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21 April 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter

To: The Faithful of the Diocese of London

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I want to address you today on this year's Annual Parish Appeal for St. Peter's Seminary.

As we heard in today's Gospel reading, Jesus describes for us the qualities of good shepherds – intimate knowledge of his flock, the ability to lead and protect, to accompany and seek out those who are separated from the flock. Traditionally, the Church has interpreted this reading as referring to people who are living vocations in ministry, as priests, deacons, or lay ministers.

Our Diocese is blessed to have St. Peter's Seminary as a resource for people who are seeking a supportive community to discern God's call to servant leadership in the Church. From St. Peter's, men and women emerge to serve in parishes throughout our Diocese and in parishes in dozens of dioceses across Canada. For over a century, the Seminary has received the enthusiastic and generous support of people from our Diocese and beyond it.

The Annual Parish Appeal for the Seminary is now once again made available to parishioners. The rector and faculty of St. Peter's are doing great work in preparing men for the priesthood with formation that is faithful to Church teachings and responding to our Holy Father's call for a new approach, a synodal Church grounded in listening and inclusion.

This year has been dedicated as a special Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood. We all know how urgent the need is for priests. We thank God for the ordination of three new priests on April 27, all men of our Diocese. Next year, the Seminary will have seven seminarians who will be in parishes on their pastoral year, a larger number than is typical. This is a wonderful development, but it presents a financial challenge to the Seminary for the coming year. So, the 2024 Annual Parish Appeal is critical in order that the Seminary flourish.

I ask you, as stewards of St. Peter's Seminary, to be as generous to this Appeal as your circumstances allow, as you have in past years. The Seminary's continued success is personally important to me, because it is a special way in which our Diocese can participate in the larger work of evangelization by forming priests who will minister here in our Diocese and in dioceses across Canada.

I am amazed and always gratified by the response of our people when they have been called to action. I ask you to take my request for this appeal to your hearts and your prayers. May you experience the peace and joy of our Risen Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
Bishop of London