



Heart to Heart

April 11, 2025 (#576)

DIOCESAN HEROES OF HOPE FOR APRIL are the extraordinary individuals and ministries who serve in the healthcare services in the Diocese of Hamilton! Arriving in the 1850's, the SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH have provided health care in communities throughout the Diocese – with a special concern for the “dear neighbour”. The health care facilities they built still welcome thousands daily, as they have for the past 170 years. They “lift us up”, giving hope when hope seems far away. The Hospice Ministry is a specialized service, caring for those who are in the final stages of life, providing a clean and safe environment to die with dignity. Emmanuel House in Hamilton, Margaret's Place in Dundas, and Stedman Community Hospice in Brantford provide such wholistic care. And there are other hospices supported by the Catholic community. Hospital chaplaincy services and Parish Priests provide pastoral visitation and Sacrament of the Sick. Prayer Shawl ministry is a “wrap around” assurance of prayer for health and well-being. See the Newsletter for April [here](#).

WE MOVE INTO HOLY WEEK NEXT WEEK, recalling the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ – his ultimate act of love for us, drawing us into communion with the Father, whose love fills us with their Holy Spirit and, in the end, saves us! The week begins with the **Blessing and distribution of Palms** and solemn proclamation of the **Passion of Jesus Christ** during Sunday Masses throughout the Diocese. On Monday, the Priests who serve in the Diocese, gather with the Bishops to celebrate the **Mass of Chrism** at the Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King. Sacred oils are blessed and the Oil of Chrism is consecrated for use in the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, and for sacramental celebrations in our parishes throughout the coming year. On **Holy Thursday**, we gather to remember **The Last Supper** and to recall that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples – a true servant-leader. This act of humility gives us an example of service to follow in our own ministry. On **Good Friday**, services celebrated throughout the Diocese will welcome the faithful who gather to remember Jesus' horrific death and to **adore the Cross of Christ** – the sign of our salvation. There we leave our burdens, sins and sorrows, so that Jesus might heal and save us. On Friday evening, we will walk the **Way of the Cross** remembering his saving acts of love for us. On **Holy Saturday**, we gather to celebrate the **Easter Vigil**. Easter fires will be lit as the sun goes down, the Easter candle will be lit and, in the **Light of Christ** we will listen to the **Word of God** from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible that point to the promises we celebrate in the Resurrection of Christ. At this time, the hundreds of Elect, who have been preparing for the **Sacraments of Initiation** – Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist – will come forward to begin the final steps of that sacred journey. Our profession of faith will support theirs! Their excitement and joy in claiming Christ and being claimed by Him will support ours. The newly baptized will join us for the first time at the **Table of the Eucharist**.

Holy Week is the high point of the Church year. May this special week-long journey be for each of us and for all of us a time of profound renewal of our faith and of our commitment to serve the Lord with joy and renewed fervour!

HIS GRACE, ARCHBISHOP JAMES HECTOR MACDONALD, C.S.C., celebrates his **100th birthday** on April 28, 2025! Priests of the Diocese of Hamilton will sign a special birthday card when we gather for the Mass of Chrism, on Monday. The card will be delivered to the Archbishop who resides with his religious community, the Congregation of the Holy Cross, in Welland, Ontario, by his long-time friend, Monsignor Earl Talbot. The Archbishop served the Diocese for many years as Pastor at St. Michael Parish in Waterloo, and subsequently as Auxiliary Bishop from 1978 to 1982. Happy Birthday to you!

PLEASE NOTE, there will be NO Heart to Heart NEXT Friday, April 18, 2025.

OUR LADY OF THE ANNUNCIATION, pray for us.

Ex corde, + *Douglas*, OMI