



Photo by Martin Cloutier

## Faith Helps Keep Wolski's Olympic Dream Alive

By Tim Warnsby (Special to Catholic Register)

Wojtek Wolski has gone from being a can't-miss prospect from St. Michael's College to a disillusioned young man who wanted to quit hockey, to a hospital patient facing a long comeback after shattering injury, and now to a person who has a shot at Olympic glory. Every stage has been a physical and emotional trial for the 31-year-old left wing from Etobicoke, Ont., and he credits his hard-working parents, Zofia and Wes, as well as his Catholic faith for his perseverance.

"The only time you really fail at something is when you quit," said Wolski, who joined Team Canada in its gold-medal quest on Feb. 15 against Switzerland in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Wolski likes to read about successful people and what makes them tick. He reads a little every evening. Then, he says his prayers before bed and enters dreamland.

Sixteen months ago, Wolski went through a real-life nightmare. He broke his neck in two places and suffered a concussion when a harmless play turned into a scary incident in the 19th game of his season in Russia. Four years before his frightening on-ice incident, Wolski's hockey career had gone into the dumper due to inconsistent play and persistent groin problems. He had played for five different NHL teams in three years after being traded four times — from the Colorado Avalanche to the Arizona Coyotes to the New York Rangers to the Florida Panthers — and signing with the Washington Capitals for his final stop in the NHL.

"I had scored 23 goals (2009-10) in a season split between Colorado and the Coyotes," Wolski said. "I was excited. It was my best season. But the next year I started to suffer from groin problems and a bad back. "I was engaged, but that fell apart, too. When I bounced around with all the trades, I wanted to quit. I was depressed. I started seeing a psychiatrist.

"My father talked me out of quitting. He said, 'why would you give up something you love doing?'" Wolski rediscovered his love for the game in Russia. He signed a two-year contract to play for Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod of the Kontinental Hockey League in 2013. He thought it would be his last contract in hockey. But he found his game again. He played so well, one of the better teams in Russia, Metallurg Magnitogorsk, lured Wolski away and he won the 2015-16 Gagarin Cup championship. "Somehow, I started playing well, liking the game again," said Wolski.

He started a family while playing in Russia and now has two children, two-year-old Weston and 11-month-old Lennon,

with his Canadian wife Jesse. "I think it was because I had so much alone time in Russia that I started to work on myself as a person on my own and it just seemed to agree with me. I found happiness." His journey to that point in his life was rooted in a love for the game, but it did not have the usual Canadian backdrop. Wolski was born in Zabrze, Poland, in 1986. When he was one, his parents fled the communist country with his brother Kordian, who is five years older. They landed in West Germany in a refugee camp and the Catholic Church helped the Wolskis find their way to Canada, where they had relatives. Wolski used to follow his brother to an outdoor rink in their Toronto neighbourhood but got fed up having to wear Kordian's hand-me-down skates that were too big. So with his First Communion money, he went to a second-hand sporting goods store to buy a pair of used skates that he wore for two years.

"Those skates are still hanging on a wall in my parent's house," Wolski said. He developed quickly and played junior B at St. Michael's College in Toronto. "We had a 15-minute Mass at lunchtime at St. Mike's," he said. "On game days, I would go with a teammate and say a prayer. "I still go to Mass on holidays but my Mom would like us to go more."

In the fall of 2016, life was good for Wolski, on and off the ice. But, on Oct. 16, a "bizarre" turn of events threatened it all. It happened during a game, with his team on the power play in the third period. Wolski slid to poke the puck back to his teammate Chris Lee, who is also part of Canada's Olympic team. "It was such a bizarre play because he was going sideways," Lee said. "I was focused on the puck and didn't think anything that bad would happen. But what happened is an opponent fell on him and they slid into the boards. "I knew it was panic time. We were screaming for the doctors. It was a panicky situation. We didn't know. You hope for the best."

Wolski remembers everything about that incident. He remembers thinking he had been paralyzed, but then after "30 to 40 seconds" being able to move his arms and legs. He remembers joking with the trainer in the ambulance ride to the hospital. He remembers not being strapped in properly and feeling every bump along the way, especially driving over train tracks. He remembers having his equipment cut off, then his underwear and was lying naked on a gurney, feeling rather vulnerable. He remembers a nurse coming over to him with what he thought was a form to sign for surgery. It turned out she wanted his autograph.

"Magnitogorsk is a small town," Wolski said. "Here I was lying naked and everybody was walking by looking at me. I knew when she asked for my autograph I was going to be fine." But Wolski's season was over. With the help of Toronto-based trainer Matt Nichol, Wolski worked himself back into shape and earned a spot on the Canadian Olympic roster. "Wojtek is a great person," Metallurg Magnitogorsk assistant coach Mike Pelino said. "He's really deserving of representing Canada and he will make the Canadian fans proud with his efforts and with the passion he plays with.

"I am very happy for him to have earned this opportunity, and more so to have been able to come back after such a horrific incident. From that very moment though, Wojtek had such a positive and upbeat attitude and I was confident that, God willing, he would return better than ever." Wolski still has more to experience in his hockey career.

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## PARISH DIRECTORY

### Parish Council

Crystal Lynch  
crystallynch2000@gmail.com

### Finance Council

Lauri Ann Fenlon  
lauri.ann.fenlon@gmail.com

### Parish Education Committee

Renee Stafford  
pec@olphbc.ca

### COORDINATORS

#### Altar Guild

Bridget Bird 604-228-9180

#### Altar Servers

Kate Carr 604-730-5640

#### Catholic Women's League

Lynn Macdonald  
bob.lynn.macdonald@gmail.com

#### Children's Liturgy

Kathy Mok  
communications.olph@rcav.org

#### Craft Group

Doris Rankin 604-224-0876

#### Development & Peace

William Wingson 778-866-8504

#### Eucharistic Ministry

Pamela Brammall 604-228-9206

#### Food Bank

Robyn Sirmul robynsirmul@shaw.ca

#### Hospitality Ministry

Gerry Macken 604-222-1369

#### Knights of Columbus

Peter Dodge 604-222-0791

#### Library

Katherine Hill  
kathswim2012@gmail.com

#### Liturgy of the Hours

Bridget Clark 604-228-8773

#### Madonna Group

Monica Cheung 604-739-8837

#### Ministry of the Word

Roger Poirier 604-224-0426

#### Music Ministry

Catherine Walsh  
catherine.organist@gmail.com

#### Pastoral Care

Mary Thompson 604-263-6008

#### PREP

Elizabeth Towers 604-440-8809

#### Project Advance

Bertilla Watanabe 604-224-4344

#### RCIA

Bertilla Watanabe  
bwatanabe@rcav.org

#### Social Justice/St. Vincent de Paul

Mark Thompson 778-891-6275

#### Volunteers Coordinator

Lara Garcia Carton  
olphchurchvolunteers@gmail.com

#### Weddings

Fr. Babu Mathew  
604-224-4344



### MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm  
(Anticipated Mass)  
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm  
Monday – Wednesday 8am  
Thursday Mass/Novena:  
8am & 7pm  
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am  
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)  
Children's Mass: 9am 1st  
Sunday of the month Oct-June  
Children's Liturgy: 11am All  
Sundays except the 1st Sunday  
from Sept- June  
Reconciliation  
Saturday: 4-4:45pm  
Adoration  
Saturday 9:30-10am  
Library Hours  
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

### STAFF

#### Pastor

Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

#### Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.

#### Office Manager

Virginia Fong

#### Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

#### Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

#### Youth Ministry Coordinator

Theresa Barao

#### OLPH School Principal

Lora Clarke

### IN RESIDENCE

William Comerford, C.Ss.R.

### CONTACT

Email: parish.olph@rcav.org  
Website: www.olphchurch.ca  
Parish Office: 604-224-4344  
OLPH School: 604-228-8811  
Jr. Kindergarten:  
jrkindergarten@olphbc.ca



Olphchurchvancouver

OLPH Church, 2465 Crown  
Street, Vancouver BC V6R3V9



February 18, 2018

1st Sunday of Lent

## Lent: Our Journey of Self-Examination Has Begun

Dear Friends & Parishioners,

Our time for preparation for Easter has begun. Ash Wednesday marked that beginning. It is a time for self-examination, renewal and sanctification so that we may gain a greater appreciation of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

So much of our lives is spent on "getting ahead" in life. Lent is the perfect time to slow down and think more deeply about what really matters. And what really matters is that we have a Father who loves us deeply and wants us to spend all of eternity with Him. How do we get closer to Him? The Church recommends that we use this time of Lent for self-examination through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer reaches out to God, fasting deprives us of the comforts that make us complacent and almsgiving turns our hearts and minds toward others.

Our Lenten Mission is also a great way to kick-start this time of rapprochement with God. Fr Ray Douziech from Toronto will begin the Mission talks immediately after the Sunday 5pm Mass. Fr. Ray sent a message to us: "Lent is a 'joyful season' of anticipation. To quote Ann Weems, it is a 'time to intensify our living unto Christ.' The mission will allow you to take the time to let the power of the Gospel grab hold of you and savour the richness of God. A mission is a time to reflect on our discipleship as we move towards Easter. Take the time to reflect, renew and re-dedicate yourself!"

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Mission.

Yours in Christ,

**Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R**

## Mission Prayer

Glory to you, O God for all seasons!  
Your love calls us to be your people.  
By sharing our many and diverse gifts  
we share in your mission.

We ask you, Lord, to shape us into a  
community of mercy. Nourish us by your  
Word and Sacraments, that we may grow  
in the image of Jesus.

Through the power of your Holy Spirit,  
and the blessings of our Parish Mission,  
heal us that we, in turn, may heal the  
wounded. Form us to be instruments of  
mercy, justice and peace in our world.  
Give us the courage to take up our crosses  
and follow your son, Jesus,  
and then send us out to proclaim your  
merciful love.  
Amen.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish  
Lenten Mission 2018



Your paths, Lord, are love and faithfulness for those who keep your covenant. – Psalm 25

## NEWS & NOTICES

**Stations of the Cross:** The Stations of the Cross will be prayed every Friday at 7pm followed by the Lenten Talk in the hall which will begin soon after.

**West Point Grey Lenten Prayer Series:** Wednesdays at noon for 1/2 hour. Soup & bread lunch after prayer. Lenten Prayer Vigils: Feb 21 – West Point Grey Baptist Church, 4509 W. 11 Ave. Feb 28 – West Point Grey United Church, 4595 W. 8th Ave. (U Hill Congregation hosting) Mar 7 – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic, 2465 Crown St. Mar 14 – West Point Grey United Church, 4595 W. 8th Ave. Mar 21 – West Point Grey Presbyterian, 4397 West 12th Ave.

**Trip to Mexico:** Father Bill Comerford is going to Mexico: March 22 – 31. 2018. Eduardo and Rosa Ana Ituarte, who are parishioners of OLPH, founded an orphanage for young, needy children eight years ago and they have invited myself and whoever else would like to come to visit the orphanage in Ezequiel Montes in the Mexican State of Queretaro. The flyer with all the information is in the process of being printed. There is an exciting visit to the famous Basilica of our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City planned and we will experience the Via Crucis Stations of the Cross in Ezequiel Montess on Good Friday. If you are interested please call Eduardo Angel Ituarte Lima 604-401-4342. Fr. Bill is chaplain and can be reached through the parish office at 604-224-4344 ext.109.

**Catholic Women's League Notices:** 1. Opportunity to renew your membership or join the CWL this weekend - February 17-18. For those considering joining, there is some information at the back of the Church - blue coloured sheets. See us next weekend before or after mass at the back of the Church. 2. NEXT MEETING - Thursday February 22 in the Madonna Room 7:30pm. We will be having a fabulous speaker - Tia MacDougall from The Signal Hill.

**Sunday Offering Envelopes:** 2018 Sunday Offering Envelopes are available for pick-up from the parish office. Please drop in during office hours if you have not got a box of envelopes for this year. Please do not use envelopes from previous years. Thank you!

**Easter Vigil:** Every year to welcome the new people entering the church at Easter, we put on a reception after the Easter Vigil Mass. We are looking for volunteers to help with this celebration. Please use the sign-up sheet in the church foyer or contact Bertilla. Email: bwatanabe@rcav.org.

**Join the Choir:** Scripture often tells us to sing to the Lord in gladness. There is also that oft-quoted line of St. Augustine "He who sings, prays twice." So, if you like to sing and can carry a tune, come and be part of a fulfilling experience with the OLPH choir. Rehearsals are on Mondays 7-8pm in the church. Please contact Catherine Walsh: catherine.organist@gmail.com for more information.

**Domestic Abuse Services - Our Lady of Good Counsel Society:** 22nd Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday, March 7th, 2018 at 7 pm at St. Michael's Parish Center, Burnaby, BC. Two members of the Vancouver Police Domestic Violence Unit will be speaking at our meeting. Bring a friend to learn about the Society and the good work we do. Interested in joining our Board of Directors and making a difference in peoples' lives? Call Della at 604.585.6688 for more info.

**Mass of Remembrance:** Join us Sunday, Feb. 25, for our monthly Mass of Remembrance as we pray together for our loved ones who have passed away this month. Mass will be held at BOTH 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. in our Evangelist Chapel at Gardens of Gethsemani, Surrey. Visit [rcav.org/events](http://rcav.org/events)

**Fiat - Women's Discernment Weekend Retreat:** Fiat activities are open to single Catholic women ages 18-35 who are open to discerning God's call in life. Following the example of Mary, who gave her fiat to be both virgin and mother, we desire to hear and follow God's call to holiness through discernment of his will for our life and vocation. Join us for a weekend retreat March 2-4 at Westminster Abbey, Mission. To register, visit [rcav.org/event/fiat-womensretreat](http://rcav.org/event/fiat-womensretreat)

**Men's Discernment Night:** Do you have questions about discerning God's call for your life? Vocations in Progress for single men, aged 17 and up, is an opportunity to meet priests, ask questions, and learn about their life and spirituality. The informal event will include prayer, dinner and discussion at St. Patrick's, Vancouver, on Wednesday Feb. 21 at 7 - 10 p.m.

## Stewardship Reflection

*"After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God..." - Mark 1:14*

Do you ever think about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to come into Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that Jesus was proclaiming. It must have taken great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, following a life of stewardship takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that God will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

## CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY/MARCH

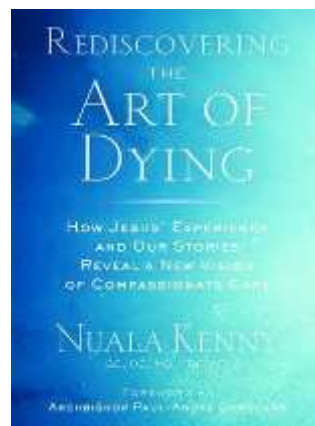
#### Madonna Group

OLPH is hosting the West Point Grey Lenten Prayer Service on Wednesday March 7 at noon with Fr Bill and members from neighbourhood Christian churches. Soup and bread will be served after the prayer service. All are welcome to attend.

#### Youth Safety Awareness

Learn martial arts and physical safety that combines combative arts and psychology developed by instructor Robert Lynds of Dojang. It is a discipline which enhances your body, mind and soul. All teenagers welcome. This is a Youth Ministry sponsored event for OLPH church and school youth. No charge for attendees. Dates for this two-session workshop are Sat Feb 17 and Sat Feb 24. Time: 3:30pm - 4:30pm. Workshop is at Dojang at West 4th and Blenheim. For more details email Theresa: [olphyouthmin@gmail.com](mailto:olphyouthmin@gmail.com)

#### Lenten Talks



Our annual Lenten Talks will begin on the second Friday of Lent after the 7pm Stations of the Cross. Books are available for \$15.16 from Novalis <https://en.novalis.ca>. You can buy a book or simply attend the talk prepared by our speakers for each session. Friday Feb 23: Should Suffering Be Avoided? Friday Mar 2: The Loss of Dignity & Identity Friday Mar 9: The Dimensions of Suffering & Care Friday Mar 16: The Art of Dying: Learning from the Master Friday Mar 23: Consolation & Resurrection



## Valentine's Day Cards on Ash Wednesday

Neighbours around OLPH Parish were hit by a power surge of love from students of OLPH on Ash Wednesday. The school organized a big Valentine's Day card distribution campaign for their neighbours.

Not all 400 cards made it into the mail slots because there was not enough time to distribute them all. However there were enough given out to remind people that the school stands for good Catholic values. Most of the cards were signed "OLPH students" rather than individually and decorated with colourful hearts, flowers, pompoms and friendly messages.

Raine from Gr 5A designed a pop-up card with a heart which said, "Happy Valentine's Day. I hope it is filled with joy!"

Another student wrote: "Dear Neighbour, Happy Valentine's Day! Thank you for being part of the community. We hope you have a relaxing Valentine's Day."

Another said, "Happy Valentine's Day! With love from the students of OLPH School."

Another one said: "Happy Valentine's Day! I hope you are loved by all!"

Achilles' card said: "We link together through neighbourhood" On the inside was a little poem:

You are our neighbor  
and that is true  
We are not under labour,  
not me or you  
I am grateful for that  
You are our neighbor  
I'll remember you.

## SEASON OF LENT

## Pope Francis' 2018 Lenten Message

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Once again, the Pasch of the Lord draws near! In our preparation for Easter, God in His providence offers us each year the season of Lent as a "sacramental sign of our conversion". Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life. With this message, I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth. I will take my cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold" (24:12). These words appear in Christ's preaching about the end of time. They were spoken in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord's passion would begin. Here Jesus foretells a great tribulation and describes how the community of believers might well find itself: amid great trials, false prophets would lead people astray and the love that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many.

### False prophets

They can appear as "snake charmers", who manipulate human emotions in order to enslave others and lead them where they would have them go. How many of God's children are mesmerized by momentary pleasures, mistaking them for true happiness! How many men and women live entranced by the dream of wealth, which only makes them slaves to profit and petty interests! How many go through life believing that they are sufficient unto themselves, and end up entrapped by loneliness!

False prophets can also be "charlatans", who offer easy and immediate solutions to suffering that soon prove utterly useless. How many young people are taken in by the panacea of drugs, of disposable relationships, of easy but dishonest gains! How many more are ensnared in a thoroughly "virtual" existence, in which relationships appear quick and straightforward, only to prove meaningless! These swindlers, in peddling things that have no real value, rob people of all that is most precious: dignity, freedom and the ability to love. They appeal to our vanity, our trust in appearances but in the end they only make fools of us. In order to confound the human heart, the devil, who is "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), has always presented evil as good, falsehood as truth. That is why each of us is called to peer into our heart to see if we are falling prey to the lies of these false prophets. We must learn to look closely beneath the surface and to recognize what leaves a good and lasting mark on our hearts.

### What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool?

What destroys charity is greed for money, "the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10). The rejection of God and his peace soon follows; we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments. All this leads to violence against anyone we think is a threat to our own "certainties": the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbour who does not live up to our expectations. Creation itself becomes a silent witness to this cooling of charity. The earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I sought to describe the most evident signs of this lack of love: selfishness and spiritual sloth, sterile pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves, and the worldly mentality that makes us concerned only for appearances, and thus lessens our missionary zeal.

### What are we to do?

Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves the signs I have just described. But the Church, our Mother and Teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting. By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of His children. If through me God helps someone today, will He not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. It allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. It also expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbour. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

I would also like my invitation to extend beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church, and to reach all of you, men and women of good will, who are open to hearing God's voice. Perhaps, like ourselves, you are disturbed by the spread of iniquity in the world, you are concerned about the chill that paralyzes hearts and actions, and you see a weakening in our sense of being members of the one human family. Join us, then, in raising our plea to God, in fasting, and in offering whatever you can to our brothers and sisters in need!