Filling the Jars to the Brim

A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of Toronto: 2026–2033

**Letter of Introduction by His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo –
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto**

"This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11)

My dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.

With gratitude and great hope, I present to you our new Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan, *Filling the Jars to the Brim*. This plan invites each one of us to deepen our loving relationship with our Saviour Jesus Christ and to renew our commitment to the faith, life and mission of the Church throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto. The overarching purpose of it is to identify several key priorities which will inspire us and focus the energies, the attention, heart and evangelizing efforts of the whole archdiocese. It is our response to the call of the Resurrected Jesus: "Go out and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28: 19–20) so that the Good News will take root in the life of the Church and by consequence in society at large in a fuller, more authentic, engaged and attritive way.

I believe that you will find that the Pastoral Plan affirms much of what is already being accomplished in our parishes and various communities: families, schools, universities, seminaries, religious houses, ecclesial movements, associations and new communities, healthcare and social agencies.

The theme of our plan draws inspiration from the Wedding Feast at Cana as reported in the Gospel of John (2:1-11). When the wine ran out, Mother Mary brought the need to her Son and instructed the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." At Jesus' direction, they filled six stone jars with water, filling them to the brim. What they offered, Christ transformed. This encounter underscores a profound mystery and truth into which we are to enter and live: all our efforts and human cooperation with grace, offered generously and faithfully, with trust and humility, are transformed and become fruitful through the incredible power of Christ's life-giving grace.

As we look forward and embark along this seven-year journey, through the six priorities or jars we are establishing a clear emphasis for a profound renewal of the faith and a proclamation of the Gospel with great zeal, vigour, enthusiasm and generosity. By committing ourselves to these six priorities, together as an archdiocesan family, a family of families, a community of communities, we pledge to do our part with the help of the Lord who is our light, guide, inspiration and the fulfillment of every desire of the human heart.

Our pastoral plan has grown out of prayer, listening and discernment. Thousands of Catholics across the archdiocese participated in the initial consultation, sharing their hopes, concerns and experiences. I am grateful to everyone who contributed in one way or another: clergy, laity and consecrated persons. Your voices have helped shape this seven-year journey, from 2026 to 2033, and the six pastoral priorities that will guide our pastoral witnessing together.

We are being called to strengthen family life as the foundation for a living faith and apostolic mission; to allow that faith to move us outward in service to those who are poor, sick, and vulnerable; to draw renewed strength from prayer and the sacraments; to deepen our personal knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching; to discern the vocations and gifts through which each person is called to holiness and to service; and to accompany youth and young adults as they grow in discipleship, transmitting and carrying the faith forward so that the life and mission of the Church may be renewed from generation to generation.

These six pastoral priorities – symbolized by the six Cana jars - are closely inter-connected. Together, they express our desire that individuals and families, parishes, schools, social agencies and other Catholic communities will experience a life-changing encounter with the risen and living Christ, and be blessed with a true sense of belonging to him and to his Church so to respond resolutely to his call to journey in holiness of life and serve others as he did and out of love for him.

The first year will be devoted especially to listening, discernment and assessment through pastoral councils at the archdiocesan and parish levels, in a spirit of authentic synodality. This will help us recognize the gifts and graces already present among us, alongside the needs that call for renewed attention. In each of the subsequent six years, we will give particular attention to one pastoral priority – one jar - while continuing to nurture them all.

I invite you to read this pastoral plan prayerfully, perhaps even with others or in community and consider how you can do your part for its implementation. Clergy, consecrated persons and lay faithful each have a vital role to play for we are a family. Through our prayer, participation and service, we can work collectively to bring these shared commitments to life in our different communities. We desire this pastoral plan to be our human effort so that the fruits of the Spirit (charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity) may be produced in abundance and made manifest by the Holy Spirit. It involves a wide-spread transformation, it is about building the Kingdom of God, it is aimed at discipleship and evangelization.

Above all, I ask you to pray for the fruitfulness of this journey. It is imperative that we continue to listen attentively to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to one another, respond generously to the Lord's call and inspirations, trusting that he will accomplish more than we could achieve through our efforts alone. We are indeed God's Beloved: known and loved, chosen and called, equipped and sent into the world, into our world, here and now, as missionary disciples bearing and sharing the greatest message ever known to humankind. We are all invited to proclaim Jesus, each in our own way and depending on our vocation, charisms and circumstances. The Holy Spirit is our constant inspiration and companion who touches hearts and opens the doors for authentic witnessing and evangelization. We have a unique grace and opportunity with this pastoral plan to reach out to our contemporaries, to our culture, to each person and institution, and witness to them the saving truths of the Gospel of Jesus. And in this way and through this gift, afford each person in our entourage and others, the grace to encounter anew – or perhaps for the first time – the One who is our way, our truth and our life (Jn 14:6).

Our Lady's presence and action at Cana is a paradigm for our lives, our journey of faith and the unfolding of our pastoral plan. We should never forget or minimize the *gift* she is to the Church. At Cana, the Lord Jesus worked the transformation that was needed largely thanks to Mother Mary's loving presence (we need to invite her into our lives, communities and pastoral plan), her unwavering faith/trust in her Son, her intuitive gaze of her surroundings, her attentiveness to the needs of others with the heart of a mother, and her bold yet humble intervention and powerful intercession. She is our helper, the one who brings us to Christ and the one who facilitates, mediates and accompanies the transformation of our hearts, lives and communities.

May Our Lady of Cana's words "Do whatever he tells you" keep on resounding in the depths of our souls. Together, let us fill the jars to the brim and entrust this transformative journey to her Son our Lord Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Jesus with Mary,

† Frank Card. Leo

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