



The **Catholic Bishops**
of **Alberta** and the
Northwest Territories

Les **évêques catholiques**
de **l'Alberta** et des
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

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Year of Consecrated Life

January 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On the First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 2014, the Church around the world – at the invitation of Pope Francis – began to celebrate the *Year of Consecrated Life*, which will conclude twelve months from now on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, February 2, 2016.

The Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories would like to take this occasion to address Christ's faithful and all people of good will regarding the immeasurable contribution that consecrated men and women have made to the life of the Church and of all people in this region for over 150 years.

Consecrated Life is a broad term that we use today to refer to the many ways of life by which Christians may dedicate themselves to follow Christ through living the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in the service of the Church's mission. These forms of life include the more ancient religious orders and congregations, as well as newer forms that have grown up in the heart of the Church, such as societies of apostolic life and secular institutes. Pope Francis asks in his Apostolic Letter of November 21, 2014, that this *Year of Consecrated Life* be set aside by all of us to do three things: 1) to look to the past with gratitude, 2) to live the present with passion, and 3) to embrace the future with hope.

By our own letter, we, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, want personally and publicly to thank all of the consecrated women and men who have laboured in the Lord's vineyard and who continue to do so today. Since the arrival of Oblate Priests in 1845 and the Sisters of Charity of Montréal (the Grey Nuns) in 1859, consecrated persons of many different communities have been marvellous co-workers, helping to sow the seeds of the Gospel and to tend to a variety of needs of the people in this region. The Catholic school system in Alberta, numerous Catholic health care institutions, and countless parishes have been built up through the generous and loving service of consecrated women and men. In this *Year of Consecrated Life*, we would also invite all of our different Catholic communities to find ways to remember and honour the good work of so many consecrated persons in the past and those who are serving today in the Church.

As we honour and thank our consecrated sisters and brothers for their service, we encourage our communities this year to take the time to learn about and promote the awareness of the different forms of consecrated life in the Church today. In our busy, noisy, and prosperous society, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to hear God's call to this sort of permanent life of service. The need for consecrated persons in the Church, however, is just as necessary today as it was in the past. Therefore, we ask all to pray earnestly for vocations to the consecrated life and that God's kingdom will continue to grow in this good soil of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. May the beauty of the Lord's face and his evangelical counsels shine in the lives of many consecrated men and women in the years to come as they challenge us to love God above all things and to set our hearts first on the kingdom of God.

We entrust all consecrated persons, both living and deceased, and the whole Church, to the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God. May she who presented the infant Jesus in the temple forty days after his birth, guard the vocation of all consecrated persons and help us all to know, accept and live our call from God in faith, hope, and love.

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend Frederick Henry
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend Gregory J. Bittman
Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith



Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul