



Heart to Heart

December 10, 2021 (#454)

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY with Indigenous Peoples is celebrated this Sunday, December 12th, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas. The 2021 Message for the day, drafted and approved by the Catholic Indigenous Council can be read [here](#) and on our website. Additionally, the apology issued to Indigenous Peoples by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is now featured in a YouTube video [here](#).

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CCCB and the Bishops' Working Group on Indigenous Initiatives met with the leaders of each of the National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs) to make final decisions about the advisability of the planned delegation to Rome. After careful assessment of the uncertainty and potential health risks surrounding the recent spread of the Omicron variant, it was collectively decided that the delegation to Rome would be postponed. With the heightened hope and expectation, this is a major disappointment for all parties. Pope Francis is committed to rescheduling the visit in the New Year.

IT IS WEEK FIVE FOR DIOCESAN RESPONSES to the questionnaire for the Synod on Synodality. Already more than 900 responses have been received online from groups and individuals. 356 responses have been received from the Waterloo Deanery, 214 from the Hamilton Deanery, 173 from the Halton Deanery, 109 from the Wellington Deanery, 27 from the Bruce-Grey Deanery, and 21 from the Brant Deanery. With this kind of interest we encourage and welcome responses from other groups and individuals. Thanks to Pastors and parishioners who are organizing the gathering of groups to respond to the questions.

THE SYSTEM BOARD FOR THE ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTH SYSTEM met virtually yesterday. There was discussion about the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 strain. While the numbers are rising, there is no dramatic increase in hospital bed use, and while the rate of the virus transmission is more rapid, the severity seems not to be as troubling. There are no outbreaks throughout the system, and everyone is watching carefully. We are encouraged to get the "booster"!

THIRTEEN OF THE OUR SIXTEEN SEMINARIANS will gather at the Basilica of Our Lady in Guelph on December 28th to visit and enjoy a day of recollection together. The day will end with the Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate of Seminarian Carlos Diaz by Bishop Wayne Lobsinger. We pray for our seminarians, that God will bless their discernment – and ours.

THE CHRISTMAS GATHERING FOR THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES takes place next Wednesday at Holy Rosary Parish Hall, Burlington. It is a "COVID-19 restrictions" gathering, assuring the safety and well-being of participants. More importantly, it is an opportunity to thank our Catholic Cemeteries staff for the very good work they do – especially given the challenges presented by the pandemic. Their gathering is always the first for the Christmas season. Christmas is soon upon us!

COATS FOR KIDS is a popular program sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Ontario State Council. Already this year over five-thousand winter coats have been provided to children throughout the Province! Corporate sponsorship of the program has made it possible to increase the number of coats provided. The children are delighted to receive the coats –and to be warm during these particularly cold days!

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

Ex corde, *+ Douglas*, OMI