



Heart to Heart

May 22, 2020 (#402)

GOOD NEWS FROM FATHER JIM PETRIE THIS WEEK! The construction of St. Benedict Church is underway once again. The work had been stopped as part of the COVID-19 government shutdown, and was one of the projects that got the green light on Monday-past. The completion of the building is now foreseen to be late Autumn. Good news indeed!

THE REMARKABLE GENEROSITY OF PARISHIONERS in response to the Easter letter which included an appeal for financial assistance for their Parishes has been astounding! The letters keep coming in! Already two envelopes filled with responses have been sent to many Parishes throughout the Diocese. A third will be sent soon! Thank you for your overwhelming generosity! This has helped many of our Parishes avoid financial collapse during this COVID-19 pandemic. The letters with their financial offerings have been an encouraging reassurance of the love of parishioners for their Parishes and of their support for their Pastors! Other offerings made through the *Canada Helps* on-line portal have also provided valued relief. Thank you to Jim Long, Chancellor (Temporal Affairs) and Francis Doyle, Director of the Development and Stewardship Office, for keeping us all informed about these important opportunities!

THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ONTARIO charged with drafting recommendations regarding the re-opening of churches, after authorization from Ontario government officials, has met several times already. A draft document is being prepared and will be reviewed by legal and insurance advisors as well as by Bishops and advisors from all of the Ontario Dioceses. Once the recommendations are approved by Diocesan officials, they will be forwarded to Pastors who will begin to put them into effect in the Parishes in a careful and coordinated way. Our primary concern is for the safety and well-being of all who worship in our churches.

THE DIOCESAN OFFICE FOR REFUGEES CURRENTLY HAS 100 REFUGEES with a sponsorship application in process with *Immigration Canada*. While there have been no newcomers since the start of the pandemic shutdown, there are a number of refugees who are travel-ready when restrictions are removed here in Canada and in the country of asylum. Two of our newcomer families who arrived before the pandemic have recently welcomed newborns. Mothers and babies are doing well. Special thanks to sponsoring Parishes – and to Erin Pease and Rita Balla who oversee the Office for Refugees!

ENGLISH-SPEAKING CATHOLIC ARTISTS have come together with a message of hope! You will recognize the names of many of the artists who came together “virtually” to sing the very popular song by the St. Louis Jesuits, *BE NOT AFRAID*. Salt + Light Media made it available on their website and through social media. It is available [here](#) for your enjoyment. This time of the COVID-19 pandemic has produced many creative artistic initiatives that stir the spirit!

DR. TOM STEWART is back in the seat of the President and CEO of St. Joseph’s Health System! He continues in his roles with the Provincial COVID-19 Command Table and Ontario Health. Thanks to Brian Guest for covering during his absence. We are reassured by the respect in which he is held by health care leaders!

FATHER ANTONIO CUNHA, Pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Cambridge for 40 years, died on Wednesday night, May 20th, following a lengthy illness. Because of government restrictions for funeral services and burials, a funeral Mass will be celebrated at a later date. Monsignor Murray Kroetsch will preside at the burial joined by a few family members. May he rest in peace.

Our Lady of Canada (Health of the sick), pray for us!

Ex corde, *+Douglas*, OMI