



Heart to Heart

March 5, 2021 (#428)

THE PENULTIMATE WAVE OF ONE HEART, ONE SOUL has been launched. To date, the campaign has raised over \$23 million, 66 percent of the \$35 million goal! 42 parishes have surpassed their baseline target. Six more are at 93% or higher. In one parish, over 78% of parishioners participated in the campaign, the highest level of participation so far in any parish. Several parishes are already undertaking projects and programs for which funds have been raised. Painting and improved lighting at the Cathedral is almost complete. The scaffolding will be coming down soon. A recent note from one donor says it all: *“Blessings. I loved reading the campaign news and all the good things that are happening because of it. I just want to share with you my experience with One Heart, One Soul. At first I was hesitant to contribute because I wasn’t sure if we could meet the contribution you asked of us. Thank God we are contributing to it! God has been so gracious to us. As soon as we started contributing, my husband got a raise and a family member has given us gifts that matched our 3-year contributions. Last year we were able to buy a new car and installed a new roof on our house. So much blessing has come our way, and we thank One Heart, One Soul. We thank God for His generosity. God has shown me that if you are generous, He will be more generous! Thank you.”* And thank YOU to all who support the campaign!

THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER is observed annually on the first Friday in March. It is an invitation for Christians to pray together ecumenically. This recalls our Christian responsibility to be sensitive to the signs of the time so that we might bring a more authentically Christian dimension to the concerns of our world, our country, our community. Sponsored by the *Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada* and its national counterparts around the world, it is celebrated in about 165 countries. We pray to the Lord!

THE DIOCESAN OFFICE FOR REFUGEES has continued its lifesaving ministry during these pandemic days. They have been training sponsors, updating program resources and tools to incorporate COVID-19 requirements and policies. The most recent federal changes which affect sponsored refugees include a mandatory pre-departure COVID-19 test before settling in Canada (effective January 7, 2021), as well as a mandatory COVID-19 test upon arrival at Pearson, followed by a 3-night hotel stay while test results are pending (effective February 22, 2021). Many have had their flights to Canada cancelled and delayed because arrangements for COVID-19 testing in the country of asylum have been impossible or incompatible with Canadian standards.

THE REFUGEE OFFICE is also preparing their response to the Annual General Statistical Questionnaire from The Vatican Secretariat of State. In 2020, the Office served more than 4,750 refugees, parishioners, sponsors and community members through phone calls, emails, workshops, training sessions and advocacy efforts with Immigration Canada, local Members of Parliament and the UN Refugee Agency. Pope Francis would be proud of the efforts of our office of two totally dedicated and hard working professionals! We sure are!

BLESSED SACRAMENT PARISH IN BURFORD and St. Anthony Daniel Parish in Scotland have prepared to welcome *Migrant Farm Workers* to the county again this year. Gift bags have been prepared containing PPE, sanitizers, toiletries, work socks, and packaged foods. They also provide contact information and government guidelines in Spanish to help them navigate the challenging realities of the pandemic. We are proud of the ministry of Father Peter Ciallella and his team.

INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO PRIESTS AND PARISHES for *SafeWorship* during the 2021 Holy Week ceremonies. Pastors are strongly encouraged to assure pandemic protocols are followed diligently in their Parishes. We are alerted that COVID variants are causing major problems, adding another layer of complexity to pandemic woes. Additionally, plans for this year’s *Mass of Chrism* have also been sent to Priests, along with a request to RSVP to the e-mail invitation to participate to the Priest-only event at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King on Monday, March 29th. It will be a different Holy Week – but we pray that we will be able to gather to celebrate, if even in smaller numbers.

Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!

Ex corde, +*Douglas*, OMI