



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP *of* CALGARY

November 3, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As the Bishop of Calgary, I want to provide you with an update on where we have been, where we are currently and where we hope to be in the coming years with God's providence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Since early March, the Province of Alberta and our Diocese have been responding to the ongoing threat of COVID-19. We put in place liturgical guidelines to ensure the safety and health of parishioners as they returned to the public celebration of Mass in June with the restricted attendance of about 30% of the normal capacity due to the required physical distancing in our churches.

In April, we introduced fiscal guidelines to ensure the financial stability of parishes and the Diocese that are in place until the end of December 2020. This was done in anticipation of reduced parish revenues which overall since the pandemic have decreased by 20 to 40 percent.

The fiscal guidelines included the temporary lay-off of staff at the parish and the Diocese, a salary reduction for the clergy and further cost containment measures. Suffice to say that we pulled our belt in and we were able to reduce our spending.

We know that we are not alone in experiencing such a negative financial impact. All sectors of our society have been to some degree affected financially by the pandemic, including the Church. We recognize this financial pressure is a burden on families and individuals.

While the faithful continue to be as generous as is possible, a family's first financial priority is the care of the family. This is an important priority and one which I affirm for each of you. It will take some time before parish offerings return to their pre-pandemic levels.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY

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As we look forward to 2021 we must continue to live within our means by introducing further financial measures that will impact our diocesan and parish staff but will allow us to manage responsibly the day-to-day expenses in the parishes and the Diocese with reduced revenues.

Like many organizations, our largest operating cost is in the area of staff compensation and so we are faced with the need to address these costs. This means that the temporary lay-off of staff in parishes and at the Pastoral Centre will become permanent for some. These decisions will impact those employees who will not return to work, their families and all of our parishioners in one way or another.

These decisions which affect people's lives are not taken lightly. They are extremely difficult and if circumstances were different and the future financial position of the Diocese more predictable, they would not have to be made. I deeply regret that this step is being taken because the Diocese and our parishes have been blessed with such dedicated staff. We will continue to ensure that compassion, justice, respect and the necessary support will be given to our employees especially those most impacted.

These decisions, however, are necessary so that the mission of the Church will be sustained in this time of pandemic and to provide for a solid foundation for the future. While these are challenging times, I am hopeful that together we will emerge from this pandemic even stronger with the help of God.

I thank you for your continued support and I ask for your prayers especially for all those who are impacted by these decisions.

I extend to all parishioners, to you and your family, my prayers as we entrust the Diocese to our Lady and to St. Joseph.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary