



DIOCESE OF LONDON

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16 May 2023

To: Priests, Deacons, Religious, and the Faithful of the Diocese of London

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It seems like such a long time ago, but after being ordained a priest on 4 May 1991 in Italy, in the fall of that same year, the Superior General of the Michaelite Fathers sent me to Canada. I was in a new country, experiencing a new diocese and getting to minister to a wide variety of parishes, linguistic communities, and clergy. I learned very quickly the value and joy of trusting my superiors and being open to the work of God in the simple act of saying “yes” to His plan.

Serving in the Diocese of London for over 31 years, I have received and experienced so many blessings. I have always enjoyed serving the parishes and have been spiritually enriched by your faith, cultures, languages, traditions, charisms, gifts, and beautiful devotions. It is an amazing diocese. The faith and dedication of priests, deacons, religious, lay ecclesial ministers and volunteers', your love for the Church and your love for Jesus Christ have been such an inspiration to me.

I have had the privilege of working in many parishes as a priest and bishop, visiting your Families of Parishes and schools, celebrating the Eucharist and Sacraments, breaking open the Word of God with you and being a part of St. Peter's Seminary Board.

Now, 32 years later, I am about to open a new chapter in my ministry and my journey as the Bishop of the Diocese of Charlottetown. This chapter, like so many before, also began with a call and a positive reply. God speaks to us in many ways. I always look for signs, especially in important moments of my life, faith, and vocation journey. When the Apostolic Nuncio communicated this new appointment to me it was the Feast of Saint Joseph. In my homily that day, I reflected on two particular virtues of Saint Joseph: his tender care for the Holy Family, and his trust in God's plan. The date of the announcement, Palm Sunday, April 2nd, was also very meaningful to me as it is the anniversary of the death of Saint John Paul II, and the vigil of Divine Mercy.

I am grateful, but at the same time, humbled by the appointment the Holy Father entrusted to me to serve the Diocese of Charlottetown as its bishop. I accepted this appointment with trust and confidence that God will provide me with the necessary graces. Having lived for 32 years in this diocese and being a member of a religious order, I have learned to trust the decisions of my superiors when they asked me to take a new appointment or new ministry. God has a unique plan for each of us and there are so many small “yesses” that help prepare us for the big moments when we are faced with important choices, but strengthened by faith and experience in God's loving mercy we move ahead with our “yes” to the will of God.

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I want to thank Bishop Fabbro for being a great mentor to me and for his support, friendship, and leadership. I am grateful to him for allowing me to minister in this beautiful, diverse, spiritually vibrant diocese. I count as one of my many blessings my close collaboration with Bishop Fabbro in shepherding the diocese, especially in these last years when we have focused on restructuring the diocese, working to find new ways to evangelize and to form disciples of Jesus, evangelizing the culture, and bringing people to Christ and bringing Christ to people. He has been a true friend, teaching me so much about the life and work of a bishop. His mentoring has prepared me for this moment as I take on my new responsibilities. I am most grateful to the Diocesan Center staff that work with such dedication and passion every day and that have been of such great assistance in my ministry.

I want to thank the Michaelite Fathers for their ongoing support and fraternity. It was my spiritual formation with my brother Michaelites that gave me the faith and courage to closely follow the plan that God has laid out for me. To consecrated men and women, seminary faculty, all priests, deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers for their generosity and dedication to bringing the Good News to others and witnessing to their faith for Christ and his Church. Thank you all for promoting a culture of warmth, tenderness, inclusion, gentleness, and hospitality.

Please remember that I will remain, wherever I go, a proud disciple of Jesus, formed in the ministry of charity and service in the Diocese of London and from now on, you have a home, an open invitation, and an open heart in Charlottetown. So, once again, I am moving for the next opportunity to minister in the great vineyard of Our Lord. I have learned so much living among you, and I have been supported in difficult moments and laughed in happy times. The life of a Christian is so full of wonderful moments all leading us closer to Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life!

I know that the Diocese of Charlottetown has waited a long time for a bishop. Therefore, I look forward to journeying with them and being their spiritual father and shepherd. I also look forward to learning from them the many stories of how their faith has supported them, guided them, and now calls me to minister among them!

Please pray for me so that I can faithfully imitate Saint Joseph's virtues in serving and shepherding the Diocese of Charlottetown with tender care and trust in God's abundant mercy, love, and providence.

It has been an honour to serve you as a priest and a bishop.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Joseph Dabrowski, C.S.M.A.

Most Rev. Joseph Dabrowski, C.S.M.A.
Bishop-designate of Charlottetown