



Advent Letter – 2020

November 29, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we begin a new year of liturgical prayer and worship on this First Sunday of Advent, I write to you about a 'new beginning' in the diocese, namely our Diocesan Caritas.

In his great encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI said,

"The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable."

In 2012 after I was appointed as Bishop of St Paul and just a few months before his retirement as Pope he sent a letter to all bishops in which he said,

"The Bishop is to encourage in every parish of his territory the creation of a Local Caritas service or a similar body, which will also promote in the whole community educational activities aimed at fostering a spirit of sharing and authentic charity."

The Diocese of St Paul has participated generously in the national Development and Peace fund raising and other activities for many years but their outreach is only for the needy outside of Canada. However, our neighbour diocese to the North, Mackenzie/Ft Smith has many very poor parishes and is with limited resources.

To help them but also to continue extending the 'hand of charity' to the needy outside of Canada, I announced earlier this year that we are founding our own local Diocesan Caritas. Therefore, our diocesan 2021 collection on the Second Sunday of Lent will be for St Paul Diocesan Caritas. The funds collected will be shared as follows:

- 50% to MacKenzie/Ft Smith Diocese
- 25% to Chalice
- 25% to Aid to The Church in Need

I have begun the organization of our Diocesan Caritas Commission with members of our former Diocesan Development and Peace Committee but also with a new chairperson, Fr. Jhack Diaz of Mallaig parish.

One of the benefits of a local Diocesan Caritas group is that more parishioners can become involved in the outreach but just as important, they can also interact with the people they assist and therefore to 'receive' from them in turn.

For the next Sundays of this Advent, Fr. Jhack and some members of the Commission will be sharing with you concise but interesting information and prayer intentions related to needs of the people we want to assist and also learn from this year.

May our Lord and his blessed Mother guide us all of the Diocese of St Paul this Advent to grow in our Christian life of charity and so prepare for His coming among us.

†Bishop Paul