



# FROM THE VINEYARD

Newsletter No. 164; January 7, 2022

**BLESSINGS OF THE NEW YEAR** as I rouse *From the Vineyard* after a brief, Christmas hibernation. Many thanks to all those who helped us to celebrate Christmas in the parishes of our Diocese, despite the ongoing pandemic. The season concludes with this Sunday's celebration of the Baptism of the Lord.

**NEW PROVINCIAL RESTRICTIONS** brought in on Monday have not directly affected our churches. We remain open at 50% capacity with appropriate social distancing and other safety measures. With the transmissibility of the omicron variant I remind people about the importance of wearing face masks. As we deal with outbreaks in some of our parishes (including clergy who must observe the self-isolation guidelines), it has been necessary to cancel Masses in some places. Thus far, this has not been a widespread issue, but we may be dealing with it in various places over the next few weeks of this wave. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated as we do our part to battle the pandemic. Be advised also that our parish offices and Diocesan Pastoral Center are mostly closed as we follow the provincial health directive for employees to work from home when possible.

**STORIES OF A GENERATION – WITH POPE FRANCIS** premiered on Netflix on Christmas Day. This four-episode series is based on the Pope's 2018 book, *Sharing the Wisdom of Time*. The series showcases people over the age of 70 from across the globe (including the Pope himself) sharing their insights and stories with young filmmakers. Each of the four episodes takes up a central theme: "Love," "Dream," "Struggle" and "Work." Although a few well-known people like Martin Scorsese and Jane Goodall are featured, most of the participants are not household names. This project reflects Pope Francis' often stated desire that young and old should speak with one another. If you subscribe to Netflix, it is well worth watching!

**OUR ONLINE THOUGHT EXCHANGE SURVEY** for the Worldwide Synod and our own Diocesan Planning process was re-opened over Christmas. I was delighted to learn recently that we have had more than 100 new participants who contributed over 300 thoughts and 2000 ratings since it relaunched. The survey will remain open until Friday, January 14, 2022, so there is still time for people to participate. The Thought Exchange platform gives people a chance not only to respond but to see how others have answered the survey. It even allows a participant to rate the other responses, so it becomes a real exchange of thoughts and ideas.

**TODAY, THE CHURCH IN CANADA CELEBRATES ST. ANDRE BESSETTE, CSC**, better known to millions as Brother Andre of Montreal. A doorkeeper at a school run by the Holy Cross community, his strong devotion to St. Joseph has inspired generations of Catholics. He was canonized by St. Pope John Paul II in 2010. The beautiful St. Joseph's Oratory began with his inspiration and initiative and continues to be a place of prayer and miracles!

Fraternally, † Daniel