



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN

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Dear pastors and faithful,

This last year has been one marked by hardships and challenges. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the tragic results of investigations into gravesites at former Indian Residential Schools, which rekindled trauma across this land for residential school survivors, their families, and communities, weigh heavy on our hearts. We have battled isolation, anxiety, weariness and deep sorrow, and our most vulnerable people have felt the deepest impact.

Led by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, we are called to raise up disciples who are joyfully living out their mission, proclaiming the Good News and making disciples of others. A significant way that we do this is through our charitable giving towards initiatives that help grow the mission of the Church, responding to the real physical and spiritual needs of our communities as apostles of mercy.

As we approach our annual Collection for the Needs of the Church in Canada, I urge you to prayerfully consider a donation, which will help the Church respond to those in need. You can contribute to this special collection at weekend Masses on September 25-26 using envelopes marked, "THE NEEDS OF THE CANADIAN CHURCH". The funds collected will help support initiatives of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in areas of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and residential school survivors, family and life issues, liturgy and sacraments, evangelization and catechesis, responsible ministry, social justice, as well as ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue. This collection is taken only once a year, and so I ask you in Christian charity to respond as generously as you are able.

As the Holy Father reminded us in his homily for World Day of the Poor on November 15, 2020, "how empty is a life centred on our needs and blind to the needs of others! The reason we have gifts is so that we can be gifts for others. And here, brothers and sisters, we should ask ourselves the question: do I only follow my own needs, or am I able to look to the needs of others, to whoever is in need? Are my hands open, or are they closed?"

Entrusting our diocese to the intercession of Our Lady, Refuge of Sinners and Hope of the Afflicted, in gratitude let us remain united in prayer and mission for the needs of the Church in Canada.

Yours in Jesus with Mary,

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC
Bishop of Saint John

September 16, 2021