



FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 318; February 20, 2026

I AM SORRY TO BEAR THE SAD NEWS THAT FATHER COLLINS OKAFOR, SMMM, passed away last weekend. Father Collins was on his way back from Nigeria to Canada but was too sick to board his flight in Frankfurt, Germany. He was hospitalized there and died shortly afterwards. Father Collins was most recently pastor of St. Alphonsus Parish in Wooler and Holy Angels Parish in Brighton. He had served in the Diocese of Peterborough since 2011 in Courtice, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls and Mactier. We will arrange a memorial Mass for Father Collins soon and share details when they are available. “Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.”

JOURNEY THROUGH LENT is a video series produced annually by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and available on their website. This year, I was asked to be the presenter and while it was a major commitment, I was honoured to do so. The seven videos (Ash Wednesday and the six Sundays of Lent) were taped by Salt & Light in our Cathedral a month ago. Each one is a brief reflection on the Scripture readings of the day exploring the significant Lenten themes. I hope I have done the material justice! You can judge for yourselves (charitably, I hope) by going to the [video series page](#) on the CCCB website. I pray that they might help you toward a spiritually fruitful Lent.

POPE LEO’S LENTEN MESSAGE was released last week and is entitled “Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion.” The Holy Father invites us to embrace Lent as a time to “place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives.” This brief letter is certainly worth reading and reflecting on as we embark on the Lenten season. You may view it on the Vatican website [here](#).

THE ANNUAL SHARE LENT COLLECTION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE takes place on the Fifth Sunday in Lent. This year’s theme is “On Track for Justice.” You may read my letter about the Share Lent campaign [here](#). Please consider supporting this annual appeal, a major way in which the Church in Canada supports people and communities in the Global South.

A WINTER SOCIAL for the Peterborough Catholic 20’s and 30’s group takes place tomorrow, Saturday, February 21. Come out for a fun skate at the Quaker Rink at 3:00 p.m. and then continue with a potluck gathering and games night at the meeting rooms of Sacred Heart rectory, 208 Romaine St. in Peterborough. There is no need to register, just come and enjoy!

PLANNING IS UNDERWAY FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027. Interested participants are invited to a Zoom Information Session on March 11 at 7:00 p.m. as we consider the logistics of sending a group from our Diocese. Please email FrStephenDeCarlo@peterboroughdiocese.org to register and get the Zoom link. Details are still being finalized but this meeting will be a good opportunity to raise questions.

*Fraternally,
+Daniel*