



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING WELCOMED

When you reach to any final destination, depending of the transport you have used, you will need to be welcomed and guided.

We had the privilege to be welcomed by our sponsors, St. Joseph Catholic Church, accompanied by Refugee Committee members including the pastor and the Archbishop, our family living in Grande Prairie, some of their extended family and their friends. It was really an amazing moment. During that period they were taking pictures and videos of what was happening. Finally, they escorted us to our relative's house.

From the time we reached their house, everyone was working tirelessly so that we can get used to Canada and Grande Prairie.

We stayed only 2 weeks in their house and after that our sponsors were able to find us a house where we are living now with all the necessities. If we did not have the privilege to have a family and our sponsors, it would not be possible to be where we are now.

Thank you for everyone who contributed to my family to be where we are now. This is reminding me of the verse in the Bible: "You will know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16. May the Lord bless you all.

I am a newcomer to Canada. I entered into Canada in January. Since that time up to now me and my family were well welcomed. People showed love to us as soon as we arrived at the airport.

St. Joseph Catholic Church Refugee Committee, our relatives and their friends have been with us up to today. Everyone made effort for us to find an accommodation and we are already settled well.

In February we have shifted from our relative's house to our own house. Everyone made an effort to find time to move things from different places to our house. We are now in our house with everything needed and we already have all documents. We already feel at home and loved. May God bless everyone who made an effort for us to settle well. Thank you.

2024 MEN'S CONFERENCE

I have been blessed with attending the Men of Integrity conferences in Stoney Plain over the last several years. Although a bit of a challenge at times the conference was always worth the trip as I was always with like-minded men. Blessing upon Blessings: the last 2 years the men of North Peace now have had the option of spending a retreat with other like-minded souls right here and in our parish. What I find most profound is the Testimonials of fellow parishioners. We are asked to walk in others shoes so we have an inkling of their journeys and I find in listening to these young men, my story.

The amazing young man who led the conference, Peter Van Kamp, as guest speaker was articulate and humble, thereby humbling us all. Other participants included his Grace, Archbishop Gerry Pettipas, C.Ss.R.

I realized my faith, after learning so much more, was very much a Little faith, but through the spirit of those attending and the Grace of the Holy Spirit my FAITH is in a state of transformation and by the grace of God, our Father, the journey continues.

N.E.T (NATIONAL EVANGELIZATION TEAMS)

For two weeks, we hosted retreats, met, and talked about the love of Christ with high school students. We discussed the importance of having a stable foundation in our identity as children of God. This means that we entirely rely on God and trust in His plan for our lives while being fully seen, known, and loved by Him. The students had the beautiful opportunity to experience and encounter God's love for them.

“My small group had mixed levels of faith and engagement. We discussed God and what we should put our foundation in as children of God. Most agreed that He should be a main priority. During prayer ministry, I prayed over the people in my group, and I could tell that the Holy Spirit was present just by the way they were receptive. Near the end of the day, I asked them if they wanted a better relationship with God, and some said yes! I even gave a few of them Bibles and prayer cards.”

We were so privileged to witness how much God desires to have a profound and deep relationship with His children. It is such a blessing and an honor!



ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR FAMILIES

As Christians, my son and I have been on a journey with God for a long time. However, sometimes in life, our journey takes us on a different path.

Joining St. Joseph's Church was a mix of excitement and anxiety. We were taking a leap of faith into a community we were just getting to know. As we settled into the rhythm of Sunday services and midweek OCIA gatherings, we found ourselves drawn into a deeper exploration of our faith. We wanted to understand and know God and His Church more intimately. Through prayer, study, and contemplation, we began to discover a vast spiritual understanding we are just starting to uncover.

Over the past year, joining the church and experiencing the various celebrations, allowed us to realize that our faith is a journey we take while putting our full trust in God. Alongside this spiritual growth came the joy of making new friends within the church community. Whether learning about God during the Liturgy of the Word or discussing topics during OCIA meetings, our new friendships supported us on this journey of faith. The genuine warmth and acceptance of our fellow believers will always be treasured in our hearts. Through learning more about God, joining the church, and making new friends, we discovered a deeper sense of purpose and belonging that continues to enrich our lives.



ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Our journey started in November of 2021 when we began attending St. Joseph's. Ever since that first Mass we have felt so welcomed by the church. It is the perfect mix of friendliness and tranquility that we were both searching for (shoutout to some key people for a great first impression!)

As we continued to attend, we felt it was time to participate fully in church life. As neither of us had been baptized we decided to begin OCIA last September and are excited to be baptized this Easter! We are also seeking baptism for our daughter and convalidation for our marriage.

Through OCIA we have come to learn so much more about the church and gained many friends. It has meant the world to us to participate in the community and to be welcomed with open arms. This church has certainly been a blessing from God in our lives and we look forward to what the future has in store for our small family.

FROM OUR 2023 REFUGEE FAMILY

I want to express my deep gratitude to my church family for the immense support and love you have shown us. It's because of you that we stand strong today. Each and every member of our church has played a vital role in our lives, and we are thankful for your unwavering support.

Members of the Refugee Committee have been pillars of strength for us. Their kindness, generosity, and unwavering faith have been a source of inspiration. They have shown us what it means to be true friends and family, always there to lend a helping hand or a listening ear.

As we look back on the past year in Grande Prairie, we are filled with gratitude for all our church family has done and all that you continue to do. Your commitment is a testament to your faith and your love for God. We are truly blessed to have you all in our lives.

We look forward to many more years of fellowship, growth, and service together. May God continue to bless you abundantly as you journey with us in faith.

