



1 April 2017

Dear Fathers, Pastoral Assistants and Parishioners,

I am writing this letter in Rome, where I am joined by the other western bishops for our ad limina visit. I arrived here on Saturday 18 March, having flown from Grande Prairie through Calgary and Frankfurt. This is my sixth visit to Rome; it is my fourth since becoming a bishop.

Ad Limina Visit

The ad limina visit is a long-standing tradition in the Church. While from the first centuries, bishops from around the world would have had reason to meet with the pope on a variety of matters, it was Pope Sixtus V in 1585 who set the norm for such visits. Pope Pius X, in 1909, added the requirement that every five years the visit be accompanied with a report on the status and statistics of the bishop's home diocese. This report is called a "quinquennial report", literally a "five year" report.

The Canadian bishops make our visit by regional assembly. There are four regional assemblies in Canada: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and the West. The week of March 27 to April 2 is our week. My arrival here a week early is allowing me to overcome jet lag (always worse when I fly east), and get to enjoy some of Rome and Malta before the actual visit begins.

There are some essential elements in the ad limina visit:

- To pray at the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul;
- To celebrate Mass in the four major basilicas: St. Peter's, St. Mary Major, St. John Lateran, and St. Paul Outside the Walls;
- To meet the Holy Father;
- To meet with the various dicasteries, or offices of the Vatican, and discuss the state of the Church in our country with the directors of these offices. These include the following:
 - Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,
 - Pontifical Council for Culture
 - Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life
 - Congregation for Bishops
 - Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization
 - Congregation for Clergy
 - Secretariat of State
 - Congregation for the Causes of Saints
 - Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
 - Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

10301-102nd Street, Grande Prairie AB T8V 2W2

Phone 780.532.9766

Fax 780.532.9706

Email archbishop.agm@live.ca

- Dicastery for Promoting Integral; Human Development
- Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity
- Congregation for the Oriental Churches
- Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
- Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Consecrated Life
- Congregation for Catholic Education
- Secretariat for Communications

Quinquennial Report

I had to submit our quinquennial report to the Apostolic Nuncio in Canada before 15 October 2016. This was the first such report since the last one in 2006. As you can see, it is much longer than five years since the Canadian bishops had an ad limina visit. In order to write this report, I asked a number of people across our archdiocese to write specific chapters. When these submissions came in, Lauri Friesen molded them into a finished product. For the benefit of any of you who would be interested in reading this report, we have posted it on-line on our web-site, at <http://archgm.ca>.

Catholic Missions in Canada (CMIC)

On April 6th, I will be attending the Tastes of Heaven Gala put on by Catholic Missions in Canada. This is an annual fundraising dinner held in Toronto each year. I am the designated speaker at the gala this year. Each year, CMIC honours a Canadian missionary with the St. Joseph Award. In past years, missionaries from our archdiocese have been granted this award: Father Paul Hernou one year, the Soeurs de Sainte-Chrétienne (Sisters Bernadette Gautreau and Jeannette Berger) another year. This year, the recipient of the St. Joseph Award is Sister Mary Jeanne Davidson, SSND. As most of you know, Sister Mary Jeanne is engaged in ministry to our First Nations communities in Cadotte Lake, Little Buffalo and Duncan. I am pleased that CMIC has chosen to honour her this year.

CMIC is a major benefactor to our archdiocese. They help fund our Indigenous communities, our youth ministry and faith formation programmes, and our seminarians. In Acts 20:35, St. Paul says that Jesus said “it is more blessed to give than to receive”, but none of the gospels quote Jesus as saying that. It is my hope that in time, we will be more self-sufficient and be able to help other dioceses in Canada that are in great need.

Holy Week and Chrism Mass

Palm Sunday this year is on 9 April; Easter Sunday is the 16th. The Chrism Mass for our archdiocese is, as usual, on Tuesday 11 April at 7:30 pm. We invite one and all from the archdiocese to attend this beautiful liturgy, at which I will bless the holy oils for the coming year, and the priests will renew their fidelity to Christ’s ministry and to my leadership as bishop.

I wish all of you many blessings in the remaining days of the holy Lenten season, and for the Season of Easter. I rejoice that many children and adults will be baptized and received into the Church at the Easter Vigil or other times through the Season. May God bless all of you, your families and your parish communities.

Yours sincerely in Christ the Redeemer,



Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan