

*The Official Newsletter of St. John Bosco Council #14327
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**From time to time we
feature and introduce you
to a fellow past or present
member of our Council**

WHO'S WHO IN OUR COUNCIL

By Pat Loduca

Our council has always enjoyed the close collaboration with the clergy at our home parish, St. Benedict Church many of whom we are fortunate to count as members and call Brothers. One such individual is Deacon Peter Takaoka. I interviewed him recently to take a peek into his extraordinary life and the circumstances that led him to the diaconate as well as the Knights of Columbus. Here's what I learned.

Tip of the hat to...

**DEACON PETER
TAKAOKA**



PAT – Deacon Peter, thanks very much for doing this. So, where did you grow up?

DEACON PETER – I grew up and was born in downtown Toronto at Toronto General Hospital. At four years old we moved to Scarborough and that's where most of my youth was spent. We actually lived not too far from the Seminary, but I never thought I would ever be involved with the Catholic Church at that time. I had a fairly uneventful suburban childhood. My family included my father, mother, my older sister and me. I went to John A. Leslie Public School and then R. H. King Collegiate, all in Scarborough.

My parents, well they both grew up in poor financial settings. My mother immigrated from Japan and my father was actually born in Vancouver but was sent to Japan, as happened often back then with Japanese families, to be raised by his grandparents. He then came back to Canada as a teenager. Both my parents were unfortunately scarred by the internment camps put in place during the second world war. For this reason, my parents moved eastward from Vancouver; my dad moved across Canada ending up in Montreal while my mom went to Dundas, Ontario to work as a domestic before they eventually met up in Toronto.

You know they really didn't talk much about their early life so I don't know much about it other than my mother was sent to Canada with a friend of the family as a domestic at 12 years old. That's about what I know about her family life. Her family were farmers in Japan. With dad, I tried to research his birth certificate but there was no registration of his birth in Canada although I was told he was born in Vancouver but sent to Japan with his younger brother. My father ended up coming back to Canada while his brother stayed in Japan, so I have a branch of the family that is in Japan. When he moved eastward in Canada, he ended up working in road gangs, lumber camps, and the like.

It was a tough time for them as especially on the west coast there was a fear that members of the Japanese community might collude with the enemy at the time so that's why they set up these camps and families lost much of what they had. The Japanese were hard workers and many of them owned fishing boats and businesses that were taken away from them.

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My mother would always tell me that you've got to go to school and get an education! ...an education is something no one could take away from you.

So, growing up in Scarborough, we didn't have much as a family. We were the only family in the neighbourhood without a car. We walked everywhere we needed to go. However, I never feared that we would never have enough to eat, have enough clothes, or have a roof over our heads. We lived in a house and had the three necessities of life; food, shelter, and clothing. No frills or extravagances but we had everything we needed.

PAT – That's quite the story. What values did your parents instill in you?

DEACON PETER – Definitely hardworking, the importance of getting an education; my mother would always tell me that you've got to go to school and get an education! She would say that an education is something no one could take away from you. That was probably a value born out of their upbringing in tough times where many things were taken away from them but once you have your education, that can't be taken away.

The other thing is that both my parents were not church-going people. We were not affiliated with a particular church. Once in a while, I did attend the United Church but really, I was 'unchurched'. At the same time, my mother instilled in me Christian values. Things like yielding to others, don't always seek your own way and trying to do things for other people. Without a church background, I really credit her with instilling in me or trying to instill in me, Christian values.

PAT – Did you feel an affinity with God in any way growing up?

DEACON PETER – Yes, I did feel that He was always looking out for me. I attribute any sort of Christian or religious upbringing to the public school I attended where the morning exercises would include the Lord's Prayer and a scripture reading right after the National Anthem. If it wasn't for that, I would have no Christian exposure. I also remember in Grade three a teacher whose sister was a missionary and we would often get to see photos of her doing some work or helping out kids in far away places.

PAT – So, when did you become a Catholic?

DEACON PETER – It was after I met my future wife, Naida who is from the Philippines. She went to church regularly and when I was going out with her, I was moved to accompany her to church; not because she asked me to or told me to, but because I felt drawn to it. And when I did attend what at the time was a school—because what was to be the Church of the Good Shepherd on Don Mills Rd. just north of Steeles wasn't even built yet—I found the parish priest to be very charismatic. He had a lot of personality and was a good speaker. So, having curiosity about the church and then being drawn by this priest really drew me to investigate it further. There wasn't a formal RCIA program like we have now at St. Benedict for instance. I used to work in the RCIA program with Antoniette and I would often say to her then that if I had to go through a two-year RCIA program now, I don't think I would have made it through (He laughs!)

So, I would meet up with the priest—I can't even recall if it was weekly or not—and he would give me books to read and after about six months I was baptized at the Easter Vigil Mass in 1981! I was almost 30 years old when I was baptized, received the First Holy Communion and was confirmed all at once. Credit to the priest and to Naida who never once told me that she wanted me to become a Catholic. And that is a great thing. We were then married later that year in September.

Deacon Peter and Naida





The Avro Arrow became a source of national pride for many Canadians until the project was discontinued by Prime Minister Diefenbaker, simultaneously quashing Deacon Peter's original career dreams!

PAT – That's awesome! Any children?

DEACON PETER – Yes, we have two children. A son, who is a Grade 8 teacher in the York Catholic School Board and a daughter who works in the hospitality industry. And we have one granddaughter, my son's daughter. She is now eight years old and growing quickly. Grandchildren really change your life!

PAT – How did you choose your career and how did it help mould who you are?

DEACON PETER – Oh, well! For as long as I can remember, I always wanted to be an Engineer. This is when I was 12 years old even before I knew what an Engineer was! So, everything pointed me in that direction. In high school I took many math and science courses and then, of course, I enrolled in an engineering degree program. My initial inclination was to be an Aeronautical Engineer but I then became a Civil Engineer. It was when Prime Minister Diefenbaker killed the Avro Arrow Program that my dream of Aeronautics died.

PAT – Wow, now that was a well-known and infamous moment in Canadian history!

DEACON PETER – Yes, after that I looked into Electrical and Mechanical, but I ended up in Civil Engineering and in the branch of Civil I landed in Environmental Engineering. This is where I completed my Bachelor's and Master's degrees; in things like Wastewater Treatment, Air Pollution, that kind of stuff.

In terms of moulding me, my career moulded me into a person who developed an interest in technical matters. It was only after about 10 years in the working world, did I feel that maybe I missed out on some things; maybe I should have paid more attention to the arts because I started to become a little more interested in things like History, Literature, things like that. It didn't change my career, but I think I just matured a little bit more and understood there were other things I could appreciate as well.

PAT – Okay cool. So, when did you move into the St. Benedict area?

DEACON PETER – That was in 1983 after our son was born. We, in fact, don't live within the boundaries of St. Benedict but a friend of Naida's introduced us to the parish and we started going there and that's when Fr. Nino was the Pastor. We've been parishioners here ever since. And, it wasn't until the mid-nineties that we began to be more involved as volunteers in the church. At that point, I started a six-year period of helping out in the RCIA program as mentioned before and eventually both Naida and myself both became Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

PAT – How did you come to discern your vocation as a deacon?

DEACON PETER – Well I've said this before and people may get bored of hearing it, but it wasn't something that I decided on or discerned while listening to a sermon another deacon or something like that. It was a call-by-name program which the archdiocese had in place and where someone could be nominated for a vocation; whether a priest, a nun or a deacon. I guess it may have been Antoniette Pace who put my name in the hat, so to speak, and it was then the job of the Pastor to contact this person to let him or her know that they had been nominated.

Anyway, Fr. Frank Kelly called me up in 1998 and said, "Someone believes you would make a good deacon." Well, I turned him down flat and said I didn't think so and that it wasn't for me. Fast forward, 10 years later, in 2008 the same thing happened and Fr. Mike Pace now the Pastor approached me and said the same thing about me being a good candidate to become a deacon. I told him what I told Fr. Kelly 10 years earlier. I said I didn't feel any differently than I did then, so thank you but no thank you!

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Fr. Mike, being a lawyer by training, did not take 'no' for an answer. He suggested I go down to what was called a 'Come and See' weekend at one of the churches somewhere where those looking to discern a vocation would attend. Archbishop Collins was presenting along with others and Fr. Mike said, "I know you are not interested, but just go down there and see what you think; no commitment." I said, "Okay fine! I will go." I guess you could say the rest is history but not because I immediately discerned that this was my calling. It wasn't like that. I did think that I had better give this a try because I didn't want to be sitting here later in life thinking that I missed something; thinking that I closed the door to something that I should have tried.



Together with family at the Ordination

So, Naida and I talked. And, the thing about this vocation is that it's more about the wife than it is about the man. So, together we agreed, let's try it. I thought I don't know that this is for me, but let's try it. I started the process in 2010 after having gone through some examinations and after the Formation Team declared, "Okay, we will accept him." At that point, every weekend there was a weekend retreat and every week we candidates would meet with our Mentor. I went through this whole thing thinking that the Formation Team at some point would tell me, "Okay, thank you for your interest and efforts, but this is not for you." However, this never happened!

Then it came to a point just before being ordained whereby canon law you had to participate in a five-day retreat. It was only during that retreat that I came to the realization that yes, this is exactly where I should be. And again, this is a week before ordination. So, this is the discernment of my vocation (He chuckles!) I guess it was a four-year discernment!

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PAT – Amazing! Great story and witness. Would you say there is an underlying foundation for someone considering the diaconate or is every calling different?

DEACON PETER – I would say every calling is different. There were some who understood this calling by witnessing a deacon preach or they heard a call saying, "You can do this" and they responded to that call. There were others who really knew they wanted this and fought for it. Yes, every situation is different.

In respect of the underlying foundation, there is a desire to serve. The idea of a deacon and the role of a deacon is to serve at the altar of course, but his main role is to serve the marginalized which is what the people in the church don't see. Deacons will go to places like Kipling Acres; they will serve at hospitals. In my case, I serve at a jail. That is actually the primary role of the deacon here in the archdiocese; to serve the marginalized and then, of course, to also serve in the church.

PAT – What were your initial challenges after becoming a deacon? Any funny stories?

DEACON PETER – Oh, yes! I've had some classic slip-ups. As I mentioned before, the main role of a deacon is to tend to the marginalized outside of the church, but there is a good reason for Deacon Diego and me to serve in the church as well; to circulate among all the different Masses as much as we can so people can see us. Not for us but I've said this many times: When people look at me and see many of the slip-ups I've made, I'm sure many of the guys say, "If that guy, THAT guy, could be a deacon, then I can do that!" (we both laugh!)

I'll give you a classic example. I laugh about it now but it could have been horrific. One time years ago at the 9:30 AM Mass down in the hall. If you've attended it you know that the altar is fairly confined and very small. This was back in the time when Fr. Joe would celebrate Mass there and one time as Fr. Joe was speaking, he was having trouble with the microphone. It wasn't quite right and properly set up for him so he was trying to fiddle with it. I noticed this and took it upon myself to help him. The thing was though that as I was fiddling with the microphone now, the sleeve of my alb was just above one of the candles on the altar. Unbeknownst to me, I'm just working away trying to fix the microphone while the sleeve of my alb is getting perilously close to the candle.

At this point, I hear a collective gasp!!! A collective intake of breath! Immediately, there were two people: Steve Cawthorne and Joe Muscat who bolted up to the altar afraid I would set myself on fire. And currently, I have two albs and one of them you will see has a sort of grey smudge mark on the sleeve. I could have coloured it back to being all white but I leave it there as a reminder. (We both laugh!) So, in case anyone asks about what's up with the deacon with the dirty alb, just tell them it's a reminder of when he almost set himself on fire! It's humorous now but with the material these albs are made of, I could have been in flames within a few seconds!



Beware of the altar candle!

So, that was one and the other incident I always laugh about from early on in my diaconate was when Fr. Mike was still here. You know how at the end of the Mass you have the solemn blessing and the priest says, "Bow your heads for God's blessing." And then he dismisses the congregation after blessing them. Well, it was around this time of year in the Easter season and at this Mass, I was supposed to say the words, "Bow your heads for God's blessing." It may have been my first year as a deacon and I was nervous enough and I was probably continually repeating this in my mind so I wouldn't miss it because, usually, this is only said at this particular time of the year.

So, I'm all set to do this, but I'm not sure if Fr. Mike forgot or decided to dispense with the Solemn Blessing and just went along and said, "The Lord be with you," to which the congregation responded, "And with your spirit." It was at this point that I would have to come in and say, "Bow your heads for God's blessing." But he went on and blessed the congregation and concluded the Mass. And here, I was supposed to say, "Go in peace and glorify the Lord," but instead I say "Bow down for the blessing!" (We both laugh!) I'm just looking at those people in the pews and Fr. Mike is glaring at me and I just slap my forehead and everyone breaks out into laughter!

PAT – What would you say is the golden thread that has tied together with your life story to date when it comes to faith?

DEACON PETER – Oh, wow! I guess going back to my childhood when I was 'unchurched' I always felt that God was taking care of me. So, I have a real belief that you should always place your life in the hands of God and let God take care of it. I can say that there are a number of times when God took care of me and I have absolute faith that when I speak to people in the jail or wherever; I really have faith that you can place your life in the hands of God and He will take care of it. I would say that this has gotten me to where I am right now. And, when I don't feel it or the enthusiasm wanes, it's also the power of prayer that picks me up. You just have to have faith in God and He will answer your prayer!

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PAT – When did you become a Knight and what led you to do so?

DEACON PETER – I would say it was four or five years ago and you know, it goes farther back when Leo McKenna was always asking me to join. I resisted and resisted until after I became a deacon and I then told myself, “You’re now a deacon and maybe with that you should become a Knight too! That was pretty much it. And, I’ll tell you why I initially resisted, it wasn’t because I was trying to give people a hard time or anything like that. You know, when I join a group—and I don’t join many groups—I want to be fully committed to the group. If I can’t be, then I don’t feel I should be part of it and that is the reason why I didn’t join earlier. At that time, I just didn’t feel I had the time to devote to the mission of the Knights so I didn’t join.

PAT – That makes a lot of sense. Okay, so let’s move on to your favourites! If you could pick your favourite 3 movies of all time, what would they be?

DEACON PETER – Let’s see. Comedy-wise, it would be Planes Trains & Automobiles, then drama and other genres—I have many favourite movies—but I would have to go with Gran Torino and Scent of a Woman.

PAT – Some of my favourites there! How about favourite sports and sports teams?

DEACON PETER – I don’t watch sports religiously, but if I had to pick a sport and team it would be baseball and the Blue Jays. I do like to watch the Blue Jays. They have a good young team this year and are fun to watch.



PAT – What about your favourite genre of music?

DEACON PETER – Oh, this is another tough question, but I would go with Jazz and Blues.

PAT – Any favourite compositions or artists?

DEACON PETER – Certainly from a jazz perspective it would be Keith Jarrett. A favourite blues composition would be Sweet Home Chicago and I also enjoy listening to Oscar Peterson.



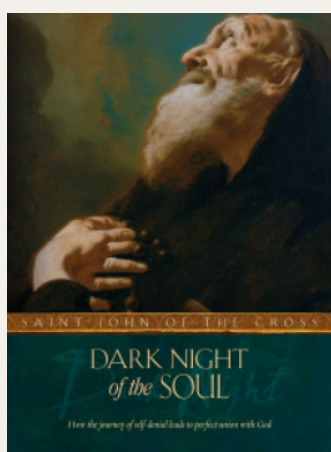
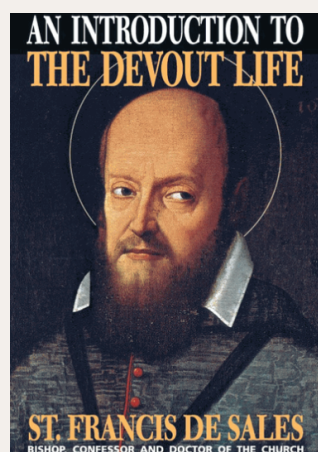
Keith Jarrett - circa 1975

PAT – Okay, cool! Favourite food?

DEACON PETER – Wow, there are so many! I would have to say Paella, Filipino Lechon which is a roasted pig, and grilled fish.

PAT – Yummy! Favourite hobby?

DEACON PETER – I actually don’t have many hobbies but I do like gardening and reading.



PAT – I’m not sure if you noticed that in our last newsletter we started a column called ‘Who’s in Your Spiritual Posse?’ Do you have a ‘posse’ of saints you turn to or call on often for their intercession?

DEACON PETER – Again, because of my early life, I am not in the habit of praying for the intercession of saints as some of the dyed-in-the-wool Catholics are, but I can think of two saints that have impacted me. One of them is St. Francis De Sales and the other is St. John of the Cross. St. Francis De Sales because he wrote a book for a laywoman called, I think, “An Introduction to the Devout Life”. It’s a very simple book and each chapter is only three or four pages long and it’s easy to read. And, it basically gives you instructions on how to live a spiritual life as a layperson.

And, with St. John of the Cross, I have done some reading on him and he's a poet and difficult to read because he's quite deep spiritually. He is the one who at 26 years old was St. Teresa of Avila's Spiritual Director when she was 52 years of age! So imagine that. He has some great reads and one especially is The Dark Night of the Soul. It's about how we really have to go into this dark night before we come out the other side, sort of thing. Anyway, those are two saints that I kind of try to read their works.

PAT – Excellent! Do you have a bucket list? Anything you've yet to scratch off on that list?

DEACON PETER – Oh, I don't know and I'm not sure I'll ever accomplish this, but it's to do the Camino walk, the Way of St. James to Santiago de Compostela. I have been to Santiago de Compostela in Spain but have not walked the Camino.

PAT – One day (hopefully a long, long time from now) God will take us with Him; When that happens to you, how would you like to be remembered by your family, friends, fellow parishioners, and colleagues here on Earth?

DEACON PETER – Oh, I don't know. That would be a little presumptuous from me! I'm not sure that I have done anything as outstanding or awe-inspiring as Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King Jr., but I guess one thing I'd like to be remembered as would be a person who didn't take himself too seriously. You know, after you almost light yourself on fire and make a real bonehead move at the altar alongside Fr. Mike, you can't take yourself too seriously (We both laugh!)

PAT – That's just awesome, Deacon Peter! Is there anything else that we didn't talk about or capture today?

DEACON PETER – No, I think I've bent your ear for long enough!

PAT – No, this has been great and always enlightening for me to do these interviews. I always learn a lot. Thanks so much for doing this!

DEACON PETER – It was my pleasure!

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You know, when I join a group—and I don't join many groups—I want to be fully committed to the group.



Camino de Santiago Route Map



HOSPITALITY IN A TIME OF WAR

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FAMILIES IN POLAND OPEN THEIR HEARTS AND HOMES TO UKRAINIAN REFUGEES - BY ADRIAN WALCZUK 4/25/2022

When Blessed Michael McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus, a primary purpose of the new fraternal order was to aid families in need, especially those who had lost their breadwinner. The plight of these 19th-century American families is reflected today in the experience of refugees from Ukraine, most of whom are women and children. While many of their husbands and fathers stayed to defend their homeland, they have found themselves in foreign countries on their own, with few belongings and unsure of their future.

Millions fled Ukraine in the first weeks of the war—most of them to Poland, where Knights have mobilized to welcome families at the border, at parishes and in their homes. As soon as the Russian invasion began, the Poland State Council responded to the call of the Polish Bishops' Conference to host refugees, assembling a database of medium- to long-term housing options, including Knights of Columbus families willing and ready to open their homes. Three of these Knights' stories are shared here.

A SPACE WE CAN SHARE

Dominik and Marta Kołodziej have always been open to guests. The decision to welcome refugees into their home in Kraków, Poland, came naturally. "We were facing an influx of people who were fleeing the war, who had lost their homes, who lost that sense of security we have here," said Dominik, a member of Blessed Michał Sopoćko Council 17667 in Kraków.

The Kołodziejs have two young children—Nikodem, 6, and Dominika, 3—and are expecting their third child in June, but they had no doubts. "Already on the first day of the war, when we saw that people were fleeing the bombing and looking for shelter, we agreed that this was a space we can share," Marta recalled.

Dominik and Marta made a room in their home available, and five days later, on Ash Wednesday, they welcomed guests from Odessa, Ukraine: Inna, her 12-year-old daughter, Eleonora, and her mother, Tatiana. They communicate with each other primarily in English, but also in their native languages. Inna, whose husband died a number of years ago, fled with her daughter just a few days after the war broke out. She recalled the first day of the conflict, when the sounds of bombs woke them in the early morning and she rushed out to buy food and medicine.

"While I was in the pharmacy, a terrible explosion came from the street, and the pharmacy clerk, a young woman, became so frightened that she sat down on the floor," Inna said. "I asked her to get up and not be afraid because people needed medicine. Terrified that my home was being bombed, I then took my purchases and ran back to find my daughter waiting for me."

Inna's mother, Tatiana, initially wanted to stay at home in Odessa, but after hiding in basements for a week, she fled in a car 800 kilometers (500 miles) to Lviv, and eventually reached the Polish border. "Both young and old were very scared. Frankly, we didn't know how we were going to live," Tatiana said. "We came to a very good family here in Kraków. Dominik and Marta greeted us with such warmth and generosity."

From left, Tatiana, Inna and Eleonora are pictured with Marta and Dominik Kołodziej and their two children, Dominika and Nikodem, outside their home in Kraków. Photo by Sebastian Nycz



The two families have since lived together as one, sharing a common living room, bathroom and kitchen. “God is an important point of reference for us in this common space,” said Marta. “Christ teaches us to feed the hungry, welcome newcomers, be supportive of each other.” At first, Dominik assumed that welcoming guests would feel like a sacrifice. “But it turned out to be quite the opposite,” he said. “We get along great. We already feel like family members with each other.”

Being welcomed by the Kołodziejs has allowed Inna and her family to process their experience and think about the future. “We were in shock. For the first two weeks or so, we didn’t understand at all what happened,” Inna said. “But then, thanks to their friendly and hospitable attitude, we started thinking about how to live, how to make plans.”



Włodzimierz and Edyta Stec are pictured with Alina (right) and her three boys in their home in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Poland. Photo by Izabela Szelaq

THEIR SECOND HOME

Włodzimierz and Edyta Stec responded to a call to take in refugees on the day the war in Ukraine broke out.

“On Feb. 24, State Deputy Krzysztof Zuba notified all K of C leaders that the state council was collecting the names and contact information of individuals and families who could accept refugees from Ukraine,” recalled Włodzimierz, who is grand knight of Our Lady of La Salette Council 15142 in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, in central Poland. “Without a second thought, Edytka and I decided that we would welcome a minimum of four people.”

On March 5, just after 10 p.m., Włodzimierz received a call that 11 people were waiting at the border for help—four women and seven children. He and some friends immediately drove in three cars to pick them up and bring them to a safe place. The Stecs took in a family from Kremenchuk, in central Ukraine—Alina and her three sons, 2-year-old Zahar, 6-year-old Makar and 9-year-old Maksym—with whom they communicate in Russian.

Alina did not want to leave her homeland and husband behind, but her middle son’s fear during the bombing raids persuaded her to flee to Poland. She was afraid that if the situation escalated, the trauma would become unbearable. “We are very happy here—safe, comfortable and warm,” Alina said. “This is like a second home. Our second family.”

Welcoming a trio of rambunctious Ukrainian children into their home has brought big changes to the normally tranquil life of Włodzimierz and Edyta, whose 28-year-old son is married and living in Warsaw. But the Stecs practice patience, knowing that the most important thing is to help those in need. “I must admit that sometimes I have moments of weakness, doubts,” Edyta said, acknowledging that her once quiet home life has been turned upside down.

“One day Włodek said that we have to give up own comfort, such as returning home after work to rest in peace and quiet,” Edyta added with a laugh. “That’s how my husband is. I think that’s why he’s a Knight of Columbus. He’s in the right place, and I support him in all of this.”

Włodzimierz's comfort zone has also been challenged. "I have a funny situation because sometimes the boys call me 'diadia,'" he explained. "'Diadia' is Russian for uncle, but I thought it meant grandpa. I told them, 'But I don't want to be called grandpa,'" Włodzimierz said with a smile, adding that contact with Alina's sons has, indeed, helped prepare them to be grandparents. "This is meant to be their home, their second home—at least until it's all over," said Włodzimierz. "That's what we want, and we are working to make it that way."

In addition to hosting refugees, Włodzimierz Stec and his friends renovated a house for another Ukrainian family. It has a large backyard and was outfitted with furniture, kitchen appliances, a washing machine and other necessary equipment.

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER

When Adam Weigel-Milleret arrived at his office in Igołomia, Poland, on Feb. 24, he learned about the Russian invasion from one of his employees, Oleh, a native of Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine. "Oleh was so distraught that he couldn't concentrate on normal daily activities," recalled Adam, a member of St. Brother Albert Chmielewski Council 15128 in Kraków. "I simply told him that if he had family there, he should bring them here."

For the next several days, Oleh was constantly on the phone, anxiously helping family members navigate the more than 600 miles (1,000 km) from Kharkiv to the Polish border. Witnessing Oleh's frantic efforts to help his family was one thing that motivated Adam and his wife, Marta, to act.

Next to our company's headquarters there is a large, unused house," explained Adam, who runs an international transportation and mechanics company east of Kraków. "And we managed to shelter several Ukrainian families there." First, the couple took in Oleh's daughter, her cousin and her two children, ages 5 and 12, who arrived from Kharkiv after traveling nonstop for three days through their war-torn country. They soon started helping on a larger scale and are currently hosting 39 refugees, including 21 children. "Adam's family welcomed us very, very warmly. My grandmother had arrived here before, and it was she who asked Adam if he could give us a room," said Angelina, who fled from southeastern Ukraine with her young son, Artur, sister Margarita and cousin Sofia. "On the spot they gave us bedding, towels, diapers and porridge for Artur—everything he needed. I can't even express our gratitude."

Many of the refugees have arrived so exhausted they can barely get out of the car and walk, especially the children. The trauma of their experience is still very raw. One night, a Ukrainian mother staying in the house heard the sound of a toilet flushing and thought there was a bombing. "She panicked, picked up her baby and ran out because she didn't know what was happening," Adam explained. "I think this incident best illustrates what people are going through in Ukraine."

Adam hopes that the house is not only a shelter, but also a space where mothers and children—deprived of their husbands and fathers—can experience a sense of family and community. He noted that several rooms are currently occupied by a large extended family consisting of sisters, cousins, grandmothers and mothers-in-law—bookended by a great-grandson and a great-grandmother. "I can't help but think of the mission of our founder, Blessed Michael McGivney," Adam said. "He was combating the effects of industrialization on family life and working toward unity. And by a complete accident, I find myself working toward the same goal now, helping to protect families and bring them together."

ADRIAN WALCZUK is a member of Father Michał Sopoćko Council 17667.



Adam Weigel-Milleret (right) stands together with some of the refugees he and his wife have welcomed and housed in a large residence next to his company headquarters in Igołomia, Poland.

Photo by Sebastian Nycz

THE SAINTS COME MARCHING IN!

No, Not the Football Team!

We are all called to be saints. Yes, even you and I. God calls us all and if we respond, we become the ones we ought to be, the ones we were created to be. Nothing is impossible to Him.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

- Matthew 17:19-20



The following highlights the lives of a few saints whose name day coincides with the time period of this newsletter.

Spend some time getting to know them and the lives they lived. It's amazing to know that many saints were just common folk like you and me who one day took it upon themselves to love and follow the Lord even with the many deficiencies they knew they had.

ST. JOHN PAYNE - Feast day May 4th

Born: 1532 - Peterborough, England

Deceased: April 2, 1582 - Chelmsford, Essex, England

John Payne was born into a Protestant family. The date of his conversion to Catholicism is unknown. It is known that in 1574 he entered the English College at Douai, France and was ordained priest there on 7th April 1576. Less than three weeks later, on 24th April, he and Fr. Cuthbert Mayne left for the English Mission.

Fr. Payne based himself at Ingatestone, Essex. Early in 1577 he was arrested there and imprisoned. However, he was released and in November he went back to Douai. By Christmas 1579 he was back at Ingatestone.

In July 1581 Fr Payne was arrested in Warwickshire, due to the diligent efforts of the spy, George Eliot. Eliot was a known murderer, rapist and thief. Known as 'Judas' Eliot, he made his living denouncing Catholics and priests for bounty. The priest was committed to the Tower of London on 14th July.

On 20th March 1582, Fr. Payne was taken from the Tower and indicted on a made-up charge of treason for conspiring to murder the Queen and to install Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne. The guilty verdict was a foregone conclusion. Fr Payne was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, receiving his sentence calmly. On the morning of Monday, 2nd April 1582, Fr. Payne was dragged from prison to the place of execution. The crowd had become so sympathetic to Payne that they hung on his feet to speed his death and prevented the infliction of the quartering until he was dead.

John Payne was one of a group of prominent Catholic martyrs of the persecution who were later designated as the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII, by means of a decree of 29th December 1886 and was canonized along with the other Martyrs of England and Wales by Pope Paul VI on 25 October 1970.





*Basilica of
Saint Rita at Cascia*

ST. RITA OF CASCIA - Feast day May 22nd

Born: 1381 - Roccaporena, Italy

Deceased: May 22, 1457 - Cascia, Italy

Patron Saint of: The Impossible, Abused Wives, and Widows

Rita of Cascia was a wife, mother, widow, and member of a religious community. Her holiness was reflected in each phase of her life. Rita wanted to become a nun but was pressured at a young age into marrying a harsh and cruel man. During her 18-year marriage, she bore and raised two sons. After her husband was killed in a brawl and her sons had died, Rita tried to join the Augustinian nuns in Cascia. Unsuccessful at first because she was a widow, Rita eventually succeeded.

Over the years, her austerity, prayerfulness, and charity became legendary. When she developed wounds on her forehead, people quickly associated them with the wounds from Christ's crown of thorns. She meditated frequently on Christ's passion. Her care for the sick nuns was especially loving. She also counselled lay people who came to her monastery.

Beatified in 1626, Rita was not canonized until 1900. She has acquired the reputation, together with Saint Jude, as a saint of impossible cases. Many people visit her tomb each year.

ST. ALICE OF SCHAERBEEK - Feast day June 15th

Born: 1220 - Schaerbeek, Belgium

Deceased: June 11, 1250 - Brussels, Belgium

Patron Saint of: The blind and the paralyzed

St. Alice grew up in a tiny village near Brussels in the early 1200s. She entered the Camera Sanctae Mariae, a convent run by the Cistercian order when she was seven. St. Alice suffered much physical pain due to leprosy as well as mental anguish when her affliction forced her into isolation. She eventually suffered blindness and paralysis because of her leprosy. Because of her humble and courageous response to her affliction, she became an inspiration to the Cistercian community.



St. Alice loved receiving the Eucharist and feeling closer to God. It put her at peace for a while and was her only true escape from her physical sufferings.

The Lord began appearing to St. Alice telling her not to worry about her sicknesses because she would be saved in heaven. Her visions became a regular occurrence and Alice became very spiritual and in touch with the Lord through receiving the Eucharist and thinking deeply about her visions.

St. Alice died in 1250, and there were many miracles attributed through her intercession. In 1907, Pope Pius X canonized her saint. The church celebrates her feast day on June 15.

Today, St. Alice remains an inspiration of courage and humility to all who endure physical afflictions. She is an example of how suffering can bring us closer to Christ. She is known as the patron saint of the blind and paralyzed.

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA - Feast day June 21st

Born: March 9, 1568 - Castiglione, Italy

Deceased: June 21, 1591 - Milan, Italy

Patron Saint of: Young students, Christian youth

Aloysius (Luigi) Gonzaga gave up a privileged life and inheritance to live the vows of religious life even to the point of contracting the plague because of his selfless care for people already sick with it. He was the eldest son of the Marquis of Castiglione and heir to the family title. The Gonzagas were known as patrons of Renaissance artists, and they ruled what amounted to a kingdom.



He was destined for the military by his father (who was in service to Philip II), but by the age of 9 Aloysius had decided on religious life and made a vow of perpetual virginity. To safeguard himself from possible temptation, he would keep his eyes persistently downcast in the presence of women. St. Charles Borromeo gave him his first Holy Communion. A kidney disease prevented St. Aloysius from a full social life for a while, so he spent his time in prayer and reading the lives of the saints. Although he was appointed a page in Spain, St. Aloysius kept up his many devotions and austerities and was quite resolved to become a Jesuit.

His family eventually moved back to Italy, where he taught catechism to the poor. When he was 18, he joined the Jesuits, after finally breaking down his father, who had refused his entrance into the order. He served in a hospital during the plague of 1587 in Milan, and died from it at the age of 23, after receiving the last rites from St. Robert Bellarmine. The last word he spoke was the Holy Name of Jesus. He was beatified in 1605 and canonized in 1726.

ST. VINCENZA GEROSA - Feast day June 28th



Born: October 29, 1784 - Lovere, Italy

Deceased: June 29, 1847 - Lovere, Italy

Patron Saint of: Vietnam

Cofoundress of the Sisters of Charity of Lovere, Vincenza's family was well-to-do and noted for its charities to the poor and to the Church, but it suffered so much from domestic disharmony that Vincenza's mother died away from the household alone and poor. Priests advised Vincenza not to exchange her home for that of her uncles, so as not to forfeit her patrimonial rights.

Once she fell heir, with her sister, to the family fortune, she indulged her charitable zeal by transforming a house belonging to her into a hospital. In it, she performed the humblest duties, together with Bartolomea Capitanio, the one who would co-found the Sisters of Charity with her.

Vincenza ceded all her wealth to the new congregation. When Capitanio died in 1833, Vincenza, in her humility, thought herself totally incapable of carrying on the work but local priests, encouraged her to continue.

Vincenza proved sensible, penitent, and courageous enough to surmount every obstacle. To her belongs the credit for drawing up the constitutions of the Sisters of Charity, winning ecclesiastical approval for the institute, guiding it in its early years, and developing its characteristic spirit of amiability, humility, and charity. Against her wish, she was elected superior when the first community was juridically established in 1835. At her death, there were 243 members in 24 houses. Her most noted saying was: "One who knows the Crucified knows all. One who does not know the Crucified knows nothing." She was beatified on May 7, 1933, and canonized on May 18, 1950.

WHO'S IN YOUR SPIRITUAL POSSE?

What if you could sit down with your favourite saints and have a chat? What would you say? If you could pick five favourite saints or saints that are close to you and have a special meaning in your life, who would they be?

I recently listened to a podcast by Catholic scholar and bible educator Jeff Cavins who spoke about this and how he introduced it into his prayer life.

We all form part of the Communion of Saints, one body in Jesus so why not invoke the intercession of those with whom we feel close.

Who's in your posse? When do you call on them? Say hello to them every morning and ask them, along with Mother Mary, to help protect you and your family, to pray to them to strengthen those around you and help them to know Jesus.



Welcome to my posse (Tony Di Felice & Family):



ST. JOSEPH - Birth unknown, Death unknown
Patron Saint of: Families, Fathers, Canada, and more

Tony: *"Last year my family and I consecrated ourselves to St Joseph the patron saint of families, fathers and the church. I pray to him as he models his faithfulness to God as a protector of Mary and Jesus. My wife Rosina always had an affinity for St Joseph having grown up in Montreal and often visited the St Joseph Oratory."* Feast Day: March 19



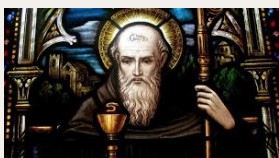
ST. JOHN BOSCO - 16 August 1815, Becchi, Italy – 31 January 1888, Turin, Italy
Patron Saint of: Young people, especially those living in poverty

Tony: *"Having been a parishioner of St Benedict's Parish for over 20 years, my family was drawn to the Salesian spirituality of St John Bosco patron saint of the young and the poor."* Feast Day: January 31



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA - 1195, Lisbon, Portugal – 13 June 1231, Verona, Italy
Patron Saint of: Lost items, lost people, lost souls and more.

Tony: *"I'm drawn to St Anthony primarily because he is my patron saint. I often pray to him for his intercession to bless and protect my family."* Feast Day: June 13



ST. BENEDICT - 2 March 480, Nursia, Italy – 21 March 547, Monte Cassino, Italy
Patron Saint of: Europe, against evil and evildoers and more

Tony: *"We pray to St Benedict because he is our parish's patron saint and a great protector against evil."* Feast Day: July 11

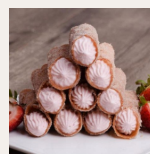


ST. GIANNA MOLLA - 4 October 1922, Magenta, Italy – 28 April 1962, Monza, Italy
Patron Saint of: Mothers, physicians, and unborn children

Tony: *"She did a lot of charitable work, especially with the elderly and was involved with the Saint Vincent de Paul group. Her volunteer work is an inspiration to us."* Feast Day: April 28

PAST, CURRENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS!

CANNOLI SALES SUCCESS!



Thank you for your support in purchasing or helping our CANNOLI SALES DRIVE after Masses at St. Benedict recently.

Your generosity is helping us to assist youth programs across our community including one based at Monsignor Percy Johnson High School.



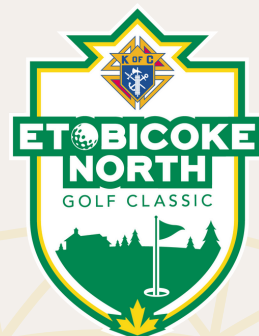
And thanks to @sugarmomma_sweetz for providing the delicious cannoli!

GOLF IS BACK!!!

Preparations are in full 'course' for our 3RD ANNUAL ETOBICOKE NORTH GOLF CLASSIC!

To be held on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH at MILL RUN GOLF CLUB in Uxbridge, ON

Our community speaks to who we are. In fact, the least fortunate of us paint the picture of our community's soul. When we give to those in need, we strengthen the bond that is Etobicoke North.



SO JOIN US!

Your partnership with the ENGK will help the Knights of Columbus support over 55 community programs organized by St. Benedict Parish. It will also assist the works of St. Vincent de Paul where 97% of every dollar raised is used to support hundreds of local families, and it will help The Sara Elizabeth Centre's art-based programming for young adults with special needs.

WANT TO BE A TOURNAMENT SPONSOR OR WISH TO GOLF!

FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CONTACT:

Adam Muscat at 416-428-9828 or adammuscat@live.ca.

NEXT KOFC GENERAL MEETINGS

The general meetings of the Knights of Columbus for the next two months will take place inside St. Benedict Church Hall on WEDNESDAY, MAY 25th and WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22nd both starting with Mass at 7:00 PM.

Members will receive notices a few days before each meeting with more info. Please note that at the May meeting we will elect officers for the 2022-2023 fraternal year. Nominations will be accepted up to the election date.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Bro. Chris Timson & his wife Julia on the marriage of their daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Gagandeep on March 18th!

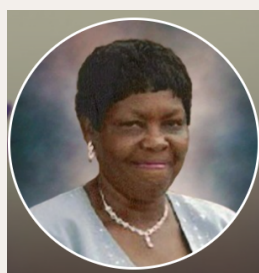
Congratulations to Bro. Domenic D'Amico & his wife Rosemarie on the births of three grandchildren; their sixth, seventh, and eighth!!!

Domenico Francesco and Adamo Giuseppe (fraternal twins) were born on March 22nd, and Christian Domenic was born on March 24th!

Congratulations to Bro. Adam Muscat & his wife Carmela on their son James' First Communion on April 23rd!

May God bless your families.

IN LOVING MEMORY



CATHERINE VERLINDA PITTERSON

May 12th, 1935 – March 30th, 2022

Beloved mother to two children: Pauline and Brother Clarence Pitterson, as well as 3 beautiful grandchildren Matthew, Marcus and Maya who will miss their grandmother dearly; they were the sparkle in her eye. Catherine's husband Lionel Pitterson pre-deceased her on September 19th, 2019, at the age of 95. They were married for close to 60 years and are now reunited again as one in the Kingdom of Heaven. Mom you will be dearly missed. We love you!

<https://www.arbormemorial.ca/glendale/obituaries/catherine-verlinda-pitterson/81331>



Let's pray for the repose of her soul and for her family. May she Rest In Peace.

If you have an event you'd like to have announced here, please send us a note to stjohnbosco14327@gmail.com



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN BOSCO COUNCIL #14327 2194 KIPLING AVE. ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO M9W 4K9

Published bi-monthly by the Communications Committee of St. John Bosco Council #14327
Pat Loduca, Tony Di Felice, Wolf Hartmann, Daniel Loduca

IF NOT US, THEN WHO? IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?

Founded on the principles of charity, unity, and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus was established in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn., and a group of parishioners. Their intent? To bring financial aid and assistance to the sick, disabled, and needy members and their families. Today, Father McGivney is being considered for sainthood.

Our Council strives to live the values of charity, unity, and fraternity every day and in every event we organize, whether to fundraise for a worthy cause or to bolster our Spirituality. We voluntarily assist our home parish St. Benedict Catholic Church in Etobicoke and we raise money for many other needs in our community and city.

Meetings:

General - Every 4th Wed. of the month except December, July, & August (*April & May meetings respectively include the nominations and the election of officers*)

Officers - Every 3rd Wed. of the month except July & August

Events:

Annual Golf Tournament - This year on Saturday, September 17th

Faith Forum - Every 2nd Wednesday of the month

Other Events - Multiple dinner dances, sports viewing parties, and game nights one day when God wills it so! Stay tuned.

Have any questions or comments? Have any ideas for future newsletters and possible fundraising events, or know someone who would like to learn more about what we do and stand for? Feel free to contact us at stjohnbosco14327@gmail.com.

Council Officers and Committee Leaders:

Pat Loduca <i>Grand Knight</i>	Fr. John Mariapragasam <i>Chaplain</i>
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Tony Di Felice <i>Deputy Grand Knight</i>	Adam Muscat <i>Chancellor</i>
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Denzil Fernandes <i>Financial Secretary</i>	Alberto Sala <i>Recorder</i>
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Jim Bradbury <i>Treasurer</i>	Steve Azzopardi <i>Lecturer</i>
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Vacant <i>Advocate</i>	Robert Brown <i>Warden</i>
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Inside Guard: Steve Azzopardi

Outside Guards: Don Smith, Joe Santogrossi, Joe D'Sylva

Board of Trustees: Chris Timson, Joe Muscat, Doug Woods

Tony Di Felice <i>Program Director</i>	Adam Muscat <i>Membership Director</i>
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Deacon Peter Takaoka <i>Faith Director</i>	Robert Brown <i>Recruitment Director</i>
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Tony Di Felice <i>Community Director</i>	Chris Timson <i>Fraternal Designate</i>
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Alberto Sala <i>Family Director</i>	Adam Muscat <i>Youth Chair</i>
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Chris Timson <i>Life Director</i>	Pat Loduca <i>Communications Chair</i>
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Warren Fernandes <i>Counsellor - Squires</i>	Adam Muscat <i>Fundraising Chair</i>
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