

Strength in trying times



Since 1972
Supporting our
English-language
Catholic community

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As we at Pillars look back on a successful year of promoting vitality initiatives in Montreal's English-language parishes and prepare for the launch of our 46th annual fundraising campaign, we, as Catholics, are again shamed by the sexual abuse and cover up scandal that has rocked our Church, this time as recently reported in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury report.

In his letter to the faithful on this issue, Pope Francis reminds us of the words of St. Paul, "*If one member suffers, all suffer together with it*" (1 Cor 12:26).

Indeed, those who suffer need to be our priority. We need to take serious action to root out this evil perpetrated on so many innocent victims. Pope Francis, The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Christian Lépine and others have all spoken out strongly in condemnation. Please see the links below for their messages.

In this time of crises, trauma and suffering, we must remain strong in faith and hope, so that with God's help, a more open, accountable, inclusive and compassionate church community will emerge - one that is faithful to its roots and true mission.

St. Paul says: "*Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good*" (Romans 12:21).

In this regard, let us do good by showing strength - strength in caring for the victims of abuse, in demanding legal accountability for Church sins and failures and strength in sparing no effort to create a culture in our Church that prevents such atrocities, their cover up and perpetuation.

Catholic Strong

Prior to these most recent sad and troubling developments, the phrase "*Catholic Strong*" was to be the theme for our 2018 fundraising campaign, which starts on the weekend of October 13th and 14th. For the reasons above, we feel it remains entirely appropriate.

We chose it because we are proud of - and want to highlight - the strength within our local Catholic community and the actions supported by Pillars that are underway in our parishes, among our youth and across our faith networks. We're also proud of our financial support of four new seminarians discerning their vocations to the priesthood.

In this issue of *The Column*, you'll find details of these activities and hopefully a sense of pride that your donations to Pillars make these projects possible.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our community *Catholic Strong* in these trying times.

See below for various Church statements on the issue of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults:

- Pope Francis: Letter to the People of God, 20 August 2018: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180820_lettera-popolo-didio.html
- Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on the findings of the Pennsylvania Investigating Grand Jury August 20, 2018: http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/CCCB_statement_-_Findings_of_Pennsylvania_Investigating_Grand_Jury_-_EN.pdf
- Archbishop Christian Lépine calls on the Church to stand firm in its struggle against sexual abuse: <https://www.diocesemontreal.org/en/news-and-info/latest-news/archbishop-publishes-open-letter-shared-pain>
- Statement by the Holy See Press Office, 16 August 2018: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-08/vatican-responds-to-pennsylvania-grand-jury-abuse-report.html>
- Joint statement by Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Timothy L. Doherty, Chairman, USCCB Committee for the Protection of Children and Youth People, 14 August 2018: <http://usccb.org/news/2018/18-138.cfm>

From theory to action – Parish Vitality is on the march

Here are a few stories about Pillars' involvement in local parish vitality initiatives. If you like what you're reading, please donate to Pillars' upcoming Fall fundraising campaign by clicking on the following link: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E920047QE&id=2>

Pillars' Parish Vitality Facilitator, Terrel Joseph, has been a busy man. Over the last 12 months, he's visited 23 of our English-language parishes. His mission? Listen, learn and assure them of his assistance with any plans for growth and vitality they wish to develop.

Three parishes, St. Thomas à Becket, St. Willibrord and Holy Name of Jesus, committed to work with Terrel in developing their "vitality action plans". Each had a desire for intentional growth and a pastoral team ready for a year-long collaboration on the project. Other parishes are on deck.

Conducting the Gallup Member Engagement Survey is the first step and it's well underway in all three parishes. In addition to Terrel's time and expertise, Pillars donated close to \$5,000.00 to cover the costs associated with the surveys.

Over decades of research, Gallup identified four outcomes of church health: i) Inviting, ii) Giving, iii) Service and iv) Life satisfaction. Healthy churches are termed "Good Soil" churches and two causes produce these outcomes: 1) **Spiritual Commitment** (a strong belief, commitment to living as a disciple of Jesus); and 2) **Member Engagement** (a strong emotional connection to their parish).

While both contributed to creating a Good Soil Church, Gallup's findings have been that Member Engagement has been the more powerful engine of the two.

As a result, each of the three parishes is actively involved in collecting and entering the data and reviewing the results, with the goal of identifying two areas for strengthening. Each will then devise and initiate their action plan, all under the guidance and with the support of Terrel Joseph, Pillars' Parish Vitality Facilitator.

These three have been among the first parishes to benefit from Pillars' commitment to support vitality initiatives. Read Terrel's complete blog at: www.pillarstrust.org.

Great Awakenings at St. Thomas à Becket

"We're very excited about the project and the survey," says Fr. Peter Sabbath, Pastor at St. Thomas à Becket parish in Pierrefonds and a priest who has benefitted from the support of the Diocesan Priesthood Guild, a Pillars beneficiary. "The question now is: "what do we do with the results, how do we apply them?"

Earlier this year, St. Thomas à Becket embarked on a year long pilot project to develop a "vitality action plan" with the assistance of Pillars Parish Vitality Facilitator, Terrel Joseph.



Since completion of the Member Engagement Survey, Fr. Sabbath and the pastoral team at St. Thomas à Becket have been working with Terrel to understand the data and decide on a direction to implement the findings in a concrete way.

"On average, our results generally fall into line with other Christian churches," he says. "Most people are satisfied with the parish and it appears to fulfill their needs. But there's more to it than that. We're called to become saints, to evangelize our milieu, our society, our schools and neighborhoods. That's what we're called to do as a result of our Baptism. This is a new concept for a lot of Catholics. The heart of it is turning believers into disciples. It's essential to go to church and receive the Sacraments, but then we have to go out and change the world - what Pope Francis calls 'getting out of the sacristy and into the streets'."

Fr. Sabbath is hopeful that the action plan for St. Thomas à Becket will result in a road map to discipleship for his parishioners and he's appreciated the support of Pillars Trust, through the time and effort of Terrel and its donation to cover the costs of the Gallup survey.

"The survey was very professionally done and we've been positively impressed with Terrel. He's on fire for Christ and he's plunged into the survey work. He's been leading and organizing our meetings and it gives us confidence to see that he knows what he's doing. We're very grateful to Pillars for accepting to fund the survey and for developing this clear strategic direction of assisting the parishes."

The Divine Renovation of St Ignatius of Loyola

By Terrel Joseph



Before Pillars hired a Parish Vitality Facilitator to support renewal in the English-language Catholic community, St Ignatius of Loyola parish in NDG took the initiative to launch their own “Divine Renovation”.

Inspired by his six-month internship at St Benedict’s Parish in Halifax Nova Scotia, the home of the Divine Renovation Network (DRN), Fr. Michael Leclerc returned to St Ignatius in the summer of 2016 with the conviction that church can be better, and with a support network in DRN to help him accomplish this.

In the Fall of 2017, after a successful first year as a member of the DRN, St Ignatius doubled down for a second year of coaching, mentorship, and support from world class parish renewal coaches. But this time they did so with the financial backing of Pillars. Following through on its commitment to support parishes serious about renewal of their vitality, Pillars funded the costs St Ignatius incurred to remain a member of the DRN throughout 2017 and 2018.

One of the key principles taught in the DRN is that pastors must lead through the strength of a team. As no one priest can possibly do everything, a well-balanced team working together towards a common vision is a must. The core values of DRN combine the best of organizational development and leadership principles from the secular world with a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, and a laser focus on the result that matters most to parish vitality: helping as many parishioners as possible to become fully committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

To this end, St Ignatius has spent the better part of its first two years in the network focusing on building up leaders and creating a culture of discipleship using the Alpha program. In the last year and a half they’ve run four Alpha programs, reaching a total of 150 people. Many of those who participated encountered Christ through the experience and have started to become engaged as leaders in the parish.

While donations obviously don’t tell the whole story, St. Ignatius boasts a 15% increase in giving to the parish over its first year in the DRN. Clearly something they are doing is inspiring parishioners to respond with their support.

This article is based on an interview with Stephen Corsi, who is the director of Engagement and a member of the Senior Leadership Team at St Ignatius of Loyola. If you would like to see the full interview, please click on this link: <https://stignatiusmtl.org/people/stephen-corsi/>

Catholic Strong Youth

All Aboard for Steubenville Toronto

While it takes a lot of leadership and sheer will to get a group of forty-four teens from five different Montreal parishes and seventeen chaperons to a Catholic youth conference in Ontario, it also takes a lot of planning, a bus and the money to pay for it all.

Pillars and Mission Jeunesse (also supported by Pillars) successfully teamed up to bring local teens to the epic Steubenville youth conference held last July 13 to 15th in Toronto.



The Steubenville conferences were pioneered at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio and have since expanded to 21 different host sites around the United States and Canada. The theme of the Toronto conference was “Revealed”. World class speakers, great music and moving prayer moments ensured the incredible love of The Father was, in fact, revealed to all in a fresh and deeply convicting way.

Pillars played a key role in initiating this local participation by reaching out to all 30 of the English-language parishes in Montreal to encourage teen involvement. Mission Jeunesse performed almost all of the back end logistics to make it happen. Pillars then topped off its support for the event by donating funds to pay for the bus to get the kids there and back.

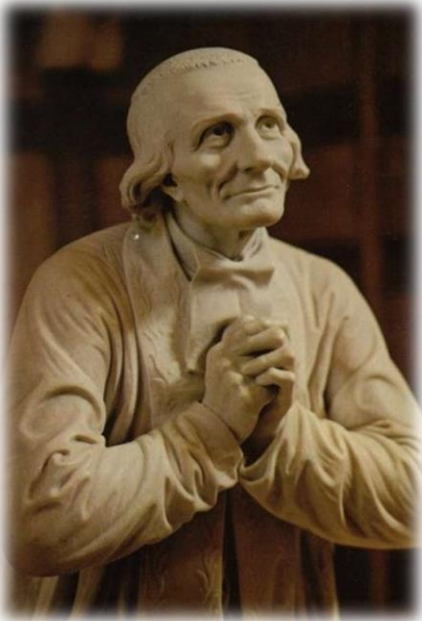
With most of the teens saying they want to go again next year and several other parishes interested, Mission Jeunesse expects to be able to send at least two busloads of eager Catholic Strong teens next year.

In 2018, Pillars Trust's support has helped Mission Jeunesse send participants and/or volunteers to:

- The Decoding Love conference with Christopher West & Jason Evert
- Diocesan World Youth Day
- Allez-Go Leadership training for Youth Ministry Leaders – The 2018 Youth Synod MJ Forum

Catholic Strong Priests

Saint John Mary Vianney, Pray for us!



Again, this year, we call on the intercession of St. John Mary Vianney (Curé of Ars) patron saint of parish priests worldwide, to intervene on behalf of our parishes, and congregations. May he bring special blessings to our priests and those considering priestly vocations.

Very Good News. For the first time in several years, there are now **four** new seminarians studying for the priesthood. Pillars will ensure the financial support for their formation as priests. We call on the generosity of Montreal Catholics to contribute to their studies through your donations to our campaign.

In 2009, on the 150th anniversary of the birth of John Vianney, Pope Benedict XVI stated:

“In his time the Curé of Ars was able to transform the hearts and lives of so many people because he enabled them to experience The

Lord’s merciful love. Our own time urgently needs a similar proclamation and witness to the truth of love.”

Pillars has put forth significant effort over the past year to support parish revitalization with notable progress as you can see from the articles in this letter. We ask St. John Mary Vianney to continue to intervene on our behalf.

We ask parishioners to support the seminarians, young persons and adults who rely on Pillars Trust.

Catholic Strong Professionals

A Faith Network is born

A testimony from Adriano D’Angelo

In the spring of 2016, I went to see my friend Michael Gentile (Pillars Board Director) with an idea. There was a need for people to reflect on what it was to live out their career ambitions and challenges in the context of their faith. I wanted to encourage people to see how the work they do can serve God, and how it could change their day to day.

The primary way people experience this is through witness; they need to meet others like themselves who struggle with the daily routine yet still find Christ in the midst of it all.

As a young aspiring professional, I dreamed of a professionals’ network for Catholics where they could meet and strengthen each other in their faith and find opportunities through that shared purpose in Christ.

Michael quickly agreed that the need was great and shared with me that it was something he had been dreaming of for several years. We discussed a format that would involve a 5 à7 cocktail with a speaker who would share a personal witness on how he/she integrates their faith life into their own professional and personal lives. The key was a short, accessible witness talk and lots of time for fellowship in an informal, relaxed setting.

Michael agreed to be the first speaker and we then approached the Newman Center (also a Pillars Beneficiary) to host the event. Having no formal organization or funds, I approached Pillars to ask for “seed money” to sponsor the fledgling group and help get it off the ground. Pillars generously agreed as it met the criteria for support by helping to engage and vitalize our Catholic community and had no means to raise money on its own.

The first event was held in May 2016 at the Newman Center. We were greatly encouraged when over 60 people showed up to the event and the feedback was tremendous. The positive response led to a second

event - also sponsored by Pillars Trust - which was held in the fall of 2016 at the Grand Séminaire. This time over 70 people attended.

Since that first year, the CPN has now held six events with total attendance of over 400 people. We've had a finance professional, school principal, CCM Hockey product designer, VP of Marketing and Branding, a University Professor and a Medical Doctor all share their testimonies of how God has worked and is working in their lives.

The group has formed an executive of seven members and has recently created a new logo and website, which will be launched at our next event on October 4th at 5:30 p.m. at The Sacred Heart School of Montreal. Our guest speaker will be Anne Leahy, the former Canadian ambassador to the Holy See. We hope to see many of our Pillars Trust supporters there.

The launch and success of the Catholic Professionals Network would have never been possible without the generous support of Pillars.

Our community needs Christ-centered, mission-oriented initiatives to spring up and reach many others. I and the CPN executive encourage you to give generously to Pillars during its upcoming Fall campaign so that the light of Christ may burn ever brighter in our city.

Catholic Strong in a Digital Age



Cecil Chabot, Canadian CAPP Representative, pictured with Pope Francis in May 2018

This past spring, Cecil Chabot, Director of the Newman Centre and CAPP's Canadian Representative, attended the organization's 25th anniversary conference in Rome. Entitled, "*Human Dignity in the Digital Age*", the conference examined the challenge of discerning the unfolding implications of our new digital age. Cecil's participation was due in part to support from Pillars.

"The key lesson I took away was this." noted Cecil, "We need to prayerfully discern the positive and negative consequences of the unfolding digital revolution; we need to foster hope rather than fear; and no matter what our position is, we can always find ways to apply Catholic social teaching to both the new opportunities and challenges that we face."

The Institution "Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice" (CAPP) owes its name and birth to the Encyclical "Centesimus Annus" published by Pope John Paul II on May 1st, 1991. Pope John Paul II published *Centesimus Annus* to mark the hundredth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter of *Rerum Novarum* (*on new things*) which contained three guiding principles: human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity. The connection reveals CAPP's inspiring idea and purpose: heartfelt endorsement of papal social teachings and committed support to the Holy Father's charitable initiatives.

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Have an idea for a project we could help with or would you like to volunteer your services?

Contact us at: ptf@catholiccentre.ca or at 514-937-2301 ext. 255

Check out our website: www.pillarstrust.org

Donate online and receive a tax receipt immediately

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