

Ten Ogórek Jest Zielony

Well, there it is. My first full sentence in Polish. It was taught to me this week by a group of grade-three students at St Basil's school, which runs a Polish-English bilingual programme. Not exactly the most important statement ever uttered (this pickle is green), but, hey, it's a start. In fact, the students gave me a standing ovation, likely due to not only the fact that I encouraged it, but also their astonishment that I could pull it off!

Standing ovations all around – unforced and entirely spontaneous – are due to three congregations of religious women with whom I was blessed to spend some time over the long weekend. These are women who give voice to what are, indeed, very significant statements, and who, moreover, live out what they say through their daily witness.



The Sisters of the Merciful Jesus attend a Mass at St. Joseph's Basilica. Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

On Saturday, I visited the Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus, to bless their new convent and chapel. Their message is to trust always in the mercy of Jesus Christ, and to find therein the source of real hope. Here in

this Archdiocese they transform that message into a ministry of accompaniment and assistance among the First Nations peoples of Maskwacis, about one hour south of Edmonton.



Sr. Anne Hemstock, with Sr. Mary Truong, Sisters of Providence. Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

Sunday morning was the occasion to gather with the Sisters of Providence to celebrate with them the 175th anniversary of their Congregation. Inspired by their founder, Blessed Emilie Tavernier Gamelin, these women are dedicated to announcing the message of Divine Providence, and to inviting all to place their complete confidence in God, who knows our every need and never fails to care for His children. Throughout the history of this Congregation, word has been translated into action through education, healthcare and outreach to the poor.



Gift shop Carmelite Monastery with items made by the sisters. Lincoln Ho, Grandin Media

Monday was for prayer. For this I spent the day at the convent of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns. Their “word” is unspoken, yet it echoes loudly. Daughters of St Teresa of Avila, they are entirely consecrated to the contemplation of the mystery of God. Silence, solitude and stability within an enclosure mark their life, which they offer in love for the good of the Church.

These three visits took place over the Thanksgiving Day weekend. When it comes to thanking God for his many blessings, where to start??!! He is so very good, and His blessings abound. Among them in this Archdiocese is the presence and witness of women consecrated to God through the embrace of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. We have many Congregations serving the people of the Archdiocese. Like the three I visited these past days, they give voice – in both word and deed – to a message that translates well into any language: entrust yourself to God’s mercy, be free of all anxiety, and find in Him true joy and peace.