



Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Office of the Archbishop

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November 23, 2021

Behold, I make all things new (Revelation 21.1-8)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I bring you greetings as we enter the Advent and Christmas Seasons. The above Passage from the Book of Revelation speaks about the promise of new life and new beginnings for all those who put their faith in Christ. This is important for us to remember as we struggle through this pandemic and its effect on our lives. Jesus calls us to face this in a spirit of faith, hope and love.

Last year, in my letter for the annual Sharing God's Gifts (SGG) Appeal, I commented on how the People of God rallied to support their parishes during times of reduced congregations and even shutdowns. Even with the reduction of our pastoral programs last year, parishioners responded generously and quickly to SGG and donated over \$ 1.2 million. This resulted in rebates of more than \$500,000 to parishes for their own needs. I am confident that this year we will be able to respond to SGG with the same spirit of generosity.

In addition to our pastoral programs, this year we witness new hope regarding the Church's desire to walk together with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Recently, at our Plenary Assembly in September, the Bishops of Canada made a joint statement of apology for the legacy of suffering caused at Residential Schools in Canada. At the same time the bishops pledged to raise funds for healing and reconciliation in our country. The Archdiocese of Winnipeg, along with the other Manitoba dioceses, will play our part in raising funds for healing and reconciliation in Canada.

Therefore, this year we have two challenges. The first is making sure that the Sharing God's Gifts Appeal remains strong as both an archdiocesan and parish effort. Secondly, we begin our fundraising for the Solidarity Fund for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation to assist our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Sharing God's Gifts – 2021: In the past 20 years, Sharing God's Gifts has raised over \$30 million for pastoral programs throughout the Archdiocese. This is a tremendous achievement, and I am grateful to parishioners and clergy who have supported SGG over many years. In the last 5 years over \$2million has been returned to our parishes from the SGG over goal rebates. It follows that the more new families become involved, the greater benefit comes to parishes. The key to Sharing God's Gifts is summed up in one word, Participation!

We are now moving into our second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and regular parish life continues to be challenging. While pastoral programs have been reduced, the wage subsidies are coming to an end. Taking all this into consideration, the goal of our 2021 SGG Appeal will be reduced by 10% for a \$900,000.00 goal this year, supporting the following:

Support for Chaplaincy and Campus Ministry at St. Paul's College: \$116,000
Pastoral Services (Diaconate and Lay Formation, Religious Education and Social Justice): \$203,000
First Nations and Home Missions: \$227,000
Vocations (currently, three men in seminary): \$109,000

Priests' Pension Plan: \$185,000
Mission Assistance to the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas: \$10,000
Appeal Fundraising expenses: \$50,000 (6%)

I have taken the liberty of enclosing a postage paid envelope and donation form if you have not already contributed to SGG. If you wish further information, you can contact the Catholic Center at 204-452-2227 or use the "Donate Now" icon on our website: www.archwinnipeg.ca or donate via the Archdiocesan APP.

Solidarity Fund for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation: Our country is a nation of immigrants stretching as far back as the 16th century to the present day. This is part of the Canadian reality and forms the great Canadian cultural mosaic. Having said this, we often forget that the various Indigenous populations have inhabited these lands for thousands of years prior to later immigrants. The historical record shows that these first peoples of the land, even though forming a virtual cultural mosaic among themselves, have struggled and often suffered from the advance of the colonial and foreign structures put into place in the building of Canada. We know very well that Canada, as a country, has provided many benefits for its citizens and above all is a country where people are free to establish their lives. Yet, within this context, many Indigenous people have suffered through loss of land and culture and have experienced poverty, and outright discrimination. Pope Francis speaks about going out to those on the peripheries of society and engaging with them. Our **Solidarity Fund for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation** is a sincere effort to bring new life and new hope into our relationship with Indigenous peoples. The bishops of Canada as a body, pledged to raise \$30 million to assist Healing and Reconciliation projects over the next five years. This a totally new undertaking involving dioceses from across Canada

The Archdiocese of Winnipeg is committed to this fund in unity with the other dioceses in Manitoba. We have established a Solidarity Fund for Truth, Healing and Reconciliation as a separate fund to meet these needs, Our Archdiocesan Goal is \$660,000 to be raised over the next five years. To date, I have donated \$220,000 from the sale of Micah House; this enables the Archdiocese to make a donation from its assets towards the Solidarity Fund, leaving \$440,000 to be raised.

I invite all of us to rally together to meet the needs of the Solidarity Fund and I am fully confident that we will be able to make our contribution to this effort in Canada. You will find with this letter a brochure marked "**Solidarity Fund**" and I invite you to consider your pledge or donation by filling out the form provided and return in the postage paid envelope.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for reading this letter today. We are in a privileged moment in which we are called to re-build our community during these pandemic times and to move forward in our relationship with our Indigenous neighbours: **Behold, I make all things new!**

I wish you all a Holy and Blessed Advent and Christmas.

Yours in Christ,



✠Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg