



HAVING BEEN INFORMED OF THE TRAGIC FIRE which occurred on the night of January 22 at L'Isle Verte and which, destroying the seniors' residence, claimed numerous victims, many of whom are still reported missing, His Holiness Pope Francis prayerfully shares in the grief of the bereaved families and entrusts the victims to God's mercy, that He may welcome them into His light. (Excerpt from a message signed by Cardinal-designate Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of His Holiness, to Archbishop Pierre-Andre Fournier of Rimouski, Quebec)

MR. JOHN O'BRIEN HAS BEEN ELECTED PRESIDENT of Catholic Umbrella Pool II (CUP II), a reinsurance pool operated by the Catholic Mutual Group out of Omaha, Nebraska. Catholic Mutual provides the insurance program in conjunction with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. The two-year mandate begins at the annual meeting in April. He is the first Canadian elected to the position. Congratulations are certainly in order!

MR. SCOTT WHITFIELD IS NOW A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRIESTHOOD for the Diocese of Hamilton according to the Pastoral Provision for former Anglican priests. Following a review of his request and supporting documentation, the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith informed me in a recent letter that his candidacy has been accepted. Mr. Whitfield, will undertake studies under the direction of St. Peter's Seminary to complement those he has already completed. Currently he serves as a Lay Pastoral Associate at St. Patrick's Parish in Hamilton. We are grateful for his desire to serve in the Diocese and wish him well in his studies.

ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS to fill upcoming vacancies on their Board of Governors. Board members advise, govern, oversee policy and direction, and assist with the leadership and promotion of St. Jerome's University, its mission and objectives. Additional information is available on their [website](#). Letters of interest should be sent to the University by March 1, 2014.

THE DIOCESAN PERSONNEL BOARD MEETS THIS AFTERNOON in the Bishop Reding Meeting Room to study personnel needs and possible appointments for our Diocese. This is our second meeting for the current pastoral year. It is always a delicate process requiring the support of prayer and the generosity of the Priests of the Diocese. Please keep us in your prayers.

THE CELEBRATIONS OF CONFIRMATION CONTINUE IN THE DIOCESE. I will be at St. Matthew's Parish in Oakville tonight. I am told to expect about 150 candidates! Tomorrow I preside at two celebrations at St. Eugene's Parish in Hamilton. It will give me an opportunity to see the recently completed renovations to the residence and office space there. On Sunday, I preside at Mass at Holy Rosary Parish in Burlington, during which Confirmation candidates will be enrolled in the preparation program for the Sacrament. We pray for all the young people who will be Confirmed this year!

ASIAN COMMUNITIES CELEBRATE THEIR NEW YEAR TODAY – it is the Year of the Horse. The Vietnamese community at Our Lady of Vietnam Parish in Hamilton has been cooking up a storm for the three-day celebration. We offer good wishes to all who celebrate this New Year! May it be a time of joy and rich blessing for you!

Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!

Ex corde, + *Douglas*, OMI