

# Edmonton Archdiocese parishioners increase donations through Together We Serve

The numbers are in – and once again parishioners in the Archdiocese of Edmonton have responded generously to the annual Together We Serve appeal.

In 2018, the 11 charitable partners in the appeal received a total of \$1,611,426, up from \$1,568,756 the previous year. Total donations amounted to 96 per cent of the \$2-million overall goal.

The year also saw individual parishes collect more than ever through the Parish Share program. Each parish has its own target for Together We Serve, based on historical giving patterns.

If they surpass that target, the extra amount is rebated by the Archdiocese for the parish to spend on their own charitable projects or local initiatives.

The record-breaker this year was St. Peter Parish in Villeneuve, which also includes Calahoo, Mearns, and Rivière Qui Barre. They needed some improvements to the 50-year-old St. Emerence Church in Rivière Qui Barre, so Rev. Miguel Irizar, the pastor, decided to raise some of the needed money through the Together We Serve campaign. In a matter of weeks, they raised more than three times the parish target, meaning an extra \$27,634 could be put toward the renovations.

It was an impressive accomplishment for the tiny parish. “God provided us with whatever we needed, and it’s amazing to see,” said Father Miguel, who is now studying in Rome. “It’s my hope that the renovations we did will help the parishioners of Rivière Qui Barre have a beautiful church for many years to come.”

Connie Lunde, director of development for the Archdiocese, encourages parishes to increase their targets for Together We Serve, so that they can raise funds for special projects without undertaking separate campaigns.

In 2018, a total of \$136,875 was rebated through the Parish Share program.

Here’s where the money went for Together We Serve 2018:

Catholic Social Services – Sign of Hope campaign \$313,333

Development & Peace – Caritas Canada \$246,190

Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith \$134,286

Evangelization of Nations \$89,523  
Needs of the Church in Canada \$111,904  
Needs of the Church in the Holy Land \$134,286  
Newman Theological College \$134,286  
Pope's Pastoral Works \$89,523  
St. Joseph Priests' Foundation of Edmonton \$89,523  
St. Joseph Seminary \$134,286  
St. Joseph's College, Campus Ministry \$134,286  
Parish Share rebates to parishes \$136, 876  
Administration \$176,982 (8.8%)  
Total Raised \$1,925,284

Archbishop Richard Smith acknowledged that 2018 was a difficult year for many families in Alberta, but the people of the Archdiocese still responded generously to the annual appeal, now in its sixth year.

"I am grateful for the support you have shown through your gifts to Together We Serve," he said. "You may never know the precise difference you have made, but you will know that it mattered to someone. Like the ripples in the baptismal water, the effects of your generosity reach ever outward."