



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

To be read at all Masses on Sunday, October 30th, 2022

Catholic Social Services Sunday, October 30th

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In today's gospel, we met Zaccheus who is shunned by all around him. Despite his great financial wealth, he is spiritually bankrupt. However, Zaccheus yearns for the truth of Christ. So, he climbs a tree so that he can be a witness to that truth.

When Jesus sees Zaccheus he looks at him with the eyes of God's eternal love. Jesus sees beyond all of the social judgements and Zaccheus experiences being seen in a way he has never been seen before. This encounter transforms him.

Such is the work of Catholic Social Services in our own Archdiocese. It heals and transforms.

When vulnerable people come to Catholic Social Services they are people at the margins of our society. They may be women and children facing domestic abuse, refugees leaving a war-torn homeland, people with developmental disabilities who require around-the-clock supports, seniors living in isolation, a pregnant girl with nowhere to turn for support, or a high-risk teenager with no place to call home.

Whatever their circumstances, each year more than 20,000 vulnerable Albertans encounter God's love through the 1900 staff and 400 volunteers at Catholic Social Services who faithfully serve a noble mission. Part of the agency's success is fuelled by the generosity of our Catholic community who volunteer time or make much-needed financial donations.

Last year, I designated the final Sunday in October as the inaugural Catholic Social Services Sunday. On this, our second annual Catholic Social Services Sunday, I offer my most sincere gratitude for this very special local agency.

I pray that each of you will hold a distinct place in your hearts for all the vulnerable people in our community served by the fine people at Catholic Social Services.

Sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton