



Heart to Heart

February 21, 2025 (#569)

THE MOST REVEREND WILLIAM McGRATTAN, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and Bishop of Calgary, has written a message to “*individuals, families, parishes, and all Catholic movements and associations in Canada to join their local Bishop in lifting up Pope Francis in their prayers and intentions*”. With the troubling news throughout the past week of the Pope’s precarious health, the call to prayer is timely and important. As the Bishop says in his letter, *we pray “for the full recovery of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, as he continues to lead the Church with courage and a generosity of spirit!”* Pastors are asked to include a prayer for healing at all Sunday Masses this weekend.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS AT NOON at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King in Hamilton will welcome student representatives from the seven Catholic District School Boards in the Diocese. They will receive and carry back to their Boards, a Jubilee Pilgrimage Cross which will be part of the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope for the students in the schools in these Boards. The Jubilee Year is a time for all to deepen their faith, and come closer to the Lord!

OPENING THE HOLY DOOR, a new book authored by Joan Watson, will be featured in a *Spring Book Club* offered by our Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis. On four Tuesdays, from 1-2 p.m. from March 18-April 8, interested participants will reflect on the images of mercy, hope, and salvation on the panels of the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. 35 million people are expected to gain the graces of passing through the Holy Door during this Jubilee Year of Hope. For those of us who will not, the Spring Book Club is a perfect way to become familiar with this sacred experience. In the Diocese of Hamilton, six pilgrim Churches display an impressive replica of the Holy Door, providing an opportunity to share in Jubilee Year graces. Register to participate in the Spring Book Club [here](#).

ReSTART: MOVING FORWARD – The 10 week program offered by our Family Ministry Office provides education and support to anyone seeking to heal and move forward after a divorce or separation. The “in person” sessions are offered from 7 to 9 p.m. on Monday evenings from *March 17-June 9* (no session April 21 and May 19) at the Chancery Office 700 King Street West, Hamilton. If you are from outside the Hamilton area, virtual (ZOOM) participation is possible. Cost is \$35 for materials, but no one is turned away. Check out the Diocesan [website](#) to register, or contact the Family Ministry Office [here](#).

LECTURES IN CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE sponsored by St. Jerome’s University presents Dr. Gary J. Adler Jr. on February 27, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. The title of his lecture: ***HOW CATHOLICS GOVERN: Examining the Religiosity and Policy Preferences of Local Government Officials***. The lecture will take place in SJ1, Classrooms and Library Building, Notre Dame Chapel. The event is co-sponsored by the Institute for the Religion, Culture and Societal Future. Register [here](#).

LAST NIGHT WAS SPECIAL! I celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Stoney Creek. It was a small group of 21 well-prepared students from St. James Catholic Elementary School. The school choir set the tone, singing the entrance hymn with joy and gusto. The candidates were evidently well prepared. Four Confirmandi came forward to lead the Prayers of the Faithful. The last young person, well-dressed, came to the ambo. He let out an anxious breath, stood up straight and, syllable by syllable, as he had no doubt practiced at school and at home, read his assigned prayer intention, confidently, clearly, and courageously. Courage, one of the sure gifts of the Holy Spirit, was evident! It was an emotionally charged moment – making it hard to pray the prayer to conclude the petitions! Thank you to caring parents, supportive teachers, and courageous students for being open to and promoting the powerful work of the Holy Spirit! The gifts of the Spirit change our lives!

Our Lady of the Annunciation, pray for us!

Ex corde, +*Douglas*, OMI