



MESSAGE TO THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL OF OTTAWA-CORNWALL

May 6, 2020

On this feast of Saint François de Laval, patron saint of Canadian Bishops, Pope Francis announced publicly his decision to appoint me as Coadjutor Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall. This is the beginning of a new chapter in my life, one that will build upon multiple experiences that have taught me to trust the Lord. I have always been amazed at the callings I received from the Church; however, I did not always understand why I was the one chosen to assume responsibility for a new parish, a new diocese, a new ministry or a new undertaking. My first “fiat” is rooted in my love for God and for his people. It was from this fundamental principle that I responded to all the other callings in my life, offering my service with humility and thanksgiving. God's plan is not always obvious, but it is revealed to us as a Mystery. No matter how many questions I ask, the answer is often the same: "My grace is sufficient for you." So I walk gently and joyfully on a path that will be strewn with signs of divine Providence.

As Coadjutor Archbishop, I am grateful for the time I will spend with Archbishop Prendergast. He will help me prepare for my new responsibilities, thus ensuring continuity with the wonderful work already begun. Both of us, together with the clergy and the laity, we will form a good team capable of advancing the mission of Evangelization. The construction of the Kingdom of God for the salvation of souls is never finished. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and supported by your good prayers, I make the commitment to give the best of myself.

I will certainly have the joy of meeting again the faithful of my first diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall. The road we traveled together was short but very rewarding. Knowing that the reality of your diocesan Church is taking a turn by your amalgamation with the Archdiocese of Ottawa, I will be there to accompany you throughout the transition and in the integration into the new reality. According to the information I have received, the process is already well underway. As for the people of Ottawa, you are a big family that I will have the joy of knowing and loving.

Therefore, until the day of my arrival in my new Archdiocese, I will be with all of you in thought and prayer. The restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic may complicate the situation somewhat, but I entrust everything to Mary Immaculate and to Saint François de Laval.

+Marcel Damphousse
Bishop of Sault Ste. Marie
Coadjutor Archbishop Elect of Ottawa-Cornwall