



1 May 2020

Dear Pastors, Pastoral Assistants and Parishioners,

These continue to be unusual times. As long as our public health leaders engage us in the battle with COVID-19, life moves at a very different pace than we're used to. I'm sure all of us are keen to see an end to this, even though many of us may have gotten used to new routines. We may even esteem some new routines to be better than the old ones.

I want to give notice that the devastation of COVID-19 has been felt in our archdiocese. To the best of my knowledge, there have been ten deaths at the Manoir du Lac in McLennan, among them Hector Dubrûle, a maternal uncle of Msgr. Charles Lavoie. Shawn Auger, a 34-year old hockey coach from Grouard has also passed away. There was another death at the J.B. Wood Continuing Care Centre in High Prairie. All of these are grieved by family and friends. This virus is not a distant threat; it is very close. Let us keep those lost and their loved ones in our prayers, as well as the courageous front-line workers who care for those affected.

Consecration of Canada to Mary, Mother of the Church

You may recall that in 2017, for the 150th anniversary of our country Canada, all the bishops consecrated our nation to Mary, Mother of the Church. I still remember well the solemn ceremony at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Ottawa where this act of consecration took place, during the bishops' Plenary Assembly that fall.

In response to the COVID pandemic and its devastating effects on our nation, the bishops of Canada will renew this act of consecration on Friday, May 1st. I will make this Act of Consecration from the chapel in the Chancery building in Grande Prairie on that day at 9:00 am. I invite all of our priests to make that same consecration in their churches on May 1st as well. The American bishops will also be consecrating the United States to Mary, Mother of the Church.

The Glass Door Campaign

I have initiated what I am calling The Glass Door Campaign. This is a way of staying in touch with all (or, as many as possible) of our parishioners in the archdiocese. This is obviously important during this pandemic, but I foresee this benefiting us into the future. Over the past few weeks, with the guidance of DCG Philanthropic Services of Saskatoon, we have met on a few occasions with the parish priests and some volunteers from our parishes. The first goal is to reach out to as many Catholic households as possible in the archdiocese. At the first stage of the project, we want to communicate about: 1. How are people doing in the midst of the pandemic? Are there spiritual needs that the parish or archdiocese could address? 2. Do we have your current contact information, so that we can stay in

touch? 3. We have initiated different ways to support your parish financially at this time, if you are able to do so.

One of our priests suggested we have a name for this project: in pondering this for a couple of days, I came up with the name “The Glass Door”. This is how I explained my choice to the priests: *I [had] just came in from a good long walk around my subdivision, praying my rosary. As many of you know, there is a lake in my part of town, with nice trails through wooded areas and the neighbourhoods. I saw one house that stood out because of its doors. The vinyl siding was a common grey/brown colour, but all the exterior doors were a bright yellow. I was quite taken by the scene. Then I thought about a name for our campaign that begins with the idea of a door. My ideas led me to this idea: “The Glass Door Campaign”. My thought was this: Because of the pandemic, most people are spending more time than usual at home, behind closed doors. Yet we long to be outside, enjoying the sunshine, fresh air, all the feelings of springtime. A glass door would allow us to share in some of that, while still inside. There is something “open” and “transparent” about a glass door, that is very different than an opaque door. The same can be said of our campaign. We’re connecting with parishioners while maintaining the prescribed distance. There is something bright and hopeful about this campaign. It allows us to feel good about our faith community.*

You will hear more about this project as it moves forward.

GrACE and Catholic Education Week

Catholic Education Week in Alberta is held this year from May 18th to 22nd. Bonnie Annicchiarico of the GrACE initiative has put together a series of prayers and intercessions led by the bishops of Alberta that will be live-streamed at 9:00 a.m. each morning of that week. The following schedule has been put together. I encourage all of you to take part in this week of prayer for our Catholic schools. Since Monday is a civic holiday, we begin on Tuesday

Tuesday, May 19 Holy Rosary, led by Bishop Terrio of Saint Paul.

Wednesday, May 20 Chaplet of Divine Mercy, led by Archbishop Pettipas of Grouard-McLennan

Thursday, May 21 Mass, celebrated by Archbishop Smith of Edmonton (This is World Catholic Education Day)

Friday, May 22 Address and Blessing, by Bishop McGrattan of Calgary

Peace River Flooding

Due to an ice jam, the Peace River has flooded its banks in several places. This has been devastating for the community of Fort Vermilion; now it threatens Garden River. This situation is still recent as I write this letter, so I don’t have much to say about the condition of our church and rectory in the Fort, except to say that they are presently unusable. I anticipate the need for major repairs to these buildings.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,



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