



## The Story of the Grotto

*As taken from an account in the Daily Colonist  
December 15, 1912*

"Father Vullingsh was a native of Holland and studied at the famous Louvain University. Twenty-one years ago he volunteered for service on Vancouver Island, where for sixteen years he devoted himself to missionary work among the Indians. About five years ago he re-visited his native land on a brief holiday, and while there he was persuaded, by his sister, to accompany her to Lourdes. He did so, and was able, through the kindness of medical friends to witness the investigations made



into the reported cures by expert medical men. The love of Our Lady of Lourdes permeated his being, and, one night as he stood, but one among thousands at the grotto, he resolved to carry the devotion of Our Lady of Lourdes to the shores of the Pacific and establish there a replica of the Grotto of Lourdes where the Mater Dei would be venerated.

As Father Vullingsh thus stood musing on the decision he had just arrived at, he was suddenly accosted by a lady who was unknown to him, and who asked him if he wished to have a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. 'It was truly wonderful' declared Father Vullingsh. 'Here was I, having just resolved to spread the devotion of Lourdes in the West, and this lady, whom I had never met, seemed to be inspired to offer me the very thing I wanted.' The Father thanked her and accepted her kind offer. In conversation he discovered she was of noble Spanish blood and was married to a French Count with a fine castle in France. The lady selected the most beautiful life-sized statue she could find, and presented it to Father Vullingsh who, by special favor, had it carried in procession to the Grotto and afterwards placed, during the night, inside the Grotto rails. Those of my readers who have been privileged to see the statue will bear me out in stating that it has no equal in British Columbia. That the gift brought rewards is evident from a letter recently received from the donor in which she stated that the statue had brought her many blessings.

After the statue was carefully packed and dispatched to Vancouver Island its first resting place was at Ladysmith, where the sisters and people were so enraptured with it that its owner became doubtful of getting it safely from the coal city. His next appointment was as chaplain of the St. Ann nuns at Victoria, and here again his beloved statue was in danger of loving confiscation by the sisters.

Eventually, when construction of the Lourdes Grotto Replica was complete, the statue was put in its place of honor. ✚

## Blessing the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel



*Bishop Gary Gordon blesses the new Eucharistic Adoration Chapel with Father Al Alilio and ministry leaders*



*Bishop Gary Gordon with Sacristan Joe Calenda and Altar Server Sean Pearse*



*Bishop Gary Gordon and Father Al Alilio concelebrate the Sunday, December 6, 2015 commemorative mass*

## St. Patrick's Parish Maintenance Committee

### **Steve Pearse, Maintenance chair**

Our current maintenance committee was convened by Fr. Al last fall, and consists of members Nancy Griffin, Jim Shrubsole, Jim Pungente, Pierre Kouba, and Steve Pearse. At the first meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup> we discussed recent projects, church equipment and ongoing maintenance, and possible future projects. Two weeks later we met for a thorough tour and inspection of the entire property, to help with short and long-term planning.

Here are some highlights from the meetings:

- ▶ Recently completed projects included replacing roof above flower room, repainting rectory and fence, modifying office doors to comply with safe ministry guidelines, and installing outdoor lighting along the east side of the church.
- ▶ Major HVAC equipment includes four heat pumps and three hot water boilers, all of which are 17 years old and on regular maintenance schedules.

- ▶ The committee will prepare maintenance logs and schedules to anticipate lifecycle issues for all major equipment.
- ▶ Fr. Al asked for input about the Adoration chapel project, which has since been completed under the supervision of Pierre Kouba.
- ▶ Some issues were identified for immediate action this spring and summer, including repainting wood trim around windows in the basement and above the choir loft, re-routing a major downspout away from the basement windows, and installing LED lighting in the choir loft.
- ▶ Our next major project will be the conversion of the former religious gift stand and the west side confessional into a quiet room, with entrance from the narthex and windows into the church.

The maintenance committee appreciates your support, and asks that you please report any potential maintenance issues to Heidi so we can get them looked after. ✚

## Christmas at St. Pat's 2015



*New creche built by Eamon McMannis*



*St. Pat's Knights of Columbus Council 7934 outdoor nativity scene*



*St. Pat's youngsters perform the nativity story at the 6:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Mass*

## St. Patrick's Pastoral Council

### **Gary Mitchell, Chair**

We are a consultative body, elected from the parish community, which gives our advice and support to Fr. Al in fostering pastoral activities within our St. Patrick's parish community. We listen, consider, discuss and propose practical solutions and recommendations to those proposed pastoral ideas, initiatives and plans brought before us.

Specifically the Pastoral Council's purpose is to enhance the process of: a) pastoral planning; b) developing pastoral programs; c) improving pastoral services and d) evaluating our effectiveness of our parish services and programs.

This year, the Council's major initiatives include: coordinating our pastoral plan with the diocesan plan; developing an evangelization program; and preparing for the arrival of a refugee family within our faith community.

If you have any initiatives and ideas of how to improve our parish please contact myself or any member of our pastoral council, we are all very approachable. If you have any questions about the council or pastoral activities, best you contact me (that's why I am the council chair!). ✚

# St. Patrick's CWL: Ninety Wonderful Years

## **Pauline Scherr**

This year marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Patrick's Parish Catholic Women's League.

The CWL began its work in Oak Bay in 1926 as Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. In 1960, our council was re-named St. Patrick's, Oak Bay Council.

We finished off our 89<sup>th</sup> year in December with a luncheon and pin presentation to two wonderfully caring and dedicated ladies who have volunteered many, many years in our parish community doing justice to our motto: For God and Canada.

Yvonne Hayward, our past president, presented Mrs. Magdalene Wardrobe with her 60-year pin. Magdalene has also been a member of the Prayer Group, 27 years grandma for the Moms & Tots, works on the Hobby Group, bazaars, co-chaired funeral receptions, worked at 9/10 Club & many positions on our executive. She is truly dedicated to her faith and community.

Mrs. Lorna O'Neil was presented with our Maple Leaf Service Pin. Lorna has been a member of our parish family since moving here from Alberta in the 1960's with her husband, Patrick, and three children. She was on the executive for Pro Life and active at St. Patrick's where her children attended school as well as a great support to Pat while he was Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus Council.

Lorna has co-chaired our Good Used Clothing Sales and Annual Bazaar for nine years. We heard her lovely voice as a member of the 7 p.m. choir for a number of years. Lorna is currently our President Elect.

A huge thanks to these special ladies for their commitment to their families, church and community.

During 2016 we will have notices in the bulletin and on our notice board in Our Lady of Lourdes Hall of events planned to celebrate our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The CWL has two major fundraisers each year:

The spring Good Used Clothing Sale will be held April 15 and 16 and the fall sale will be held Sept. 30

and Oct. 1. Both sales will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Donations of clean, unstained clothing, shoes for men, women and kids and household linens are greatly appreciated.

Our 2016 bazaar and silent auction is scheduled for Oct. 1 from 9:30 to 2 p.m.

Although these are fundraisers organized by the CWL to support our charities, they bring the whole parish community together to work for a common goal. St. Andrew's High School has also participated in these events.

All parishioners are welcome to participate in and enjoy our events. Please consider volunteering. You will learn how our stalls operate, meet your fellow parishioners and your ideas will be welcomed!

By working together, we are able to support the following: Anawin House, Development & Peace, Hospice, Missions at home & abroad, Mount St. Mary's Hospital, St. Vincent de Paul, Sandy Merriman House, Single Parent Resource Centre, Oak Bay Volunteers, 9/10 Club, Syrian Refugees, School Bursaries and Parish Needs.

The Catholic Women's League is the largest women's organization in Canada (over 80,000 members) working for God and Canada. Our national executive meets annually with our federal MPs. Our provincial executive meets with members of the provincial government yearly. Ladies 16 and over are welcome to join. Check the cover of the bulletin for information. ✚



Back: Mrs. Colbert, Mrs. Cuthbertson, Mrs. Orme, Fr Buckley  
Front: Mrs. Windau, Mrs Steele, Mrs. Horbsby, Mr. Cuthbertson 1926

# St. Patrick's Supports Seminarians in Peru

## Nancy Stuart

It was a warm welcome home for Fr. Bill MacDonald, OMI, when he was the guest speaker in January at a fundraising event for four Peruvian seminarians.

St. Patrick's Parish has been supporting the seminarians in Peru for the past three years. Fr. Bill, who retired from St. Patrick's two years ago, was the guest of honour on Jan. 24 for a fourth and final fundraiser for the seminarians at Our Lady of Lourdes Hall.



Father Bill MacDonald, OMI

Heidi de Contreras, our parish secretary, organized a lovely dinner for Fr. Bill on the Friday evening. About 25 people attended and Fr. Bill was pleased to see everyone and really felt he had come home to family.

Fr. Bill celebrated all the weekend masses. After the Sunday 10:30 mass, about 65 people sat down to lunch and listened to Fr. Bill give a brief history of the Oblates on Vancouver Island. We also raffled off an alpaca rug which was donated by Fr. Bill's good friend, Fr. Jim Dukowski, who works in Comas, Peru, just outside Lima.

Also attending the lunch was Lois Hobbs, an Oblate Associate from Saltspring Island, who talked about the work of Rita Balachandran, who has built an orphanage and school in Kenya.

The four seminarians have been very grateful for the support that St. Patrick's has given them and Nancy Stuart read a message of gratitude from their director, Fr. Cesar Taipe Flores.

It was a very successful lunch, organized by Nancy Stuart, Pat Mochrie and Shannon Turner and ably assisted by Bruna Perusi, Gaby Leja and Mary Carpenter. Over \$15,000 was raised. ✚

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## Pastoral Care and Home Visits

### Perlita Pamaran

Whether recovering from major surgery, or just in for a short stay, many members of the St. Patrick's community and beyond find themselves at Royal Jubilee Hospital.

That's where the St. Patrick's hospital and home visits ministry comes in, visiting people who are unable to attend mass.

Our pastoral care ministry reaches out to Roman Catholics at Royal Jubilee every Sunday. Hospital patients and their loved ones appreciate the care and guidance offered by the St. Patrick's community. Our

ministry brings Holy Communion and prayer to the faithful.

Sometimes patients are from out of town and have no one to visit them. These patients truly appreciate the company and kindness our ministry provides. We try to spare time to chat and visit with patients.

We work in co-operation with the Vancouver Island Health Authority hospital chaplain and our Pastoral Care team members wear official I.D. when visiting the hospital.

We also do home visits, an important function of our ministry in a parish with many elderly and aging

members. We feel a responsibility to connect with our fellow parishoners, some of them in nursing homes.

We currently have two couples doing this important and rewarding work and Royal Jubilee is a large hospital! We could use some help and anyone interested in joining our Pastoral Care team should speak to Father Al or Pat Mochrie, the Pastoral Care chair. Their phone numbers are in the bulletin.

You can also contact me directly. Please e-mail me at [perलिएpamaran@hotmail.com](mailto:perलिएpamaran@hotmail.com) or phone me at 250-294-3175. ✚

# Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Dance

Father Al and Heidi organized a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Dance on Friday, January 8, 2016, in St. Patrick's School Gymnasium. Food for Thought Catering Ltd. capably catered the meal and Kendrick Acheron provided some great music afterwards. Thanks to all who volunteer their gifts to our parish!

