



Archbishop Murray Chatlain
Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
P. O. Box 270, The Pas, MB R9A 1K4
chancery@keepas.ca
www.archdioceseofkeewatinlepas.ca

November 1, 2020

Greetings from the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas,

Some of us have been sick with COVID-19; all of us are sick of COVID-19.

I do not know all of your sufferings from this pandemic time, but I am certain that you have been affected. I pray for you and all of our benefactors. We all remember Jesus' promise that He is with us in the midst of our sorrows and uncertainties.

It seems so long ago, but in March we held our diocesan workshops in Thompson and Saskatoon. Our spirits were uplifted; but within days, as you know from your own experience, everything started shutting down.

Like you, we had to quickly adapt to the new "normal." This meant providing online services so people could still be together and connected to our diocesan services. Despite physical distancing, we never stopped ministering to our people. We wanted to ensure that everyone – even in our most isolated parishes and missions – knew this and didn't hesitate to reach out to our priests and religious.

Our diocese covers 430,000 sq kms and is home to nearly 113,000 people of Métis, First Nations (Cree, OjiCree, Dene) and non-Native ancestry. It's a vast territory of northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but just 15 priests, one religious sister and one deacon serve our 50 missions and parishes. Fourteen of our missions are accessible only by small plane, and many of our priests are pastorally responsible for up to five communities.



Respecting restrictions due to COVID, our priests journey throughout the diocese – as much as they are allowed to – ministering in areas that are, for many reasons, more isolated now than before the virus struck.

Your support eases that isolation by helping fund these costs so that clergy and religious can travel throughout our diocese to share Christ's message of hope. I'll be honest with you; their safe travel is a worry for me in many ways: flight costs, vehicle maintenance and repair costs alone have exceeded \$73,000 this year.

Despite the pandemic, there are many instances of God's love and activity in our North.

Because of COVID, some of our priests and staff "stayed put" in a community for several months – which caused people to feel more connected to their priest and let him share more closely in their day-to-day trials. The number of people praying with us on social media has been both surprising and encouraging. And we've learned to use Zoom and other platforms to touch base with each other over long distances.



Sr. Andrea Dumont CSJ

One of our significant losses this year was that of Sr. Andrea Dumont CSJ. Sister Andrea served for many years in Thompson, MB and shortly after retiring in June at age 86, passed away of cancer. Recently, Sr. Una Byrne SP retired from her service in Norway House. Luckily, we still have Sr. Bonnie Bryson CSJ in Lynn Lake! We need the gift of religious women and are reaching out to other countries for help. This requires funds, but people of our diocese need the balance of priests and religious sisters. Your support will help make this outreach possible.

You may have heard of Tristen Durocher, the young Cree man who walked over 600 kms from La Ronge, SK to Regina's legislature to draw attention to the tragedy of youth suicides in our North. We work to respond to the needs of our young people with specialized programs, healing workshops and gatherings to support them in their pain and addictions. This also marks the third year of having a National Evangelization Team (NET) minister in our diocese. Your support allows these vibrant leaders to connect with our youth and share the promise and message of God's love.

The needs of our diocesan ministries continue. In 2019, the cost to run our diocese was \$1,468,227 – a major portion of which went to missionary travel and salaries, and maintenance of churches and rectories. That amount also included \$446,873 for mission expenses, such as heating, maintenance and electrical bills. A

number of our missions are unable to pay their operating costs; your donation will help subsidize these essentials, now and into the new year.

**Your generosity last year helped raise \$252,000 to support the ministries of our Diocese. Thank you!
Our goal this year is \$250,000. I hope you will help us reach this important goal.**

Here are some of the initiatives your support helped make possible in 2019/2020:

- Last November, I joined diocesan staff and lay leaders for a Mental Health First Aid First Nations Certification training program in The Pas, MB facilitated by local Indigenous counsellors. This program is geared to helping individuals experiencing substance misuse, depression, anxiety and trauma.
- Because we are unable to gather physically, we have provided virtual workshops to staff and community leaders. The first was on Personal Care in Crisis and was led by Fr. Stephan Kappler from The Southdown Institute. We then invited Leah Perrault to hold two evening sessions on Christian Family and Christian Hope. Recently we held a Dying Healed Workshop that was facilitated by Jacqueline Saretsky and Deborah Larmour from LifeCanada.
- We continue to reach out virtually to parishioners by recording and making available Sunday liturgies from the Cathedral on our Youth Facebook page and YouTube channel. Check these out at The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas on YouTube or <https://www.facebook.com/KeewatinYouth>.

Donations to our ministries are down significantly this year; I hope you'll be able to help change that. Together, we can do so much to share the message of God's love in our diocese!

I know how difficult these times are and the many demands on your shoulders. If you are able to support our ministries this year, know that your gift is needed more than ever and will make a difference for communities in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, now and in the months to come. If you are unable to support us at this time, be assured of my gratitude for your past support and our prayers for the days ahead.

Finally, in the words of St. Paul who knows something about suffering and doing without, "Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Cor. 16:13-14)

May God reward your generosity and protect you and all your loved ones,



Archbishop Murray Chatlain
Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas



A black bear relaxing at the garbage dump outside Lac Brochet, MB. This is not photo shopped! Picture by Mandy Stantic.

PS: Your donation - in any amount- will make a huge difference to so many people in our northern Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas. We are deeply grateful for any donation you can give.



PRE-AUTHORIZED GIFT PLAN

I wish to pledge \$ _____ per month for ___ months.

I wish to pledge \$ _____ per month on an ongoing basis.

I hereby authorize the R. C. Episcopal Corporation of Keewatin (The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas) to withdraw funds as indicated above from my bank account on the 18th day of each month.

(Please sign this form and enclose a void cheque for bank information).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ONE TIME DONATION

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 Other: _____ (Cheques can be made payable to R. C. Episcopal Corp of Keewatin). All donations of \$50 and above will automatically receive an income tax receipt. If your donation is less than \$50 and you wish to receive an income tax receipt, please check this box: Yes

Please return the bottom portion of this form (and financial gift) to: Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, P.O. Box 270, The Pas, MB R9A 1K4
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