



The Inner Joy of His Vocation: Monsignor Vito Grespan

Monsignor Grespan's story highlights how he made the best of wherever he found himself – and he has a very storied history. From serving in the Apostolic Delegation to Canada, to become Chancellor of the Diocese of London, and then going to serve in the parishes, Monsignor Vito Grespan put his all into everything he did, and was rewarded for it tenfold with the love he received from the parishioners and the respect from his peers.



Born March 10, 1916 to Ernest L. Grespan and Mary Golla, Monsignor Grespan spent his early years in his hometown of Treviso, Italy. He stayed behind in Italy to complete his high school studies, and then joined his parents in Canada, settling in Milton (in the Diocese of Hamilton). After learning some English, he applied to the Bishop of Hamilton to begin studying in the Seminary; the bishop felt that the diocese had enough vocations for the time being, and so he went to St. Peter's Seminary in the fall of 1935, with Bishop Kidd's blessing.

He was ordained on June 7, 1941 in St. Peter's Cathedral by Bishop Kidd, and immediately became assistant pastor at St. Martin's Parish in London. However, he performed work outside of a parish for quite some time after this: From 1947-1950, he attended the Canadian College in Rome; in 1950 he was made a Papal Chamberlain; from 1950-1952, he was part of the Apostolic Delegation in Ottawa (as well as serving as the secretary to the Apostolic Delegate, the Most Reverend Ildebrando Antonutti, from 1951-1952); and from 1952-1968, he was Chancellor of the Diocese of London and Judge of the Diocesan Court, serving under both Bishop Cody and Bishop Carter.

It was not until 1968 that Monsignor Grespan returned to parish life, becoming pastor at St. Mary's Parish in London, where he stayed until 1970. In the spring of 1970, he became pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Ingersoll, where he did much to improve the church: under his tenure, he repaired the church roof, insulated the building, replaced the carpet, cleaned the bricks, and eventually replaced the stained glass windows in 1972. He stayed at Sacred Heart until 1980, and then went to Holy Name of Mary Parish in St. Mary's, before retiring in June 1987, and settling in St. Thomas.

Although Monsignor Grespan did much for the Church as a whole, he was also known to many as a congenial, affable, kind and considerate man, who was beloved by his parishioners. He was also known as being a fair disciplinarian and his leadership skills, joining these qualities with his vast theological knowledge. All of these show how Monsignor Grespan was very well rounded, and made the most of wherever he was, whether that be a parish or as a Chancellor. Truly he, as described in a biography, “[radiated] the inner joy of his vocation!”

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