



## SMALL THINGS, GREAT LOVE

How do you create a personal connection with someone you've never met and might never meet?

Pg 3

## CREATIVE MINISTRY

It's no secret that everyone has had to adapt this year & our ministry has been no exception.

Pg 4



# SAINT JOSEPH: PATRON SAINT OF NET CANADA

St. Joseph has always held a special place in the hearts of our staff and missionaries. Not only is he the patron of Canada, but our office has been on St. Joseph Blvd for over a decade and many staff have expressed a strong devotion to him over the years. So it was only fitting that in the year of St. Joseph — as declared by Pope Francis in December — **we officially made him the patron saint of NET Ministries of Canada.**

In his Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis speaks of



St. Joseph in ways that call to mind our mission and, in particular, our missionaries and staff. The Holy Father references St. Joseph placing his whole self “at the service of the Messiah.” This total gift of self is so evident when I look at what has happened so far this year. Forty-six missionaries have given up a year of school and work, friends and conveniences, to offer themselves in service to further God’s Kingdom and to speak of Jesus’ love to the young people they encounter. Our staff as well have worked overtime and on weekends to ensure the mission of evangelization can continue during this pandemic, never seeming to lose their zeal or count the cost.

It is also fitting that Pope Francis mentions that “God acted by trusting in Joseph’s creative courage.” In a year of unprecedented change and challenge, we have felt this same trust in us as we moved forward in ministry. When we encountered open doors for ministry, our missionaries courageously walked through them in

faith. Roadblocks have appeared out of nowhere threatening to stall ministry, but our staff immediately rallied and found creative ways to still allow our missionaries to reach out with the life-changing message of Jesus. I can’t think of a better phrase than “creatively courageous” to describe our NET staff and missionaries during this challenging time.

So, join us in continuing to seek the intercession of St. Joseph, praying that we always follow his example of service with courage and creativity.

St. Joseph, pray for us!

- Pierre O’Reilly  
Executive Director



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# SMALL THINGS, GREAT LOVE

## **How do you create a personal connection with someone you've never met and might never meet? How do you bring Jesus to that person?**

That's the challenge facing Team 3 this year. For the last three years, NET Canada has been sending a team to the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas to minister to remote northern communities. The plan for this final year was to empower local leaders to bring Jesus to their own communities.

However, the pandemic had a different plan. Almost immediately after the NET year began, the province of Manitoba locked down remote communities to protect them during the second wave of COVID-19.

### **A PERSONAL TOUCH**

Unable to travel to different communities and with so much free time on their hands, the team was encouraged to get creative in finding ways to communicate the love of Jesus to those around them. Jacob Brown said,

*"I discovered a love for wood-working, so I began making wooden crosses. Each cross is unique and we send them to the people we are praying for so that they have a tangible reminder that someone is praying for them."*

Maria Altamirano began sending letters to parishioners and other members of the community. She said,

*"I didn't want people to meet us once at the beginning of the year and not hear from us again. I wanted them to know that we're praying for them, that we want to stay in touch with them, and that we wish we could meet them. We pair the crosses and letters together, hand deliver what we can and mail the rest."*

### **PRAYER IS POWERFUL.**

Virtual events have proven to be effective since the pandemic began, but this team, composed of four experienced missionaries with a deep heart for the people of the north, wanted to do even

more to help alleviate the isolation and suffering of the people in these communities.

So, they turned to some of the only options still available to them - prayer and fasting. They began collecting specific prayer intentions from the communities they were supposed to be traveling to and praying for people by name who they had yet to meet. They also reached out to priests throughout the Archdiocese, and have been praying for them and calling them regularly to help mitigate some of the loneliness of isolation.

While this team has been unable to do the big things that they originally had planned, they have been able to put great love into things that might seem small. And, just like He did with the loaves and fishes, the Lord takes our small offerings and turns them into abundance.

**TO READ A STORY ABOUT THE POWER OF THE TEAM'S MINISTRY OF PRAYER, TURN THE PAGE! >>>**





When we first arrived in the Pas in the fall, we met a few parishioners, including Susan<sup>1</sup>. Susan asked us to pray for her husband and her family and their conversions. We continued to pray for her intentions throughout the lockdown. In February, when in-person services were allowed again, we saw a man at mass that we hadn't met before. I went up and talked with him, and he mentioned that our team knew his wife, Susan. His name was Doug and he said "I've been so far from God and I have so much ground to make up. I've recently come back to my faith because I owe it all to him." He's been coming to daily mass, and all the rosaries and stations of the cross that we've led since. I usually have someone in mind when I start a cross, but at one point I began making one not knowing yet who it would be for. When I met Doug, I knew then that the wooden cross I had been making was for him. It's been beautiful to get to walk with him on his journey back to the faith, and to know that we have been praying for his conversion since we arrived.

- Jacob Brown  
Team 3

<sup>1</sup> Names have been changed.

It's no secret that everyone has had to adapt this year, and our ministry has been no exception. Here's a look at the creative ways NET missionaries have been giving the Holy Spirit the opportunity to move this year, straight from the mouths of those who are seeing it happen!



One young girl shared recently about how the online retreat we put on 4 months ago is still affecting her today! **She now prays and encourages her friends at school to embrace the life of the church and have a personal relationship with God. So beautiful!**

- Marinna  
Team 4



A few months ago, during the beginning of the stay at home order, I started an online Minecraft (a computer game) server in order to spend time with the youth here. The server was very simple at first, just me and 2 youth I had been getting to know. Needless to say, I didn't realize just how much interest there would be. As of today when I write this, I have 30 youth that have access to the server. **Most of those youth were not originally attending our youth nights, and now more than half of them are!**

- Alex  
Annunciation of  
the Lord Ministry



Our ministry has been online for much of these last few months due to the lockdown here in Ontario. We have youth nights online twice a week as well as small group meetings each week. We have sharing time, a few interactive games, a talk on some topic like 'God the Father' or 'Forgiveness', and then finally men's and women's groups to have discussion, some fun, and to grow as Men and Women of God. Weeks ago we had a young guy join. We thanked him for coming afterward and he said '**No, thank you guys! This is so fun; I love these meetings.**'

- Matthias  
Team 5



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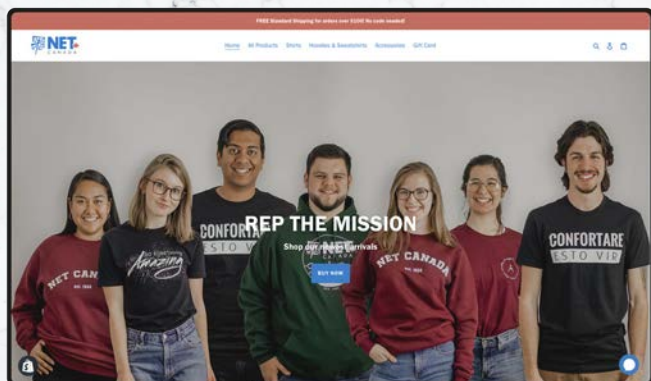
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Contact:  
**Heather Penney**  
[development@netcanada.ca](mailto:development@netcanada.ca)

\*Always consult a qualified income tax accountant and/or estate lawyer before planning your gift.

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