

hear it through
the Grapevine
EASTER 2026

Horizons of Hope

As I get older, the topic of dying has come up frequently in conversations with friends. Many expressed fears of experiencing pain, losing independence, and becoming a burden. I was struck by how many people were considering MAID (Medical Assistance In Dying) as an end of life option. Amid so much uncertainty and disagreement, I felt the need to better understand the perspectives of both the Catholic Church and the medical community, particularly regarding the role of palliative care. When our church offered a four part program called, Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care, I signed up. No one should have to experience dying alone. Jesus journeyed with the dying and modeled profound compassion.

Christ carries our burdens and calls us to become beacons of light. The church offers the Anointing of the Sick for comfort and spiritual strength. Death is a transition to the fullness of life.

Like the good Samaritan, we are called to assist our neighbour in their end of life journey. They are neither a burden nor should they suffer. Let us advocate for access to palliative care. It is a human right as declared by the World Health Assembly. Palliative Care is a beautiful end of life journey.

I encourage everyone to consider taking this course to alleviate fears associated with end of life. Our lives are a gift from God and He provides grace in the form of Palliative Care during our time of greatest need. God never leaves us.

God is Never Outdone

OCIA SPONSOR

I wanted to join as an observer, hoping to strengthen my own understanding of our faith, but God is never outdone in generosity. Through the opportunity to be a sponsor, I've found myself learning so much from others and growing far more than I expected. God's plans are always better than our own. I've had the opportunity to listen to my sponsee's perspectives during our meetings and to grow closer to her through her experience on the journey. It has been such a beautiful and fulfilling experience to walk alongside someone taking her first steps and discovering Jesus in a personal and meaningful way.

Joining the Life of the Church

I began my conversion in March of 2025, prompted to come to Catholicism by the passing of Pope Francis.

The Faith has completely transformed my life, both interiorly and externally. I've come to learn how utterly indispensable the sacramental life the Church offers truly is.

The waiting period of conversion has brought me a great gratitude for these things, and how truly special they are, that we should treat them with profound reverence and never take them for granted.

One of the most transformative devotionals along my journey was the Rosary, in which I'd like to leave a paraphrased quote from St. Louis De Montfort.

"If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, you will be saved. Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and save your soul."

Catholics Returning Home

Attending Catholics Returning Home has been an enriching experience for me in gaining a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and connecting with parishioners. It gave me courage to branch out and join ministries within the church. It was a unique opportunity to get to talk and learn from our leaders and priests about the sacraments, prayer, Church teachings, as well as see some of the “behind

the scenes” areas of the church. It was a safe and welcoming environment to be honest about struggles with my faith and finding connections within a large parish. Attending the group helped me to realize that our church really is a spiritual home. It is important for us to discern what God is calling us to do within the church, bringing our own unique personalities, talents and gifts. Attending the sessions truly helped me to feel more at home at St. Joseph’s and it is beneficial to anyone no matter where you are at in your faith journey.

Faith In Action

This year’s Faith in Action Men’s Conference was well attended and I was both grateful and humbled to participate with so many men from our parish and the broader Archdiocese. In today’s society, living our faith as Catholic men can sometimes feel quite lonely. Gathering with dozens of other men for prayer, worship and spiritual discussion served as a powerful reminder that we are not alone. Rev. Kristopher Schmitz delivered the theme “Lord, teach us to pray” in an engaging and energetic way that transformed the gravity of the topic into something even more approachable for reflection. One major take away is the idea of finding rest in prayer, especially since maintaining a strong prayer life often requires significant effort and discipline. I pray this annual event continues to bring faithful men together so we can support one another and persist in putting our faith into action.

Women’s Retreat 2025

In the first weekend of May 2025, I attended the Women’s Retreat entitled, “Cast Your Worries, Embrace Joy”. The statement in the brochure immediately captured my attention: “These days we all have something going on. We all struggle, we all feel pain, we all hurt.” I attended with hope and I was not disappointed! The presenters shared their personal struggles reminding us that we are never alone in dealing with adversity.

They brought out the themes of how to be grateful in trying times; authentic joy and how to cultivate it; the power of surrendering to God. I valued the openness of the speakers and the sharing with other participants. The time for prayer and song were so uplifting.

As a widow, living alone, the retreat was a wonderful way to feel connected with other women and to feel part of a community. I discovered how to turn negative thoughts into something positive, there is always something to be grateful for even in the bad times and it is okay to step back and let God take over.

Two of my favorite quotes from the weekend: “The water eventually smooths out the rough stone.”
“Rejoice always...giving thanks in all circumstances” Thess 5:16-18

The retreat was a wonderful opportunity for learning, personal reflection, sharing with like minded women and being nourished with some great food. Thank the Lord for all that is good! This year’s Women’s Retreat on May 1st-2nd:

*Standing Firm
in Who You Are*

WOMEN’S RETREAT



I’m so excited for another year of Camp Discovery! When I went last year, I expected it to be fun—but I never imagined it would change my life. I made so many amazing new friends, grew deeper in my faith, and even decided to commit my life to Jesus during Adoration.

Since camp, I’ve joined youth group, become an altar server, attended Discovery retreats, and I now use the prayers I learned at camp every day—at night and before meals. I would highly recommend Camp Discovery to anyone. I hope to see you there!

For more info or to register, go to saintjoseph.ca/discovery/camp

Changemakers Lab

VBS JULY 6-10, 2026

Adults, youth & children - come experience the transforming love of God! Grounded in God’s love, and through worship, drama, Bible study, STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, art, math), and active games, children learn that they can use their unique gifts to make a difference wherever they go. Lots of fun for volunteers and children!

