

To: The St Francis Regional Ministry

Harvest Thanksgiving, 2021

Dear Friends and Faithful Members of the St Francis Regional Ministry,

As we approach the celebration of Harvest Thanksgiving, we are grateful for much in the midst of these trying times. The pandemic's fourth wave, at least in Quebec, seems to be stabilizing with the successful rollout of vaccines. Most notably, many of our churches have decided to resume in-person worship. We remain cautious, but thankful with these developments.

While pastoral work has continued during the pandemic, we are returning to something approaching pre-pandemic rhythms of Christian life together. Many of the parish corporations of the St Francis Regional Ministry decided to open their doors for in-person worship at the end of the summer. We have also been invited to resume regular worship services in our various care homes. We invite you to consult the deanery website, [www.deaneryofstfrancis.com](http://www.deaneryofstfrancis.com), for our worship schedule (under the "Calendar" tab) and for other documents, such as altar guild schedules, reading lists, and suggested hymns (under the heading "Planning Documents" on the home page). We have also seen an influx of funerals over the last few months, which were postponed during the more intense periods of the pandemic. All worship services continue to be held within government health guidelines, and we are grateful for all your patience as we get used to these protocols. As always, we are here for you if you have any pastoral concerns (Fr Giuseppe: 819 570 3433, [ggagliano@quebec.anglican.ca](mailto:ggagliano@quebec.anglican.ca); Fr Edward: 819 679 9957, [esimonton@quebec.anglican.ca](mailto:esimonton@quebec.anglican.ca)).

In September, we bid adieu to our Administrative Assistant and one of our lay readers, Spencer Nadeau. Spencer, who ably and efficiently handled our administration and officiated services at various parishes, is undertaking a one-year Master of Arts degree in English Literature at Acadia University. As a parting gift, he was provided with funds raised by a few of our parishes, our discretionary fund, and individual donations to cover the remaining costs of his education. He was also given a silver St Benedict's Medal on his last Sunday. May God bless him in this next step. For the time being, please contact Fr Giuseppe with any administrative issues you may have.

Although we are regaining a sense of normalcy, online worship and workshops continue. We were pleased to see some members of the Regional Ministry sign up for the year-long Revive course for Christian formation, offered through the Diocese of Montreal. Other opportunities for online connection continue:

- Bishop Bruce continues to provide online worship services on Facebook Live and by phone, now taking place at 4:00 pm on Sundays. Please see the Diocesan website for more information (<https://quebec.anglican.ca/resources/at-home-worship>).
- The Sunday service at St Barnabas, North Hatley continues to be streamed by Zoom at 9:00 am, and an e-mail may be sent to [stbarnabastechs@gmail.com](mailto:stbarnabastechs@gmail.com) to receive the link and order of service.
- The Rev'd Joshua Paetkau continues to offer a service of Evening Prayer every Sunday at 7:00 pm via Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/joshua.paetkau>).
- Gospel-Based Discipleship is offered through the parish of St Michael, Sillery via Zoom every Wednesday at 7:00 pm (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81991071585>).

Thank you to all who have continued to support your local parish financially. Offerings and other donations may be given online to particular parishes through Canada Helps (<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/church-society-of-the-diocese-of-quebec/>), or you may contact your local wardens and treasurers for more information on how to give.

In the book of Revelation—in the second-last chapter of the Bible—Christ says to St John, “See, I am making all things new” (21:5). This exclamation takes place in the midst of John foreseeing the restoration of all creation, when Christ returns and heaven and earth are joined as one. Our faith does not proclaim a God who creates the world and steps back as an impartial observer. We acknowledge that God is active in the transformation of the world, as shown in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we await that final renewal at the end of all things, we see glimmers of this promise in our present life.

The pandemic has changed numerous aspects of our lives, many of which may only be seen in hindsight. We are grateful for those moments where we witness renewal and restoration explicitly. Yet, even in the midst of challenging times, we can hold fast to Christ’s promise that he is making all things new. Jesus is with us even in the midst of difficulties, guiding us by the Holy Spirit. We give thanks for God’s continual presence with us during these times, not only as individuals, but as a part of the Body of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward and Fr Giuseppe  
Priests of the St Francis Regional Ministry

*O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go forward with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

A prayer by Fr Eric Milner-White OGS

*Ô Dieu, tu as appelé tes serviteurs dans des périples dont nous ne voyons pas la fin, par des sentiers encore inexplorés, aux périls inconnus. Donne-nous la foi d’y aller vaillamment, sans savoir où nous allons, mais sachant que ta main nous guide et que ton amour nous soutient, par Jésus Christ notre Seigneur. Amen.*

Une prière par Père Eric Milner-White OGS