



# Diocese of Thunder Bay

## Newsletter



Catholic Pastoral Centre | 1222 Reaume Street, Postal Box 10400, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8 | dotb.ca

Summer 2025

## Interview with Bishop Alan Campeau *By Grace Daigle-Matkowski*



On Thursday, February 27, 2025, Father Alan Campeau was consecrated and installed as the sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Thunder Bay. He succeeds Bishop Fred Colli, whose resignation was accepted in June 2024 upon reaching the age of 75. On June 16th of this year, I had the chance to sit down with Bishop Campeau and speak with him to better understand who he is and how the last four months since his installation have been. We covered topics ranging from academics, his priesthood, and what his plans are for the diocese, all with a very hopeful and uplifting tone. Having only met him briefly twice before, and I can say it was a very insightful conversation which I share with you here.

With roots in Belle River, Ontario, and beginning his priestly journey in the Diocese of London, this is what he shared on how his upbringing and early ministry shaped his approach to faith and community: "It's shaped it considerably. I've always been surrounded by Catholic family values growing

up with my parents and my seven siblings, later six sadly. During Lent, we'd kneel around the living room furniture, to pray the rosary together. We attended Sunday Mass weekly, and prayed grace before every meal. I was an altar server, was involved with the youth group and did volunteer work for the Church. The Church has always been a part of my life, and prayer has sustained me through challenging times."

Bishop Campeau's academic journey led him to St. Peter's Seminary and King's College at Western University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Sociology, followed by a Master of Divinity in preparation to become a priest. "To get into the theology program, you need at least five courses in philosophy. I also took five sociology courses, and five electives which gave me a double degree. They do complement each other."

Following his ordination to the priesthood for the Diocese of London by Bishop John Sherlock (April 28, 1990), he served at St. Gregory the Great





Parish in St. Clair Beach and St. Pius X in London. In 1995, responding to an invitation from newly appointed Bishop Fred Henry of the Diocese of Thunder Bay, who sought support in ministering to parishes facing a priest shortage, Father Campeau embarked on what was intended as a short-term assignment, with the blessing of Bishop Sherlock.

Having served in many parishes and missions across the diocese, including his most recent appointment as Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Dryden, Immaculate Conception in Ignace, and Our Lady of Fatima in Vermilion Bay, he was able to develop his leadership skills. “Each of my assignments have been learning experiences that have helped me walk with the people. Sometimes if you’re having a bad day, you might not respond well to someone, and you learn from those mistakes; and when you have a parish council, it’s about discussing the needs of the parish. We have to be open to good dialogue, and build community. I have this little philosophy in my head that when asked ‘what do you do for a living?’ I respond ‘I build faith communities.’ A faith community builder is a good definition for what I am, be that through spiritual, social, or fundraising activities. There’s so many different ways faith is lived and celebrated when we claim to be the people of God.”

Priesthood has opened many doors to self awareness and discovering effective ways of leadership for Bishop Campeau. “My Priesthood has absolutely helped me in so many ways to gain experience as a leader. When I was ordained, I was

assigned as assistant priest, and every assignment that followed has led me to where I am now. I’ve also had so many opportunities to broaden my understanding of the Church. Being involved with parish life is one thing, being a dean and a member of the Council of Priests, another. I also represented the Diocese of Thunder Bay in the National Federation of priests for six years, then I was elected vice president for Ontario and English-speaking Quebec which gave me a national awareness of the Catholic Church in Canada. I went to World Youth Days which gave me a global awareness of the Catholic Church. When you spend time reflecting on what an experience means to you, revelations occur. When I was on sabbatical in the Holy Land studying Scripture, being there where Jesus walked; a religious sister from Ireland mentioned to me how it was a lot to take in— the geography, and political and social climate of the time in which Jesus lived... I could barely keep up with the speed at which I was learning. She told me ‘it will all make sense when you get home.’ She was right. You remember things from Israel, from Jerusalem as they become relevant again after. This experience has absolutely helped me in my preaching, which in turn gives more to the listener. I hope these experiences have prepared me for my new role.”

This year (2025) also marks his 35th anniversary of the priesthood. This is what he said when asked what this milestone means to him, especially as he embarks on this new chapter: “Sometimes you don’t pay attention to the passage of time. I was recently at







Our Lady of Loretto and a parish couple there had just celebrated their sixty-seventh year of marriage. What does thirty-five years compare to that? Time goes by too fast. It doesn't feel like I've been ordained for that long, nor does it seem like sixty-seven years for that couple." When asked what some of the most rewarding or memorable aspects of his priesthood thus far have been, he shared some positive insights. "I was asked a similar question when celebrating my thirty-fifth anniversary with my now former parishioners in Dryden. It gives me great joy to see the parish community involved, whether it's at Mass or outside of Mass, and when there's good liturgy with everyone singing and participating, that just warms my heart, when we're all on the same page celebrating our Faith. And when you see the community coming together outside of Mass, and I see the fellowship and joy, and energy put into making something happen, that too has been

rewarding and memorable. Even with more solemn gatherings such as Cemetery Sunday, where we'd gather to remember and pray for the dead. There weren't hundreds of people that came, but those who did come wanted to be there and wanted to pray. It made a difference to them that we were there together. Whenever we had a funeral, we were with those who were grieving, and everyone came together to provide a meal, good liturgy, and that's parish life. It's not just doing what you do to get it finished and run away. It's stopping and making an effort, and I hope most of all, it's sincere. That's what empowers me to do what I do; always looking at the positive and not the negative."

He shared how it feels to step into this new role as the sixth Bishop of the Diocese of Thunder Bay. "It all still feels very new. I'm learning new things every day, and it's very surreal. I never thought in a million years that I would be a bishop. I was quite happy serving the parishes that were assigned to me. Now it's overwhelming and there are so many different moving parts to the role with regards to taking care of my priests. They come first. If I didn't have them, there's no way I could take care of the people. Hand in hand with the Priests we join efforts to take care of the diocese. Helping our people to grow in their faith by doing more than maintaining buildings (churches and rectories). But making certain all is well looked after. I say these things not to discount the roles of Deacons, Ministers of Service, nor the countless numbers of volunteers who also contribute to the life of the Parish across the diocese. Everyone plays an important role. But, after all, we are a sacramental Church, and we want the sacraments, and the priests dispense the sacraments." As a side note in the conversation, on the election of Pope Leo XIV, Bishop Campeau expressed his excitement and hope that the Holy Father will gain the people's affection and follow very much in the charisms of Pope Francis while also honouring his name, and all the Pope Leos who came before him. They were all men of 'social justice.'

Bishop Campeau has had many chances to connect with Bishop Fred Colli about the transition, gaining advice and insights as well as some encouragement.

“We’ve talked quite a few times over the last few months, and he was very affirming. He said, ‘I could do this job and that I have a very organized mind.’” At the time of this interview, Bishop Colli had been over recently and shared some positive comments about the newly published priest moves.

Unsurprisingly, when there are several priorities that need focus, deciding which ones require it most can be daunting. “There’s so many. I keep asking myself, where do I start? There’s so much that needs

attention, and we’ve gone without a Bishop for about seven months now. There aren’t many starting points. I hope that everything will come together at an even pace by Fall. Once I understand the needs and the challenges and everything isn’t so new, I can give more attention to all the wonderful ideas I get from the Priests, Deacons, Ministers of Service, and lay people, and from those I consult with, including those on the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, of which I’m a member of, and the Assembly of Bishops of Ontario. It’s a consolation to have so many amazing suggestions, support, and backup from all the other Bishops as I gain my footing.”

Bishop Campeau believes there is much to look forward to for the Diocese of Thunder Bay in the coming years. “I hope to see a diocese that is vibrant, where parish communities are growing, bouncing back from the setback caused by the pandemic. Many people I’m sure are still at home, hesitant to come back to Church, but I hope they do full scale. I’d like to see new programs and forms of evangelization, and that we follow the leadership of Pope Leo XIV. I’d like to see cooperation. I hope people will trust me and that while some might be questioning my decisions, whether or not I get the chance to explain it, the goal is always for the common good of more than just one parish or person.”

Finally, what Bishop Campeau would like the parishioners to know as he begins his ministry is how grateful he is for everyone’s positivity and encouragement. “I just want to say I’m overwhelmed with the support I’ve received since the announcement made by Pope Francis, to my ordination all the way up to today. People from across the diocese are supporting me, and those who have known me before as a priest, to those who don’t know me at all, to the children in our schools who sent me hand-made cards of congratulations. Everyone is saying that ‘they picked the right guy’ and I sometimes ask myself ‘are you sure?’ It’s really empowering. I want to say thank you to all the people from the far ends of the Diocese, like Rainy River, Kenora, Keewatin, to Marathon and Manitowadge, to the places I’ve been assigned and the places I haven’t yet visited. The affirmation and





love is just so overflowing. I hope people will know that I hope to be transparent and accountable; that I don't have private agendas."

The Diocese of Thunder Bay is a 'Missionary Diocese' with many Missionary Priests coming from foreign countries to serve us. We cover a vast territory geographically, and resources are not always available to us. This includes money and raises the topic of the Bishop's diocesan Ministry Campaign which Bishop Campeau will scrutinize when preparing the brochure for the 2027 Campaign. Entering a new leadership role is simultaneously exciting and terrifying. I encourage readers to remember to trust and pray for him as he takes on this new role; perhaps by saying a rosary and invoking the intercession of Saint Charles Borromeo,

Patron of bishops, and John Vianney, Patron of priests. Also assisting him in this new chapter of his life is his right-hand, furry, four-legged assistant Amelia Grace A. K. A. Amie. She has been adjusting to her busy and vital job as an employee at the Thunder Bay Pastoral Center, giving emotional support to the others, bringing smiles, and is paid well in treats she collects from them. When she's not doing this, she's napping and thinking very hard about any work that needs to get done. May Saint Francis of Assisi watch over her. Domine, Audi Preces Nostras. ✚

*Photos By:*

*Juliano Brusadin, Randy Devost, Sean Murphy*



## Cursillo Thunder Bay *By Deacon Reino Pitkanen*

Cursillo Thunder Bay is an evangelizing Charism from the Holy Spirit given through a man named Eduardo Bonnín. This charism teaches about Christ's unconditional love for each and every one of us no matter how far away from Christ we may be. Eduardo was affected by his time in the army. Noticing how far from God the soldiers were, he came to the conclusion that they were not alone; many others in the secular world were in that same position. It led Eduardo to seek a way—a method, by which the many alienated from God could come to know His love. The method of Cursillo is to penetrate the environments, to go where the clergy cannot go. Bringing the Gospel and evangelizing environments is the purpose of Cursillo. Its method is by the best means possible: friendship.

Cursillistas are very friendly people who are convinced of their Faith and attract others who wish to be their friends. As these friendships grow during the Precursillo (the phase before attending a weekend), it may cause the new friend to question if something is missing, if they are searching for something in their life. At that point, the Cursillo weekend will enter the conversation in the form of an invitation to attend. There are three encounters during the weekend, meant to be lived throughout the Postcursillo (the phase after attending a Cursillo weekend). As the Rector would tell you at the beginning of the weekend, this is a model for the rest of one's life.

Cursillo weekends are always women with women and men with men because, as we all know, women are from Venus and men are from Mars. We are inherently different. The weekend consists of a series of rollos (witness talks), some meditations and a lot of friendship building. During the weekend there are three encounters. First, with oneself, to get to know where you are in life and in your faith.

The second is an encounter with Christ where you learn of His unconditional love and how He has always been there for you, and always will be there for you, in the person of the Holy Spirit. The third encounter is with others. Knowing

how much Christ loves each and every one of us and also knowing how many have never heard or understood this message is when the urge to evangelize begins. We want to make friends, really get to know them, and we want to introduce our friends to Christ's love.

The Group Reunion and Ultreya are the means by which we persevere in that endeavour. The weekend is only the beginning. Cursillistas form small friendship groups where we share our lives and support each other on our journey to the Father for the rest of our lives. The deep bonds of friendship that develop through these group reunions are extraordinary. They are so much more than the friendships we normally know. The Group Reunions are often held weekly but may be every two weeks or once per month depending on the agreement within each group.

In many dioceses in Canada, the custom is to hold the Ultreya monthly, but it should be weekly. The reason is that the Group Reunion is the gathering with friends on an intimate level, and the Ultreya is the larger or social gathering where it is understood that the more we know each other, the more we love each other as friends. When in the Ultreya meeting, we already know each other as much as we can, then we think about having a Weekend to bring new blood to our movement.

There is also a monthly get-together called an Ultreya (the word means onward) where all the smaller groups can get together as one big family and share their lives. There is music, a witness talk, and smaller group sharing.

Next level is the annual Canadian Conference where cursillistas from across the country get together and again form long-lasting, true friendships leading them to look forward to meeting their friends at the next conference. These are the kind of friends who would love for you to stop by and visit if you are in their neighbourhood. All cursillistas are invited to attend.

Last but most definitely not least, there are world events where cursillistas from 52 countries around







*Front Row; Father Rae, Jeff LaFontaine, Gerard Normand, Deacon Dennis McDermott, Father Eslin (Vancouver)  
Back Row; Ron Kawtiash, Deacon Reino Pitkanen, Jonathon Prieston, Chris Torma, Colin Campbell, Bruce Sutton,  
Aaron Koroscil, Rocky Rizzo, Dave Frank, John-Paul Federico, Juan David Castillo, Cory Gabreluk*

the world get together to meet old friends and make new friends. True, honest friendships are the kind that if you do not see each other for several years you just pick up exactly where you left off as if not a day had gone by since you last met. Once again these events are open to all cursillistas in the world.

There is no hierarchy in Cursillo, all are equal. There are teams called Secretariats that guide the local movements as well as an Officers Group for Canada that guides the Canadian Movement. This is the CCCC (Canadian Conference of Catholic Cursillo). There are four international groups that guide their areas. Canada is in the North American Caribbean Group. Finally, there is a group that helps guide all the Cursillo groups around the world and it is the OMCC. We recently held a Men's Cursillo weekend and 10 men became new

cursillistas. It was a weekend filled with the Holy Spirit. We received over 140 letters of support for the success of the weekend from many countries around the world asking the Holy Spirit to come and bring our new cursillistas closer to Christ. They are all aware now of Christ's unconditional love for each and every one of them and ready to share that love.

In conclusion, if you are a Cursillista and you know a friend you care for and you want to share this wonderful gift you were given, then invite your friend to Cursillo. If you are invited to a Cursillo by a friend, think seriously about attending. You will not regret it. ✚



# Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services of Ontario: A Current of Grace for the Church *By Sandra Debesys*

**M**ay the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ descend upon you and remain with you forever!

I was asked to write this article by Bishop Al Campeau, to give insight to the Diocese on the Charismatic Renewal and where it stands today in our Diocese, Province, National, and International forum.

Where to begin? I guess with my testimony. I am all in when it comes to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, and the gifts offered by Him in today's world as stated by Jesus and God the Father.

Why? As you may have heard, I did have a personal experience with our Lord and Saviour, at first without realizing it! In 1977, I became very ill. The specialists at Toronto General said they had done all they could and it would be a matter of time before I would succumb to my disease. I was not to have any more children and I was not to work. I flopped myself on the bed and said "Lord you gave me life and you can take it away. If all I can do is watch grass grow, so be it." It was at this very moment I actually felt better! After a couple of months of hardly eating,

I suddenly became famished for pizza. On discharge, my husband and only child (18mos) and I stopped for pizza and there were no repercussions! I was healed! This realization did not come easy, as I was a Registered Nurse in a hospital setting and healing was done by diagnosis and treatment. It was something I needed to proclaim and witness, and that did take a while. Jesus is patient.

From this day on I searched and opened the door of my heart to Jesus more and more. There is always more.

This brought me to a Charismatic prayer group in Orillia where my husband and I spent many years. We took the Life in the Spirit Seminar. It is a seven-week program that provides the major steps of getting to know Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a personal way. On the fifth night, I was prayed over for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and received more healing and the gifts of tongues. I had asked for neither! I also received an unexplainable hunger for Scripture and prayer—more gifts! I grew to become





more proactive rather than reactive. The peace within my heart provided a doorway to loving everyone as Jesus sees them. This was God's plan. I grew in the Life and gifts of the Spirit. What gifts am I referring to? There are two sets of gifts: the Isaian Gifts (Isaiah 2:2-3). These are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts are meant for us personally for our growth. The next set are the Corinthian gifts. These gifts, or Charisms, are given to us to share with everyone (1 Corinthians 12:28). These gifts deal with hospitality, administration etc.; they also include the supernatural gifts of prophecy, healing, and tongues to name a few. It is important to know your gifts for the journey God has for you. The Lord gives these gifts to everyone, but, we sometimes fail to have the courage to open these gifts.

In 1989, my family and I returned to Thunder Bay, where Bob and I were very active in the prayer group as well. I did have an eleven-year hiatus due to the need to return to work full-time.

The experience of increasing in maturity has brought me closer to Jesus. I have learned to trust in Him more. Through Scripture and intimate prayer time with the Lord, I am still learning about His Love and Mercy. When Bob passed away, I asked the Lord, "What now?" I started to receive phone calls asking me to be part of formations such as the Diaconate and CCRSO (Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services of Ontario)—a name I have come to respect and honour.

As an added note. I worked for forty-three years and had two more children! As we all are, I am here as an instrument to do the Lord's will to bring His Kingdom to earth so people can experience His Glory. Alleluia! Give the Lord permission to work in your life. The Lord is calling us, each individually, to be members of His Body to love one another.

### **The Thunder Bay Prayer Group:**

To date there is the "Bind us Together" prayer group meeting at St. Agnes on Mondays at 1:30 pm. All are welcome. Here we praise and

worship the Lord, encourage the manifestations of the gifts, and we wait upon the Lord for words of encouragement. Our monthly schedule provides: soaking prayer, Lectio Divina, the Jericho walk, and free time for sharing in building up the Body of Christ. We provide Life in the Spirit Seminars yearly and have recently provided a "Gifts Workshop" for the Charisms of the Holy Spirit. This Fall, we had our first live-streaming event of the Spring Conference provided by CCRSO. There is more to come! What I love about this organization is its obedience to the Church and the humility to let others come to the forefront. We as a group have made ourselves available to serve at Alpha and at the Praise and Worship gatherings as well as our service to the poor and our willingness to be ecumenical.

If anyone is interested in starting a Prayer group please contact me: [sdebesys@gmail.com](mailto:sdebesys@gmail.com)

### **History of Charismatics:**

Charismatics do not have an original person or author. It was strictly the Holy Spirit. The origin can be traced to a retreat in 1967 at Duquesne University, where the Baptism of the Holy Spirit took place. There are now 160 million followers around the world.

### **History of CCRSO (Catholic Charismatic Services of Ontario):**

This service came into being in 1973 when the Canadian Catholic Bishops requested this formation. We are to pastor and shepherd the prayer groups in Ontario. There was to be a Liaison to the Bishop and two Delegates. The Liaison was appointed by the Bishop and the Delegates could be appointed by the Liaison/Bishop. The Liaison is to report to the Bishop on our conferences and meetings.

There is a conference in the spring and usually a retreat for just the Liaisons and Delegates in the Fall. This has been going on ever since. Dcn. Armand Danis was our first Liaison in the Diocese of Thunder Bay and he brought the Renewal to the forefront in Thunder Bay. There were up to three prayer groups in our Diocese in the beginning, all





very vibrant and working at the Life in the Spirit Seminars and the teachings on the Gifts/Charisms of the Holy Spirit.

Our mandate is to: 1. bring Life in the Spirit Seminars to the Church, 2. promote ecumenism and, 3. serve the poor.

### **Charis (a Greek word meaning Grace):**

Charis is a newly named formation of service that is international. We are now part of the Dicastery. This was once called the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service. At Pentecost 2019, Pope Francis announced the name change. As Cardinal Suenens stated in the 1980s, Pope Francis stated “We were to be the Current of Grace for the Catholic Church and to the world.” Grace means “unmerited favour” in other words a free gift not earned and given to everyone.

Charis is a service headed in Rome and is very active. Come and experience the Life in the Spirit Seminars, feel His mercy and love. ✝

*“One goal that you are proposing, and which I myself have encouraged, is to expand the ‘Life in the Spirit Seminars’ in all places and for everyone. These are truly kerygmatic moments, opportunities for the ‘initial proclamation’ of the Gospel. They make it possible for people to encounter the living Jesus, in His Word and His Spirit, and at the same time to experience His Church as a welcoming environment, a place of grace, reconciliation and being born again. That is why I have you to make these Seminars more widely available”*

*– Pope Francis*





## Reflection — The Life of Pope Francis *By Grace Daigle*

Pope Francis (born Jorge Mario Bergoglio on 17 December 1936 in Flores) was a figure who has consistently championed the marginalized and called for a more compassionate approach that has left an undeniable mark on the world. His papacy, rooted in simplicity and direct engagement with people, has resonated with many both within and outside the Catholic faith. From his powerful calls for environmental stewardship in *Laudato Si'* to his unwavering advocacy for refugees, he has consistently challenged the status quo and urged us to look beyond ourselves.

Bergoglio attended a Salesian school in sixth grade, then graduated as a chemical technician from a technical secondary school. He worked for several years in the food section of a laboratory under Esther Ballestrino and had previously worked as a bar bouncer and a janitor. Inspired by a priest during a confession on his way to Spring Day celebrations, Bergoglio studied at the Inmaculada Concepción Seminary before entering the Society of Jesus in 1958. As a Jesuit novice, he studied humanities in Chile and officially became a Jesuit in 1960. He

earned a licentiate in philosophy and subsequently taught literature and psychology at two different high schools in Argentina between 1964 and 1966.

As a Cardinal, Bergoglio was known for his personal humility, doctrinal conservatism, and commitment to social justice. His simple lifestyle included living in a small apartment rather than the elegant bishop's residence, using public transportation, and cooking his own meals which enhanced his reputation for humility. This carried into his reign as a Pope (elected in 2013), and his emphasis on mercy and dialogue has opened new avenues for understanding and reconciliation within the Church and with other faiths.

While his tenure has not been without its challenges and criticisms, Pope Francis's commitment to a Church that is a "field hospital" for the wounded and a voice for the voiceless stands as a powerful testament to his vision and leadership. He reminds us that faith in action, particularly in service to others, remains a cornerstone of a meaningful life. †



## Indigenous Teachings - What is A Ribbon Skirt? By Grace Daigle

Ribbon skirts, since their Métis origins, have consistently served as a powerful emblem of Indigenous pride, even as their appearance and meaning have evolved. Initially reflecting women's intrinsic connection to the land and drawing inspiration from European designs, buckskin, T-dresses, and quillwork, these skirts now showcase a diverse array of beautiful patterns and vibrant ribbons.

Beyond this shared cultural significance, ribbon skirts hold profound and personal meaning for the women who wear them. The choice of colors, patterns, and the number of ribbons often carries symbolism related to the wearer's name or clan, serving as a unique artistic expression. Crafted by hand and frequently passed down through generations, these skirts embody a tangible link to ancestral heritage.

The ribbon skirt's significance extends beyond mere attire. It can function as sacred regalia for ceremonies, a tradition fostering connection to ancestors, or an expression of womanhood and

the sacredness of femininity. Furthermore, ribbon skirts can represent remembrance for the missing and murdered, advocate for the protection of natural resources, or symbolize a wearer's personal life journey. For many, they foster a sense of community and serve as a vital means of preserving cultural history, offering an opportunity for shared understanding and open dialogue.

The recognition of January 4th as National Ribbon Skirt Day in Canada, sparked by an incident highlighting the skirt's perceived lack of formality, underscores its cultural importance. Ultimately, the question of who can wear a ribbon skirt touches upon universal themes of respect and understanding for Indigenous heritage. Choosing to wear a ribbon skirt transcends cultural boundaries, offering an invitation for all to learn and becoming a symbol of unity and reconciliation. Therefore, the answer to "who can wear a ribbon skirt" is, indeed, anybody, provided it is done with respect and understanding. ✚





## The Papal Conclave - What is the Process? By Grace Daigle-Matkowski

With great sadness, the passing of our Holy Father Pope Francis at the age of 88 was announced on the morning of April 21st, 2025 after a reign of 12 years. While this was a time of grieving, it was also a time of great joy as sooner than many expected, white smoke appeared from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel on the morning of May 8th, marking the election of Pope Leo XIV. Even with the conclave reaching its conclusion, this electoral event raises many questions and inspires curiosity. One of those questions being ‘what exactly is a Papal conclave, and how does this intricate and historically significant process unfold?’

After the passing of the pope is verified by the cardinal camerlengo, or chamberlain, who traditionally performed the task, pronounces the phrase “sede vacante” which means “The throne is empty” after calling out the Pope’s baptismal name. The camerlengo takes possession of the Ring of the Fisherman worn by the pope. The ring, along with the papal seal, is later destroyed in the presence of the College of Cardinals. The tradition originated to avoid forgery of documents, but today is symbolic of the end of the pope’s reign. A conclave can also be called in the event that the Pope resigns, in which case, the Fisherman’s Ring is disfigured in the presence of the College of Cardinals.

A nine day period of mourning known as the novemdiales (Latin for ‘nine days’) follows during which the congregations must make certain arrangements in respect of the pope’s burial. This also allows time for pilgrims to see the Pontiff’s body and for the congregations to fix a time and date for the conclave’s commencement, which normally takes place fifteen days after the death of the pope. They may extend the period to a maximum of twenty days to allow other cardinals to arrive in Vatican City.

On the day designated by the congregations of cardinals, the cardinal electors assemble in the Vatican for Mass, then gather in the Pauline Chapel before proceeding to the Sistine Chapel, singing the Litany of the Saints. The cardinals take an oath to observe the procedures set down by the apostolic

constitutions and to, if elected, defend the liberty of the Holy See, maintain secrecy, and disregard the instructions of secular authorities on voting. The senior cardinal reads the oath aloud in full. In order of precedence, the other cardinal electors repeat the oath while touching the Gospels. After all the cardinals present have taken the oath, the master of papal liturgical celebrations orders all individuals other than the cardinal electors and conclave participants to leave the chapel. Traditionally, he stands at the door of the Sistine Chapel and calls out: “Extra omnes!”

Secrecy is maintained during the conclave. The cardinals and staff are forbidden to disclose any information relating to the election. To do so will result in excommunication *latae sententiae*. Only three cardinal electors may communicate with the outside world under grave circumstances, with the prior approval of the college, to fulfill their duties. Those cardinals are the Major Penitentiary, the cardinal vicar for the Diocese of Rome, and the vicar general for the Vatican City State.

On the afternoon of the first day, one ballot (referred to as a “scrutiny”) may be held, but is not required. A maximum of four ballots are held on each successive day: two in each morning and two in each afternoon. Before voting in the morning and again before voting in the afternoon, the electors take an oath to obey the rules of the conclave. The scrutineers add up the votes, and the revisers check the ballots and the names on the scrutineers’ lists to ensure that no error has been made. The ballots are then stitched together with a needle and red thread and burned by the scrutineers with the assistance of the secretary of the College of Cardinals and the masters of ceremonies. If the first vote held in any given morning or afternoon does not result in an election, the cardinals proceed to the next session immediately. The papers from both voting sessions are then burned together in the Sistine Chapel at the end of the second session.

For there to be a vote, there must be a majority of two thirds. If the vote is successful, the smoke



coming out of the Chapel chimney will be white. If it is unsuccessful, it will be black. This is due to the chemicals infused within the sealing wax of the ballots.

Once the election concludes, the cardinal dean summons the secretary of the College of Cardinals and the master of papal liturgical celebrations into the hall. The dean then asks the pope-elect if he assents to the election, saying in Latin: *Acceptasne electionem de te canonice factam in Summum Pontificem?* ('Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?') There is no requirement that the pope-elect do so, and he is free to respond *Non accepto* ('I do not accept'). If the Pope-Elect is already a bishop, he may take office immediately, but if he is only a priest, he must be ordained a bishop before the Pope. If a layman is elected, he must receive the ordinances of a deacon, priest, and bishop before he takes office.

The Papal Conclave is a long and complicated process, the longest one in history lasting three years from 1268 to 1271. It is rooted in Tradition and sacred secrecy for the sake of truth. However, the multiple steps to ensure nothing interferes with the vote and nothing influences the priests who do the voting, pales in comparison to the most important element when electing a new pope: prayer. This year, as Pope Leo the XIV is elected to not only succeed our Holy Father Pope Francis, but Saint Peter himself, let us pray that the Holy Spirit will guide him in his mission. ✚





## *Prayer for Priests, by Saint Charles Borromeo*

*O Holy Mother of God, pray for the priests your Son has chosen to serve the Church.*

*Help them, by your intercession, to be holy, zealous, and chaste. Make them models of virtue in the service of God's people. Help them be pious in meditation, efficacious in preaching, and zealous in the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Help them administer the Sacraments with love and joy. Amen.*

– Source: [www.catolico.org](http://www.catolico.org)

## *Prayer by Saint John Vianney*

*My Jesus...we can only be satisfied by setting our hearts, imperfect as they are, on you. We are made to love you; you created us as your lovers. It sometimes happens that the more we know a neighbor, the less we love him. But with you it is quite the opposite. The more we know you, the more we love you. Knowledge of you kindles such a fire in our souls that we have no energy left for worldly desires. My Jesus, how good it is to love you. Let me be like your disciples on Mount Tabor, seeing nothing else but you. Let us be like two bosom friends, neither of whom can ever bear to offend the other. Amen.*

– Source: [www.sjvcenter.org](http://www.sjvcenter.org)

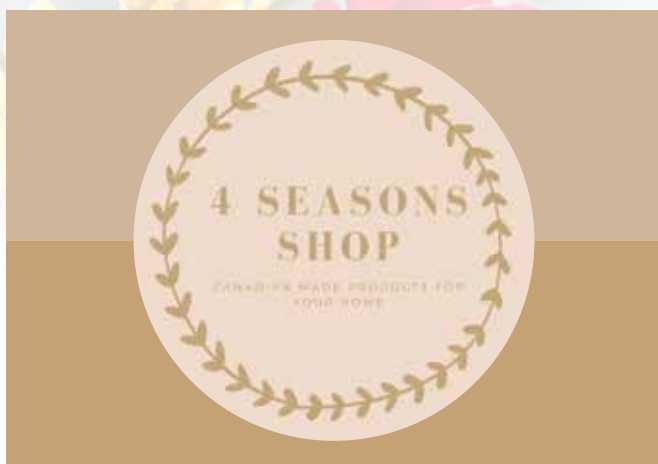
---

## **Celebrating Life's Holy Moments** *By Grace Daigle*

Various religious goods are available for sale at the Diocese of Thunder Bay Four Seasons Gift Shop. Items that are usually offered are gifts for any celebration of the Sacraments, including First Communion and Confirmation gifts. Featured items include Saint Medals, books on the Saints, a Catholic Missal for Children, Daily Meditations, brown and red scapulars, rosaries, crucifixes, and even mugs for tea or coffee. Other items are also available. Stop for a visit today at the Pastoral Center, or check our website to see what we have! †







*Treasures can be found in every corner of the 4 seasons gift shop.  
Visit us today at the Catholic Pastoral Centre!*



**Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Closed for lunch from 12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**Contact us at: (807) 343-9313 | Check out our Instagram: [@4seasonsshop](https://www.instagram.com/4seasonsshop)**



**Catholic Pastoral Centre | 1222 Reaume Street, Postal Box 10400, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6T8 | [dotb.ca](http://dotb.ca)**