



## Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

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**June 16, 2019**

### **Solemnity of The Most Holy Trinity**

To All the Faithful of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

#### Blessings and Peace

I am happy to be writing to you on this Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Having just celebrated the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, we now focus on the fullness of God as expressed in the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we are made in the image and likeness of God, then perhaps it is in the image of the Trinity of God that we can best find our identity as a Christian Community, a body made of many parts but finding wholeness in our relationship to God and in our relationship to one another.

What does such a body look like? In the Gospel of John, we find reference to Jesus teaching the disciples how they should behave in his absence.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (Jn 13.34-35)

The love we are called to share is the same love which binds the Father to the Son and spills over on us through the gift of the Spirit. As we celebrate the gift of the Holy Trinity today, let us be ever vigilant in treating one another with courtesy and respect. Let us strive to bear witness to the call of the risen Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who enter the doors of our Church so that they will take one look at us and know we are Christians by our love.

With this letter it is my privilege to share with you the upcoming changes in pastoral leadership in our communities. These are the first formal appointments announced since my being ordained as Bishop for the Diocese. I am pleased to say that, while change is never easy, we have been blessed with the gift of new labourers in our vineyard and I am confident in the priestly gifts that the Lord has provided.

**Fr. Maridas Vallabhenni:** New to us from the diocese of Cuddapah, India, Fr. Mariadas is appointed, effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, as Pastor to the region of the Sahtu where he has already been hard at work for several months. Fr. Maria will be responsible for the Catholic faith communities in Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake, Deline and Tulita.

**Fr. Macleen Anyanwu:** A member of the religious congregation, Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy, Fr. Macleen is appointed, effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, as Pastor to the region of the Dehcho. Fr. Macleen will be responsible for the Catholic faith communities in Fort Simpson, Wrigley, Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Sambaa K'e and Jean Marie River. Over the next several weeks Fr. Macleen will have the opportunity to travel with Fr. Joe to the various communities so as to build upon a strong foundation already in place.

We pray for these priests as they take on their missions. I ask you to welcome them and to support them as members of your local faith community. Teach them and learn from them, get to know them and let them get to know you, for together we are stronger and reflect more faithfully the body of Christ.

I would also like to announce some retirements and farewells.

**Fr. Joseph Daley:** On loan for more than 20 years from the diocese of St. John, NB, effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Fr. Joe will be retiring from full-time parish ministry (currently Sacred Heart, Fort Simpson). Fr. Joe will be moving to Ebner house in Yellowknife where he will continue his duties as Vicar General for the diocese and be available for pastoral help. He will also spend more time engaging in a passion of his, Cruise ship chaplaincy. It is with grateful hearts that we thank Fr. Joe for his dedication and service over the years. We are also grateful that he is choosing to spend his coming retirement years with us and will continue to serve the diocese in a new way.

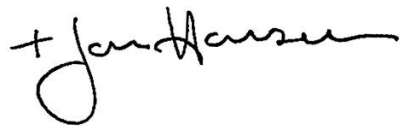
**Fr. Mick (Gerald) Fleming:** For the past 6 months, Redemptorist Priest, Fr. Mick Fleming has been looking after the Delta/Arctic region of the diocese based out of Inuvik. Sadly, we bid Fr. Mick farewell. As of August 1<sup>st</sup>, he has received a new appointment from the Redemptorists and will be moving to Saskatoon, SK to become the next pastor of St. Mary's parish. We thank Fr. Mick for his generous service to our northernmost communities and trust that this is not the last that we will see of him. Fr. Mick's departure will leave an unfortunate gap in the pastoral care for the region. I once again call upon the generosity and zeal of those communities to carry on faithfully until we can find a pastor to serve.

And finally, with a joyful heart I announce the upcoming ordination of Mr. Lee Stroman to the Permanent Diaconate.

**Mr. Lee Stroman:** On Wednesday, September 18, 2019, Lee Stroman, a parishioner of St. Patrick's parish in Yellowknife, will be ordained a permanent deacon for our diocese by myself (Bishop Jon Hansen). Lee has been studying theology for the past number of years and has now come to the completion of his program. Lee has also recently been hired by St. Patrick's parish as a pastoral worker and so is in a wonderful position to exercise his ministerial gifts in the diocese. Please keep Lee, his wife Emily and his whole family, in your prayers as they prepare for this very special occasion.

With summer quickly upon us I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very blessed season with lots of opportunities for recreation, relaxation and relishing the gift of our loved ones and the beautiful land on which we live.

Peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Bishop Jon