DUC IN ALTUM

LUKE 5:4

PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP

Spiritual Renewal in the Diocese of Calgary

Renewal of Priests
⊕
Renewal of the Laity, Deacons, and Religious
⊕
Renewal of the Diocese

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of Calgary

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Calgary,

Greetings of peace.

Introduction

1. February 27, 2020 marks the third anniversary of my installation as the Bishop of Calgary. As we enter this new decade in the life of the Diocese, I have begun to look ahead and also to review with gratitude the last three years to see the workings of the risen Christ and the Spirit.

2. After being installed as the Eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary, I embarked on a process of consultation with the priests and the permanent deacons. The past three years were devoted to the assessment and evaluation, planning, and implementation of the pastoral approaches to the priorities that the clergy had identified. They include ongoing priestly formation, sacramental preparation that is family focused, the evaluation of the structure and mission of the Catholic Pastoral Centre, the ongoing vigilance and care for our Catholic schools, the review of our youth and family ministry outreach, the new focus for the young adult and university chaplaincy, and the revitalization of the formation curriculum for permanent deacons that will ultimately focus their ministry on much needed areas of pastoral outreach in the broader community. The Presbyteral Council has been invaluable in helping to prioritize the areas of diocesan pastoral ministry, its implementation and the necessary feedback for its success.

3. This process of consultation with clergy was also supported by my Pastoral Visits to the parishes where I have had the opportunity to meet and talk with the lay faithful who worship in our parishes and serve in the various ministries such as Catholic schools and health care institutions and lay organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to name but a few. My parish pastoral visits are continuing and I appreciate the opportunity to have in-depth discussions about matters pertaining to the faith and the mission of the parish which Christ has entrusted to each one of us through baptism.

Duc in Altum | Put out into the deep

4. In this year of 2020, we will mark the 20th anniversary of *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI), the Apostolic Letter issued by Pope John Paul II during the great jubilee year. He began the Letter by recalling the words of Jesus to Simon inviting him to "put out into the deep" for a catch: "*duc in altum*" (Luke 5:4) where "they caught a great number of fish" (Luke 5:6).

5. The Lord continues to speak these words to us today and invites us to put out into the deep. It is in this same spirit that we embark as a Diocese to rediscover and renew our common mission of proclaiming the Gospel through the spiritual and pastoral renewal of our clergy, the religious and lay faithful, and our parishes in anticipation and preparation for a formal process of Diocesan pastoral planning.

6. At the beginning of the millennium, the Letter was the Holy Father's way of calling for the ongoing renewal of the Church's mission through the laity and ordained ministry, and the ongoing pastoral planning at every level of the Church in order to rediscover the mystery we behold as a Church and as contained in Sacred Tradition. That mystery is Jesus Christ, the Good News that we are called to proclaim.

7. Pope John Paul II stated, "The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem. (The program) must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach the people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture." (NMI par. 29)

8. The Church's mission must take into account the current times and culture. An important and essential part of this renewal is for priests to first rediscover their centredness in Christ so that they can truly offer a renewed pastoral leadership within the parishes in today's context.

9. Pope John Paull II stated, "It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of the interior life and of holiness. When this principle is not respected, is it any wonder that pastoral plans come to nothing and leave us with a disheartening sense of frustration? We then share the experience of the disciples in the Gospel story of the miraculous catch of fish: 'We have toiled all night and caught nothing' (Lk 5:5). This is the moment of faith, of prayer, of conversation with God, in order to open our hearts to the tide of grace and allow the word of Christ to pass through us in all its power: *Duc in altum*! On that occasion, it was Peter who spoke the word of faith: 'At your word I will let down the nets' (ibid.)." (NMI no. 38)

10. When pastors are grounded in Christ who calls them to "put out into the deep", they can then invite the faithful with joy and confidence to renew their own zeal for living their faith as missionary disciples in the world.

Program of Renewal

11. I am proposing a multi-year program of renewal, and invite us to embrace it as a Diocese in such a way that as we renew our individual commitments to the state of life for which we have been called by the Lord to live and serve, we become the leaven that will renew and transform the parishes, which when burning with zeal for the mission of Christ, in turn

will assist in the formation of missionary disciples for the evangelization of our society.

12. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), stated, "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.' This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's Word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented." (EG no. 28).

13. Parish renewal begins with the priests by renewing their priestly life and spirituality and, in turn, their ministry. It is my belief that this approach will provide us with new pastoral experiences from which to draw upon when we begin a formal process of diocesan pastoral renewal and planning in the coming years. As scripture states, "new wine must be poured into new wineskins" (Mark 2:22). A similar call and path will be extended to the lay faithful, religious and those who live and witness to their faith through their professions.

14. I envision a multi-staged process that will span over three years, engaging respectively the renewal of the Priests, the Laity, Deacons, and Religious, and the Diocese as a whole. It is a process that will focus on the basics, the living of our baptismal faith, deepening our spiritual lives, seeking new ways of outreach in witness to justice and holiness that is a sign of authenticity in today's world. This renewal must touch the fabric of our parishes, families and youth, young adults, seniors and the elderly. It can be the impetus for building bridges between the parishes and communities, with agencies and pastoral services sponsored throughout the Diocese.

15. Within the renewal of the laity, I also see unique opportunities for renewal in the professional life of Catholic School Educators, Administrators, Teachers and Staff, our Health Care Professionals, and Public Safety Professionals. These occasions of renewal provide the professionals serving in ministries of the Catholic Church the opportunity to plan and implement a year-round program of formation and support best suited to their field of work and expertise.

16. The final stage of renewal, taking place from Pentecost 2021 to 2022 and marked as the Renewal of the Diocese, will be the year of consultation, assessment, and planning for the pastoral life and mission of the Diocese. A working document will be produced for this final stage of renewal which will contain the findings of the previous stages of renewal and the practical and valuable information already obtained from the parish pastoral visits I have conducted since the beginning of my episcopacy.

17. While the process of renewal unfolds in stages, the various moments that liturgically mark the beginning of each stage will cause the processes to overlap and run concurrently with each other. The nature of this renewal will remind us of our interconnectedness and unity in Christ while celebrating the various spiritual gifts and responsibilities.

18. The following are markers of the renewal process. (See next page)

Year 2020

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Feb 23
- The Release of the Bishop's Pastoral Letter to the Faithful

Ash Wednesday, Feb 26
- The Release of the Bishop's Pastoral Letter to Priests

Mass of Chrism, Monday, Apr 6
- The Priests Renew their Promises and Formally Begin the Process of Renewal

Easter Sunday – Apr 12
- The Lay Faithful Renew their Baptismal Promises and Formally Begin the Process of Renewal

Pentecost Sunday – May 31
- Renewal for Lay Associations

Catholic School Division Opening Masses – August 2020
- Renewal for Catechists and Catholic School Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

White Mass - Oct 2020
- Renewal for Health Care Professionals

Red Mass - Oct 2020
- Renewal for Law Professionals

Blue Mass - Oct 2020
- Renewal for Public Safety Personnel

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, World Day of the Poor – Nov 15
- The Deacons Renew their Promises and Formally Begin the Process of Renewal

The Feast of the Holy Family – Sunday, Dec 27
- Renewal of Families & Youth and Begins the Process of Renewal

Year 2021

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Tuesday, Feb 2
- The Religious Renew their Vows and Formally Begin the Process of Renewal

Mass of Chrism, Monday, Mar 29
- The Priests Renew their Promises

Easter Sunday - April 4
- The Lay Faithful Renew their Baptismal Promises

Pentecost Sunday – May 23
Renewal for Lay Associations and the Launch of the Pastoral Planning Process

Catholic School Division Opening Masses – August - Sep 2021
- Renewal for Catechists and Catholic School Administrators, Teachers, and Staff

White Mass - Oct 2021
- Renewal for Health Care Professionals

Red Mass - Oct 2021
- Renewal for Law Professionals

Blue Mass - Oct 2021
- Renewal for Public Safety Personnel

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, World Day of the Poor - Nov 14
- The Deacons Renew their Promises

The Feast of the Holy Family - Sunday, Dec 26
- Renewal of Families & Youth

Year 2022

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, Wednesday, Feb 2
- The Religious Renew their Vows

Mass of Chrism, Monday, Apr 11
- The Priests Renew their Promises

Easter Sunday – Apr 17
- The Lay Faithful Renew their Baptismal Promises

Pentecost Sunday – Jun 5
- Renewal for Lay Associations, the Culmination of the Pastoral Planning Process, and the Beginning of the Implementation Phase

19. In this multi-year process, it is my hope that we all deepen our commitment to the Lord in living our vocation every time we make the act of renewal on the marked feasts and occasions. We also strive to increase the formation we are receiving in the corresponding states of life and professions so that we may be able to deepen our sense of discipleship in our daily lives.

Call to Holiness

20. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate* (GEE), states, "We are frequently tempted to think that holiness is only for those who can withdraw from ordinary affairs to spend much time in prayer. That is not the case. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves. Are you called to the consecrated life? Be holy by living out your commitment with joy. Are you married? Be holy by loving and caring for your husband or wife, as Christ does for the Church. Do you work for a living? Be holy by labouring with integrity and skill in the service of your brothers and sisters. Are you a parent or grandparent? Be holy by patiently teaching the little ones how to follow Jesus. Are you in a position of authority? Be holy by working for the common good and renouncing personal gain." (GEE no. 14)

21. Beginning this Season of Lent, we open our hearts, minds, and homes to the Holy Spirit. May these years of renewal be for us a source of inspiration and grace not only for our personal holiness and development but also for the holiness and development of the entire Diocese.

22. With the Diocese of Calgary under the patronage of our Blessed Mother, I conclude this pastoral letter with the prayer to our Lady from *Evangelii Gaudium*. We honour her for her humility and for her docility to God the Father, and we praise God for raising her to the stature of being the greatest disciple of our Lord and the "model of evangelization" (EG no. 288).

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own "yes"
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.
Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

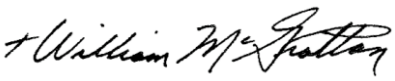
Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us.
Amen. Alleluia!

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William T. McGrattan



Bishop of Calgary