



1 March 2017  
Ash Wednesday

Dear Fathers, Pastoral Assistants and Parishioners,

I begin to write these lines from Calgary, where I have attended the installation of Bishop William McGrattan as the 8<sup>th</sup> bishop of Calgary. This is a notable moment in the diocese of Calgary, as Bishop Fred Henry served here for 19 years ... a long time. Bishop Henry had been the auxiliary bishop of London (his home diocese) before being assigned as the Bishop of Thunder Bay. (Incidentally, my great uncle, Bishop Ned Jennings, was the first bishop of Thunder Bay.) From Thunder Bay he was appointed to Calgary. The gratitude of the people here for Bishop Henry's faithful service was as loud as their welcome for Bishop McGrattan. It was a fine celebration for this diocese.

### **Assembly of Western Bishops**

The bishops of western Canada met in Victoria on February 21-23. This is an annual meeting, and allows us to collaborate on several issues that we face as a Catholic community in Canada, especially here in the west. Among the topics we discussed were:

- An update on St. Joseph Seminary and Newman Theological College, and the impact of changes in the *ratio formationis* for seminaries;
- A report from our collective insurance company, APEX, as it deals with substantial claims due to water damage in several churches. We also got an update on our Safe Environment procedures;
- The upcoming *ad limina* visit in Rome;
- Statements on physician-assisted suicide;
- Changes in prison ministry since this has been outsourced to Bridges of Canada;
- Programs and activities across our region in the light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and Calls to Action;
- One morning was spent with Father Pat Lee, SJ, a Jesuit from Gonzaga University, on spiritual discernment, a topic frequently addressed by Pope Francis.

### **Synod of Bishops 2018: Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**

Pope Francis has called for a Synod of Bishops to meet in Rome in October 2018 on the topic of Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. What a timely topic!

Everywhere I go in our archdiocese and meet you, either individually or as parish groups, you raise this question: What about our young people? If they don't retain the faith that we, their parents and grandparents have, what will become of them? What will become of the Church?

A preparatory document was circulated to all bishops around the world, with the request to have as many people as possible read the document, reflect on it, and send their bishop a summary of their responses to the reflection questions in the document. So, I hereby ask every organization in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan to read over the document (it's only 30 pages), discuss it among yourselves, and send me your reflections. We will then send a synopsis of your responses to the committee that is planning the Synod.

The preparatory document is available on our webpage (<http://archgm.ca>) in both French and English. I invite any individuals who wish, to do likewise. I ask you to submit these to Lauri Friesen at [exec.agm@live.ca](mailto:exec.agm@live.ca) before Friday 15 September 2017. I will remind you again before that deadline.

This is also my suggestion for the Parish Pastoral Council and Deanery Pastoral Council meetings in the coming months.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan