



Deacons of Manitoba Newsletter



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Words from Deacon James

Happy new year!

This is a new year, a year that will hold new adventures, challenges, maybe life lessons. But what we can be sure of is that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Wars, refugees, disease, hunger, exploitation of the earth and nature, we surely won't forget COVID-19 any time soon. This makes me wonder where is compassion, generosity, respect, tolerance, and love? What can I do as one person? Caring is still very much alive; it is in the hearts of all.

Sometimes we must dig really deep to find it. It is when we put others, and their needs, before our own. It is hard to be self-centred when we are grateful for all the gifts we have received, beginning with our lives, and all the other graces.

Let us be grateful in prayer and actions this year of 2024!

May the best day of 2023 be your worst day in 2024.

Happy New Year and many blessings!

Deacon Jim and Family



Words from Carol

Hello dear members of the Deacon Community of Manitoba,

My name is Carol MacKenzie-Gruber. Deacon Michael Cordova has asked me to write the community news for our newsletter. Following is a short bio.

I was born in Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan on Christmas Eve of 1950. Yes, if I am cut, I bleed green. I am of Germanic ancestry. I came to the University of Manitoba to take my diploma in Physical Therapy and worked at the St. Amant Centre for 19 years. I came through the RCIA at St. Bernadette Parish in 1980. The formation team impressed upon me that I was a disciple of Jesus, and I began to exercise my discipleship as a member of the choir a week after I was baptised. I also became a Benedictine Oblate in 1983.



John MacKenzie and I married in 1988; our marriage theme was 'How right it is to love you'. We moved to Brandon in 1990 for John's work; I continued to work as a physiotherapist at the Brandon Regional Health Centre. After I retired, I did two units of CPE, and volunteered for on-call duty in the Pastoral/Spiritual Care Department of the hospital for about 5 years.

John had taken his deacon formation in the early 1980's but was not called to ordination until 1997. Most of you will know that Deacon John died January 25, 2023, on his 86th birthday after a lengthy, slowly progressive illness. The Deacon Community has meant a lot to us over the years, and I am more than happy to continue to be connected with you all.

Since I am supposed to write about community news, I need you, the members of the community to send me your news. You can get my email address through Deacon Michael.

God bless you all, and may you have a joy-filled Christmas as you celebrate the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Your sister in Christ,

Carol

The Deacons of Manitoba Community is composed of deacons from three Manitoba dioceses: Saint Boniface, Winnipeg and Keewatin-The Pas. On September 29-October 1, 2023, approximately 25-28 deacons, wives and widows gathered at St. Charles Retreat Centre for their annual retreat with Father Gerry Ward as retreat master.

The retreat began Friday with Evening Prayer and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Archbishop Richard Gagnon joined us for Morning Prayer on Saturday morning, followed by talks on prayer, communication, and self-care by Father Gerry. We were blessed to have the opportunity for confession also.

One of the gems I gleaned is that I am that grain of wheat that has to fall on the ground and die so that I can yield a rich harvest. If I stay stuck in a rut, not willing to risk, to step out into the world and do my bit, I cannot enrich the lives of others. The world is crying out for people to step out in faith, to respond to the nudging of the Holy Spirit, to be that messenger of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We, all the baptised, are called to be that grain of wheat that dies to self for others, as our Lord and Saviour did.

We were delighted to gather together after a long absence, meeting new deacons and welcoming old friends. We look forward to the next gathering at the call of the executive. Happy Christmas and many blessings to all in the New Year.

Following are a few pictures taken at the retreat.



Group photo in the Chapel.



**Deacon Executive: Back row: Doug Cross, Rick Loftson, Charles Baumgartner, Jim Frater
Front row: Rick Ryzner, Clarence Fisher, Michael Cordova**



**Deacon Wayne and Judy Johnson celebrated their 51st anniversary on Sept 30 at the retreat.
Congratulations!**

Suggestions or comments:

Please do let us know how to do better with the newsletter through email: fraterjim218@gmail.com or michaelmartincordova@yahoo.com