



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 309; December 5, 2025

THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS sent an open letter to **Prime Minister Carney** yesterday, expressing grave concerns about amendments to Bill C-9, which could have serious impacts on religious freedom. The proposed amendment would remove the current “religious exemption” from Canada’s hate speech laws. While noting the importance of protecting vulnerable individuals and groups and condemning hatred, the bishops raise a serious caution – that this amendment could cause uncertainty for faith communities and their representatives, as the expression of traditional moral doctrines may be mis-interpreted as hate and subject the speaker to severe legal consequences. Please read the letter [here](#). I urge anyone who shares in these concerns to contact their local Member of Parliament and respectfully urge the government to reconsider this legislation.

I CELEBRATED MASS AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS Catholic Secondary School in Lindsay earlier this week. I appreciated the kind welcome of Matt Bowen, Principal, and the able assistance of Father Israel Oreubi from St. Luke’s in Downeyville. Afterwards, I enjoyed meeting some staff and students at a little reception held in the library. The Mass was prayerful, and it was a wonderful way for the school community to begin the season of Advent!

THE SIXTY-TWO INDIGENOUS ARTIFACTS being returned by the Holy See will arrive in Montreal tomorrow. A ceremony will be held including leaders of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Metis National Council as well as members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Let us pray that this important gesture may be a meaningful step in the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

OUR ADVENT GATHERING FOR PRIESTS AND DEACONS went well yesterday – both the celebration of the Mass and the luncheon afterwards. Blustery weather and some sickness depleted our numbers a little, but we were still close to fifty who gathered in the joy of these holy seasons. Sincere thanks to all who worked hard to plan this annual Advent get-together!

THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE CLOSSES in dioceses around the world on the Feast of the Holy Family, Sunday December 28. All are welcome to the Closing Mass being celebrated on that day at 10:30 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains. What a wonderful chance to give thanks to God for the many blessings and graces of the Jubilee Year in our Diocese. (Note that Pope Leo XIV will formally conclude the Jubilee Year one week later at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome on the Feast of the Epiphany. At that time the Holy Door will be closed and sealed.)

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*Fraternally,
+Daniel*