

# Archbishop Smith: Be Carried by the Tide

Over the last year and a half or so, I've been reaching out in a number of different ways to the parishioners of this Archdiocese to find out what's on their minds. I've hosted listening sessions for a variety of groups, as well as town hall gatherings on the occasion of parish visits. Weaving its way through everything I'm hearing is deep anxiety.

People have been sharing with me their concerns about things happening in the Church, our schools and our hospitals, as well as about recent trends in our society. They tell me about challenges at home. Young adults have been very open with me about their fears of not measuring up to expectations, or the angst that arises when they are told they need to create themselves. Of course, the economic challenges facing our province right now are foremost in people's minds, especially when people's livelihoods are on the line. These, and other circumstances are causing great and widespread worry.

At all times, but particularly in moments as difficult as these, we need to guard against an especially debilitating form of amnesia: forgetfulness of the providence of God. The love of God is beyond measure, and Jesus taught us to trust absolutely in the Father's certain care for our every need (*cf. Matt 6: 25-34*).

In the last while my mind has taken me back to a beautiful teaching of St John Paul II, in a document I number among my favourites: *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. In paragraph 38 he says this: "This is the moment of faith, of prayer, of conversation with God, in order to open our hearts to the tide of grace and allow the word of Christ to pass through us in all its power: *Duc in altum!*" Here is the remedy for our fears. There is at work in the Church and in the world a great "tide of grace." Our Lord will never abandon us, and without cease pours out his love to carry us along and provide for our needs. Let's not swim against the tide by self-reliance or by stubborn persistence in sinful patterns of thought or behaviour. Instead, let's open our hearts to him, listen attentively to his Word, confess our sins, and worship Him alone so that we will know the joy of being carried by this tide of grace to true peace and joy.