

April 1, 2021 Letter from the Archbishop



Dear Parishioners and Fathers,

Honouring the life of Fr. Maurice Marion

On Friday March 19th, Father Maurice Marion passed away in his apartment in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he had been living in retirement since June 2018.

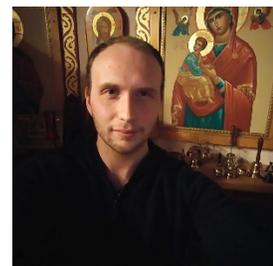


Originally from Winnipeg, Fr. Maurice had been married with two children until his wife passed away. His son and daughter being already adults, Maurice entered St. Joseph Seminary as a candidate for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, but then offered Archbishop Guimond to study for the Grouard-McLennan Archdiocese. Father Maurice did his pastoral internship at Our Lady of Peace Parish in Peace River, where he was ordained to the diaconate on February 16, 2008 and to the priesthood on August 23rd, 2008. Fr. Maurice was assigned as parish priest at Notre Dame de Lourdes in Girouxville in 2009 (also serving Tangent and Eaglesham). In August 2017, he was transferred to St. Thomas More in Fairview with responsibility to Hines Creek.

Fr. Maurice's funeral took place in Winnipeg on Tuesday 30 March. I am grateful to Fr. Maurice for his years of service to our archdiocese.

Archdiocese welcomes new Communications Officer

Kyle Greenham is the new Communications Officer for the Archdiocese. Born and raised in Newfoundland, Kyle began his career in communications there before moving to Edmonton. He comes to this position, having worked in several venues, including his latest at Grandin Media at the Archdiocese of Edmonton. In the midst of this he was baptized and received into the Catholic Church. I'm pleased to have on the chancery staff a person of his abilities. Welcome, Kyle, to the Archdiocese.



Ryan Beaupré to complete seminary formation in Ontario



Many of you may remember Ryan Beaupré. After completing his high school studies at Christ the King Minor Seminary in Mission BC, he entered St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton for our archdiocese. He then took a couple of years out of the sem, one year of which he worked on a master's degree in philosophy at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. It's a delight to have Ryan coming back to conclude his theology studies, for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. Ryan will complete his seminary formation at St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario.

Hopes for easing of COVID19 restrictions in our parishes

We continue to struggle with the COVID pandemic. It was my thought and hope that the provincial government would be able to ease some of the restrictions on indoor gatherings before Holy Week, so that we might accommodate more people at our Easter Triduum services. It seems that this was also the government's intention, until the number of cases of COVID, including variants of the virus, began to peak again. It is not as dire as last year, thank God. I'm pinning my hopes on 2022, but I'm making no immediate travel plans to go anywhere. "It's not over until it's over."



Zoom – A blessing for our vast archdiocese

You may have noticed that my calendar is filled with meetings by Zoom. This handy app has become standard equipment in many businesses and organizations, especially since the pandemic has made it much more difficult to meet physically in groups.



However, our archdiocese started using Zoom prior to the pandemic. Shortly after I became the bishop of our diocese, I became acutely aware of our vast distances, and how difficult it will be to try to have meetings that include parishioners and priests from across the whole diocese. I recall at one point gratefully using a school board video-conferencing program and equipment for a meeting that tried to connect Grouard, Slave Lake and High Level. It proved to be a total failure! Later I heard about Zoom from Sr. Louise Vanderploeg that her congregation of School Sisters of Notre Dame were using Zoom to meet together from all across the globe! Once Sister Louise got me onto this, I found it wonderful, but too few people were yet on it, and many were slow to warm up to the idea. Then came the pandemic, and instantly there are meetings and gatherings galore on Zoom. This has

become *de rigeur* for bishops' meetings. I use it not only for archdiocesan meetings, but also personally to meet with family members, and former class mates from the minor seminary (now, that's reaching back into the last century!). It's an inexpensive app, and is quite user-friendly.

I don't say all this just to tell you about Zoom ... I want to encourage all of our parishioners and priests to learn and be able to use it. I believe this will be one of the lasting effects of the pandemic: meeting by Zoom. As I've pointed out, our diocese is so vast, it's difficult for us to meet otherwise. Many people don't like to travel long distances for meetings. This way, you can attend the meeting from your own office or living room. This is not to say we will never again meet personally; there are several times and events when we must meet personally. But for many other occasions, an on-line meeting serves us quite well. I have already seen this in bishops' meetings.

Year of St. Joseph

We have begun the Year of St. Joseph. I encourage you to look for updates on the elements in this year on our website <https://archgm.ca/year-of-st-joseph/>. Let us all renew our devotion to St. Joseph, and deepen our prayer life as families and individuals. I often call to mind the motto that I chose for myself when I became a bishop: *What God wants is for all to be holy.*



+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.

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