



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every year on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, we also celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life.

On this day of prayer and reflection, we take time to thank the Lord for the great gift he has bestowed upon us in the form of devoted religious sisters and brothers and consecrated women and men. We are blessed to have many of these people serving here in the Archdiocese of Edmonton. Their presence among us, with their witness of total consecration to Christ and the Church, is a beautiful sign of the self-emptying love of Christ that brought us life.

One need not look far to see tangible signs of the legacy of this love and dedication in the Archdiocese. For example, it is largely thanks to the work of religious sisters over 100 years ago that we now enjoy excellent access to Catholic schools for our children and Catholic hospitals for our sick and injured. St. Joseph's College, our Catholic presence on the University of Alberta campus, was operated for its first 37 years by religious brothers.

Today consecrated women and men continue to share their gifts with us in a wide variety of ministries, from teaching to parish pastoral work to social services to chaplaincy to retreat leadership.

This day presents a special opportunity to show our appreciation and gratitude for these persons who give daily witness to the beauty of the Gospel message. I invite all parishioners to celebrate the gift of consecrated life in our community, through both grateful prayer and practical gestures of appreciation.

Sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

January 2009