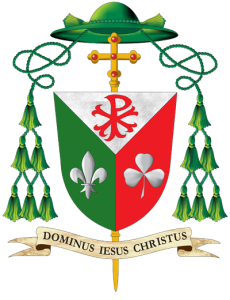
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**Memo 73**

October 18, 2021

To: Priests, deacons, mandated persons, school pastoral workers

Re: World Day of the Poor and World Youth Day

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed and continues to change our daily lives, often bringing isolation and poverty. In this context, our Holy Father Pope Francis calls upon the Catholic faithful to pay special attention to the poor and to young people. I hasten to transmit to you two messages that he addresses to us in this regard (attachments)

1. **World Day of the Poor, next November 14th.**

In his message for the World Day of the Poor, entitled *'The poor you will always have with you'* (Mk 14:7), the Pope first evokes the dedication of the woman who poured perfume on Jesus' head and feet some time before his death. " *It was also for the sake of the poor, the lonely, the marginalized and the victims of discrimination, that the Son of God accepted the woman’s gesture* " (n. 1).

1. Concern for the poor, writes the Pope, leads to heroic acts, as we see in the life of St. Damien de Veuster: *« With great generosity, he answered the call to go to the island of Molokai, which had become a ghetto accessible only to lepers, to live and die with them. He rolled up his sleeves and did everything he could to improve the lives of those who were poor, ill and outcast. He became both doctor and nurse, heedless of the risks involved, and brought the light of love to that “colony of death”, as the island was then called. He himself contracted leprosy, which became the sign of his total sharing in the lot of the brothers and sisters for whom he had given his life. His testimony is most timely in our own days, marked by the coronavirus pandemic. The grace of God is surely at work in the hearts of all those who, without fanfare, spend themselves for the poorest, sharing with them in concrete ways*» (n. 3).
2. *“Last year,* writes the Pope*, we experienced yet another scourge that multiplied the numbers of the poor: the pandemic, which continues to affect millions of people and, even when it does not bring suffering and death, is nonetheless a portent of poverty. The poor have increased disproportionately and, tragically, they will continue to do so in the coming months. Some countries are suffering extremely severe consequences from the pandemic, so that the most vulnerable of their people lack basic necessities. The long lines in front of soup kitchens are a tangible sign of this deterioration. There is a clear need to find the most suitable means of combating the virus at the global level without promoting partisan interests.  It is especially urgent to offer concrete responses to those who are unemployed, whose numbers include many fathers, mothers, and young people.  Social solidarity and the generosity which many, thanks be to God, have shown are, together with far-sighted projects of human promotion, making a most important contribution at this juncture » (*n. 5).
3. In addition to spreading the Pope's message, I invite each parish to proceed with the collection of goods to offer to the poor (non-perishable food, clothes that can still be used, contacts with local food banks...).

2- **World Youth Day, November 21, Solemnity of Christ the King**.

As we know, the Pope has moved the WYD from Palm Sunday to the Feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday of the liturgical year. In his message entitled "*Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen*" (Acts 26:16), the Pope refers to the current context of the pandemic, with its death and isolation, but also its solidarity; inspired by the figure of St. Paul, he invites us to stand up.

1. St. Paul is called personally by Christ, as is each and every one of us. *« In God’s eyes, no one is lost. Thanks to a personal encounter with him, we can always start over again. No young person is ever beyond the reach of God’s grace and mercy*».
2. We can open new paths: communion in the Church instead of solitude; love and respect in relationships; defense of the poor and vulnerable; ecological commitment. « *Arise! Testify that lives of failure can be rebuilt, that persons spiritually dead can rise anew, that those in bondage can once more be free, that hearts overwhelmed by sorrow can rediscover hope. Arise! Testify joyfully that Christ is alive! Spread his message of love and salvation among your contemporaries, at school and in the university, at work, in the digital world, everywhere»,* concludes the Pope*.*
3. Since it is difficult to organize a celebration at the diocesan level, I invite each parish, in conjunction with the people in charge of pastoral animation in our Catholic schools, to organize Eucharistic celebrations that give a greater place to young people, especially on November 21.

Thus, through his messages, which it is important to spread, the Holy Father stimulates us to come out of our isolation by caring for one another.



✠ Serge Poitras

Bishop of Timmins