



THE PILGRIMS ARE STAYING IN ROME FOR ONE MORE DAY, thanks to Alitalia Airlines. For some unexplained reason they cancelled our Friday flight home. Now, we are looking forward to the return flight on Saturday, arriving in Toronto in the early afternoon. This change seriously affects the onward journey of the priests from Newfoundland and Labrador, but everyone seems to be taking the change with the same good cheer that has marked the entire journey!

POPE BENEDICT XVI ASSURED ME OF HIS PRAYERS for the priests and parishioners of the Hamilton Diocese during a brief private meeting following his Wednesday audience. His talk during the audience focused on the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* and the four pillars that help us build that unity in the Church. Our group of pilgrims were identified and welcomed specially.

EARLIER IN THE WEEK WE VISITED THE “SCAVI” – the excavations that took place under St. Peter’s to discover if the true burial place of St. Peter was directly under the main altar as tradition has taught. The tour is one of the most interesting tours I have ever been on, concluding with a view of St. Peter’s bones! So, we can say that we have seen the bones of St. Peter, and we have met “Peter” in the person of Benedict XVI.

FATHER ADAM VOISIN MET THE GROUP ON MONDAY EVENING FOR DINNER, following our arrival in Rome from Tel Aviv. He is living at the Canadian College in Rome while he completes his studies in Canon Law. He has another year-and-a-half to complete his JCL (Juris Canonici Licentia). He is doing very well in his studies and reports that his comprehension of Italian has improved significantly. He joined us for dinner every night – often bringing us to excellent restaurants in Rome! We pray for his continued success in his studies!

WE GATHERED FOR MASS AND DINNER AT THE OBLATE GENERAL HOUSE LAST NIGHT. Father Louis Logan, OMI, from the United States was elected Superior General of the Order at a General Chapter in October. So, he is as new in his position as I am as Bishop of Hamilton! It was good to meet him and to introduce the Oblate community to the priests from Hamilton. At least for the time that I am Bishop of the diocese, there will be a special relationship between the diocese and the community. I am very pleased to report that their hospitality and welcome was unbounded!

MONSIGNOR JOSE BETTENCOURT, A PRIEST FROM THE OTTAWA ARCHDIOCESE, works at the offices of the Secretary of State (Cardinal Bertone). He has arranged for us to visit the offices which are located in the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City. He will give us a conference on the work of the secretariat, and show us around the third loggia of the Palace. The entrance to the apartment of the Pope is also on that level – it is about as close as one can get, without going in! So our delayed return to Hamilton has provided the opportunity for this special experience!

I WILL PRESIDE AT A CELEBRATION AT ST. STEPHEN OF HUNGARY PARISH in Hamilton, on Sunday, when Father László Amászka, OFM Conv., will be installed as Pastor. The parishioners are delighted to have such a fine young priest to shepherd them, and we are pleased to have such a committed young priest serving with us in the diocese! We pray that God will bless his ministry!

Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!

Ex corde,

+ *Douglas*, OMI