waldemar presided over the baptism of Tia Maria, daughter of Adham and Sawsan Alhurira. At the request of the family, Father Waldemar invited Father Fadi Atalla, pastor of the St. Paul Syriac Catholic Parish (Ottawa), to co-preside over the ceremony.

In conducting the sacrament of baptism, Father Waldemar followed the Latin (Roman Catholic) Rite whereas Father Fadi followed the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church Rite. The beautiful ceremony was thus delivered in English and Arabic and was attended by 60 members of the Syrian and Lebanese community (including Melkite and Maronite Catholics) and other friends from Divine Infant parish.

My wife and I were blessed and honored to have been asked by the Alhurira family to be the Godparents of Tia Maria.

Other accomplishments

Dad (Adham) is still working at *Les Jardins Radisson*, a large Skyline Living apartment complex in Gatineau, while **Mom (Sawsan)** continues to work full-time as a busy mom and housewife.

Their eldest, daughter Carol, has completed her first year towards a Bachelor of Science at Carleton University and is taking summer courses in statistics, biology, and neuroscience. She works part-time at the Convent Glen Metro.

While **Son Charbel** is advancing to Grade 12 at Lester B. Pearson Catholic High School, **Karen** will advance to Grade 8 at St. Matthew and is doing very well in French Immersion. **Anji** advances to Grade 3 next year at our Divine Infant Elementary School. **Tia** is well taken care off by Mom, Dad, sisters and brother. She loves the outdoors.

English as a Second Language (ESL). Adham attained Level 4 English as a second language (ESL) proficiency whereas Sawsan has achieved Level 5. Adham is registering for the Level 5 classes. ESL Level 4 is the minimum requirement for citizenship

Canadian Citizenship. Tia Maria is a full-fledged Canadian by birth. An application was submitted for the other four children but has not yet been finalized. As Mom and Dad both meet citizenship requirements, they will soon be submitting their applications.

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Driver's License: While Adham is a seasoned driver, Sawsan and Carol hold a Level 2 (G2) license whereas Charbel has his beginner Level 1 (G1). The family is well equipped to provide transportation for current and future needs (e.g. pending the sponsorship/arrival of the Abo Saad refugee family).

Other activities: Last summer, the family traveled to Montreal to visit friends and attend La Ronde amusement park. They also had a busy Canada Day which included a visit to the Canada Science and Technology Museum and the Canadian Museum of Nature.

UPDATE ON SPONSORSHIP OF THE REFUGEE SYRIAN ABO SAAD FAMILY

A little over one year ago, on April 28th, 2019, Father Waldemar announced that our parish had agreed to sponsor the Syrian Abo Saad family of three (George, Rita and daughter Joumana) who are refugees in Lebanon. The Abo Saad and Alhurira families are related as both moms (Rita and Sawsan) are sisters.

The required completed forms were submitted during late summer 2019 to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and our Sponsorship Agreement Holder at the Archdiocese of Ottawa. In November 2019, IRCC informed us that the completed forms had been approved and had been forwarded to our Canadian embassy in Lebanon for follow-up.

The Abo Saad family was scheduled for an interview in Lebanon with a Canadian Visa Officer on March 16th, 2020. The interview unfortunately coincided with our Prime Minister's announcement of travel restrictions to Canada, effective March 18. Accordingly, our health authorities issued guidance and restrictions limiting the IRCC's processing of all applications, including refugee submissions. Consequently, the Abo Saad interview was cancelled and will be rescheduled on a later date (to be determined).

As prospective sponsors but also of course for the Abo Saad (and Alhurira) families, and while understandable, this was obviously a very disappointing development. The timing of this set-back, coupled with the COVID-19 challenges, coincides with ongoing clashes in their war-torn home country (Syria) and civil unrest taking place in their current host country (Lebanon).

With IRCC acknowledgement that we are all living in extraordinary times with the pandemic, we have an important role to play as sponsors in ensuring that refugees continue to be supported to the extent possible. We need to not only maintain communication with the Abo Saad family with the Alhuriras' assistance, but also uphold both families in prayer, in particular seeking God's protection of the three Abo Saad family members in their challenging local environment.

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat
I was thirsty and gave me something to drink
I was a stranger and you invited me in.*

(Matthew 25:35)



Happy Alhurira Family

Knights of Columbus

Paul Bourke, Grand Knight

The Knights of Columbus have four core principles that provide us strength and guidance through all of the good works that we strive to perform. These are **Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism**.

At Divine Infant Council #7873, our council supports each of these principles as follows:

Charity: By supporting local Catholic organizations such as Miriam Centre, our Catholic high schools with bursary awards, our Parish as well as many other organization too many to name individually.

Unity: Working together for the good of our council and the greater good of the community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, our **Leave No Neighbour Behind** initiative, knights provided grocery and pharmacy shopping for vulnerable parishioners. A telephone tree was organized to call all members to help members feel less isolated during this stressful time.

Fraternity: Our very successful monthly parish breakfasts bringing together our parish family after Mass, a special Santa Breakfast in December brought much joy with Santa alias Deacon Bill giving gifts for every child. In August we held a wonderful pilgrimage to the **Knock Shrine in Mayo Quebec** led by Fr Waldemar, deacons Bill and Steve, in total we had 52 pilgrims who after Mass enjoyed a BBQ lunch which was included at no extra cost.

Other activities included a Novena and special Mass dedicated to **Our Lady of Guadalupe** in December. During the Covid-19 lockdown in Holy Week we held a 19 Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament followed by Mass, participated by more than 60 Knights and parishioners.

In May the month of Mary, we celebrated an online Rosary led by Deacon Mike Seguin and Divine Infant Cenacle. This was followed in June, month of the Sacred Heart by devotion with Consecration to the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary and Litany.

We continue to collect pop cans, wine and beer bottles with proceeds sent to Miriam Centre. Our Grocery card profits help support both K of C and parish endeavors.

Patriotism Our council joins with other Orleans councils to promote and support the annual **Soldier On** program, supporting military injured personnel.

Dear Friends, this year I'd like to close my report with wonderful news, our founder **Fr Michael McGivney** was officially approved by Pope Francis to be beatified. With great anticipation we wait for the Holy Father to announce the exact date and time when the Mass of Beatification will be celebrated.

Vivat Jesus





SIGN UP FORM
DIVINE INFANT PARISH

Yes, I am interested in joining our parish ministry(s), group(s) or program(s).

I'd like to find out more about

.....

.....

(please, write the name(s) of parish ministry(s), group(s) or program(s) in which you are interested)

My name is

Contact information:

Phone number

E-mail address

(Please, drop this form on the collection basket or bring it to the parish office)

THANK YOU!

