

8th Annual Rideau Canal Men's Retreat

by canoe, kayak and pontoon boat

Tues. to Thur., August 4-6, 2026

Theme: "To know Christ, and the power of His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10)
Theme of the Bicentennial of the Archdiocese of Kingston (1826-2026)

Invitation # 2 – A Reminder

May 1, 2026 follow-up to January 12, 2026 email

The **8th Annual Rideau Canal Men's Retreat 2026** for Catholic men 18 years and older, and fathers with teenage sons, will be held from **August 4-6, 2026**.

The canoe, kayak and pontoon boat route will be similar to that in previous years (Seeley's Bay to McNally's Bay), with slight modifications here and there. We will experience the rugged beauty of a relatively sheltered section of the Rideau Canal, while traversing lakes, navigation channels and four sets of locks over the course of two days.

We will camp in tents overnight at Davis Lock on Tuesday, and on Father Brian McNally's lakeshore property along the Upper Rideau Lake on Wednesday and until Thursday afternoon.

The goal is to gather Catholic men in an outdoor adventure/retreat where we can share our Faith and enjoy male camaraderie. This invitation is being sent to you and other past participants at an earlier date than usual, with the hope that those interested in participating can work their schedules - and come together for this time of prayer, daily Mass, opportunities for Confession, and lots of fun, fraternity, exercise, laughter and adventure.

If you know other Catholic men who may be interested and are not on our distribution list, please feel free to forward this invitation to them. The Retreat is growing in popularity and we anticipate being fully registered. (There were 56 men in 2025, and the maximum number we can accommodate is 62.) If you wish to participate, please send in the registration and waiver forms, plus payment as soon as possible.

A degree of canoeing ability is required in order to safely and effectively paddle 33 kms over two days, so two options are being made available for the 2026 Retreat:

- Option 1 - Full Participation: paddling by canoe or kayak, with participation in all retreat activities.
- Option 2 - Partial Participation: travel by pontoon boat (with a limit of 7 men), with participation in all retreat activities except paddling.

Details are in the attached Registration and Waiver forms.

Those wishing to paddle a canoe are asked to indicate their degree of skill and ability on the Registration form - either advanced, intermediate or beginner. We will use the information to assign positions in the bow or stern of the canoes.

Details re. Route and Schedule

Tuesday, August 4, 7 am: The school bus, trucks, other vehicles and trailers arrive at the canoe launch in Centennial Park, located on Haskins Point Road in Seeley's Bay. (See "Directions" in attached file.) Canoes and kayaks are unloaded, and personal gear (see "Kit List" in attached file) is removed from the bus and other vehicles, and placed in the appropriate watercraft. Those in the lead boat, pontoon boat and catamaran (rescue craft) simultaneously make their way to the canoe launch dock from the nearby boat launch. At **8 am** we join Archbishop Michael Mulhall and several priests of the Archdiocese of Kingston in the celebration of Holy Mass in a nearby Pavilion. The sharing of information and instructions is followed by a light breakfast, and we begin our adventure on water by travelling northward and upward for a total of 16 kms that day. We make our way across Whitefish Lake and through the four locks at Jones Falls, before crossing Sand Lake and through Davis Lock, where we camp overnight.

Wednesday, August 5: Holy Mass at **7:30 am**, followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (30 minutes) and a full breakfast. We then begin a 17 km voyage, crossing Opinicon Lake, through Chaffey's Lock, and over Indian, Benson, Mosquito, Pollywog and Newboro Lakes. After passing through Newboro Lock and the Newboro Canal we proceed a short distance to Father Brian McNally's lakeshore property at 200 McNally's Lane, located on the south-east shore of McNally's Bay on the Upper Rideau Lake, where we remain for the rest of the retreat.

Thursday morning, August 6: Holy Mass at **8 am** (Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord), Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a light breakfast, ultimate frisbee, swimming and other recreational activities, retreat talks, BBQ lunch, and **departure at 2:30 pm**.

A total of **23 Grumman aluminum canoes** with paddles will be rented, accommodating the **46 participants choosing Option 1** (full participation) on a first come, first served basis. Those wishing to paddle their own kayak are also very welcome to join us.

Father McNally's **lead boat** and the **pontoon boat (with 6 passengers** who have chosen Option 2) will be pre-positioned each time in front of the convoy to simplify logistics and enhance safety. The catamaran (Tony's safety vessel) will follow behind the entire group as usual.

Attached to this email please find: Registration Form; Acknowledgement, Release and Waiver Form; Kit List; Directions; Maps of the Route; "How to Paddle" links.

***Please note:** The Rideau Canal Men's Retreat is **not** covered by the liability insurance of the Archdiocese of Kingston or its parishes, nor do we have group liability insurance to cover those on the Retreat. We are simply a group of Catholic men coming together for an annual three day Retreat by canoe, kayak and pontoon boat. It is necessary that **each participant** (or his father, in the case of teenage sons) complete the **Registration and Acknowledgement, Release and Waiver** forms, so that it is clear that each of us takes responsibility for ourselves (and fathers for their teenage sons) while on the Retreat. Such a waiver is, of course, standard procedure for most such events, both for the sake of the organizers and to ensure that the participants are made fully aware.

Important changes from previous years: Participants are **now required to bring** a refillable water bottle, knife, fork, spoon, bowl and coffee mug - in addition to a personal flotation device, personal snacks, tent, sleeping equipment and other items mentioned on the attached Kit List. For the sake of the environment and to avoid waste, **plastic water bottles and utensils, paper plates and cups will no longer be provided.**

Cost: The fee is \$100 (non-refundable) to cover the rental of canoes, the school bus and portable toilet, as well as lock fees, breakfast, lunch, dinner and miscellaneous expenses. Reduced rates are available for teenage sons. Donations are graciously accepted in support of the Retreat.

Payment (\$100), along with the Registration and Waiver forms, can be sent by e-transfer to hart.daniel64@gmail.com.

For further information and for registration, please contact:

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