



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

October 2021

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

In 1961, our world was very different. Humanity had not yet set foot on the moon, rotary dial phones were still in use, and digital cameras were not yet on the scene.

At the same time, our Archdiocese maintained little in the way of formal social services agencies. Yet there was a great desire to heed Christ's invitation to feed, clothe and welcome the poor in a new kind of way. To help answer this call, Catholic Social Services (CSS) was founded in the Archdiocese of Edmonton in 1961, under the leadership of Monsignor Bill Irwin, and with the encouragement and blessing of Archbishop John MacDonald.

While our world today seems very different from that of 1961, Christ's call to attend to the needs of the poor and suffering, and to love our neighbour, remains timeless. In many ways that call has grown even louder in recent times.

Catholic Social Services continues to offer exemplary services to all who need them. Whether it is sheltering women fleeing domestic violence, assisting senior citizens suffering abuse, helping parolees successfully transition back into society, supporting new mothers who have nowhere else to turn, keeping the once-homeless permanently housed, providing residential care for adults with developmental disabilities, caring for high-risk youth, or resettling refugees escaping war-torn lands, CSS has been there on the frontlines, faithfully serving all those who need a helping hand in their time of desperation. I am very grateful for the work they do, and am continually inspired by the passion and dedication of the 1900 staff and 400 volunteers of CSS who will walk daily alongside those who suffer.

Over the past 60 years, Catholic Social Services has served hundreds of thousands of Albertans. Its success has been fuelled by the generosity of the Catholic community who have volunteered their time or made much-needed donations. I am grateful to each one of you who has made a contribution – no matter how great or small – in radiating Christ's love through your dedication to this very special Agency within our Archdiocese. Catholic Social Services is an organization of which we can all be proud.

To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CSS, I am delighted to recognize Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> as *Catholic Social Services Sunday* across the Archdiocese of Edmonton. At the same time, it is my pleasure to recognize that the last Sunday of October will be marked as *Catholic Social Services Sunday* from this day forward.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton