



October 11, 2016

Dear faithful of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface: Lay people, religious, deacons and priests,

The autumn season is such a beautiful time of year! Even if we live in the city, the rural reality of our Manitoba means that we all rejoice in the fall colours and in the harvest, be it from the garden or field. We are moved so easily in this season to give thanks and praise to God, the Creator and Father of us all.

I am coming to you today to speak of another harvest. That of which Jesus speaks in Matthew 9:37-38 "Pray the Father to send out workers to the harvest for the harvest is plenty but the laborers are few." These words of Christ have often been used to call us all to pray for vocations to the priesthood. And pray we should, at all times, that more young men of our diocese will hear, discern and follow the call of Christ for the sake of His Body, the People of God, our Church.

The harvest is indeed plenty; however, recently we have also been blessed with an abundance of laborers or at least potential laborers. We presently have eight seminarians studying to become priests for the diocese. Four of these seminarians are from parishes in our diocese, and four are from overseas (3 from Vietnam, 1 from Congo). And, Fr. Kevin, our Diocesan Vocations Director has reminded me again recently that a further 13 young men have contacted him, inquiring about a possible call to the priesthood.

So at present, the laborers are several. This is good, isn't it? Yes, but it does bring forth one major challenge which is the financing of their studies. At present, the diocese has a fund to support the costs of formation for seminarians. With eight seminarians already receiving support in their studies and pastoral training (and quite possibly several more on the horizon), this fund will soon be depleted. Also, it is important to note that our current diocesan operating revenues cannot fund the amount needed each year to support even these eight (let alone more) seminarians. The average annual cost per seminarian is \$ 31,200.

Therefore, we have a problem. But it's a good problem and we are blessed to have it! So I ask you to continue to pray but also support our annual Good Shepherd Campaign. The first such appeal is being launched this fall with 100% of the funds raised going to our Seminarian Fund.

Christ wishes to guide, feed, and sanctify his disciples, all of us. He calls and sends out pastors after His own heart to accomplish this today in our midst. At this time, He has called and many have responded, generously and joyfully. Our part is to assist Jesus in His work of bringing forth sufficient workers for the harvest, holy and loving shepherds for His flock.

Please be generous in financially supporting this year's Good Shepherd Campaign. United in gratitude for all of God's blessings!

Sincerely in Christ,

Archbishop Albert LeGat

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