



Fall 2023

2 messages

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6 September 2023 at 14:00

Thank you for your support of vocations!

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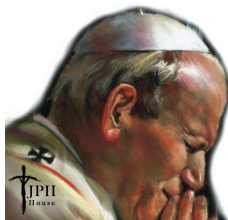
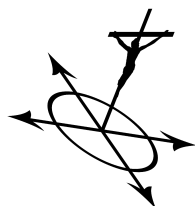
Fall 2023

Greetings members of the St. Joseph Vocations Society! I hope you had a wonderful summer alongside many friends and family. Summer is an important time to slow down, kick our feet up, and relax and enjoy the warmer months.

For most people, not me LOL! This summer, I was appointed full-time Director of the new Diocesan Youth Office while remaining Director of Vocations. This meant that I had to conclude my service at Immaculate Conception Parish and begin a new life all over again. Such is part and parcel of the priesthood, as we go where we are sent. I am very excited about this new role, which is focused at supporting and directing youth ministry within our Diocese and working with parishes, schools, and families in bringing Christ to our young people and forming them as future leaders of the Church. Please keep me in your prayers as I begin work within this new office.

The summer was also busy for me, considering World Youth Day, walking pilgrimage, and the Young men's Discernment Retreat.

Please recommit yourself, right now, to daily praying the Prayer for Vocations and the Prayer to St. Joseph that are printed on the back of this newsletter. As you will see in this newsletter, your prayers are bearing fruit. As a thank you, I will offer Holy Mass once a month for the members of the St. Joseph Vocation Society.





Seminarian Updates

Mr. Peter Bissonnette (pictured below) has successfully completed his pastoral internship at St. Joseph's Parish in Bracebridge and has now begun his 3rd year of theological studies at St. Augustine's Seminary. God willing, he will be ordained a transitional deacon after his 3rd year.

Mr. Christian Parker graduated last spring from St. Philip's Seminary with a Bachelor of Thomistic Thought degree, thereby satisfying the requirements to have an undergraduate degree and study philosophy prior to theological studies. He will continue his formation in the fall of 2022.

Mr. Andrew Roelands (pictured above) is the newest addition to our seminarians! Originally from the London, ON, area, he studied at St. Peter's Seminary for a few years until deciding to take some time off for further discernment. During that time, he found a job working in the Lindsay/Downeyville area and volunteered in various parish activities and the Confirmation program. He also took part in Fr. Eric Mason's walking pilgrimages as well as his youth excursions in Britt. As Andrew discerned back into the seminary, he had made so many friends in the Peterborough Diocese that he wanted to call it home. He will begin in the Spiritual Year at St. Augustine's Seminary.

Keep them in your prayers!





World Youth Day 2023

From July 27th-August 10th, the Diocese of Peterborough sent 22 young pilgrims to Lisbon, Portugal for the World Youth Day (WYD) event. After many months of planning and fundraising, which included a Portuguese Dinner, chocolate fundraisers, spaghetti dinner, parish appeals, and a walking pilgrimage, the group made the long trek to Lisbon to begin WYD.

World Youth Day is a five-day Catholic celebration, inviting Catholics from all over the world to come together and grow in their faith. Pilgrims came from as far away as Australia, Africa, South America, Asia, and Europe. Canadians numbered over 5,000, and on the first day we were able to take part in a Canadian gathering in order to meet up with fellow Canadians. We ran into old friends and acquaintances, and made some new ones. We said prayers, heard some talks, and some even joined in on a group dance.

The next few days allowed us to take part in what WYD had to offer. Many of us took part in Rise Up sessions, which were various talks centered on specific themes, given by a few presenters including bishops, and ended with Mass and lunch. The rest of the day allowed us to attend various exhibits such as seeing relics of saints, a Shroud of Turin exhibit (only a replica) Theology of the Body seminars, vocational fairs, opportunities for confession and Adoration, or to catch Mass elsewhere. There was also a stage set up near where we were staying that held concerts all day and night, including a performance from the famous Fr. Rob Galea of Australia. Overall, there was a lot to do and take part in and it was impossible to do everything. But we made the most of it and made new friends too.

Pope Francis arrived on the Thursday and we were able to take part in the official welcome. He had visited Fatima the day before and then came to address the pilgrims. We braved large crowds, security checkpoints, and high heat in order to attend, and we even got a glimpse of him going past us! In his opening address, the Holy father reminded the youth that each of them is called by God and everyone belongs to the Church "Todos! Todos! Todos!"

The following Friday allowed us to attend the Stations of the Cross. We decided to view them at the nearby stage, due to crowd fatigue. Before that, we had the opportunity to attend a Rise Up session with Bishop Robert Barron, who gave a talk on prayer. He later celebrated the Mass.

The following day had us walk 10 km to Campo do Graca, the site of the overnight vigil and place for the final Mass. It was a really hot day, 38C, and we packed plenty of water and sunscreen. We celebrated Mass in the lobby of our hotel and packed what we needed for an overnight under the stars. Along the way, we took a bus partway and met up with some youth from Kenya. We sang a few joyful songs and had a blast together! We walked the rest of the way, picking up our meal kits midway. We arrived at the vigil site and braved the crowds to get to our location. We had a few hours to settle in and take it easy until the pope arrived for Eucharistic Adoration. After his remarks, a priest came on the stage holding the Blessed Sacrament, and without any instructions or prompting, the

large crowd intuitively knelt down and adored and prayed in absolute silence. You could hear a pin drop. This experience was truly incredible and showed the deep faith the 1.5 million youth in attendance.

Afterwards, we tried to catch some sleep, some having more success with that than others, but we were all awoken the next day by Fr. Guilherme Peixoto's techno music. Fr. Stephen and Fr. Peter went over to the place for concelebration with 10,000 priests while our group stayed behind in our spot.

Overall, it was an amazing and wonderful experience to see 1.5 million youth from all over the world to come together and grow in the faith. The Church is truly alive and the future looks bright. I can attest to that based on my WYD experience, both past and present. Young people do believe in Christ and do want to be part of the Church. The challenge is whether or not we are willing to allow them to not just be our future, which they are, but also the present. The youth are on fire with the faith and love Christ. It was such a heartwarming and encouraging experience and it gives me hope for the future of the Church.

The next WYD will be in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027. See you there!



Young Men's Discernment Retreat

Every year, the seminarians of the Diocese of Peterborough join a few discerning gentlemen at St. John the Baptist mission church in Morinus, ON, located on beautiful Lake Rosseau, for a summer retreat and days of recollection. On August 22nd-25th, we used the church for daily prayer, Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Discerning young men are invited to join us for next year's retreat on July 2nd-5th, 2024.

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11 September 2023 at 10:54

Thank you Fr. Stephen.

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