

# London Interfaith Counselling Centre

## NEWS RELEASE

London Interfaith Counselling Centre's new Executive Director  
hoping to expand services and build on past successes

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

London, Ontario: The newly-appointed Executive Director for the London Interfaith Counselling Centre (LICC) says he sees his new position as "a wonderful opportunity to expand in a multi-faith setting." And while he recognizes that his background may be of interest to many who remember his announcement just over a year ago to leave his position as priest with the London Roman Catholic diocese to marry, Willy Van Klooster prefers to focus on the future now.

"I needed some time to consider what I wanted to do," he says, referring to the year's exploration of career possibilities before agreeing to become Executive Director for LICC on May 4, 1998. "I was pleased to be offered this position and I'm looking forward to building on the successes that LICC has had over the past 11 years."

The organization, which is presently supported by 42 partner faith communities, has kept a modest profile. Van Klooster's first goal is to promote the "excellent and affordable" counselling provided by the centre's accredited counsellors.

"It's a cross section of what I would consider excellent counseling -- individual, marriage and family counselling. Our counsellors have, at minimum, a Master's degree. But what makes us really attractive is that there's no waiting list and that this counselling is available on a geared-to-income scale so it's affordable to everyone."

LICC's mandate also includes the provision of counselling which honors the spiritual dimension of life, but Van Klooster stresses that services are "accessible to everyone, regardless of their spirituality or faith and regardless of their ability to pay."

"Many who seek counselling at the centre do so because they know their spirituality will be respected and can be included. Others prefer that spirituality and faith not be discussed and that's fine too."

LICC also provides pastoral education. Currently, six men and women who are training to be leaders in various churches, are involved in the program. They will go on to provide pastoral care in churches, hospitals, long-term care facilities and other areas.

In conjunction with the centre's role of helping to coordinate bereavement services in London and Middlesex, LICC recently acquired funding from St. Joseph's Health Centre to launch a Bereavement Resource Directory which will be released this month.

Funding for the Centre comes from partner faith communities, foundations, donations and revenue generated from clients.

"From my experience as a faith leader in the community I know there is a need for counselling which is available to all people regardless of their background. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to work with an organization that fills this need in the community."

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## Looking for a Story Idea?

Here's a few to get you started.

### **Profile of LICC's new executive director**

- As a priest in the Roman Catholic diocese of London for 12 years, Willy Van Klooster brings a unique perspective to his new job and says he's already been discussing some of his ideas with LICC's Board of Directors who are open to the changes he's suggested.

### **Focusing on the business of London's Partner Faith Communities**

- A partnership of 42 of London's religious communities benefits a wide range of individuals. Its new executive director is hoping to expand the partner faith communities to include a broader sector of London's diverse religious groups. Will this marriage be possible and how will it benefit the community?

### **LICC: Providing high quality, accessible counselling and bereavement services**

- For the past 11 years LICC has successfully advanced its mandate of providing high-quality, cost accessible counselling and bereavement services to all members of the community. With so many of these services available in the community how is this program different? Is there a need?

### **Education and Careers**

- London Interfaith Counselling Centre provides pastoral education for men and women training to take their place in the community as future religious leaders. What has been the outcome of this program?

### **Members of London's Faith Communities have come together in a business partnership**

- Churches have traditionally provided sanctuary for some people and nurtured faith for entire communities. But while their goals are often similar, on a national scale differences in beliefs have often led to conflict. In London, however, 42 of London's faith communities have found benefit in forming an alliance. Through a partnership, under the LICC banner, these groups have been successfully working together over the past 11 years to provide a variety of services to members of all faiths, and pooling their resources to acquire funding from the community at large to enhance this mandate.