



Your CHURCH, Your VOICE

Divine INITIATIVE



InfoJOURNAL
SPRING 2015

If all goes according to plan, Paul Blair will be ordained to the priesthood in June 2016. However, nothing in his early life had prepared him to walk with God... Except God himself!

Now 30 years of age, Paul Blair, a Manitoba Francophile from St Norbert, was ordained as a deacon on December 19th, 2014, after 8 years as a seminarian. The diaconate is the first sacramental step to the priesthood. Paul's ordination as a priest could be as soon as June 2016.

Ten years ago, Paul Blair was not a churchgoer. "I was baptized as an infant, because on my Mother's side, they were Catholics, but we were never a practising family. At university, I studied sciences, particularly physics. I was an atheist, convinced that science had all the answers".

In April 2005, Pope John-Paul died and a new pope would be elected. As he was interested in history, Paul decided to keep abreast of this event "to see how this machine would choose a pope. A conclave was a new thing for me; I had never seen one before", said Paul.

As he was looking at the funeral Mass for the Pope, this science student suddenly thought "Wouldn't it be great to be a priest". I had no idea where this came from, I knew no priests and if I had been at one Mass in my lifetime, that was all! I was thoroughly confused".

During the following weeks, Paul wrote his science exams, but he remembers that the thought of priesthood never left him. He arranged to meet a priest and asked to complete his Christian initiation. In September 2005, he started the catechetical program for adults and in September 2006, he entered the St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton.

"At the beginning, I had many questions, such as: Do I really believe there is a God? I read a great deal, I did much research and

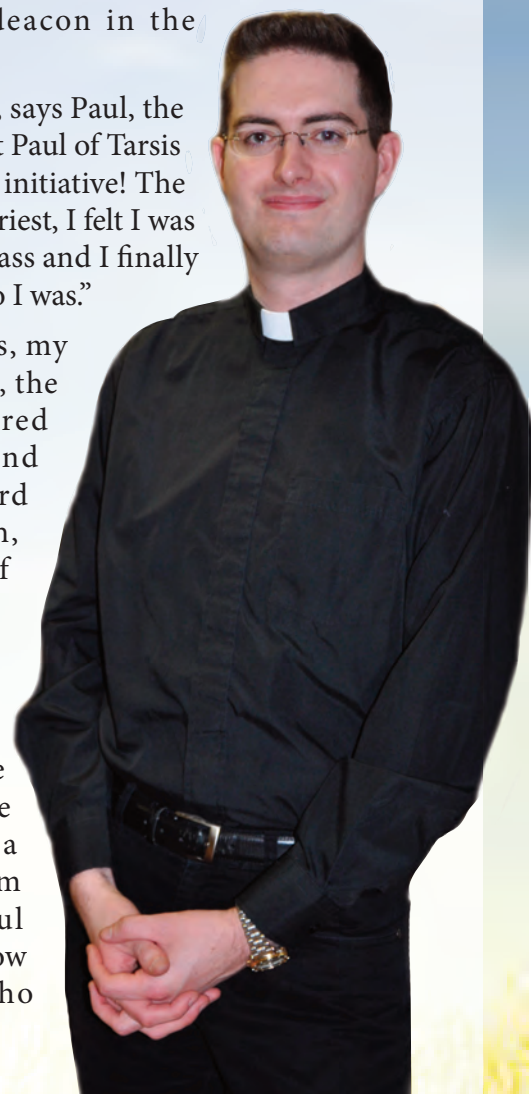
when, finally, I was at the end of my wits, I started to pray. I asked Him to convince me and then, everything quickly came together! I had opened the door".

Now, Paul Blair is a student at Sacred Heart Seminary in Milwaukee and will come back to Saint Boniface in the summer to serve as deacon in the Archdiocese.

"The more I tell my story, says Paul, the more I find it strange. But as Saint Paul of Tarsis said: it is pure grace, it is a divine initiative! The first time I imagined myself as a priest, I felt I was looking through a magnifying glass and I finally saw that everything fit in with who I was."

"My academic aptitudes, my love of history, arts and culture, the fact that I had never considered settling down with a wife and children, my inclination toward simplicity rather than wealth, everything made sense in view of the priesthood, as if life had foreseen what I would become!"

If Paul's unique experience of conversion came forcefully and speedily, the majority of seminarians had, like him, no religion or belonged to a religion other than Catholicism when they were younger. Paul concludes: "It's crazy, but that's how God works. He is the One who chooses!" †



The Good
NEWS

Hello, dear readers! You now have on hand the new format of the Diocesan newsletter, previously known as *New Vision*, and renamed *Your Church, Your Voice*, *Diocesan InfoJournal* which will be published three times a year, from September to June.

The content of this publication is prepared in collaboration with a diocesan editorial team and the staff of the RédWeb Department of *La Liberté* which supports us with interviews and reports of parish events. The *InfoJournal* will be distributed to all parishes in our diocese (as was *New Vision*) so as to improve communications with the people of the diocese and the community at large. It will be inserted in *La Liberté*.

Your Church, Your Voice is also published online at

www.archsaintboniface.ca, the Diocesan website, in the section: *Our Faith Stories, Treasures to Share*.

In order for this new project to evolve and bear fruit, we need **your** collaboration to send us your parish news: events, initiatives, projects, as well as references of people who would like to tell their stories of faith and community. We look forward to hear "your voice" at infojournal@archsaintboniface.ca to make known "your stories", treasures that will be the "Good News" of inspiration, encouragement, faith, hope and trust in our Lord and our Church.

Come and see! Come and read! †

Maryvonne Alarie, Coordinator of the Editorial Team

On-site Visits: STRENGTHENING THE TIES

Archbishop Albert LeGatt takes his pastoral responsibilities to heart. Canon Law specifies that a bishop must make pastoral visits to all diocesan parishes; thus, Bishop LeGatt has been meeting with each of the St. Boniface parishes, one after the other, since January 2014. Be it to consider their financial statements, their strengths or their weaknesses, he has been there to discuss parish life with all of the parishioners and to encourage them to carry on. He also urges them to embrace the vision of a revitalized pastoral life and get started on the pathway to evangelization. These pastoral visits have been Archbishop LeGatt's way of renewing the ties between the bishop and the faithful of the various parishes, as well as between each parish and the Archdiocese at its service. †



"Archbishop LeGatt visited our parish on March 18 and 19, 2014. At that time, he met with members of various organizations, committees and parish teams. He celebrated mass and participated at an evening coffee get-together.

This visit made it possible for the Archbishop to

*Agnès Mao-Tougas and Léo Charrière,
Co-Parish Life Directors,
Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Parish, St. Boniface*

"Archbishop LeGatt was in our parish on June 9 and 10, 2014, at which time he held meetings with our parish councils and our parish priest, Father Nelson, with whom he later met privately. He celebrated mass, that was followed by a supper with the Parish Councils to discuss parish business. Bishop LeGatt also visited the school and met with the young people and the Principal to discuss catechesis. As well, he took time to visit three personal care homes. The next day, mass was followed by a coffee meeting with open

forum, to which the entire community was invited.

We, in St. Agathe, were proud to welcome the Archbishop! He is very human and extremely approachable. He gave our community a glimpse of his playful side and everyone appreciated this very much. This visit demonstrated that Bishop LeGatt has time for his "lambs" - he is our Bishop too, not just the one for St. Boniface's "humongous" Cathedral."

*Thérèse Dorge,
Co-Parish Life Director,
St. Agathe Parish, St. Agathe*



During Archbishop LeGatt's pastoral visit (October 24-26, 2014), he got together with our priest, Father Gerry Sembrano, as well as with our committees, our lay ministers and various groups in the parish. Not only did he visit with the children in the catechism class and with young people from the youth group, he also attended our *Praisefest*. As well, he held two forums, presided at three masses and shared several meals with parishioners.

*Tom Leppelmann,
Chair of the Pastoral Council,
Christ Our Saviour Parish, Steinbach*

Our parish was very honoured to receive him. His visit strengthened the relationship between our parish and our Bishop, and thus strengthened unity within the diocese. Throughout the weekend, through various activities, all our parishioners had an opportunity to interact with Bishop LeGatt. We are grateful that he took time out of his busy schedule to pay a visit to our parish.

A Growing PARISH



From left to right:
K.C. Sim, Sungin Kang and Laurent Song.

St. Thomas More parish has a Christian community that is 99% of Korean origin and every year, it welcomes more and more faithful who ask to receive the sacrament of baptism.

St. Thomas More parish, in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, has about 300 parishioners of all ages and welcomed about 20 new members in the past three years, most of them immigrants recently arrived from South Korea.

At first, the church of St. Thomas More was a chaplaincy. It was officially erected as a Korean parish by Archbishop Émilie Goulet on June 19th, 2009. Sunday masses are now celebrated in Korean by Fr. Andrew Kim.

This year, during the 2015 Easter Vigil, 14 adults, men and women, will be baptized. They follow the catechumenal program, accompanied by Laurent Song, a layperson who was himself baptized as an adult.

"I was baptized in Korea in June 1984", explains Laurent Song. "I had already journeyed with young catechumens in Vietnam, but this is the very first time I can walk with adults on their journey to baptism."

The new immigrants from South Korea, K.C. Sim and Sungin Kang, are among the 14 adults who will be baptized. "I have asked, along with my wife, to receive baptism, as I desire to know God and the Catholic religion, but also to be part of a community, explains Sungin Kang. I wish to take part in building a lively community of faithful to the one true God, with all the other parishioners."

K.C. Sim confirms the importance of the community aspect of the sacrament of baptism. "It's important for me to be able to rely on religion since I came to Canada, as I have no family

here. I need to rely on God, as well as on a community of faith. It is difficult for me to express my feelings, but my trust in God is growing". He also journeys towards baptism with his wife.

Back in Korea, Sungin Kang was a disciple of Buddha, and K.C. Sim's family was also guiding him towards Buddhism. But after their arrival in Canada, conversion was easy.

"I find that there are similarities between both religions, even if the two are different, states K.C. Sim. I recognize similar values and mentality. Coming to church or to baptismal preparation is soothing and relaxing. And that is really motivating!"

The baptismal preparation lasts 16 weeks, and catechumens must attend at least 70% of the sessions in order to receive the sacrament. A manual approved by the parish, videos and other media in Korean, help the catechumens delve into topics such as: God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit, Christendom, the sacraments.

"For beginners, what is most important is not the quantity of information received, but the manner in which it is received", says Laurent Song. "In order to receive Christ, we must learn to let go, to empty our hands."

"It's a good challenge for me. It is an opportunity to renew my faith and open my own hands. I was baptized more than 30 years ago; this is just a great way to revive the grace I received at the time. It has transformed my heart and makes me feel closer to God and Jesus." †

Healing of FAMILIES



Father Yozefu-B. Ssemakula

The healing of families through prayer was on the agenda, February 13, 14 and 15 2015 at the Parish of St. Alexander, in Fort Alexander, as part of The Healing of Families seminar, animated by Father Yozefu-B. Ssemakula. Invited by the parish and the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, this African priest primarily addressed the First Nations citizens of Fort Alexander, in addition to all the faithful wishing to live a healthier and spiritually enriched family life.

"The healing of families is of utmost importance", declared Father Yozefu-B. Ssemakula, "especially now, at the beginning of the 21st century, with so many families being destroyed by breakups. One person's emotional and spiritual health affects others. The family is the cornerstone of society. A wounded family affects everyone."

The coordinator of the St. Alexander Parish Council, Cynthia Bunn, feels that "the negative aspects in our lives are consequences of long-past actions from which we need to free ourselves. My grandfather, my mother and I attended residential schools," she explains. "This experience left its mark on us but we have the opportunity to refuse to be crushed by the past. We have the freedom to reject this by waking from our deep spiritual sleep. It will take more than two or three days to accomplish this and to heal our community. It will be a long process. The key is for us to remember we can choose our future. The key is to act and to place our confidence in God." †

The pastor of St. Alexander Parish, Malachy Ekezie, agrees. "The wounds are deep in the First Nations community of the Sagkeeng region", he stated. "There is depression and suicide. When a person is wounded, families suffer, and the whole community suffers. This workshop will help heal the broken hearts of those who cannot forgive themselves or others. In summary, it will free the people who live under the burden of their suffering."

Father Ssemakula invited us to re-think our concept of God," explained Roberta, a resident of Fort Alexander. "We

explored the Holy Scriptures, to remind ourselves that God does not condemn or chastise us, but heals us and frees us. All too often, we blame God for our trials, telling ourselves we are not worthy of Him".

"Christ loves us", emphasized Randy Ducharme, a resident of Hollow Water. "Christ wants us to heal. He is not a vengeful god. So, by praying, we can confidently give ourselves over to Him and, remembering that we have His support, we have the power to regain control over our lives. It is liberating."

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Together GROWING IN FAITH



La Broquerie ARISE Together in Christ group.

ARISE Together in Christ is a journey of evangelization and faith made in small groups. The young Franco-Manitoban Anne-Marie Dizengremel is living this experience.

Since the Fall of 2014, Anne-Marie, a 17 year-old Catholic teen-ager has been meeting weekly with four or five young people ranging from 14-18 years of age. They come together to pray and reflect on the gospel.

How did this happen? These young people from La Broquerie have formed a group ARISE Together in Christ, a program sponsored in October 2012 by Archbishop Albert LeGatt. Geared towards evangelization and spiritual renewal, the sessions are spread over a three-year period during which participants gather in one another's homes to break open the Word and share how they are living their lives.

"It's fun to be able to talk with other young people and to hear their opinions about the faith and so to deepen our own faith," Anne-Marie says joyfully. "We always have an opening prayer, then we talk about the questions asked in the booklet we each have. Sometimes, we launch into other topics related to the topic at hand."

One of our members, Jacinthe Wiebe, followed a training session to be the group leader.

Lillian Ćulumović, the coordinator for Religious Education and Evangelization for the diocese tells us, "There are 170 ARISE Together in Christ groups in the diocese involving about 2,000 people of all ages and every walk of life." Most of these groups are mixed groups, made up of people of all ages, but the La Broquerie group decided to gather only young people in their group. It's great to see them so involved! That's the way our Church will be renewed!"

In fact, ARISE Together in Christ helps Anne-Marie deepen her faith. "The meetings are always very challenging," she confides. They really make me think about my faith. I've made several retreats, but ARISE gives me a more powerful experience because we are in small groups which help us really get to know one another, and we are in our own environment, our own community."

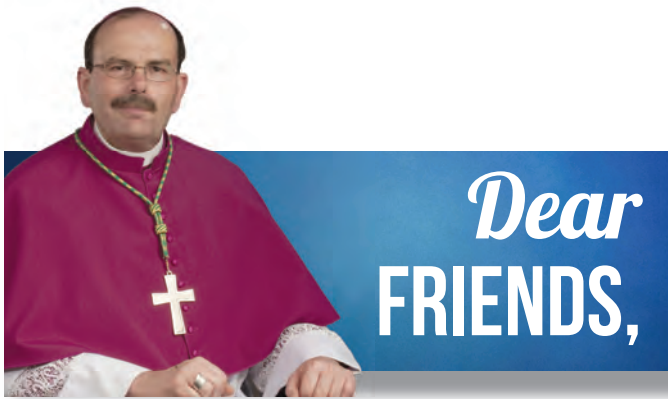
This spiritual experience happens through sharing reflections on the Word of God, but also through the challenges the group raises each week. "It might be serving Mass as a group, sending a letter to someone we've not spoken to for a long time, or whatever response we might make to the gospel passage,"

Anne-Marie comments. "It helps to reflect on what we are doing in our everyday lives."

Furthermore, as Lillian Ćulumović points out, the gatherings are a great tool for evangelization. "If a member meets someone who has had an initial encounter with Jesus Christ, or a deepening experience, he or she can invite that person to come to the meetings, answer his or her questions and even accompany him or her to church. This is a friendlier approach and far less intimidating!"

The groups are discerning to find another name since the ARISE Together in Christ program belongs to RENEW International with whom the Archdiocese of St. Boniface had a three year contract that has ended. But even under another name "our group plans to continue to meet", states Anne-Marie Dizengremel.

"The Church is called to go out from the church building into the streets," concludes Lillian Ćulumović. "That's what we've done with ARISE Together in Christ." †



Dear FRIENDS,

Our Faith Stories, Treasures to Share is being launched in our diocese! What's this all about?

Well, to understand the importance of this new arrival, we have to go back a few years to 2009 and the expression of a desire by many across our diocese for a greater quality of communication within our diocese: from diocese to parish, parish to diocese and parish to parish.

Along with many efforts, including a revamped website, a major plank of our communication, was the creation of the diocesan news bulletin: *New Vision*. This publication, shared in all our parishes six times a year, highlighted the many events and initiatives across our Diocese.

This was the child; now is the time for the teenager to stride forth as we continue to seek ways to ever-better connect the people of our Diocese. And as teenagers today are especially connected electronically, so in a parallel fashion, we are turning even more towards the electronic media to ensure that our needs of communication are met.

Our Faith Stories, Treasures to Share will be a section on the home page of our diocesan website which can be viewed at: www.archsaintboniface.ca/index.html?lang=en. On a regular basis every month, articles will appear on recent events that took place or on upcoming major initiatives and thrusts either at the diocesan, regional or individual parish level.

Then, three times a year, a special 3-4 page newspaper, *Your Church, Your Voice*, will be delivered to your parish. It will include a selection of certain articles from the monthly website items as well as new material.

So, our communication efforts grow electronically but also remain on paper... something for everyone's taste and preference in receiving information.

All this so that we can see more clearly how the Spirit is at work amongst us, how an initiative in one parish can be an encouragement for another parish to do the same, how we are indeed working together as a community of faith across our whole Diocese, how the Lord is touching lives and hearts in so many ways. It's all about strengthening our hope and our confidence in God. It's all about rediscovering, through the treasure of our faith stories, the desire to be a missionary Church sharing the Good News with all.

Take a moment to ponder all this, then read *Our Faith Stories, Treasures to Share*, on-line or the newspaper, *Your Church, Your Voice*. †

+ Albert LeGat
Archbishop of Saint Boniface

Free RESOURCES

The Resource Library allows parishioners to borrow, free of charge, a wide variety of CDs, DVDs, religious books and pastoral resources. It is located at 622 Taché Ave. and is open Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 12 PM and 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM. To register, sign up online at: www.archsaintboniface.ca/resources/en/ or call Agata: 204-594-0271.



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Upcoming EVENTS...

Youth + Young Adults Ministry

Ecumenical Youth Gathering: Sunday, April 12, 2015 at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Selkirk, Manitoba. For youth ages 13-18 years.

Catholic Underground Concert: Thursday, April 30; for all youth and young adults (ages 13 to 35 years). Location to be determined.

Spirit Days: Thursday, April 30 for Grades 5/6 and Friday, May 1st for Grades 7/8; at Immaculate Conception Church, 181 Austen St., Winnipeg. Fun-filled days for Catholic youth with music and speakers that will inspire.

For all details, visit the diocesan website: Services to Parishes & Communities/Youth & Young Adults Ministry



The New Evangelization Summit

Inspiring Catholics Simulcast from Ottawa – Friday, April 24 & Saturday, April 25, 2015

This summit will be broadcast out to 20 different locations across North America including Saint Boniface at: Paroisse Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens, 289 Dussault Avenue, Winnipeg, on Friday, April 24 from 6:30 to 9:15 PM and Saturday, April 25. To view full details and the video of Archbishop LeGat's message: www.archsaintboniface.ca/main.php?p=569.



NATHANIEL 2015-2018

A New Chapter
Lay Faith Formation
Archdiocese of Saint Boniface
www.archsaintboniface.ca
Lillian Čulumović, Coordinator English Sector,
204-594-0276, lculumovic@archsaintboniface.ca

Knowing the Soil: Seeking the Face of Christ in All

November 5, 6 & 7, 2015. This biennial conference planned by the Western Conference of Catholic Religious Educators (WCCRE) will be hosted by the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface.
For more information, visit www.wccre.org or contact your Diocesan Service of Catechetics: Koreen at 204-594-0273.



**SCAN THIS CODE TO VIEW THE EVENTS CALENDAR.



Let us PRAY!

Do you have a prayer intention dear to your heart? Entrust it into our hands. We'll send it to the Résidence Despins in St. Boniface where the community will pray for you every week. Your prayer intentions will remain anonymous. Send us your intentions by email: infojournal@archsaintboniface.ca or by mail: PRAYER INTENTIONS, InfoJournal, Archdiocese of St. Boniface, 622 Taché Avenue, Winnipeg MB R2H 2B4.



Your FEEDBACK

Do you have questions, comments or suggestions for us? Go ahead, send us an email: infojournal@archsaintboniface.ca or by mail: *InfoJournal*, *Your Church, Your Voice*, 622 Taché Avenue, Winnipeg MB R2H 2B4.

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