

**FROM THE PULPIT**

**Key Messages**

*Together We Serve* is an annual appeal in the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton. It was launched in 2014 with two purposes:

1. to simplify giving by combining special collections in parishes, and
2. to invite Catholics to work together to serve those in need at home, in Canada, and abroad.

*Together We Serve* is an opportunity to come together *again* as One Church – after more than two years of disruption in our parish life.

Through *Together We Serve*, we support our fellow workers in the vineyard by giving generously and joyfully to Catholic causes that are outside the immediate needs of our own parish.

70% of your gift goes to **local** Catholic organizations and community needs:

* Catholic Social Services
* St. Joseph Seminary
* Newman Theological College
* St. Joseph’s College at the University of Alberta
* St. Joseph Priests’ Foundation
* And, this year only, to rebuilding Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples

15% of your gift goes to the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith and to the Needs of the Canadian Church.

15% goes to three international collections:

* Evangelization of Peoples
* Needs of the Church in the Holy Land
* Pope’s Pastoral Works.

**For more information** **about *Together We Serve,***visit the webpage at <https://caedm.ca/togetherweserve> and click on **Frequently Asked Questions** and **Information for Donors**.

**Parish Information**

*Check the monthly financial report for your parish target and current total:* [*https://caedm.ca/togetherweserve/resources-for-parishes/*](https://caedm.ca/togetherweserve/resources-for-parishes/)

**Our parish target is: $XX,000**

To the end of <MONTH>, you have given $XX,000 to *Together We Serve*, or XX% of our target.

**How was our parish target decided?**

* When *Together We Serve* began in 2014, the Archdiocese looked at how much our parish gave to special collections each year and then calculated a 5-year average. This was our target until this year.
* This year, the overall goal for *Together We Serve* was reduced from $2 million to $1.5 million. Our parish target was also reduced [true for most parishes – but not all].

**What happens if we go over our target?**

If our parish exceeds our target, we will receive 100% of the excess funds back as a Parish Share rebate – that we can use for our own parish needs or to give to local charities. Some parishes also give some or all of their rebate to *Together We Serve*.

**How much should I give?**

* Only you can answer that question. As disciples of Christ, we should listen to how God might be calling each of us to serve others through our charitable giving – and to respond generously in gratitude for the abundance we have received.
* I invite you to take the time to pray about it and discern how *Together We Serve* fits into your life of discipleship.
* The average annual gift is $500 and many people choose to give monthly.

**Monthly Collection**

The first Sunday of every month is designated as a *Together We Serve* collection in many parishes, although people can and do give anytime throughout the year.

This Fall, we are giving special emphasis to the monthly collection, to make a final push towards achieving our parish target.

If you use envelopes, you will find a TWS envelope in your box. There are also TWS envelopes in the foyer. Ask at the office how you can give by preauthorized debit, credit card, or e-transfer. [NOTE: This may be different in your parish. Check with your TWS coordinator or office staff.]

**September 25 – Collection NEXT WEEK**

*“Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things.”* Luke 16:25

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus calls us to see those in need around us, and to give generously from our abundance. When you give to *Together We Serve*, you are supporting organizations like Catholic Social Services, the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, and the Pope’s Pastoral Works that serve the Lazarus’s in our world today.

**October 2 – Collection THIS WEEK**

*“When you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”* Luke 17:10

When the apostles said to Jesus in today’s Gospel, “Increase our faith,” they were probably surprised by His answer! Our faith is increased when we do what the Lord asks us to do. When you give to *Together We Serve* you are responding to Jesus’ command that we love one another as He loved us.

**October 30 – Collection NEXT WEEK**

*Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor.”* Luke 19:8

While most of us cannot do what Zacchaeus did and give away half our possessions, each of us can give something to the poor. When you give to *Together We Serve* you join with other Catholics in the Archdiocese of Edmonton to serve the poor at home, in Canada and beyond.

**November 6 – Collection THIS WEEK**

*May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 3.5

How does the Lord direct our hearts to the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ, as St. Paul says in today’s reading? Often through our teachers! When you give to *Together We Serve* you are supporting St. Joseph Seminary, Newman Theological College and St. Joseph’s College as they prepare young Catholics for Christian leadership.

**November 27 – Collection NEXT WEEK**

*Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.* Matthew 24:42

What does Jesus mean in today’s Gospel when He tells us to “keep awake”? When our faith is “awake, others can see it in the good works that we do. *Together We Serve* is one way we help each other to stay awake, as we wait for the glorious return of the Bridegroom at the end of time.

**December 4 – Collection THIS WEEK**

*May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that* ***together*** *you may with one voice*

*glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Romans15:5-6

*Together We Serve* is an opportunity for Catholics in the Archdiocese of Edmonton to work together to “glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It shows both Catholics and those around us that we are all one Church, acting together to advance the Mission given to us by Jesus Christ.