

## Bishops Visit Holy Father in Rome

The Holy Father heard first-hand a report about the Diocese of Hamilton, including its parishes, schools, seminarians and more, at a meeting in September with Bishop Anthony Tonnos of the Diocese of Hamilton, and auxiliary bishops Matthew Ustrzycki and Gerard Bergie.

The three bishops visited Pope Benedict XVI as part of the 'Ad Limina' visits that take place every five years. "Canon Law states that every five years, bishops must make a pilgrimage to Rome," Bishop Bergie explains. "It's a pilgrimage to the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul. As part of that, we meet the successor of St. Peter, who is the Holy Father." Ad Limina means "to the threshold," meaning, to the threshold of Rome and the tombs of Peter and Paul.

At meetings with Pope Benedict XVI's delegates, the bishops shared comprehensive reports about the Diocese of Hamilton, including its changing demographics and influx of Catholic immigrants. Bishop Bergie said that while at the Congregation for Catholic Education and Seminaries, "We spoke about vocations and the importance of promoting a vocation culture."

The bishops also participated in a general meeting with Ontario bishops and the Holy Father, and met with other Vatican leadership during the two-week sojourn. "Bishop Tonnos has participated in Ad Limina meetings before, but this was my first one, and it was a wonderful experience," Bishop Bergie says. "This tradition shows the connectedness of our faith, and that we are all one ultimately with the Lord. To come to Rome,

and to Peter's tomb, and meet with Peter's successor illustrates the unity that exists in the church."

The bishops stayed in Vatican City during the Ad Limina and wrapped up their visit with a three-day retreat in the city of Assisi.

*We spoke about vocations and the importance of promoting a vocation culture.*

Bishop Bergie

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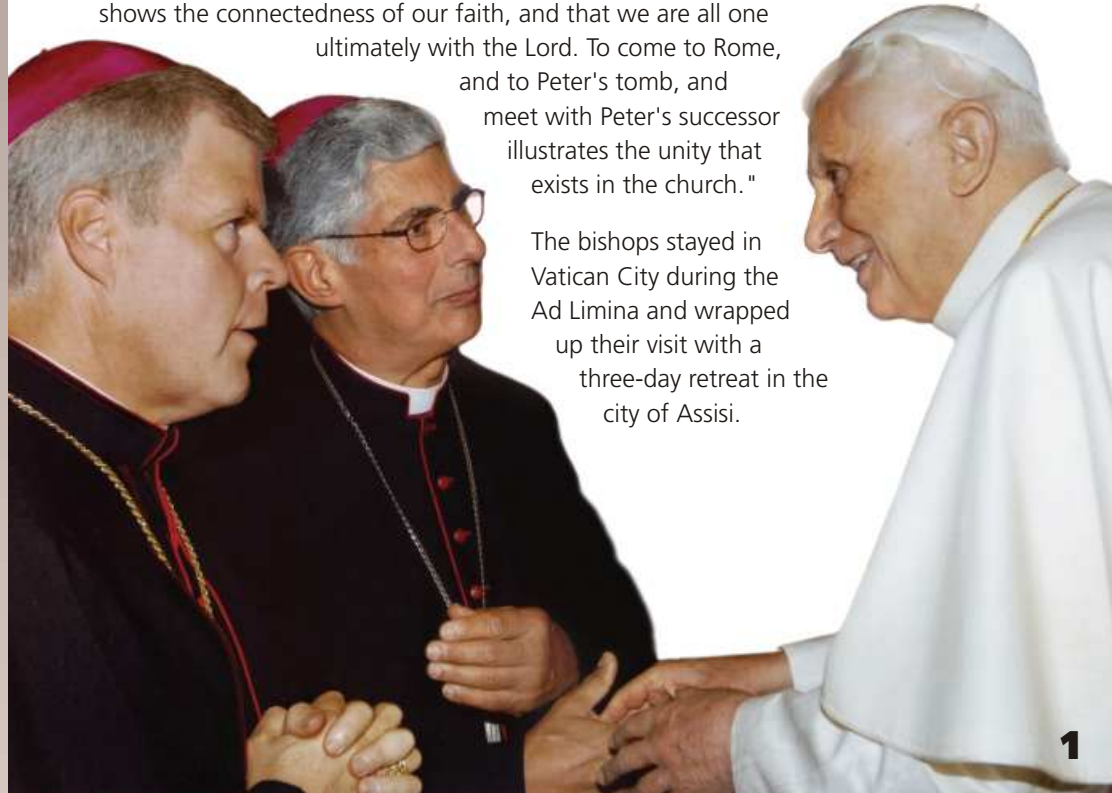


PHOTO:

Bishop Bergie (left) and Bishop Tonnos (right) with Pope Benedict XVI.

## MESSAGE

From the  
Vocation Director

The Diocese of Hamilton is blessed by the presence of many cultures and linguistic groups. People come from various parts of the world and express their Catholic faith by means of a variety of traditions. These vibrant ethnic communities serve to nurture vocations by providing people with a sense of belonging and connectedness; a supportive environment where the call of God may be heard.

The multicultural nature of the Diocese is highlighted by the number of languages in which the Eucharist is celebrated. This edition of *Reflections* explores some of the cultural diversity that exists within the Diocese. Outreach to the Spanish-speaking community and the experiences of seminarians from different cultural traditions reflect the universality of the Church.

The Eucharist embodies unity of faith. This oneness in faith is rooted in communion – communion with the universal Church under the leadership of Pope Benedict XVI. In this issue, Auxiliary Bishop Gerard Bergie shares some thoughts on the universality and unity of the Church arising from the Ontario bishops' visit to Rome this past September.

Just as the call to holiness is a universal one, so also is the faith that responds to this invitation.

Father Kevin Cull

# Our Changing Diocese

## SPANISH MISSION WELCOMES NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

Fr. Nelson Carvajal

Father Nelson Carvajal doesn't need to check out StatsCan numbers to know that the Kitchener-Waterloo area's population of Spanish-speaking people is growing. He sees the evidence daily at Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission on Moore Street in central Kitchener, where Spanish-speaking people participate at Mass every Wednesday evening. He also sees it at the Masses he celebrates in the Spanish language at other parishes across K-W, Cambridge and Guelph.

"Forty years ago it was immigrants from Spain; for the past 20 years we have new Canadians from Central America," Father Nelson says. "The number of Spanish-speaking people in this area is growing so fast."

A member of the Congregation of the Resurrection, Father Nelson himself is from Le Pas, Bolivia, and was ordained there in 1995 after several years of study in both Bolivia and Canada. In 2001 he became the administrator of the Diocese of Hamilton's newly-established Spanish mission.

Today he finds himself putting a lot of mileage on his car as he travels around the central part of the Diocese to where ever Spanish-speaking people seek spiritual support and guidance, or gather for the celebration of the sacraments. In the summer months it means spending time in Port Elgin and Burford, where he offers the Eucharist and the opportunity for Reconciliation with Mexican farm workers.

As the only Spanish-speaking priest in his area, Fr. Nelson is kept very busy. He foresees the day when more Spanish-speaking priests will be necessary in the Diocese to serve this vibrant and growing community.

The influx of Spanish-speaking people to the Kitchener-Waterloo area is just one example of the increasingly diverse population of the Diocese of Hamilton. In its earliest days, the Catholic population primarily hailed from Ireland, France and Germany. Today, prayer cards produced for the Diocese's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary were printed in 17 languages (English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Croatian, Dutch, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Korean, Vietnamese and Filipino).

# Foreign-Born Seminarians at St. Peter's

## WELCOMING MEN FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES

**The increasing ethnic diversity of the Diocese of Hamilton is mirrored by the growing trend to more foreign-born men entering seminary.**

Of the five most recently ordained priests for the Diocese of Hamilton, three were born in Poland (Wojciech Kuzma, Mariusz Durbajlo and Jerzy Tomon). One immigrated at a young age with his family, and two came to Canada as adults, specifically to complete their seminary studies and serve as Diocesan priests.

Of the 60 seminarians currently attending St. Peter's Seminary in London, seven are from the Diocese of Hamilton and of those, two are from Vietnam. There are currently nine other foreign seminarians at the seminary, hailing from Vietnam, India and Mexico.

Father Bill McGrattan, rector at St. Peter's, says inquiries from potential seminary candidates in other countries began to climb in the mid-1990s as Internet technology took hold.

E-mail began to flow in from men in Vietnam, Poland, the Philippines, Africa and South America. Political restrictions limiting the number of ordained priests in certain countries have also helped to make Canada a destination for foreign seminarians.

In the Diocese of Hamilton, foreign seminary candidates may be invited here for one year to learn English, live in a parish, and then at St. Peter's, before formally entering the seminary. "Hamilton has one of the best approaches I've seen with foreign candidates," Fr. McGrattan comments. If a candidate passes the English course, along with the necessary interviews and psychological testing, he can then enter St. Peter's Seminary as a Diocese of Hamilton seminarian.

For its part, the seminary struck a partnership with the  
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## “The language that’s the strongest of all is that of Jesus Christ”

**Paul Hrczyszn grew up in a Polish parish (Sacred Heart in Kitchener) and in Grade 9 joined the Youth Teams of Our Lady (YTOL) movement, which took hold in Ontario through the Polish community. YTOL retreats were initially conducted in Polish, with the assistance of priests visiting from Poland.**

But as time went by he and other YTOL members embraced the expansion of the faith formation group into English-speaking parishes. Today, the language at retreats is English, although as Paul points out, "The language that's the strongest of all is that of Jesus Christ.

"It's not really about being Polish, it's about being Catholic. We are young people with a common vision."

Paul is currently a seminarian at St. Augustine's in Scarborough, along with Brad Markus, another Kitchener native who has also been a member of Youth Teams of Our Lady. Chris Adamczyk, another YTOL member, is currently studying at St. Phillips Seminary.

**Paul Hrczyszn (left)  
and Brad Markus**



"CultureWorks ESL" school in London, Ontario, where foreign seminarians can learn to speak English with other international university students. Seminary faculty and administrators also took a closer look at St. Peter's itself and how it could be more welcoming to seminarians from different cultures.

"We now have a Vietnamese rice cooker and purchase a specific type of rice that is customary for Asian diets," Fr. McGrattan says. "We have rice more often than we used to. We also have a Polish cook who looks after the men from Poland and makes pierogis for them. We've incorporated new types of meals into our five-week meal rotation."

Despite all the efforts made to welcome and nurture foreign seminarians, seminary life can still be a tough haul for them, Fr. McGrattan comments. Not all pass the English course to even enter seminary. Many suffer from homesickness and general culture shock. "I know the feeling, having studied in Europe when I was doing my own training," he says. "You sometimes come to a saturation point where every single aspect of life is different from what you're used to. Add to that the struggles of learning a language and you can become overwhelmed, and want nothing more than to return to a safe, familiar environment."

Having said that, the maturity of foreign candidates – most are in their late 20s or early 30s – helps to overcome the cultural challenges. And Fr. McGrattan firmly believes that the Catholic Church benefits from these candidates. "The Church is universal and we see in these men the universal call of service and we are the beneficiaries of that call. Those who master the language and embrace our culture become very effective priests."



Fr. Bill McGrattan



## Question & Answer

WITH SEMINARIAN  
DUY NGUYEN

Duy Nguyen is a seminarian from North Vietnam. Through the connection of a family friend in Hamilton, Duy learned of the opportunity to live and study in Canada. In June 2000, he received a sponsorship from the Diocese of Hamilton to prepare for the priesthood. Today, Duy is in his fourth year at St. Peter's Seminary and has finished his Pastoral Year at Sacred Heart Parish in Hamilton. His younger brother, Tuan, is also at St. Peter's, in his third year of study.

● **Q: Did you feel called to Canada?**

**A:** I had been involved in pre-seminary for several years in Vietnam, but did not have the opportunity to fulfill my calling. When I made the connection with Fr. Toan Van Kim of the Diocese of Hamilton, I just knew this was the place for me – it was the perfect opportunity to follow my calling. I believe nothing happens by chance, but through God's will. I strongly believe that God chose to place me in Canada, to share my faith and journey with others.

● **Q: What has been the biggest cultural adjustment?**

**A:** Learning a new culture and the English language. In Vietnam I studied English, so I was fairly confident the transition would be easy. It wasn't until I came to Canada that I began to truly comprehend the language. Although I feel I've adjusted quite well, there were times when I felt defeated by the cultural differences. In those cases, I turned to God. I believe perseverance helped me to overcome any difficulties I experienced.

One of the best learning resources for me has been St. Peter's "CultureWorks Program." It's a program for international students to learn English, and about Canadian culture. We've visited different parts of Ontario, learning about Canadian heritage.

● **Q: What advice would you give to other international candidates considering the priesthood or religious life in another country?**

**A:** I would say, it doesn't matter where you are, as long as you are happy. Since our Church is universal, I believe home can be anywhere – we're all in the same family, as long as it's with Jesus Christ. So be joyful to live and serve the Church in the name of God.

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