

## Holy Week & Easter Reflections

### Foyer Lacombe House



It's hard to believe we're celebrating the Easter season again. This year, Easter feels particularly different for me. Until now, I have celebrated it with parish communities, which involved a great deal of preparation and collaboration with fellow parishioners.

I remember Good Friday's Way of the Cross on Blood Reserve. People would walk a solid 25 km to the main church, concluding in a Good Friday celebration. The weather was often harsh - filled with winds, snow, and rain.

A similar Way of the Cross takes place each year from Alexis Reserve to Lac Ste. Anne. It involves about three hours of walking and praying together, starting from Our Lady of the Lake in Alexis. It always begins with a smudging ceremony and a blessing before participants carry the large cross.

Meanwhile, many Filipino families travel from Edmonton to Lac Ste. Anne around 6 a.m. to start their Way of the Cross.



# Holy Week & Easter Reflections

## Foyer Lacombe House

The 3 p.m. celebration serves as a beautiful symbol of unity. Holy Week seems to be a time when faith is displayed more than ever, and this Easter is different for me.



This time of Easter reminds us of the promise of resurrection and the transformative power of faith. Easter inspires us to embrace love, compassion, and unity within our community. This sacred time invites us to reflect deeply on the transformative message of resurrection, reminding us that even in our darkest moments, there is always hope for new beginnings.

Just as Christ emerged victorious from the tomb, we, too, are encouraged to rise above our struggles and embrace the guiding light of faith. A shining example of "rising above our struggles" is Fr. Maurice in our community. He has worked very hard to recover, and all the prayers and faith have borne fruit.

As we celebrate this Easter, may you and everyone experience an outpouring of peace, which is so much needed in our times, along with joy and spiritual rejuvenation. Let us unite in fellowship, sharing love, compassion, and kindness with one another, reaffirming the core values that bind us together as a community of believers.

Wishing you all a blessed and meaningful Easter filled with grace, hope, and the warmth of God's love.

*~ Fr. Leszek Kwiatkowski*

# Holy Week & Easter Reflections

from Fr. Maurice Joly

## 2 Corinthians 1:20 - All things are 'Yes' in Christ Jesus

Three Days! When we think about it, it's not much. And yet, it is two thousand years ago that the story of our salvation took place, starting with the saddest night that was changed into a most radiant morning.

In the place where Jesus died there was a garden in which His body was buried. The women would have liked to embalm it that evening with aromatic perfume, but it was the Sabbath.

Two days later, at the rising of the sun, Jesus spoke and said, "Mary"! Mary knew that voice and she said "Rabboni". Her heart was filled with joy and light. Three days! That was a very short time. However, it lasted forever.

We have had moments in our own lives where we felt suddenly profoundly transformed like Mary. So much so, that we could hardly believe it.



I can imagine the twelve apostles in such a confusion. The shock was too great. Jesus was among them! He showed them His wounds. For Thomas, it took longer before he said, "My Lord and my God".

In the end, all the apostles and disciples were transformed by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. "Peace be with you".

Every time we profess our faith in the risen Lord, our lives are changed into God's own eternal existence.

Three days, three minutes, three seconds, it does not matter. Everything is in the "Yes" of the Joy of Easter.

~ Fr. Maurice Joly

# Monthly Anniversaries

## JANUARY

03-Jan-76	Ordination	Wladyslaw Karciarz
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## FEBRUARY

None		
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## MARCH

12-Mar-40	Birthday	Alfred Groleau
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## APRIL

18-Apr-96	First Vows	Susai Jesu
22-Apr-47	Birthday	Sylvain Lavoie

## MAY

02-May-37	Birthday	Gerard LeStrat
03-May-56	First Vows	Edward Kosa
09-May-41	Birthday	Edward McSheffrey
17-May-71	Birthday	Susai Jesu
29-May-60	Birthday	Rusty Gardiner
31-May-65	First Vows	Donald Claerhout

## JUNE

03-Jun-57	Birthday	Peter Doherty
03-Jun-72	Ordination	Edward McSheffrey
08-Jun-86	Episcopal Ordination	Denis Croteau
16-Jun-56	Ordination	Maurice Joly
17-Jun-87	Ordination	Leszek Kwiatkowski
21-Jun-63	Birthday	Mark Blom
21-Jun-05	Ordination	Marek Pisarek
24-Jun-67	Ordination	Gerard LeStrat

## Fr. Alfred Groleau's 86<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration



## Lenten Reflection

### Deprivation - Lent - Why?

Why do we set aside a season each year - forty days - to voluntarily give up legitimate comforts and enjoyments in order to prepare for something greater? At its heart, lent insists that desire itself is not the enemy - it is formation that is missing. Scripture never tells us to stop wanting; it teaches us to want rightly. By stepping back from what normally satisfies us, Lent retrains the heart, loosening its grip on lesser goods so it can relearn its true hunger, hunger for God. What we fast from exposes what has been filling us. And in that exposure, desire is not diminished but converted - redirected away from consumption and toward communion. So when we wait for something with intention, our longing deepens. The desire itself becomes shaped and clarified over time.

Even in everyday life, we understand this instinctively. Marketing works this way. New devices are announced months before release -not by accident, but to give time for anticipation. Waiting forms expectation. Expectation creates meaning.

Scripture reflects this same rhythm again and again. After their liberation from slavery, the Jewish people did not move directly into the Promised Land. Instead, they spent forty years in the desert. This was a necessary transition - from a people shaped by captivity and dependence toward a people learning responsibility, trust, and relationship with the Creator. The desert was not punishment; it was formation.

Likewise, when Abraham and Isaac journey up the mountain, Scripture tells us the journey took three days. The distance itself did not require that long. The time was given for interior preparation. The heart needs time to catch up to obedience.

Jesus follows this same pattern. He enters the desert for forty days, fasting and praying before beginning his public ministry. That time of self-denial was not about proving strength. It was about clarity - learning to listen, to discern, and to align himself with the will of the Father. Vision does not sharpen instantly; it emerges through silence and struggle.

### **This wisdom is also deeply embedded in Indigenous culture.**

In many Indigenous traditions, periods of intentional deprivation are understood as necessary for spiritual clarity and growth. In a vision quest, a person steps away from the community, from food, from water, and from daily routines. This is not done casually. It is a profound act of trust. By stripping away physical comfort and distraction, the individual creates space to listen - to the land, to the Creator, and to their own spirit. What emerges is not something taken, but something received.

## Lenten Reflection

### Deprivation - Lent - Why?

Similarly, the sweat lodge is a place of humility and transformation. Entering the heat, the darkness, the closeness, and the discipline of prayer quiets the body and unsettles the mind. Physical intensity opens space for spiritual honesty. One does not leave unchanged. As Elders have often said, the sweat is not about endurance—it is about purification, reflection, and reconnection.

The Elders remind us that these ceremonies recognize a deep truth: the physical body often needs to be quieted so the spirit can speak. When the body dominates, the other dimensions of our being can be drowned out. The body is humbled so the spirit can speak.

These Indigenous teachings are often express through powerful imagery. The medicine wheel reminds us that we are made up of interconnected aspects - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual - and that balance is essential. Each part must be honoured. In Métis culture, the interwoven sash conveys a similar understanding. No single strand carries the weight alone. Strength comes from the weaving together. When one strand is neglected or overemphasized, the whole sash is affected.

Our modern lives, however, are filled with constant noise - work, schedules, social expectations, travel, and especially devices. The physical and material easily dominate. Lent invites us to intentionally slow that dominance, making room again for the mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of our being.

This pattern is also visible in the reality of prison life. Those who have harmed others are removed from the ordinary freedoms of daily life - not simply as punishment, but as a forced pause. Time set apart.

Time to confront inner wounds. Time to reflect on choices, responsibility, and meaning. True change does not happen without space and time. In many ways, Lent offers us a similar opportunity - chosen rather than imposed. It asks us to quiet the physical self so that deeper truths can emerge. To hear that voice in the wilderness - the voice of the Creator reminding us that we are loved unconditionally, calling us into deeper relationship, inviting us to wholeness so we can better attend to the sacred within us.

It seems to me that is what Lent is meant to do.

*~ Bro. Rusty Gardiner*

## Lenten Reflection

### Prayer for the Lenten Journey by Bro. Rusty Gardiner

Creator of silence and sound,  
You meet us not only in abundance  
but in hunger, waiting, and stillness.

As we loosen our grip on comfort,  
teach us what truly sustains us.

As we quiet our bodies,  
open our hearts to wisdom.

In this season of Lent,  
teach us to wait without fleeing,  
to deny ourselves without bitterness,  
and to listen without distraction.

So as to be open to restore the balance within us -  
body, mind, emotion, and spirit -  
woven together in harmony.

Lead us through this season of Lent  
with patience, courage, and trust,  
that we may hear Your voice more clearly  
and walk our path with greater  
clarity and compassion. Amen.



## BOC Associates

### Oblate Associate Report – Pilgrims of Aix Experience 2026

#### Day 1 – Arrival at Aix:

Twelve pilgrims from across Canada came together throughout the day, arriving in Marseille, France. Met by Oblates from the Foundation House in Aix-en Provence (Aix), we made the short drive to the house with anticipation and excitement. After unpacking, we gathered in the dining room for our first time together as a group.



Pilgrims of Aix Experience 2026 & Fr. Bonga Thami OMI

A traditional table awaited us—baguette, wine and cheese, along with a hearty soup, rice, and roast duck. Fr. Paolo Archiati, Superior of the House, welcomed us warmly.

He introduced us to the coffee machine and showed us where the bread will be located for the next ten days. Fr. Bonga, coordinator of the Aix Experience, also greeted us and reminded us that the Foundation House is our home during our stay—encouraging us to make ourselves comfortable.

We assured him that we would do just that. He outlined the schedule for the coming day, and after a brief visit to some parts of the house, we all retreated to our rooms for a much-needed restorative sleep to help dispel any jet lag.

Please see the link below for the continuation of the week with daily updates, photos and a YouTube video on this profound experience.

[Associate Updates - OMI Lacombe](#)



#### **Dan and Joanne Friedt**

Provincial Oblate Associate Animators  
OMI Lacombe Canada

# Starlight Fundraising Dinner

Fr. Ken Forster, OMI Keynote Speaker

Please click on the Star of the North Retreat Centre link below to register for this event.



The graphic features a dark blue background with the word "Starlight" in a large, elegant gold script font, with "FUNDRAISER DINNER" in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the text is a collage of six photographs: a large dining hall, a group of people at a table, a garden with signs, a snowy outdoor scene with a tent, and a group of people sitting at a table. The text on the left reads: "Join us for a Starlight fundraising dinner hosted by Star of the North Retreat Centre with the Missionary Associates of Mary Immaculate. Celebrating 200 years of Oblate mission, the evening supports renewal programs, young adult initiatives, and a new retreat house in Kenya, featuring keynote speaker Fr. Ken Forster, OMI".

Star of the North

Star of the North Website, press Ctrl + Click to open

[Home | Star of the North Retreat Centre](#)

All are welcome to subscribe for the Star Gazer Newsletter!



[Oblates continue a lifetime of mission through prayer and presence – The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton – CAEDM](#)

## Easter Reflection

We have a Risen Saviour!



# Happy Easter Sunday!

May this Easter Sunday fill your heart with peace, your soul with hope, and your life with joy. Let us remember the true meaning of this sacred day—new beginnings, renewed faith, and everlasting love.

*“He is not here; He has risen!” – Luke 24:6*

### District Office Closure

*Please note that the local District Office will be closed from  
Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> to Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
The Office will reopen on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 am*