Spiritual Development

Standing Committee Chairperson’s Report

Fall Meeting (September 29, 2018)

Madame President,

Initially, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the recent ordinations in our diocese. We congratulate **Fr. Robert Lee** on his priestly ordination and appointment as associate pastor at St. Joseph’s Basilica. We also congratulate the three men who were ordained to the permanent diaconate **Edward Meding** of Our Lady of the Foothills in Hinton, **Ramon Morales** of St. Agnes Parish in Edmonton, and **Christopher Ashdown** of St. Thomas More Parish in Edmonton. Christopher is the husband of diocesan treasurer Jean Ashdown. We pray that these men may be sustained by the Holy Spirit as they humbly serve the people of God.

I am excited to share that we now have two diocesan Marian Shrines. Archbishop designated the Skaro shrine as a Marian shrine on August 14th, during the annual pilgrimage and the Grotto at St. Albert Parish as a Marian shrine on August 19th during the 80th pilgrimage celebrations. What a gift for our diocese, to have two places dedicated to our Mother.

The recent revelations from the Church in Philadelphia have been very disturbing. We are also shocked and disheartened to learn that a Sherwood Park man who served as a councillor at Camp Encounter has been charged with possession and distribution of child pornography. Much of my social media has been dedicated to the unfortunate subject of clergy misconduct and reaction to it. We are right to be outraged at such abuse of power, but we must remember that the Church is built on the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. He is the cornerstone and our rock of our faith.

It is reassuring to see our episcopal leaders in Alberta responding to this crisis. I have a copy of their letter on my display board, along with the website address where you can find it for yourself. And later this fall, our Canadian Bishops will be releasing new guidelines for addressing child abuse in the Church. Let us continue to pray for God’s protection for his holy Church in this troubling time.

This concludes my report, are there any questions?

Belinda Halbach

Vice President & Spiritual Development Chair