

# Diocese of Whitehorse

AUGUST 2011

OUR LADY OF THE YUKON...PRAY FOR US

ISSUE THREE



## Sr. Shelley Grant, CND Celebrates Twenty Five Years of Religious Life Twelve Years on Mission in the Diocese of Whitehorse

Twenty five years of Religious Life in the Congregation of Notre Dame has been such a time of grace and blessing for me. It is hard to believe that with my three years of initial formation and the 25 years as a vowed member of the CND that these 28 years seemed to have passed so quickly...almost half spent in the North. In 1999, I arrived in the Yukon on August 18th after working for 10 years with men and women living on the streets of Ottawa – all of them having been barred from the shelters in the city.



It was a transformative time in my life that was lived to the full. Prior to that I had completed my Masters in Theology at St. Paul's University in Ottawa and before that had been pastoral assistant in a parish in rural PEI.

In May of 1999, Bishop Thomas Lobsinger, OMI invited me to come to the Diocese and be of service and a pastoral presence to the people in Carmacks, YT. A small first nation community on the banks of the Yukon River north of Whitehorse known as the Tage Cho Hudan (Big River people) in Northern Tutchone. For three years I lived amongst the people as the Catholic Administrator of Saint Jude's Catholic Mission. I subbed in the school, received my certification as an EMT paramedic, as well as, to the best of my ability, doing all of the administrative duties that a Yukon Missionary does while being on Mission. i.e. cutting and splitting wood; building fires in the church at 5:00 a.m. so it would be warm enough for the 11:00 church service; thawing pipes and propane tanks; building steps; plumbing duties; cleaning chimneys; change flat tires on dirt roads during a down pour; praying

with people while you were attending to them in the back of the ambulance,

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baptizing our people, young and old; teaching children and adults about our faith; praying with the dying in their homes and the hospital; funeral services for our people...potlatches; entering into the lives of our First Nation people in so many ways and they have been such a part of mine. I also learned how to shoot a moose; ice fish; smoke salmon at fish camp; sew and bead moccasins; canoe and camp on the Yukon River how not to get caribou

off the road; and how you don't expect to catch fish while with the Bishop.

Since the fall of 2002, I have lived and worked in Whitehorse as the Diocesan Coordinator of Religious Education, Adult Faith Formation and Liturgy. Not wanting to give up the pastoral work I still was the Administrator of Saint Jude's. I have travelled through the nineteen missions and two parishes of the Diocese helping the pastoral staff with their catechetical and liturgical needs. On one trip to all of our missions I added the distance up and it clocked in at 6500 kms.

Over the nine years as Diocesan Coordinator of Religious Education I have learned so much about the great possibilities we have as Church. Since last year, I have been going weekly to Whitehorse Corrections Center meeting with the men and women in groups and one on one. At times it seems that we come to many closed doors but by our faith we have to continue to look for the open doors that will lead us closer to our God. We have many challenges in today's world...natural disasters, poverty in so many areas of life, social problems too numerous to mention...but with the help of one another we will be strong. The people in the Yukon have gifted me with a much deeper faith and trust in God than I ever thought or could have imagined. The roads I have travelled over this vast Diocese and the people with whom I have met have been proof that life is lived to the full and God saw that it was good. No matter how many times I have travelled the North Klondike Highway I am always struck by the vastness of what our God has created. We are so lucky to be in such a place of grandeur and beauty.

As I write this, I will be renewing my vows publicly in two days... on

the Feast of the Visitation May 31st. We have 1214 sisters and over 1500 associates from Canada, Japan, Cameroon, France, Central America, and United States all who are doing the same as I will be. Sisters and associates following in the footsteps of our Foundress Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys in the Congregation of Notre Dame. This is a Feast where two women greeted one another, a Visitation of joy like no other. I am sure each one of us can share Visitation moments that we have every day some more significant than others for sure. What was your Visitation today?

My Visitation started here in the Yukon that cold August evening when I arrived in Whitehorse with snow flurries whipping around my ankles. I have had many Visitations too numerous to mention over the last 12 years. But now it is time for me to move on to other Visitations... It was a very hard decision to leave the North but the time is right, especially when you have spent time discerning what God's plans are for you. I can say that the water level has come up a bit as lots of tears have been shed and I expect will continue as I bid farewell over these next four weeks. Fr. Jim and Bishop Gary can attest to this. I am not going to say good-bye because I still need to come back and drive to the Arctic Circle.

I want to thank so many for all of their kindness and prayers over these years. They will always be cherished memories and be assured of my prayers for you as I know you will for me. I especially want to thank Bishop Gary for his on going support and encouragement over the past five years, Fr. Jim for his many years of friendship and support even when my music got a bit loud or when my laughing got a bit out of

control in the office, to Marlene Reisinger and Helen Flaherty for all of their support. To Bishop Tom who invited me North and the many times I drove past Fox Lake and said a prayer for guidance...(his spirit lives on)....and to my religious community, the CND who allowed me to be come here in the first place. To all of you I say...

May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face until we meet again.

Much love and prayer,

Sr. Shelley Grant, CND



## Important Dates and Reminders

### Roman Missal Workshops

~for diocesan staff on Friday October 28th at Mary House , 10 AM to 4PM  
~For the Laity on Saturday October 29, 9:30 AM--3 PM Sacred Heart Cathedral will host a one day workshop in the Cathedral.

### Birthdays:

September 03~Marlene Reisinger  
04~Lise St. Onge  
October 02~Fr. John Vines  
12~David Daws  
14~Fr. Jim Bleakley

### 1st Vows:

September 08~ Fr. Jim Bleakley  
30~Fr. Pierre Veyrat

### Ordination:

September 15~Fr. Jim Bleakley



Great News for the missions in Watson Lake, Lower Post, Upper Liard, and Good Hope Lake.

A priest to serve God's people in these missions. Fr. Matthew George was installed by Bishop Gary on Sunday August 21. Fr. Matthew is a priest of the Diocese of London Ontario.

With Gratitude to God and the diocese of London,  
The people of the Diocese of Whitehorse

## Vocation Prayer

**God of life and love; By our Baptism you call us to be disciples of your Son, Jesus.**

**In your eternal plan for our salvation you call men and women to the vocation of Holy Matrimony, And so live the gospel of life.**

**We pray that you choose from our family of faith Many to serve as sisters, brothers, lay apostles, deacons, and priests.**

**Gracious Father, we make this prayer in the grace of your Son Jesus Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit, one God who lives and reigns, For ever and ever, Amen**

**Mary, Our Lady of the Yukon,  
Pray for us.**



*Above: A reminder of God's covenant and beautiful sign of His faithfulness over the hills of the Yukon.*

*Below: David Suzuki visits Mayo. Here seen with the Girard's*

# *From the Bishop's Desk*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

The first Sunday of Advent November 27 the Church will receive the third edition of the Roman Missal. This new English translation will mean some changes in the way we celebrate Mass.

To assist the priests and lay pastoral administrators effectively explain and implement the Roman Missal there will be a study day workshop on **Friday October 28th at Mary House , 10 AM to 4PM.** Sister Loretta Manzara csj from the London Diocese Liturgy Commission will be our facilitator.

Sister Loretta Manzara ssj will also assist the parishioners in the parishes and missions of the Diocese to implement the Third Edition of the the Roman Missal. ***Sacred Heart Cathedral will host a one day workshop Saturday October 29, 9:30 AM--3 PM in the Cathedral.*** The workshop will be particularly important for the Lay faithful who are involved in assisting at Mass in music and song, serving, proclaiming the scripture and assisting the priest in the distribution of Holy Communion.

I am working on a pastoral letter to the diocese on the Third Edition of the Roman Missal which will give greater detail of the changes in translation and the celebration of the mass in the Diocese.

I look forward to this wonderful moment in the life of the Church as an opportunity to grow in understanding and appreciation of the source and summit of the faith, the Holy Eucharist.

May God bless you

September 8th, 2011  
Birthday of Mary

+Gary M. Gordon  
Bishop of Whitehorse



*Fall at Tombstone Territorial  
Park*

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