



Archdiocese of Toronto

Pastoral Plan

February 2013

PASTORAL PLAN – FEBRUARY 2013

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Feast of St. Michael – September 29, 2012

To the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto:

On this feast of St. Michael, protector of the faithful and patron saint of our Archdiocese, I wish to give you an update on pastoral planning that is underway to help us as an archdiocesan community of faith to respond more effectively to Our Lord's command to His disciples: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mathew 28: 19-20).

As the whole Church enters into the Year of Faith, and as the Pope convenes a Synod of Bishops to plan ways to address the challenge of proclaiming the Gospel in our modern world, it is appropriate that we explore more deeply through a pastoral plan how we can best fulfil the mission of the Church in our own particular situation in the Archdiocese of Toronto. This letter provides you with an overview of some of the principles underlying the plan which is being developed, in advance of more specific information that will be available in the New Year.

What is a Pastoral Plan?

A pastoral plan serves as a roadmap for our journey as a Catholic Christian community, identifying key priorities and goals on the path ahead. It is rooted in prayerful reflection upon the Bible and our living tradition of faith. It also involves a thorough, accurate and honest assessment of our current pastoral situation, both the challenges and the opportunities before us.

As I regularly travel throughout the archdiocese, I am inspired by all the pastoral and apostolic activities I observe, and by the creative zeal and dedication of the laity, religious, and clergy I meet. In so many ways, we are already earnestly engaged in addressing the various matters that are central to the mission of a Christian community. It is always wise, however, to step back and consider what our key priorities as an archdiocese should be at this time, so that we can more effectively work together, and focus our efforts, and have a way of assessing how we are doing. This is what a pastoral plan allows us to do; it also helps us both to discover the tools we need to fulfil our mission, and to use our resources more wisely.

Although our faith does not change, the circumstances in which we live our faith do change, constantly. For that reason, a pastoral plan will always be a work in progress, since we regularly need to take a look at where we are, and where at the moment we should particularly direct our energies.

Faithful Stewards of our Many Gifts

The Gospel encourages us to be faithful stewards of all that has been entrusted to us, and so we should ask ourselves how we are currently sharing our time, talent and treasure, in order to serve others and to give thanks to God. In the parable of the talents, each servant is called to give an account of his stewardship; each of us is responsible for fruitfully using the gifts we have received from God. A pastoral plan should help us to do that better, both individually and as an archdiocesan community.

Apostolic and Pastoral, rooted in Prayer

It occurs to me that we can gain insight into some of the key elements of a wise pastoral plan by considering the design of the new cardinal's ring.

First, there is an image of St. Peter, to whom Jesus entrusted His flock. We should be attentive to all of the spiritual needs of those who are already gathered together in our parishes. Looking to Christ the Good Shepherd, we should be attentive as well to those who have drifted away from the faith.

Then there is an image of St. Paul, the great apostle who tirelessly proclaimed the faith throughout the often hostile world of his day. He reminds us that we need to reach out zealously and creatively to those who are scattered: not only to those who have left the faith, but also to those who have not yet really heard the Good News of Jesus. This is a particular challenge in our secularized society.

Above the images of the great pastor and the great apostle is a star, representing Our Lady, who prayerfully listened to God, and humbly did His will. Our diligent efforts, pastoral or apostolic, will only be fruitful if they are rooted in prayer, for "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain." (Psalm 127:1)

A pastoral plan, rooted in prayer, should nurture our community of faith, but also reach out beyond it.

Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?

Over the past 18 months a broad cross-section of our Catholic community has been consulted in the pastoral planning process: clergy, religious, staff, volunteers and parishioners. We have asked them what our spiritual roadmap should look like: Where should we be heading? Where have we gone off course? We have asked for practical suggestions and goals to help us move forward. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to this dialogue, one that will continue in the months ahead.

In early 2013, as the present form of the archdiocesan pastoral plan is completed, you will hear about the specific priorities and goals that are part of it. I hope this letter will help to prepare the way for further discussion around this vision and the key directions contained in the plan.

Meanwhile, especially as we enter into the Year of Faith, I invite each of us to deepen our own personal commitment to our faith in Christ, and to consider how our whole Catholic community can be more effective in witnessing to our faith in this society in which we live.

It is increasingly difficult to be a faithful Christian in our society, which is so often shaped by a vision that is contrary to that of the Gospel. While putting together a wise pastoral plan for our archdiocese is obviously a sensible thing to do, it will only be fruitful if each of us is personally attentive to our own engagement as a disciple of Jesus, and to that of our parish community.

I look forward to sharing our Pastoral Plan with you in the New Year. Be assured of my ongoing prayers for you in your life of Christian discipleship. Saint Michael the Archangel, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Thomas Card. Collins
Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto

II: THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LIFE AS A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: PRAYER

The foundation for our life in Christ as members of our Catholic Christian community is prayer. We need to be people of prayer.

*“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.”
- Psalm 127*

God calls us individually and as a community to bring Christ to this world in which we live. We share not simply a message, but our experience of the person of Jesus Christ, who leads us to the Heavenly Father, in the Holy Spirit. In the Gospels we see that Jesus in His humanity prayed to the Father, and we need to do so too. Our various plans and activities, no matter how well thought out, will be fruitful only if they are founded on prayer. St Benedict says at the beginning of his Rule: “And first of all, whatever good work you begin to do, beg of Him with most earnest prayer to perfect it.”

When each one of us is grounded in prayer, we can face the challenges that lie before us in proclaiming the kingdom of God. Prayer is our source of strength for our journey. In prayer we find direction as we seek God’s wisdom.

Each of our parish communities is to be an oasis of prayer in the midst of this troubled world. They are places of sacramental and liturgical prayer, where parishioners can also deepen their life of prayer through the prayerful reading of sacred scripture, adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, the rosary and other Marian devotions, the rich cultural prayer traditions in our archdiocese, and the distinctive forms of prayer celebrated in the various lay movements in the church.

Prayer is at the heart of all our actions as disciples of Jesus, though we must not simply pray to God and do nothing. God expects us to act wisely and decisively to advance the kingdom of God.

As our archdiocesan family discerns the path ahead in our pastoral planning, it is essential that we not only study well our local situation and its needs, but also reflect prayerfully on God’s will as revealed in the Bible and in the living faith of the church.

Praying for the work of the church is not someone else’s responsibility; it is up to each one of us to bring to our daily prayers the vision and mission of the church in our archdiocese.

Wherever we are in our archdiocese, whatever our ethnic background, age, circumstance or family situation, we can all join together in prayer. We should take account of where we have been and to look ahead to where we are going, praying that God will guide us in our mission. For the New Evangelization to become a reality in the archdiocese, each of us must grow closer to Christ. We need to know Jesus, not just know about Jesus, and that requires time each day in prayer.

Prayer not only guides our planning but is also the foundation of our ongoing life in Christ as individuals and as a community. Like the disciples, we ask: “Lord, teach us to pray,” so that our parishes and our archdiocese will be schools of prayer, where we can all discover how to enter more deeply into a prayerful relationship with God.

III: THE PASTORAL & APOSTOLIC MISSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto has a two-fold mission: pastoral and apostolic.

Our **pastoral** mission is to nurture and strengthen the faith experience of committed Catholics, as they actively encounter Christ in the Word of God and in the Sacraments, and participate in the lived faith of the Catholic Christian community. Each parish should strive to provide a full and rich experience of the Christian life, as by God's grace we build a community that will witness to Christ in our secular world. We offer pastoral care to all the faithful, attending to their many spiritual needs. We also invite those who, for whatever reason, are searching or who have drifted away from the church to come home. Our model for this is St. Peter, to whom Jesus said: "Feed my lambs... Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-19)

Our **apostolic** mission is to announce the Gospel, first to the community of the Catholic faithful and then to those beyond it. Announcing the Gospel means to care for the marginalized, address injustice in its many forms, and use the extensive resources and diverse gifts of the Catholic faithful to be a living witness to the world, following the example of Jesus Christ. We are sent by Jesus: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28: 19-20) Our model for our apostolic mission is St. Paul, who first encountered Christ through his conversion and then, with confidence and the grace of the Holy Spirit, proclaimed Christ throughout the world.

IV: CORE DIRECTIONS FOR OUR PASTORAL AND APOSTOLIC MISSION

Our pastoral plan has five core directions, each with desired outcomes and goals that reflect the two-fold mission of the archdiocese. We acknowledge that each parish may have specific aspects of our Christian mission that need to be emphasized according to the local situation, and that there are countless other worthy initiatives. Nonetheless, these five core directions provide the “compass settings” for our journey as an archdiocesan community. They are meant to be a reference point to help us work together effectively to fulfil our mission, focusing our energies to advance the Gospel in the portion of the Lord’s vineyard in which He has placed us. We begin with the inward directions (pastoral) then move to the outward (apostolic), as we discern the path forward for our archdiocese:

- 1) Parish Life
- 2) Vocations
- 3) Catholic Outreach in Justice and Love
- 4) Evangelization of Society
- 5) The Cathedral as Sign of our Mission

IV – 1. Parish Life

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” - Acts 2:42-47

Our parishes are spiritual homes for the faithful, where we meet one another to encounter Christ. Hundreds of thousands of Catholic families are registered in the parishes of the archdiocese. We strive not just for numbers but for meaningful relationships in Christ, where the local parish serves as a font that satisfies those who come to us for spiritual sustenance, nurturing a parish family whose members call one another by name. The witness of a dynamic parish can lead those who have drifted away to rediscover the gift of faith and to return home to a vibrant community. Just as the star guided the wise men to Christ, so too our parishes can serve as beacons of hope. The active, vibrant parish is at the heart of our pastoral plan because it is the place where we live out the foundational values of prayer and deep stewardship.

As individuals and as a parish community, we are all called to be faithful stewards of the many gifts that God has entrusted to us. Each of us needs to be fully engaged as a disciple of Jesus, grateful for what we have received from God, and eager to share it creatively and responsibly. This is the spirit of deep stewardship. As more parishioners actively engage in the Sunday Liturgy and in the sharing of their time, talent, and treasure in generous service, they will experience the full richness of the parish community and focus their energy outward to make Christ more visibly present in the world.

The eight desired outcomes/goals for this core direction of the Pastoral Plan follow.

(i) Celebration of the Sunday Eucharist with Full, Conscious, and Active Participation by the Faithful

The Sunday Eucharist is the summit of our parish life, and the Day of the Lord is central to the lives of all parishioners, especially families, youth and young adults. The clergy and laity will take active roles in this communal act of worship, celebrating Holy Mass with faithful care and dignity according to the Roman rite. The liturgy is an act of God, but we need to dispose ourselves to enter fruitfully into the sacred mysteries of our faith, so that the outward signs and rites of the Eucharist and sacraments will be meaningful encounters with Christ. We will promote the full, conscious and active participation of every member of the faithful in the liturgy, so that all of us can be nourished in our lives of faith and witness to Christ. Whatever our role in the celebration, we participate at Mass fully, consciously and actively through a deep internal disposition of prayerful attentiveness to the encounter with God in word and sacrament.

The parish will provide appropriate training and formation for lectors so that they will proclaim the words of scripture well. The archdiocese will engage in ongoing formation of clergy as homilists, and offer support for them in that ministry. Through well-prepared homilies rooted in prayerful meditation upon the Word of God, they will provide spiritual guidance for the people of the parish.

The music ministry and congregational singing at all celebrations of liturgy will reflect both the norms of the church and the rich and varied cultural expressions which are part of the archdiocese.

As one of the most diverse communities in the world, our archdiocese has many rich opportunities to link faith and culture together through devotional practices such as feast days, pilgrimages and other celebrations centred on the liturgy that will strengthen the vitality of the parish.

Our aim is to fully engage all parishioners in parish life in accordance with their stewardship of God's gifts. The parish will be encouraged to promote and develop a variety of ministries and initiatives which support the celebration of the Sunday liturgy through preparation and decoration of the parish church and facilities. Equally important will be those ministries which welcome and receive parishioners and offer various forms of pastoral assistance to the young, the elderly and anyone with disabilities or other limitations, so that everyone can participate fully with the community.

(ii) Opportunities for Prayer, Spiritual Formation and Enrichment

In addition to the Sunday Eucharist, parishes will strive to provide opportunities for prayer, spiritual formation and enrichment.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is central to the spiritual life of the faithful. Priests will make the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly and easily available to the faithful throughout the year, with special opportunities offered in Advent and Lent. Ongoing formation will be offered to confessors to assist them in this sacred ministry.

The devotional life of faith in our parishes will be supported and strengthened through frequent opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and Marian devotion. Chapels for perpetual adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament are to be encouraged throughout the archdiocese, and churches should remain open as much as is possible so that people may visit them regularly for prayer. Marian devotion is to be fostered in every parish and in the archdiocese, and all are encouraged to pray the Angelus and the Rosary daily.

In addition to Marian devotion, the parish will foster these important spiritual practices: praying the Liturgy of the Hours, parish charismatic prayer groups for those who desire this form of prayer, processions and devotions that are culturally significant, the practice of *Lectio Divina* and Bible study. Those who desire spiritual guidance concerning different forms of prayer found within our faith tradition will be supported by the Catholic Pastoral Centre and representatives of various Catholic spiritual traditions as appropriate.

The parish family will offer opportunities for parishioners to journey together on pilgrimage and to pray in community through parish missions and retreat days, thus providing spiritual sustenance and enrichment.

(iii) A Communal Life in the Parish Which Offers Welcome, Hospitality & Outreach

Each parish will possess a strong and inclusive identity as a community of faith, offering to everyone an experience of welcome, hospitality and accessibility. In every parish there is a “stranger in our midst” and thus the entire parish community is called to serve as the face and hands of Christ, welcoming each new member to a warm and loving family of faith.

Across the archdiocese, we are blessed with many diverse ethnic and linguistic communities; these many languages and cultures together reflect one rich expression of Catholic faith. This unique experience of diverse communal life needs to be promoted and integrated into the life of the archdiocesan church.

A vibrant parish will make sure to reach out to the various groups within the parish, e.g., family and youth, students, young adults, men and women, and the elderly. The Catholic schools connected to the parish should be active partners in parish life, affirming the ongoing relationship between parish, home and school.

The active stewardship of every parishioner will ensure the parish's vitality, namely, an increase in committed parishioners and volunteers. Ideally, the age, race, sex and ethnicity of the volunteers will reflect the demographics of the parish itself.

(iv) Strong Pastoral Leadership in the Parish which Promotes Diverse & Collaborative Roles of Pastoral Service

The pastor serves as the spiritual shepherd of his people by guiding the flock in its journey, most notably in preparing and celebrating the Eucharist for his parishioners. To strengthen the parish family, he requires the support of qualified laity serving in diverse pastoral roles, i.e. lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, ushers, etc. The pastor models a collaborative style of leadership that provides a prudent, clear and pastoral vision for the parish. It is important that the pastor have an ability to listen, and to be approachable and open to explore new initiatives put forward by the parishioners, lay associations and movements, if they are in accord with the parish vision.

The pastor and parish team will strive to empower parishioners to carry out diverse and collaborative pastoral roles as deacons, lay ministers, youth workers, catechists, parish staff, and volunteers. Through regular consultation and discernment, the pastor identifies the gifts and talents of others and entrusts to them various initiatives within the parish.

(v) Effective Pastoral Governance – Structures & Committees in the Parish Which Promote Stewardship and Ensure Accountability

One aspect of promoting stewardship is to invite and empower the laity to participate actively in the life of the parish through parish structures and committees. Each parish must have an active finance committee in accordance with Canon Law. Parishes are encouraged to have structures, guidelines and processes for ongoing

consultation and planning, such as a parish council in which parishioners can advise the pastor. The lay movements and associations within the parish will also be important partners in realizing the mission and identity of the faith community while co-ordinating their mission with that of the parish.

Ideally, a parish will have a pastoral plan which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the pastor, staff and consultative bodies. The facilities of the parish church, hall and rectory will be maintained and assessed yearly for capital expenditures. This planning will also ensure that the parish is not constrained by space limitations due to growth or new emerging pastoral needs, nor burdened by facilities which are under-utilized and consume greater and greater financial resources.

The pastor will ensure that parish staff and parishioners are aware of the archdiocesan guidelines governing the spiritual and temporal realities of the parish, so that the parish can implement them in a timely and effective manner. Regular access to ongoing programs of training and support from the Catholic Pastoral Centre of the archdiocese will help the parish team to effectively meet the needs of the parish.

(vi) Supporting the Family, the Domestic Church

The parish will provide support for the family, and will encourage any programs that are designed to assist those who are living the sacrament of marriage, such as Worldwide Marriage Encounter or ecclesial lay movements. Each parish will seek every possible way to help families grow stronger and to participate fully in parish life.

(vii) Commitment to a Renewed Evangelization – Catechesis & Formation in the Faith

The parish will promote active programs of evangelization that help parishioners and those desiring to become Catholic to respond to the call of Christ and to witness to the Gospel. The pastor and pastoral staff will be committed to collaborating with the Catholic schools, offering religious education, catechesis and faith formation within the schools and the parish.

Parishes will develop or continue initiatives and programs such as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), faith formation and spiritual care for families, programs of outreach to youth and young adults, and sacramental preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), Reconciliation, and Marriage.

Adult faith formation is important now, and will become even more so in the years to come. The archdiocese and the parishes need to have in place effective programs for teaching the faith to adults as well as to youth. Well-catechized adults will provide faith formation within their families.

(viii) A Strong Witness to an Apostolic Mission - Outreach Ministries and Service

The parish will have a strong commitment to its missionary identity, witness and outreach. It will strive to direct some of its annual financial resources and services to the marginalized, both within and outside the parish. Guest speakers and educational opportunities will help parishioners become aware of these needs. The parish will also be involved in advocacy initiatives on issues of social justice and actively participate in outreach programs (such as Right to Life, Refugee Sponsorship, Out of the Cold Programs, soup kitchens, food banks, etc.).

The parish will work actively with its lay associations befriending those who are poor and serving their needs. The pastor and parish staff will help parishioners to access archdiocesan Catholic Charities and actively encourage parishioners to support the ShareLife campaign which helps to fund such agencies.

An effective parish will be engaged in the life of its local community. In cooperation with others, ecumenically and civilly, the parish contributes to addressing the various social needs of its community. The parish will reflect this commitment to ecumenism in all of its outreach to the broader community.

IV – 2. Vocations

*“As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.”
- Mark 1:16-20*

God calls each one of us to “cast our own nets” and discover where He is leading us. As we reflect on our own vocation, we pray for spiritual shepherds to lead the flock of Christ. In addition to discerning our own path, we have a responsibility to assist the church in identifying candidates who might discern a call to serve the church. In short, each one of us is needed to help foster a culture of vocations in our families, our parishes, and our archdiocese.

Practically, we need priests to lead the 225 parishes of the archdiocese, deacons and lay pastoral associates who will support them in their ministry, and flourishing communities of consecrated religious. Those called to serve need extensive formation, proper training and ongoing support.

Together we will work toward six desired outcomes/goals for this core direction of the Pastoral Plan.

(i) Pray for Vocations

Jesus said, “Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the harvest.” (Matthew 9:38) That is His only instruction on promoting vocations. In our archdiocese, we will pray often for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life, and lay service in the church. This intention can be regularly offered at the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass.

Throughout the archdiocese, opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration are to be made widely available, for the intention of vocations, as well as for all the intentions of our community. Where Eucharistic Adoration is encouraged, vocations and the whole church flourish, for we must base our pastoral and apostolic efforts on prayer.

In addition to regular times of Eucharistic Adoration in all the parishes of the archdiocese, several perpetual adoration chapels should be conveniently located so that all who wish may participate in this form of prayer at any time.

We can pray frequently for the intention of vocations by praying the Liturgy of the Hours and making pilgrimages to Martyrs' Shrine, Marylake Shrine and other holy places. All of the faithful, and especially those who are homebound or suffering in any way, should be encouraged to pray the rosary regularly for this intention. Prayers that begin parish meetings should include a prayer for vocations. Other opportunities to pray for vocations can be identified and promoted.

(ii) Foster Vocations to Ordained Ministry and Religious Life

We need to focus our attention and efforts on fostering vocations to ordained ministry and religious life, particularly the diocesan priesthood. We have a rich array of partners to collaborate with - archdiocesan resources such as the Office of Vocations, the Office of Catholic Youth, our university chaplaincies, Catholic schools, religious communities and lay associations. We will seek to coordinate these resources in engaging our youth and young adults in programs and initiatives for vocation discernment.

Our parishes play a critical role in encouraging and fostering vocations in their midst, especially when they take particular care to engage youth and young adults. Youth should be involved in parish life, in service projects within the broader community, and in discernment retreats and ongoing programs of spiritual accompaniment; these are effective ways to help them to live their Catholic faith and at the same time to be open to considering a vocation to the priesthood and religious life. The archdiocesan Vocations Director, along with our parishes, will also work closely with lay movements, such as the Serra Club, to undertake creative and ongoing vocations initiatives.

(iii) Promote Lay Pastoral Ministry Roles within Parishes and Archdiocesan Offices

The Second Vatican Council made it clear that the laity, through their baptism, are called to evangelize the world, primarily through their witness in family life, in the workplace, and in society. They can also fulfil their baptismal call, however, through active engagement in roles of service and ministry within the church, especially in parishes. Archdiocesan offices will continue to identify and promote the various roles of ministry in which the laity are being called to serve.

Through the Institute of Theology at St. Augustine's Seminary and Catholic universities, we will explore new models of formation for training lay pastoral leaders to serve in parishes, e.g. lay ministers, youth ministers and leaders, lay parish administrators, catechists, directors of religious education, parish nurses, and volunteer coordinators.

Parishes and archdiocesan offices will establish the criteria to select, hire and train the laity for these roles of pastoral leadership. There is a critical need to have youth ministers, catechists, and lay pastoral ministers working with families, yet the parishes and archdiocese must have sufficient financial resources to make this happen. Archdiocesan offices will also promote parishes working together in regions and zones to establish these pastoral roles of ministry and leadership.

(iv) Integrate Programs of Discernment and Formation for Ordained Ministry at St. Augustine's Seminary

At the appropriate stage in life, when they are ready to move forward, the archdiocese will provide an opportunity for men to receive priestly formation. A comprehensive program of formation that is also academically accredited at every level is essential.

A continuous model of discernment and formation will benefit seminarians studying at the level of philosophy and theology. We will also ensure that the formation programs for ordained ministry (i.e., priesthood and the permanent diaconate) are based on a holistic model of intellectual, spiritual, human, and pastoral formation. The new Spiritual Year at St. Augustine's Seminary is designed to support this model. In addition, the seminary also provides a period of pastoral internship within a parish so that seminarians can acquire the practical experience and skills necessary for ordained ministry. A key priority for the archdiocese is to select and train faculty for philosophy and theology, in addition to providing qualified personnel for spiritual, human and pastoral formation.

To be good stewards, we must effectively integrate and coordinate the archdiocesan financially sponsored seminary formation programs in governance and administration, thus providing stronger accountability.

To ensure effective stewardship of the resources at St. Augustine's Seminary and to make the continuous model of discernment and formation a reality, sufficient financial resources, physically restored and updated facilities and qualified faculty are

essential. This is equally important for the other programs of formation for ordained ministry and for laity at the Institute of Theology, since the seminary facilities also support their needs.

(v) Strengthen Programs of Formation and Training for the Laity

The strengthening of formation and training for lay pastoral ministers and leaders will improve our ability to minister to the people of God, as well as assist the laity in their primary mission of witnessing to Christ in the world. An assessment of current and potentially new programs is necessary. The institutions of Catholic higher education, the Institute of Theology at St. Augustine's Seminary and the archdiocesan Catholic Pastoral Centre will be invited to collaborate in offering centralized and decentralized teaching and formation programs for the laity throughout the archdiocese.

One particular focus will be the teachers in our Catholic schools, providing opportunities for them to develop their faith lives in their role as religious educators. Another focus for new programs will be the lay pastoral staff and volunteers who are catechists, youth ministers, lay pastoral ministers, liturgical ministers, individuals in social outreach ministry, and those serving on finance committees and parish councils.

(vi) Ensure Ongoing Formation for Pastoral Leaders through Programs for Clergy and Laity

The spiritual, physical and emotional health of those who lead our parishes is critical to ensuring a high level of pastoral care for our parishes.

Formation opportunities will be made available for newly ordained priests, new pastors, international clergy and others. The archdiocese will offer opportunities for continued education, sabbaticals, and personal renewal to clergy and laity through programs of human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation.

IV - 3. Catholic Outreach in Justice and Love

*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
- Isaiah 61:1*

God invites each one of us to love all those whom we meet. In a special way, we are asked to be the presence of Christ to the poor and marginalized, both personally and together as church. As an archdiocese, we carry out our apostolic mission through many forms of witness and service. We bring this practical love to life in parishes, lay associations of the faithful, Catholic institutions, pastoral services we offer through the archdiocese, chaplaincies, ecumenical initiatives, and social agencies we collaborate with by providing financial support. The archdiocese will continue its long tradition of supporting pastoral initiatives of justice and love.

The generosity of our parishioners requires both gratitude and continuous efforts to ensure that the good works of our parishioners bear fruit. In effect, the archdiocese will serve as a pathway through which acts of justice and love are realized, and the witness of the Catholic faith strengthened.

As an archdiocese we have identified four desired outcomes/goals for this core direction of the Pastoral Plan.

(i) Ensure Effective Outreach Initiatives of Justice and Love through Catholic Charities

We are proud of the good works accomplished through Catholic Charities' agencies and other initiatives funded by ShareLife. Yet we need to do more. We will continue to urge our parishioners to donate generously to ShareLife because the initiatives of justice and love funded through the campaign meet the spiritual and material needs of all the people of God - people in our broader communities, not exclusively in our parishes. We will strengthen the relationship of ShareLife to the parishes and Catholic schools as an important means of reaching out to youth and offering education concerning local initiatives of mercy and compassion within the archdiocese. We will increase our efforts to involve them in this important work.

(ii) Provide Effective Pastoral Services, Chaplaincies and Pastoral Care Ministry

Through our archdiocesan pastoral offices, our institutions, and our parishes, we will continue to ensure that pastoral services are available to all the faithful at various points in their life. We will continue to support parish programs for marriage preparation. Our Office for Refugees will support parishes and religious orders in their work to bring refugees to Canada while our Archives Office will maintain records and catalogue important historical documents from our local church. The Marriage Tribunal will continue to strive to offer justice and compassion for couples who are looking to the church for healing after broken relationships. We will encourage initiatives, programs, and movements that help those who are struggling in their marriage, and support families that are in difficulty.

Through our Catholic Cemeteries we will help families receive the necessary compassionate support when a loved one has been called home to God. Ongoing collaboration with parishes is essential for education and awareness of this fundamental service of our Catholic community if we are to witness to the importance and value of a Christian burial in our present culture.

We will continue to strengthen the effective coordination of the chaplaincy services that we support in hospitals, prisons, university campuses, and other important ministries including St. Stephen's Chapel on Bay Street, and our ministry to the deaf.

(iii) Promote Effective Social Justice Advocacy

Archdiocesan pastoral offices will collaborate with parishes, religious communities, lay associations and groups that advocate on issues of social justice, including the right to life, international issues, welcoming refugees, caring for the homeless and poor, unemployment, education, and healthcare.

The archdiocesan website will strengthen its role as a "portal of faith" designed to offer education and advocacy on issues concerning Catholic social teaching. At the parish and archdiocesan levels, we will offer seminars and symposia concerning topics of social justice to raise awareness and to offer a means of solidarity in response to social and international challenges.

(iv) Strengthen the Outreach Initiatives of Parishes Through Greater Collaboration with the Archdiocese.

The Catholic Pastoral Centre will actively work with parishes to help them promote the establishment of lay associations that are dedicated to outreach initiatives of love and justice, e.g. the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary, Right to Life, L'Arche, and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace – to name just a few. The Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus, two fundamental apostolic associations in the church, should be present in every parish.

Parishes will be encouraged to identify a mission parish or community in the developing world that they will financially support. Parishes will also coordinate their local outreach initiatives with their neighbouring Catholic schools, other nearby parishes and the archdiocese. Each parish's pastoral outreach will include the support of three or four of the archdiocesan initiatives, e.g. ShareLife, Pastoral Mission Appeal, Refugee Sponsorship, local food bank or soup kitchen, and Out of the Cold programs.

**And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and
proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’ – Mark 16:15**

Our world today needs the gospel proclaimed more than ever. The global church has placed a particular emphasis on the “New Evangelization” as an opportunity for each one of us to appreciate the relationship we have with Christ and to share that experience and joy with others. For the Archdiocese of Toronto, the New Evangelization invites us to announce the Gospel through many forms of witness. Our faith in Jesus Christ is “Good News” and our culture challenges us to share this gift with new vigour and conviction.

We must first re-propose the Gospel to ourselves as church within our parishes, and then with renewed conviction in society. We respond to this challenge through our pastoral offices and in collaboration with the Catholic academic institutions present in the archdiocese. The church has a rich history of intellectual dialogue with society in the areas of philosophy, ethics, history, the arts and humanities, scripture studies, theology and spirituality. In our present culture of ideas, the Catholic witness of the Gospel can be strengthened through our academic institutions and schools so as to affect the broader culture and every sector of society. In the present renewed intellectual attack upon the faith, the church can more effectively respond from within the rich Catholic intellectual tradition.

We all swim in the sea of popular culture, and it influences every aspect of our lives. Where popular culture is benign, we celebrate it, but it is often destructive. We attend to its dangerous influences partly by responding directly to the negative elements, but mainly by offering a life-giving alternative. Unless we confront this challenge, many of our other pastoral and apostolic efforts will be fruitless.

We have identified five desired outcomes/goals for this core direction of the Pastoral Plan.

(i) Collaborate with Catholic Academic Institutions To Strengthen the Church’s Intellectual Witness in Our Culture

We have a strong patrimony of post-secondary Catholic institutions of higher learning in the archdiocese – universities, seminaries, and institutes. The church’s critical role in the establishment of the modern university can be the foundation of our

relationship with these Catholic academic institutions, particularly the University of St. Michael's College, Regis College and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. It is through academic institutions such as these that the Catholic faith has the opportunity to dialogue with new ideas and perspectives in a wide range of areas, such as sociology and morality, medicine and bioethics, public policy and social justice, science and the environment.

We will continue both our close collaboration with these established Catholic academic institutions and our sponsorship of organizations like the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute. We will seek to advance the mission of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, which is well situated to influence the intellectual life of the University of St. Michael's College and the University of Toronto, and the wider culture.

To promote greater co-operation within the Catholic academic community we will establish opportunities to work together in joint initiatives which engage all sectors of society in the dialogue of reason with faith, in the context of the New Evangelization. These collaborative relationships and partnerships may involve funding for research, the establishment of academic chairs, conducting studies, or offering seminars and presentations. The focus will be areas of particular relevance to those within the archdiocese so that the Church's teaching can inform our understanding of the issues we face.

(ii) Build an Ongoing Partnership Among the Archdiocese, the Parishes, Our Publicly Funded Catholic Schools and Students Attending Secular Schools

The Catholic Pastoral Centre and parishes of the archdiocese will engage fully in the work of Catholic education, building a strong connection between Catholic parishes and schools. The unique gift of publicly funded Catholic education must be both appreciated and nurtured to preserve its faithfulness and integrity.

We will work closely with those who prepare our teachers for classroom instruction, assisting with catechetical resources, counsel and instruction where applicable.

In addition to supporting publicly funded Catholic education, we will work together to enhance the programs for catechetical formation for Catholic young people who attend the secular school system and private schools.

We will seek to support the pastoral and spiritual care of Catholic teachers, to help them to fulfil their important vocation.

(iii) Collaborate with Catholic Academic Institutions to Promote Education, Catechesis and the Formation in Faith and Holiness for All Areas of Society

The intellectual apostolate at our post-secondary Catholic Academic Institutions must be extended in new ways to reach all the faithful and those interested in knowing more about the Catholic faith. In collaboration with our academic partners, we will draw upon their curricula of study and their teaching faculties to promote new opportunities for catechesis, spirituality and prayer for both laity and clergy. We will also explore joint opportunities to strengthen continuing education programs for those in parish ministry, and to develop parish-based programs which present various aspects of the Catholic faith. This will include new methods in offering these educational opportunities, with the possibility of delivering programs on a regional basis and making greater use of social communications and the media.

One crucial area is the Catechesis of Human Love, or Theology of the Body, developed by Blessed Pope John Paul II which, when widely offered, can greatly strengthen Christian family life, and the life of discipleship.

With our academic partners we will also explore opportunities to offer faith formation, spirituality and ongoing education for Catholics who are present in the various sectors of society, including professionals, and civic and lay church leaders. Through the ongoing support of individuals who seek to deepen their own formation and spiritual growth, we can strengthen the witness of the Catholic faith.

(iv) Collaborate with Catholic Media and Communication Agencies to Engage the Culture Through Media and Social Communication Initiatives

We will strengthen our communications efforts and promote greater collaboration with the Catholic Media and communications agencies within the archdiocese, so that the faith will be communicated more effectively. Collaborating in new ways with the many diverse and excellent Catholic media outlets within the archdiocese involves sharing communication platforms, information and resources in order to communicate more effectively with the faithful in our parishes and with secular society.

(v) Collaborate in Developing Formation and Training for Those Engaged in the Intellectual Apostolate, Social Communication and Media

The formation of committed Catholics who are qualified, willing and able to engage in the intellectual apostolate, and in the work of social communications and the media, will create an invaluable resource for the archdiocese. Such Catholics can become powerful and effective witnesses in the New Evangelization.

We will proactively develop strategies for participating more fully in the ongoing cultural debates about social, religious and moral issues relevant to the church's mission. We will provide formation and training for Catholics who participate in such debates, drawing on qualified personnel with experience in the use of media and social communication so that our Catholic faith is creatively and effectively presented. We will find ways to reach out to engage young adults, as their involvement is key in achieving this goal. These efforts will also promote greater interaction with Catholic students and professors in journalism, media studies, and communications. The church and the Gospel need a voice in the secular media, as well as in the Catholic media.

As there are Catholic associations such as the St. Thomas More Guild for Catholic lawyers, the St. Joseph Moscati Toronto Catholic Doctors' Guild, and the Catholic Teachers' Guild, it will be important to establish Catholic associations to provide spiritual support and networking for Catholics in the media and the arts.

IV – 5. The Cathedral as Sign of Our Mission

“Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” – Ephesians 2:20-22

The four previous core directions - parish life, vocations, Catholic outreach and evangelization - come to a focal point and find visible expression in our fifth and final core direction: St. Michael’s Cathedral as Sign of Our Mission.

The Cathedral, the seat of the archbishop and mother church of the Archdiocese of Toronto, connects every Catholic in the archdiocese, and gathers every pastoral and apostolic work under the heavenly patronage of the great defender of the faithful in the struggles of life, the archangel Michael. We need his intercession more than ever.

The Cathedral and its surroundings, the “Cathedral Block”, are a visible symbol of pastoral communion within the archdiocese and apostolic evangelization in our secular society. The Cathedral should more fully become a beautiful icon, a gathering place where those living in and visiting the archdiocese are welcomed to enter and to be touched by the sacred, echoing the meaning of the name St. Michael: “Who is like God”. Through an ongoing commitment to good stewardship, the physical restoration of the Cathedral will become the foundation for its spiritual revitalization. Building on its presence at the heart of the diocese, we can transform it into a place of pilgrimage, a centre for the liturgical life of the archdiocese and a place for the witness of the Catholic faith – a vibrant presence in a vibrant city.

We have identified four desired outcomes/goals for this core direction of the Pastoral Plan.

(i) Restore and Enhance the Architectural Beauty of St. Michael’s Cathedral

The Cathedral is the mother church of the Archdiocese of Toronto, the place of the “cathedra”, the chair that is the symbol of the Archbishop’s ministry of teaching, celebrating the Liturgy and preaching the Word. Thus, the Cathedral is the prototypical model of parish life, where the faithful are nourished and vocations are fostered. The Cathedral should be instrumental in the pastoral care of the whole archdiocese and in our apostolic witness to secular society. The central location of the Cathedral is highly desirable, and its official heritage designation requires us to be good stewards by

maintaining the building within its historical structure, while also planning for its future needs.

The work already underway to maintain and repair the Cathedral will continue. The updated assessment shows that the Cathedral is in need of substantial restoration, in addition to necessary maintenance, repairs, and upgrades to meet safety standards. These needed renovations will accommodate expanded use of the Cathedral not foreseen when it was originally constructed, such as being fitted with modern technological resources that will allow it to become a centre for evangelization through various forms of media. The newly enhanced architectural integrity and beauty of the Cathedral will serve the celebration of liturgy and provide the aesthetic experience of a sacred space which inspires one to worship God, to contemplate and to enter into prayer.

We will promote a rich experience of the Cathedral's beauty, liturgy, music and art and extend this to the entire block, so that the Cathedral will become a desired gathering place—one of pilgrimage for Catholics in the archdiocese, for all people living in the Greater Toronto Area, and for visitors.

(ii) Develop the Cathedral & “Cathedral Block” into a Place of Gathering, Worship and Outreach

The Cathedral and its surroundings, known as the “Cathedral Block”, serve the whole Archdiocese of Toronto. Its very active parish life and presence in the downtown area invite us to expand our vision of evangelization. We need to invest financially to ensure that the space, buildings and future use of the facilities meet various archdiocesan needs, which include welcoming other parishes, providing for the cathedral parishioners and neighbours, facilitating initiatives of social outreach and evangelization, and serving the marginalized. The “Cathedral Block” has also served the poor of the inner city and we will continue this important work.

As a site of pilgrimage, St. Michael's Cathedral will welcome and connect with all the parishes, the ethnic communities and other historic Catholic churches in the archdiocese. The buildings and space on the “Cathedral Block” should be designed to host formal gatherings of the archdiocese and offer surroundings which encourage people to explore the grounds, to reflect, and to encounter others in faith. The sacred architecture, exhibitions of Catholic art, media and films, and concerts of sacred music will invite people to experience beauty in such a way as to lead them to God. The design will also incorporate the elements of nature through park-like settings, gardens and fountains.

(iii) Collaborate with the Catholic School Board & St. Michael's Choir School

For over 75 years St. Michael's Choir School has served as an important element in the mission of the Cathedral. One of only six choir schools in the world affiliated with the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, St. Michael's was founded to enhance liturgical music in all parishes of the Archdiocese of Toronto. Many graduates lead sacred music in the parishes each week. The Choir School offers a unique example of the collaboration of the Toronto Catholic District School Board and the archdiocese.

Yet the school is in critical need of new facilities. Within the area of the "Cathedral Block" we must find a creative way to provide for the future of the school. Working with the school and the board, we will also identify opportunities for greater collaboration with other schools in the GTA, so that the quality of our sacred music, so important in the celebration of liturgy, can be enhanced in many more parishes, fulfilling the noble intention of Monsignor Ronan, founder of the school.

(iv) Revitalize the Cathedral & Cathedral Block as a "Centre of Evangelization"

The revitalization of the Cathedral along with the development of the "Cathedral Block" can serve to strengthen the two-fold mission of the archdiocese and serve as a sign of our faith anchored in the heart of a diverse metropolitan city. With space to gather, pray, evangelize, teach, serve and inspire, the Cathedral and "Cathedral Block" will become a place of and an instrument for evangelization in the midst of the secular influences of downtown Toronto.

We envision the creation of a "Centre of Evangelization" which will include an auditorium for music and catechesis, a media centre, a gathering place for cathedral celebrations, a welcome centre for the cathedral, offices for the cathedral and for apostolic and pastoral ministry, particularly the pastoral care of nearby Ryerson University, and a bookstore. It can be a place to highlight not only the search for truth and the exercise of practical charity, but also art and music, so as to reach out through beauty to the experience of God.

The activities of the Centre can be experienced directly by those who visit it, and also through communications technology by people at a distance. The Centre will serve as a place to learn more about the faith and to offer opportunities for Catholic speakers to engage in the intellectual apostolate. We will pursue opportunities for greater engagement with the local universities of Ryerson, University of St. Michael's College, Regis College and the University of Toronto.

The “Cathedral Block” will serve as a focal point for engaging the world with a Catholic witness through multiple platforms of media and social communication. Through such a visible presence, the space will become a gateway of faith and evangelization in the heart of Toronto’s media, music, film and art communities.

V: PRIORITIES ESSENTIAL TO OUR CORE DIRECTIONS

In each of the five core directions we pursue, we will emphasize four key priorities that will guide us in our common mission as a family of faith:

1. Engage Families, Especially Our Young People
2. Celebrate Our Cultural Diversity
3. Use Resources Wisely
4. Communicate Effectively

V – 1. Engage Families, Especially Our Young People

The Christian family is the vessel through which we have the opportunity to evangelize the world. We recognize the great challenges faced by families in an increasingly secular society, where it is often a struggle to make faith a central focus and priority of family life.

The Core Directions require that Catholic families throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto truly engage with our mission. At the same time, we need to embrace opportunities to support families, offering tangible programs to strengthen the family unit. We will emphasize activities that support Marriage Preparation, Marriage Enrichment and outreach to single, widowed, separated and divorced Catholics. Mothers and fathers are the primary educators and authentic Christian witnesses that children look to for guidance and direction as they navigate the difficult path ahead. Their leadership is essential to help catechize our young people. The active engagement of parents is also vital for the well-being of our publicly funded Catholic education system. It is parents who have the primary responsibility for education.

We will also look for opportunities to support the elderly and infirm. In reaching out to our seniors through various initiatives, we will also draw on their experience and invite them to take leadership roles and share their gifts and wisdom with us. The faithful who are called to the single life make an immense contribution to the life of the Catholic community and the wider society in which we live. We will ensure that their spiritual needs are not overlooked, and invite them to fully engage in the life of the parish and in the mission of evangelization.

As a central priority we will invite youth of all ages - from our children to young adults - to participate fully in our faith. Our archdiocese needs the contributions of our youth if we are to flourish as a Christian community capable of fulfilling its mission. We must offer to youth spiritual nourishment and full engagement as valued and active parishioners. To build effective parishes, strengthen our leadership for the long-term, revitalize the “Cathedral Block”, enhance service to the people of God, and witness in the culture of ideas, we need the full and active participation of our youth.

First and foremost, our parishes will make it a priority to reach out to our young people and to their families. Our churches will involve youth in roles of ministry and service, ensuring they stay connected to their faith as they mature and approach adulthood. We strongly encourage all of our parishes to form Youth Councils and to seriously consider hiring a youth minister – on their own or in partnership with neighbouring parishes. Parishes can work with the Office for Catholic Youth to continually enhance their outreach to young people.

Our parishes can also reach our young people through our Catholic schools. The parish staff, pastor, clergy and lay ministers will be active and present in the parish schools, assisting the teachers in the religious education of the students, especially those preparing for the sacraments. Celebrating Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation more frequently at the schools can help evangelize our youth. We must also reach the students in the secular schools, recognizing that they have an even greater need for catechesis and ongoing faith formation.

Our youth will play a key role in revitalizing the “Cathedral Block”. Not only must we draw on the talents of young people to design services and activities for the new evangelization and outreach, we also expect young people will be an important focus for programs and services in the “Cathedral Block”.

At institutes for higher learning, we will seek to provide students with the spiritual support they need in their studies and spiritual life. We will strengthen this support at all the university campuses in the archdiocese through chaplaincies and our Office of Catholic Youth.

Young adults who have completed their formal education need support as they embark upon new careers and start their own families. Parishes must take a leading role in their support. On an archdiocesan level, we will strengthen our efforts to engage and support our young adults through the Office of Catholic Youth.

V – 2. Celebrate our Cultural Diversity

The Archdiocese of Toronto is one of the most culturally diverse dioceses in the world, with Mass celebrated in more than 30 languages each week. This richness of diversity is one of our greatest gifts to be nurtured lovingly and responsibly.

For those who have come to call the Archdiocese of Toronto home, parishes with a treasured cultural history serve not only as a spiritual home but a gathering of family members who share a common culture, language and tradition. It is not uncommon for parishioners to spend many hours at the parish each week, engaging in spiritual, social, educational and outreach opportunities that foster a sense of belonging and a deep connection to traditions that span generations.

In considering the core directions of the pastoral plan, we must draw on the richness of this diversity while, at the same time, challenging one another to consider how we can stay connected with the body of Christ beyond our parish boundaries. We will work to maintain a deep connection to the local church, while encouraging our culturally diverse parishes to share their successful models of collaboration, worship and outreach with neighbours and friends across the Archdiocese of Toronto.

V – 3. Use Resources Wisely

We are conscious of the importance of subsidiarity, that is, the responsibility for action should be set as close to the local situation of the individual as possible. The individual, the family, and the parish have the greatest share of responsibilities for achieving the archdiocesan pastoral plan. The principle of subsidiarity also recognizes that some responsibilities are better carried out regionally or centrally – to achieve economies of scale or to draw on specialized expertise.

We seek to effectively balance the benefits of decentralization and centralization. Archdiocesan services must be cost-effective, provided as effectively as in the secular world, or more effectively. In achieving the desired outcomes of our pastoral plan, we must continuously ask if services are being provided at the right level in the archdiocese.

Some of our fundamental directions will be best achieved through parish-level efforts. Others, like revitalizing the Cathedral and the “Cathedral Block”, will draw on specialized expertise provided centrally. But most of our core directions will require a

collaboration of efforts and resources between the parish and the central, archdiocesan level.

V – 4. Communicate Effectively

We need to strengthen our ability to communicate within our family of faith and with all members of society, recognizing that communication is a two-way process.

At the parish level, we will ensure ongoing excellence in the way our offices listen to and respond to calls. Our parish bulletins, web sites and social media are at the front line of communicating with parishioners and others. While these are parish responsibilities, the archdiocese will strengthen its support to the parishes in their communications efforts.

At the archdiocesan level, we will aim to be among the best in North America in providing excellent communication through our website – giving access to practical information like the location and Mass times of our parishes and serving as an easy-to-use portal to the richness of Catholic writings on the full range of issues.

Our staff will become adept at using social media to hear from active Catholics and those outside the church, and to respond to their queries and concerns. Social media will serve as an important tool for transmitting our message to the community.

As the city of Toronto is a media centre for both Canadian and international secular media, we will serve as a hub for their inquiries on issues relating to the Catholic Church, providing competent Catholic voices to respond to a wide range of stories. We will also work to actively share the good works of the church with our partners in the media. We expect the revitalized “Cathedral Block” to have a media component, which will require that we develop our communication resources and strengthen our communications capabilities in an ongoing way.

VI: THE FULFILMENT OF OUR MISSION AS A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: A LIFE OF DEEP STEWARDSHIP

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." - 1 Peter 4:10

Attentive to our pastoral and apostolic mission and to the core directions which are priorities for our archdiocese, we commit to being good stewards of the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to us during our journey through this world.

Each of us spends a brief time in this life, preparing for our eternal reward with God. We receive everything from God--even life itself--and are asked to make good use of what He has entrusted to us. We are invited by God to be good stewards of His many gifts. When Our Lord returns and we are called to account, each of us wants to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21) We want to be ready for this accounting which can happen at any time. Only generous use of the time, talent and treasure entrusted to us will allow us to serenely and joyfully await the coming of the Lord.

Stewardship should not be understood in a shallow and narrow way, as a code word for tithing or fundraising for religious purposes. True stewardship calls for a fundamental disposition of the heart that makes it possible for us to fulfil the mission given to us as a community of disciples. Financial resources are certainly needed in the mission of the church, and always have been. Such generosity is a practical sign of commitment to advancing the mission that God has entrusted to us. But giving of one's financial resources, while important, is one narrow dimension of stewardship. We must focus on the deeper sense of stewardship – a profound inner conversion that leads us to live in a spirit of generosity which is most fully revealed in the sharing of time and talent.

Deep stewardship begins with gratitude and ends with responsibility. It involves individual and communal conversion, and calls us to live as disciples of Jesus in a spirit of generosity and total engagement in service to others, as we are commissioned to do through our Baptism and Confirmation. Life is too short to waste it as half-hearted disciples.

In our pastoral plan, we will continue to build on the generosity with which our clergy, religious, and parishioners devote their time, talent, and treasure for the service of God and neighbour. Deep stewardship is not something new that we need to

introduce, since it is already part of our life in many ways, even when the term is not explicitly used. However, we can be more intentional and systematic in seeking to foster stewardship in our lives and in each of our parishes. A parish and archdiocese in which all actively participate is an exciting and rewarding community that challenges us as disciples to do great things in the name of Jesus, in the spirit of the Apostles. Such a community will invite our brothers and sisters who have drifted away from the church to return and discover afresh the vitality of their Catholic faith, and it will also attract those who are seeking the meaning of life in an often confusing and sterile world.

Stewardship is not another program, nor just something we do. Rather, stewardship is a fundamental disposition of the heart expressed in everything we do, so that we live every moment in a spirit of gratitude for God's many gifts, and with a commitment to use those gifts in serving God and neighbour during our brief time on earth.

VII: CONCLUSION

**“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.”
– 1 Corinthians 15:58**

The work of the Lord is before us. Our prayer is that the Pastoral Plan of the Archdiocese of Toronto be a guide for our whole community of faith, so that together we may more fruitfully fulfil the mission we have received from Our Lord, both individually and as a community. We have ambitious goals and recognize that many challenges lie ahead. Yet we are also reminded of the abundance of gifts and talents that are present within every member of our family of faith. Above all we remember that when Jesus gave his disciples their mission, he promised to be with them until the end of the age. Everything we do must be rooted in prayer.

We recognize the many gifts that presently exist in our parishes and organizations; many of the elements outlined in our pastoral plan may already be realized in some communities. Yet we must continue to strive to go a step further, to examine ourselves and our faith communities honestly so that we may grow in fidelity as disciples, becoming more effective instruments of God in strengthening the presence of His kingdom.

God is simple, yet the complexity of this plan, which addresses our complex human situation, may seem overwhelming. The sea is so great and our boat is so small! We can work together to divide and carry out the tasks we face, but above all we rely on God who is with us.

We pray for all those who work in our archdiocese; may the Holy Spirit guide their efforts and keep them responsible and faithful in their work.

We pray for our bishops, priests, deacons and religious; may they continue to serve the needs of the faithful in the archdiocese, guiding us on the path of discipleship.

For the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto, may God inspire us as we discern the steps forward to implement this pastoral plan. We pray that God will give us the grace for our gifts and talents to bear fruit in realizing the beauty of a Church fully engaged and inspired, fearlessly and creatively evangelizing the world.

The preparatory document of the XIII General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization notes that “chronologically speaking, the first

evangelization began on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles, gathered together in prayer with the Mother of Christ, received the Holy Spirit. In this way, Mary, who according to the words of the Archangel is "full of grace", was present during apostolic evangelization and continues to be present in those places where the successors of the Apostles strive to proclaim the Gospel"(*Lineamenta*, Art. 23). Let us entrust ourselves and the Pastoral Plan of the Archdiocese of Toronto to Our Lady, the "*Woman Adorned with the Sun*" (Rev. 12:1) and "*Star of the New Evangelization.*" May she may obtain for us the grace to remain always open to the transforming Spirit of the God who "*makes all things new*" (Rev. 21:5).