

Archbishop Joseph N. MacNeil Outstanding Achievement Award

2017

The Archbishop Joseph N. MacNeil Outstanding Achievement Award is given out annually to a graduate of NTC who has:

- demonstrated academic excellence;
- contributed to the building up of the College community;
- and shown outstanding commitment to their faith in service to the wider community.

This year's recipient has been exemplary in all three of these areas throughout his studies here at NTC.

1. Our recipient demonstrated exceptional academic performance in his studies at NTC, completing his degree program with a notation of distinction. He has a keen mind, is intelligent, and concise. He has a strong work ethic and is diligent and well organized. Our recipient is also noteworthy for his humility as a student: always open to critique, willing to learn new things, consider other perspectives and approach his studies with a positive attitude and genuine curiosity. His professors noted that he was always a joy to have in the classroom because he treated his professors and fellow students with respect and courtesy. In all these ways, our recipient proved worthy of this year's MacNeil award.

2. Our recipient contributed to the building up of the College in a number of ways. He worked hard to bring a consistent and strong liturgical environment to NTC. He strove to find priests so that we could have daily liturgy on campus. He organized special liturgical celebrations for the feast day of Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman. He worked with students from the Ukrainian Eparchy to bring the Ukrainian Divine Liturgy to campus a number of times. During Advent he organized a “Giving Tree” and other charitable events at the College in support of external organizations in the Edmonton area who are serving the poor and marginalized. He also provided practical support and assistance to the Lay Formation Students hosting the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Services on campus. He was the NTC delegate to the Canadian Theological Student’s Conference in Montreal in 2016 and served on the planning committee for the conference the following year. In the last couple of years our recipient attended and assisted at all of the NTCSA social and community building events, arriving early to help set up and staying late to clean up. As the Vice President of Spiritual Life on the NTC Student Council for the last two years our recipient worked diligently, quietly and with a positive spirit to improve and facilitate the spiritual life of the NTC community. In all of these ways, our recipient proved worthy of this year’s MacNeil award.

3. Our recipient served the wider Christian Community in a variety of ways, notably through his volunteer ministerial work at the Lurana Shelter for victims of family violence and ministering to prisoners at the Edmonton Institution. He also serves as a spiritual assistant to the Secular Franciscans. In each of these ministry environments, he showed kindness, sensitivity, patience and discretion in his interactions with others, demonstrating a very strong suitability for pastoral ministry. His supervisors in these ministries describe him as generous, accommodating, empathetic and well mannered. He is ecumenically sensitive and engaged. He is a healing presence in times of strife and a witness to the importance of having a deep spiritual life, a commitment to the poor and marginalized, and understanding the possibility of being a wounded healer in our world which is much in need of peace and reconciliation. Much of this may be attributed to the Franciscan charism that animates his life: he radiates joy as he lives in poverty and simplicity, serving the poor and marginalized as St. Francis himself has encouraged.

Ladies and gentlemen: it is with great joy that we announce this year's recipient of the Archbishop Joseph N. MacNeil Outstanding Achievement Award:

Br. Benjamin Ripley, OFM.

