

Communiqué #3 January 2012
To: Parish Christian Family Life Chairs
From: Nancy Skipper - Diocesan Christian Family Life Chair

"The weather outside is frightful! Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow." Welcome to winter in Ottawa! And, happy new year to you and your families. Speaking of families.... did you know according to Focus on the Family.ca "there are 30,000 Canadian children waiting for a forever family — for a mom and a dad, for security and for unconditional love. Each child is loved by God, full of promise and made with purpose." Focus on the Family has created a new community called *Waiting to Belong*, with the aim of finding a 'forever' family for those many children waiting to be adopted.

On January 4, 2012 The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, announced that parents who are committed to adopt children in their care will be able to get Employment Insurance (EI) parental benefits. "Our government is helping Canadian families by supporting parents who have committed to adopting a child," said Minister Finley. "By increasing the flexibility of EI parental benefits that reflect evolving adoption programs, we are putting the best interest of the child first, ensuring he or she is placed in a stable family environment as early as possible."

Do you feel a tug to give a foster child love, security, and a sense of family? Perhaps you are called to either foster a child or adopt a child who is in care. The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa can help. Go to www.casott.on.ca to see where God may be calling you to.

If you are already looking forward to the next break from work, maybe it's time for you and your spouse to get away together for a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. No matter where you are in your marriage, time away as a couple may be just the answer! There is an Encounter weekend in the Ottawa area March 2-4th. For information and to register, go to timandloucote@sympatico.ca or call Louise or Tim at 613-834-8348.

Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) is hosting a *Seminar On The Family* on March 22-23, 2012. The theme is "Man and Woman, Spouses and Parents: Forming Christian Citizens." It is being held at the Sheraton Hotel, Ottawa. For more information call Michele Boulva at 613-241-9461, ext. 141 or go to mboulva@colf.ca.

The Council On Aging Of Ottawa is hosting a 'Lunch and Learn' event. Participants will listen to Eric Cosgrove and Trudy Sutton speak to "Current Trends in Housing for Ottawa Seniors." For registration, call 613-789-3577, ext. 11 or go to l-m.bouchard@coaottawa.ca

The next Pro-Life mass is at St John the Apostle Parish, 2340 Baseline Rd. on Saturday, January 28, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. with celebrant Father Tom Riopelle. After mass there will be refreshments provided by the Queenship of Mary.

The Queenship of Mary is a religious community guided by Alice Fougere hailing from Halifax, Nova Scotia. This small community of women living a common life are praying to become a community of apostolic life. There are several stages in the process to becoming a community of apostolic life. This community is hoping to be recognized by the Archdiocese which will be the formal beginning of living their vision of serving the church together. Being formally recognized will allow the members of this community to don a religious habit replacing their interim uniform. Please pray for this most beautiful group of women and their journey towards becoming a community of apostolic life.

With news in the paper of our children finding their way into inappropriate sites while on the Internet, the need to protect them is paramount. Even though the Internet has many positive and useful sites, it also

hides many dangers. Your child may not know who or what lurks behind the 'doors' to one of these sites. Nor do they know how to protect themselves. Our children need our help! Statistics Canada reports that approximately 30% of our children are more than willing to share their personal name and address on social media sites. We must be proactive to keep our family's online use safe!

Focus on the Family.ca has a pamphlet which can be left at each computer with the following information:

- Advise your children to use a nickname on social media sites, and warn them to never share their age, home address or school anywhere online.
- Place your computer in a high-traffic area, such as in your living room.
- Keep the lines of communication open, encouraging your children to talk to you if anything they read or see online makes them feel uncomfortable.

And 'Yes', "The weather outside is frightful! Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow." We have many family members having to endure this weather without warmth, living in fear, and hungry. Our homeless need our prayers and our continued support. Many of our homeless are our most vulnerable, our youth. You and/or your Council can help our homeless youth by financing a *Winter Street Survival Kit*. In a large backpack the following articles are placed:

- new winter weight sleeping bag,
- white cotton tube or work socks,
- black or dark touque,
- toothbrush,
- toothpaste,
- deodorant,
- bar soap,
- razor,
- 3 pack of juice,
- chocolate bar (no nuts),
- Christian bookmark,
- gift coupons to fast food or coffee shop restaurants.

For more information or more ideas on how you can help, contact ottawainnercity@rogers.com or call 613-237-6031.

With our hearts centered on faith and justice, and with our Mother Mary as our guide, we will hear where God is calling us into action. God Bless you!

