

# Bishop Fabbro's Christmas Greetings

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This Advent, I offer you my warmest greetings in the Lord. In this busy season, we take time to mark the beginning of a new liturgical year and prepare spiritually for Christmas. The light shining from our Advent candles reminds us that God's Son was made flesh in order to bring light into a world darkened by sin. We recall our own baptismal mission to spread his light and illuminate every corner of the world. In the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

***My hope for you at Christmas is that you will have the opportunity to spend time with your family and friends, as well as with your parish community, to pray, reflect and celebrate together.***

When we take a moment to reflect on the families and parishes of our diocese this past year, we thank God for the many blessings we have received. One particular focus has been on our common mission as intentional disciples of Jesus. Earlier this year, I instituted a commission that will serve the parishes, pastoral teams and parishioners who, together, make up the Diocese of London. We are calling the commission "Equipping the Saints for Ministry: The Diocesan Commission for the Families of Parishes."

At the beginning of the year, two pioneer Families of Parishes were activated: the Chatham Catholic Family of Parishes and the Catholic Family of Parishes in Norfolk. They have made a number of changes from which all of us will benefit, as we seek to take up our Gospel mission with new energy and enthusiasm. I thank them for their hard work. In the new year, I plan to announce the next Families that will be activated.

Over the summer, the Church was rocked by the Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report and the news of terrible scandals of clergy sexual abuse and cover-ups by bishops. Our diocese too has been hit hard by these scandals. As your bishop, I have pledged to do all that I can to create a safe environment for our children. Recently, we strengthened the policy which governs how our diocesan personnel and volunteers are to be safely recruited, screened, trained and monitored. This fall, all of our priests, deacons and lay ministers participated in a training workshop on "Called, Gifted &

Sent", the comprehensive manual which explains our policy.

In September, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted an updated and expanded national guideline for the protection of minors in Canada. This important document is called "Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to the Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation." My fellow Bishops asked me to write the Forward for this document. It is available publicly on our diocesan website at [www.dol.ca/news/protecting-minors](http://www.dol.ca/news/protecting-minors).



In October, the Diocese transferred 18 acres of land to King's University College, at the intersection of Huron and Waterloo Streets, in North London, as well as 15 acres to St. Peter's Seminary, including the seminary building. This transfer of lands will enable us to renew the vision of my predecessors, especially Bishop Michael Fallon, who aimed to create a hub of Catholic learning and formation in Southwestern Ontario. Details of

the land sale appear on page three of our diocesan newspaper, *Missio* (Winter 2018 edition).

This year, we said farewell to several priests who ministered in our diocese, including Fr. Richard Dales, Fr. John J. Devine, Fr. Ron Trojczak, Fr. Lawrence J. Mousseau, Rev. Canon Peter Sanczenko and Fr. Albert Williams. We mourned the passing of a significant number of Religious Sisters who served faithfully in many different apostolates. Please keep them and all of the departed in your prayers.

Advent is a time of hope, a time of prayer and of longing and expectation for Christ's coming in glory at the end of time. I invite you to celebrate his birth by joining us in our parishes. On Christmas Day, there will be many people who do not normally attend our weekend Masses. Let us welcome them warmly. Do not be afraid to let Christ's light shine brightly through your acts of kindness and hospitality.

May you have a blessed Christmas, filled with peace and love!

*+ Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.*

Most Rev. Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.  
Bishop of London

