



Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria *Office of the Bishop*

4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria BC V8X 2A1 – Tel: (250) 479-1331 – Fax: (250) 479-5423 – Web: rcdvictoria.org

January 27, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

“A little bit of tenderness could open up a horizon of hope.”

~ Pope Francis

As we approach the twenty-fifth World Day of the Sick on February 11, my heart is full of gratitude for the great number of people in our Diocese who have concern for the sick, shut-in, elderly and dying, and who minister to those who often feel vulnerable, lonely and isolated. It is such a blessing to know that people are realizing more and more that by our baptism, we are members of the Royal Priesthood; as such, we have been anointed and sent, as Isaiah wrote, *to heal the broken hearted, set prisoners free and comfort those who mourn.*

We have been chosen to bring to the world the Good News that those who are impoverished in body, mind or spirit are the beloved of Christ and worthy of dignity, respect, honour and compassion. Indeed, it is our great privilege to bring Christ’s mercy, love, and hope to our precious brothers and sisters; that they will choose to live fully, even in weakness and grave illness, until Christ calls them home to heaven.

In addition to our faithful Lay ministers, we are also blessed with two dedicated acute and extended care chaplains for ministry in the Victoria Capital Region; two Catholic healthcare facilities (Mount St. Mary Hospital in Victoria and St. Joseph’s General Hospital in Comox—both these Catholic institutions have full-time pastoral care); and Mass is celebrated in many nursing homes throughout the Diocese.

As blessed as I am to witness the generosity and kindness of ministers of Christ’s love in our Diocese, we need many more parishioners to listen for the inner call to tenderly accompany the sick and the vulnerable. This inner prompting is the voice of Jesus urging his people to participate with him in the ministry of compassion. No one needs to do it alone; Christ initiates the call and is with his chosen ministers every step of the way.

Similarly, as I ask you to listen for the call of Christ, I do not ask this without offering support. As the saying goes, “God does not call the equipped; He equips the called.” We take this seriously: through the Diocesan Health Care Committee’s Pastoral Care Outreach sessions, we are able to provide tools to help those who feel drawn towards this ministry to be effective and wise in their care of others.

Healthcare in Canada is challenging, and there is an increasingly critical need for people to support and accompany our frail elderly, ill or shut-in brothers and sisters. My goal is to see 15% of the parishioners in each parish actively involved in this important ministry, and thus I encourage you to prayerfully consider attending the Pastoral Care Outreach sessions to learn how to be compassionately present to those who are marginalized by age, illness or isolation.

I thank our Diocesan Health Care Committee for its tremendous role in providing education about health care and ethical issues, for promoting the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, and for helping to strengthen pastoral health care ministry in our parishes.



I also thank you for your willingness to minister to those who need our loving accompaniment. I believe that as you carry the mercy, love and hope of Christ to our aging, ill or dying brothers and sisters, your own faith will deepen and in these beloved of the Lord's, you will not only see their gratitude, you will see the face of Christ.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

*For continuity, we recommend that participants attend all four sessions.
Please bring a bag lunch to each session; coffee and tea will be provided.*

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| Session 1 <i>The Healing Ministry of Christ</i> | February 11, 2017 9 am – 3 pm St. Patrick's (Oak Bay) (250) 592-7391 stpat190@telus.net | <i>Session already held</i> You are invited to attend the Victoria session if you missed this one. |
| Session 2 <i>Listening & Communication and Mental Health</i> | March 18, 2017 9 am – 3 pm St. Patrick's (Oak Bay) (250) 592-7391 stpat190@telus.net | <i>Session already held</i> You are invited to attend the Victoria session if you missed this one. |
| Session 3 <i>The Grieving Process and Ministering to Families</i> | April 29, 2017 9 am – 3 pm St. Joseph the Worker (250) 479-7413 sjtwooffice@shaw.ca | March 4, 2017 9 am – 2 pm Trinity Parish (250) 390-2612 trinitycatholic@shaw.ca |
| Session 4 <i>Who Am I as a Pastoral Care Visitor?</i> | May 20, 2017 9 am – 3 pm St. Joseph the Worker (250) 479-7413 sjtwooffice@shaw.ca | April 8, 2017 9 am – 2 pm Trinity Parish (250) 390-2612 trinitycatholic@shaw.ca |

Program Contact Information

Moira King, Chair, Diocesan Health Care Committee
moiraking@shaw.ca