



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*Being Christian is living and witnessing to faith in prayer,
in works of charity, in promoting justice, in doing good.*

Pope Francis, *Angelus*. 25 August 2013

Ever since his election as Chief Shepherd of the Universal Church, our Holy Father has been calling upon us, and indeed the whole world, to be attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters. He asks us to give a place of honour in our hearts to the needy and any who live on the margins of society. Indeed, caring for one another, especially the less fortunate, marks us as followers of Jesus.

The people of the Archdiocese of Edmonton are generous in their outreach to others through our support of many worthy organizations that offer concrete signs of God's love, mercy and compassion. Some of these receive a portion of their funds through nine different collections taken up in all of our parishes at various times throughout the year. They address a variety of needs here at home, in Canada, and abroad. Their common purpose is to serve the missionary outreach of the Church.

Our practice has been to space these "special collections" throughout the year. Now, after extensive consultation, I am asking that we continue this support through one simplified and coordinated annual appeal. Although the appeal will be made only once annually, parishioners will still be able to fulfill their pledge over time if they so wish. This new approach will begin in Lent of 2014. Named *Together We Serve*, this appeal will reflect our shared faith in coordinated action – serving the world God so loves.

In its first year, *Together We Serve* will direct collected funds to those organizations and initiatives we currently support:

- Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
- Evangelization of Nations
- Needs of the Canadian Church
- Needs of the Church in the Holy Land
- Papal Charities

- St. Joseph Seminary and Newman Theological College
- St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta
- St. Joseph's Priests' Foundation of Edmonton

In 2015, *Together We Serve* will also include the Catholic Social Services "Sign of Hope" parish campaign, which raises funds to serve our homeless, addicted, exploited and otherwise troubled brothers and sisters here in Alberta. (Sign of Hope continues as a separate collection in 2014 due to current funding arrangements with government, and we encourage your continued support of that collection.) In the future, our outreach to others may grow even further.

Together We Serve will also include a Parish Share (rebate) Program. A percentage of monies raised over the parish target will be returned to the parish to support initiatives of their choosing.

Full details of *Together We Serve* will be outlined in the Western Catholic Reporter and posted at www.caedm.ca/WeServe.

We are stewards, not owners, of what God has entrusted to us. In keeping with this truth, the disciple of Jesus receives gifts from God gratefully, nurtures them responsibly, and shares them generously in charity with others as a return to the Lord. I invite you to spend time in prayer reflecting upon your life of discipleship. Listen to how God is calling you to the ministry of charity and the service of justice. In gratitude for God's abundance in our own lives, let us together share generously to enable God's work and thus bring the healing presence of Christ to our world.

Yours sincerely in Our Lord,



✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

December 12, 2013
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe