



September 12 2024

Dear Parishioners and Clergy of the Archdiocese,

As you may already have heard, I am back home.

After my hyperbaric oxygen therapy sessions which ended on August 27th, I stayed on at Providence Renewal Centre for the retreat for our clergy and clergy candidates until the 30th. It was nice to be back in my own quarters. Be it ever so humble, as the saying goes.

My “summer vacation” in Edmonton was very pleasant and most beneficial to my health. For those who may be wondering, let me give you a thumbnail sketch. On Sunday 14 July, I caught a private plane ride from Grande Prairie to Villeneuve airport with Angel Flights Alberta. Angel Flights is a charity operated by private pilots who offer free flights to Albertans who need to travel a long distance to reach a hospital or clinic for their medical appointments. My pilots flew from their Calgary home to pick me up, and delivered me to Villeneuve.

Rae Weniger, who has been meeting many of my needs, drove from Grande Prairie to meet me at Villeneuve airport; she delivered me to Providence Centre, which became my home for the following six weeks. Rae made sure I was settled before returning home.

Providence Centre is the local community of the Sisters of Providence. Since they have an infirmary, they also provide a home and nursing care to many sisters from other religious orders of women in Alberta ... not to mention the Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan! I was amply provided for during my six weeks of therapy. I was the only male in the residence! The sisters and nurses all treated me very well.

Each weekday, a Knight of Columbus would ferry me between Providence Centre and Misericordia Hospital, where for two hours I would lay in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber. Dressed only in a hospital gown, with no metal on me (for fear of a spark), my chamber was filled with 100% oxygen under pressure.

The chamber is made of plexiglass, so I was able to watch a movie during the two-hour session. I would breathe normal air (21% oxygen) during two ten-minute

intervals, to avoid suffering a stroke. I was slated for 30 sessions of oxygen over six weeks. By the time I finished three weeks, there was no more bleeding, which was the presenting problem. As a result, I have not needed a blood transfusion since then. Praise be to God; this ordeal would seem to be over. I will have this confirmed by my urologist next week. I still deal with some pain issues, but even these are meeting with some resolution.

I was pleased over the weeks in Edmonton to meet up with so many people I've known from our diocese. David and Bertha Hartman. Louise Lee. Roger and Angele Field. Doug and Faith Paul. I also met up with Fathers Dino Benedet, Stan Liska and Mick Fleming, along with a couple of cousins that I rarely see.

I was offered hospitality at every turn. In case anyone thought I was lonely while in Edmonton ... not true! Among the Sisters at Providence Centre, I met many who wanted to tell me of their service in our archdiocese. I should have had a tape recorder to collect the stories!

I am so grateful to all of you for your prayers and support over these weeks. There is indeed a power in prayer, which I could feel. You and so many have been kind and thoughtful over these months. What can I say but a thousand times thank you.

Mille fois merci!

Yours sincerely 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 large initial 'G'.

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