



This Month in the Diocese

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“God Hugs You”

It will be another Mother’s Day of care through distance, staying home to curb the pandemic spread. As we welcome the Month of Mary we are reminded of the trust she showed in her isolation as she was about to become a mother, and of how God cared for her, and for all of us, in times of greatest need. While we long to hug our loved ones in person, we can take comfort in knowing our love today fills the space in between and that God, in caring for us all in this pandemic, hugs us all together, in the words of St. Hildegard of Bingen: God hugs you. You are encircled by the arms of the mystery of God. Sharing a family moment are three generations of the Walsh family: Mary Elizabeth with daughter Cathy behind her, and daughter Carol Anne and grandson Andrew on screen.



5 Questions ...

on how and why to celebrate National Week for Life and the Family, May 9-15:

Page 2

Supporting Palliative Care

Free resources including a webinar, movie screening, and ways to support palliative care:

Page 3

Items of Note

Praying the Rosary to end the pandemic, MacLeod House seeks applicants, and more:

Page 4



5 Questions ...

on how and why to celebrate National Week of the Life and Family, this year running May 9-16

1. What is National Week on Life and the Family?

This special week is designated by the Church in Canada to proclaim the gift of family and life. The week begins with Mother's Day and includes the annual United Nations International Day of Families on May 15.

2: Is there a theme?

This year's theme is ***Family, The Domestic Church: A Sign of Hope and Life***. The theme reminds each of us that through our baptism we are "incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213), and are called to live and share the Good News of God's love. The theme also reminds us that we are not alone, a concept most precious in this time of continuing pandemic.

3: Where do we start?

The first word that comes to mind is ***Joy***. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and be models of joy, especially to those in our family. The Responsorial Psalm for Mother's Day, May 9, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, urges us to "make a joyful noise to the Lord," and "break forth into joyous song and sing praises." And in the words of Pope Francis: "Far from being timid, morose, acerbic or melancholy, or putting on a dreary face, the saints are joyful and full of good humour." (Gaudete et Exsultate, n. 122)

4: We're so busy now: how can we do more?

It may not be doing more, but reflecting on and expanding what is done now. For example, the Responsorial Psalm for The Seventh Sunday of Easter tells us to "Sing praises to God." We offer praise and compliments nearly every day: we cheer on our young athletes at hockey and basketball games, we congratulate them on their report cards, we thank the person holding the door for us as we dash into the grocery store. We could add a 'thank you' or 'good job' to God each day, in the presence of our family and loved ones. This would share our gratitude to God, and also invite us to reflect on all God and our faith can do to support us in our busy lives: a small act that could mean and teach a great deal.

5: What are some other things we could do?

Try sharing simple observances of our faith, such as making the sign of the cross and offering a bedtime prayer or saying grace at meals. There are also online resources such as the new Vatican streaming service <https://www.vatvision.com/> and the Canadian site <https://catholicapps.com/> that lists options for all ages and interests to explore their faith on their mobile devices.

The CCCB website has a poster, prayer cards, links and a list of activities – including the recipe for Bible cookies in a jar:

<https://www.cccb.ca/national-week-for-life-and-the-family/>

<https://www.cccb.ca/fr/semaine-nationale-pour-la-vie-et-la-famille/>



May 3-9

National Hospice Palliative Care Week

Access. Advocacy. Funding. Awareness.

Attention and action in each of these areas is needed to ensure palliative care and hospice care becomes known and available to everyone in Canada, according to this year's national campaign by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association.

For fact sheets, template letters to MPs and more:

<https://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/national-hospice-palliative-care-week/>

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops defines palliative care as “a comprehensive approach” to end of life, combining pain management with attention to the emotional, social, and spiritual needs of the individual and families, caregivers and loved ones. Palliative care provides treatment and comfort for the individual at the end stage of life, and continues to support caregivers and loved ones after the patient's death.

“Palliative care, and not euthanasia or assisted suicide, is the compassionate and supportive response to suffering and dying,” CCCB President, Archbishop Richard Gagnon, wrote in his Easter message.

Read the entire letter here:

<https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/suffering-and-end-of-life/>

In our diocese, construction continues on a 10-bed hospice building in Sydney, and several regional and community hospitals offer palliative care services. These places and programs provide valuable information, health services and support to patients and those who love and care for them. These programs rely on community support for awareness, promotion, funding and volunteers. To learn more or to help:

<https://hospicecapebreton.org/>

<http://www.nshealth.ca/content/palliative-care>

Watch and Participate:



Saturday, May 8

Webinar on Palliative Care

Offered by The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Providing information and how Catholics can maintain their faith beliefs

To register:

<https://cwl.ca/>



Thursday, May 6

Special Screening of 'The Father'

starring Academy Award winner Anthony Hopkins and Olivia Coleman. Offered by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

To register:

chpca.ca/the-father-registration/



The Way of the Cross

Today: Reflections on Suffering in Sickness and Dying

By Sr Nuala Kenny, a Sister of Charity, physician and professor of bioethics

<https://slmedia.org/blog/>



Application Deadline June 1: Greg MacLeod House seeks residents for year of ‘learning, service, community, faith’



The Greg MacLeod House will open its doors in September to welcome six CBU students to form an ecumenical Christian community. Located in downtown Sydney, the House will provide

students with an opportunity for spiritual growth, service, and the practice of Christian hospitality. The students will gather for weekly community nights and work together to serve the community.

The house is equipped with four private bedrooms, one shared loft, three bathrooms, two kitchens, and common living areas, as well as a large backyard. Located on the Sydney waterfront, it is within walking distance of shops and restaurants, the local library, and a bus route. It is also designed to be an example of care for the earth: residents will be encouraged to reduce and recycle, buy local food, use public transportation and conserve energy.

The house is named for Fr. Greg MacLeod (1935-2017), a renowned and beloved priest, professor, and social activist who founded many community businesses and development organizations and believed in the power of ideas and the dignity of all people. Greg MacLeod House is a project of the Newman Society of CBU.

CBU students from any Christian background are welcome to apply. Questions? Email gregmacleodhouse@gmail.com or visit the website: <https://sites.google.com/view/cbunewmansociety/home>



For a schedule of events, videos, and more:
<https://www.antigonishdiocese.com/diaconate-program/>



“In a time that obliges us to social distance due to the pandemic, communication can enable the closeness that is necessary to recognise what is essential, and to truly understand the meaning of things.”

Pope Francis in his message for **May 16:**
World Day of Communications



Pope Francis is also encouraging Catholics and Marian Shrines around the world to pray the Rosary daily in May, the month of Mary, for an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped the daily offering of the Rosary will encourage individuals, families and communities to join in prayer, as COVID-19 enters its second year of threatening the health, livelihoods and well-being of people around the world.