

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am delighted to be writing this edition of "The Parson's Quill" for our 50th anniversary publication of our long lost parish newsletter. Where such things as email and social media have almost taken the place of regularly published newsletters for the sake of efficiency, we lose in the area of reading little anecdotes and stories, reviews of events and short devotions or material for reflection. So it is great to be able to sit down and read this comeback version of St. Michael and All Angels' newsletter, "The Guardian".

Celebrating fifty years of the existence of St. Michael and All Angels is a perfect time to look back on what we have come through together as a parish with gratitude for the privilege of being part of God's work in this community over the years. Our community has changed. When the church was built, the houses around us were just being built too. Thorndale Pool was just opening up, St. Thomas a Beckett Roman Catholic Church was just being built as well, and even our neighbouring Anglican Church, St. Barnabas, was just starting out in their new building as well. This neighbourhood was filled with young families, many newcomers to the province of Quebec and the language spoken was almost 100% English. Now we live in a multicultural neighbourhood with many different languages being spoken. There are still some young families but there is a large number of seniors as well. The percentage of French speaking, and those speaking languages other than French or English has grown to the point where there is less than 50% English speaking and over 50% of our neighbours speaking French or other languages.

Fifty years ago everything was closed on Sundays, only essential services such as Pharmacies and Hospitals were open. No soccer or hockey practice on Sunday. And no shopping! There was a whole day of quiet every week! Our society has changed and so has St. Michael's in many ways. When you read the history written by our first rector, Canon Jenö Kohner, (included in this edition) you will see how different things are.

I was intrigued by the fact that there once was a river flowing through the land on which the church of St. Michael's stands. On the surface there is no evidence of it now, but beneath us somewhere it must still flow. That is what first drew me to our theme song, "Take us to the River", by Robin Mark. The reference to the mighty angel, of course, is fitting for St. Michael and All Angels. "Take us there in unity" is also important to us as we continue to move ahead in unity after having had a struggle with that. Requesting ears to hear the "cry of heaven" made me think of how important outreach is for our parishioners and our desire to reach out by the grace of God and offer to others the mercy he has shown us. The Holy Spirit is welcome at St. Michael's and the chorus our theme song reminded me of how well received was the "Life in the Spirit Seminars" back during the time Rev. Murray Henderson was rector here as well as the more recent/current Alpha course which includes sound teaching on the Holy Spirit which many parishioners and friends have taken. I believe the Spirit of the Sovereign LORD remains upon us as we move forward into the future. Our purpose is unchanged and our desire to serve is still strong. The Gospel of Christ is an eternal word and we go on in the power of the name of Jesus proclaiming the good news of forgiveness, salvation, mercy and grace.

The histories included in this newsletter take us to the time when Rev. Alex Cameron was rector. Alex left in 2000 and the next rector was Marc Torchinsky. When Marc was here he invited me to become Honorary Assistant here. At the time I was Chaplain at the Griffith McConnell Residence and was happy to be connected to this parish. Marc left in 2004 and was succeeded by Rev. Anthony Harvey. After Tony left in 2008, I accepted the responsibility for the interim period and I rejoice that I have been given the privilege to work among you and with you as your rector. With love in Christ,

Rev. Michelle October 6, 2016