

# GRATITUDE NEWS

## Music of the Knight

By: Mark Sammut

On November 17th, the Knights of Columbus Council 1507 presented **Music of the Knight**, an evening of musical variety - held in the Parish Hall. The concert featured performances from many talented parishioners, covering: Orchestral, Ballads and Folk, Jazz Piano, A Capella, Broadway Hits, Soft Rock and Popular.



This was the first time an event like this was held, and 130 people attended and helped raise \$1,700. Since the performers all donated their time for this event, all of these proceeds will support the Knights **Coats for Kids** program.

### What is Coats for Kids?

Since the program's launching in 2009, nearly 500,000 coats have been distributed in 49 states and all 10 Canadian provinces. In winter 2017 alone, the Knights of Columbus distributed 105,192 coats in 1,600 communities throughout the U.S. and Canada, including events at military bases, in Native American communities, at inner-city neighborhoods and through partnerships with local police and fire departments.



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## Grade 12 Catholic High School Retreat at Basilica of our Lady

By: Krista Nolan, Chaplain from Our Lady of Lourdes

On Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, all grade 12 students from all the Catholic High schools in Wellington Catholic gathered for the second annual Grade 12 Conference Day. The theme of the conference this year was "**Finding Joy**," focusing on preparing students for the next stage of their journey after graduation.

Almost 600 students were in attendance to participate in a day of learning, spiritual development, liturgical prayer and community building. The day began with mass in the Basilica, celebrated by Monsignor Noon. Students then listened to a keynote address by Dr. Terry Nelson-Johnson, a storyteller and spiritual motivator from Chicago. Dr. Nelson-Johnson is Founder and Executive Director of Soul-Play, LLC, an experiential, theological, educational enterprise serving congregations, families, schools, and adult retreats.

Following the keynote address, students moved into the parish hall, where they enjoyed a lunch prepared by the Everton Academy of Culinary Arts. Final preparations of the lunch and serving was done by generous volunteers from the Basilica CWL, Holy Rosary CWL and the Knights of Columbus, whose hard work ensured that this large group of hungry teens were quickly well-fed. Many staff and students commented on their organization and efficiency.

After lunch, the students participated in one of five workshops on a variety of topics ranging from faith supports in post-secondary, to guided meditation, to music, to stress management techniques. The day concluded with a prayer commissioning, and then students returned to school to begin applying the new insights they had gained.

Wellington Catholic is grateful for the support and welcome they always receive from the Basilica of Our Lady Parish community!

## Student Reflection from the Grade 12 Student Retreat

By: Matteo Furfaro

As a senior student from Bishop Macdonell, I was extremely proud to be a part of the Grade 12 Retreat for the students of our Catholic High Schools in Guelph.

It was amazing to see old friends and foster new relationships at this full day event.



Seminars were relevant to life as a teenager ready to leave home and embark on the next phase of their faith and life journeys. One workshop that I found particularly relevant was the discussion of stress and anxiety and how to cope with difficult situations in a healthy way.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Terry Nelson-Johnson and his theme was **Finding Joy in your life**. He spoke of being grateful for what you have and finding joy in the everyday small moments.

A quote that really resonated with me is that "**Joy is the most inevitable sign of the presence of God.**"

As a young Catholic, I felt privileged to be part of this amazing day!



## Annual CWL Christmas Bazaar

By: Natalie DiBattista

The smell of fresh-cut pine boughs, the stirring sound of carols, and the sight of families and friends gathering for an afternoon of fun made for another successful Christmas Bazaar, hosted by the Basilica's Catholic Women's League.

Tasty treats served by CWL volunteers were enjoyed in the tea room, while others were able to satisfy their sweet tooth at the bake table where generously-donated cakes, cookies and squares had every wide-eyed child's attention. And, speaking of the little ones, they flocked to "Santa's Grotto" – a new addition to the Bazaar this year – where the jolly old elf met with the young and young-at-heart. The Grotto also had a craft table where kids could make ornaments and an area for collecting toy donations, making this special spot an important reminder that this is a season of giving.

In the days leading up to the Bazaar, a small army of "elves" helped to decorate the Parish Hall, and organize the various festive activities. The penny table and silent auction were loaded with valuable items up for grabs, tantalizing gift baskets were raffled-off and the always-popular 50-50 draw drew lots of support. There really was something for everyone: homemade crafts, attic treasures, a jewelry boutique, and a wide variety of seasonal decorations. It was a great opportunity to start your Christmas shopping or to begin decking your halls for the holidays.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the patronage of Basilica Parishioners and community members from right across the City of Guelph, who made substantial donations and attended the Bazaar in droves.

Funds raised from the Christmas Bazaar support a variety of initiatives: students with specific school needs and graduation awards, our beloved Basilica, the Drop-In Centre, Right to Life, St. Joseph's Health Centre, Hospice Wellington, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace, Catholic Missions In Canada, Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and the Coady International Institute.

A truly wonderful team of women and men gave of their time and talents to ensure that this annual event made both memories and much-needed funds to support the CWL's beneficiaries. The hard-working women of the CWL embody the purest example of what our Catholic faith represents: kindness, community spirit, and dedication. For that, we are all very grateful.



## Dr. Michael Higgins' Talk

By: Ian Macpherson

On Saturday November 10th, the Knights of Columbus Council 1507 hosted Dr. Michael Higgins, who spoke to the community about the Spirituality of Vulnerability.

Dr. Higgins used the current American president as an example of Nietzsche's Übermensch, or "Superman" - part of a worldview that contains only winners and losers. The qualities of a winner include aggressivity and an adversarial attitude and their chief aim is to keep the losers in their place. This he contrasted with Jesus and his celebration not of strength but of weakness. "What grounds us is the awareness of our own profound need for redemption, (which) is best communicated by the recognition of our own vulnerability.

Signs of change, conflict and uncertainty in our world suggest the dying or dissolution of the 'old order'. But we can see this as a "manifestation of the eruption of the spirit in our lives and in our institutions" - an opportunity to respond and rebuild. Institutional and personal vulnerability can be seen in these times as a "conduit of grace", based on the principles of Jean Vanier.

Dr. Higgins used four illustrative examples to support his thesis: the comfort received from Henri Nouwen by a young couple whose infant daughter had just died; the experiences of Carmody Grey whose time in a wheelchair allowed her to view the world from the periphery and to reflect on the Pope's invitation to the poor of Rome to share in the celebration of Saints Peter and Paul with newly created cardinals; the concussion of Roselyn Kelada-Sedra that allowed her to change the way she lives day-to-day, to accept kindness from others and to share her compassion; and the story of a Little Sister of Jesus who intervened in a conflict between a young French boy and a Muslim woman in a burka that ultimately resulted in the sister making many lasting connections within the Muslim community, related by Stephanie Sandberg.

In all of these examples, and in our lives, the ability to recognize one's vulnerability allows us "to connect with others and to move forward aching into holiness". In founding the l'Arche communities, Jean Vanier recognized that people with disabilities have incredible sensitivity and have been deeply wounded, and that they have the same needs that we all have: to be loved and to love. Vanier wrote that "opening ourselves to friendship means becoming vulnerable".

Dr. Higgins concluded by reminding us that we wear many masks to hide our vulnerabilities, even while we strive for success as defined by the world: wealth, prestige, power. And yet, in the gospels, in the work of Henri Nouwen, in Jean Vanier and l'Arche, in Teresa of Calcutta, we see examples of those who have lived vulnerability in action by recognizing their own vulnerability. Indeed St. Paul describes the weakest and least presentable parts of the body as indispensable to the body. People who are the weakest and least presentable are indispensable to the Church. This is the antithesis of Nietzsche's philosophy.

"Our vulnerability then in the end is a conduit of grace. It is a moment of recognition that frees us to reciprocity. It is a discovery of our own essential humanness. It is the fragility of the heart, the broken heart, that is often the means by which we enter into the deeper recesses of Christ's expansive and encompassing love. Our only glimpse of God's infinite love is to be found in the recognition of our own vulnerability - our realization that through our fragility we enter into the larger work of our restoration and of our deeper salvation."

There was a brief intermission, after which Dr. Higgins addressed questions from attendees. The evening was well-attended and we are hopeful that this evening, now in its third consecutive year, will continue to be an annual event.

## St. Vincent de Paul Society

By: Michael Finoro

Our Society receives calls from the community to assist them with basic needs for living.

The poor live in our midst, not usually visible unless one makes a visit. Often, single folks phone to obtain a food voucher from a local grocery store. Other times, they ask for a bed as they may be sleeping on a couch or an old mattress on the floor. Even their children are in this unenviable situation. Our Lord can relate to this predicament; after all, the Christ-child is placed in a feeding trough in a manger; indeed, even the adult Jesus comments that he has no permanent residence to call home: **'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest his head. (Mat. 8:20)** Certainly, Jesus understands the plight of the poor.

Hence, we strive to make their burdens a little lighter by offering a friendly voice, a brief but important visit and information that may direct them to other resources in the community. Presently, we are also recruiting volunteers that instead of visiting, will advocate for the poor as part of the Social Justice Committee. Assisting individuals and families to try and escape the cycle of poverty may be something you can lend your expertise to. Frankly, until governments provide better support, we will need to continue providing emergency relief to the most vulnerable among us. In fact, Pope Francis continues to emphasize that helping the needy is akin to assisting Jesus. Further, he asks that we do not judge people because of the situation they find themselves in.

Last Christmas, my partner and I visited one lady who said she, like others in her building have not been able to reconcile conflicts with their adult children; hence, a number of residents were facing Christmas Day all alone.

With the help of St. Vincent de Paul this determined woman bought extra food and invited other neighbours to bring what they could and enjoy a meal together. They gathered in the long hallway and celebrated.

Please join us if you can—even if you can only spare moderate amounts of time. We know how hectic life can be but you can really lessen the suffering of another with your presence. We go out in twos-always- and every four to six weeks so the time commitment is not onerous.

If you are interested in helping or have suggestions, please contact Michael at [michael8950@rogers.com](mailto:michael8950@rogers.com). You will be glad you did! Merry Christmas!

## Parish Ministry Fair

By: Cathy Doucette

On Sunday January 13th, after both masses, there will be a Ministry Fair and Donut Sunday! All parishioners are invited to come down to the Basilica hall after both Sunday Masses for refreshments and also to meet the various ministry leaders in our parish.

The ministry fair is an opportunity to learn about the great work that our parishioners do and also learn about potential opportunities to get involved and share your time and talents with our vibrant parish community. Ministry leaders will be on hand to answer any questions that you may have about the opportunities to volunteer. Last year's ministry fair was very successful, many of the ministries at the Basilica saw new members join.

We look forward to seeing you on January 13th!

## Multicultural Food Fiesta

By: Gavin Morgan

How fortunate we are at the Basilica of Our Lady to have such a vast array of people with ancestry originating from all over the globe!

The Basilica's **Annual Multicultural Food Fiesta** celebration was held on September 23rd at the Basilica following both masses. An estimated 300+ guests attended and sampled delicious snacks and tasty dishes prepared by members of our parish community. Most of the cuisines were unique to certain places including Canada, Denmark, Hungary, India, Italy, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Wales and a host of others.

We also attracted visitors from other parts of our country, from the US and Europe. Some comments from parishioners and guests—"It gets bigger and bigger each year", "Awesome!" "Loved it." "Great experience" and "Can't wait till next year."

The Food Fiesta served as a wonderful time for our parish community to come together and share our talents, cultures and experiences through a celebration of food.

Thanks to all those who participated and all are invited to next year's Food Fiesta celebration. Until next year, au revoir, ciao, adios and good bye.



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**Gratitude News** is brought to you by the Stewardship Committee, and published three times a year to keep Parishioners informed and connected.

### Upcoming Events

- ◆ Ministry Fair and Donut Sunday—January 13
- ◆ Annual Pasta Supper—February 10
- ◆ Knights of Columbus Breakfast—February 24
- ◆ Donut Sunday—April 7

For more details about upcoming events, visit the Events section of our website at [www.basilicaofourlady.com](http://www.basilicaofourlady.com)



Pictured above—Our student volunteers that served at the Annual Prime Rib Dinner held on November 18th

