



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 2020

Dear Friends in the Jewish Communities of Edmonton:

The arrival of Rosh Hashanah in your calendar gives me occasion to send my personal best wishes, and those of our entire Catholic community, to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, to your rabbis and synagogue congregations, and to all members of the Jewish communities residing here in the Edmonton area.

Shana Tova! – Happy New Year!

The themes of your High Holy Days serve as reminders to Christians as well as to Jews that human beings are frail creatures in daily need of repentance, divine mercy and the life-giving sustenance of divine love. The circumstances of the pandemic this year bring this message into particular focus: all of us are vulnerable and our society can only truly thrive when, moved by compassion and a sense of solidarity, we care for one another.

Pope Francis spoke about this at a recent meeting with Jewish leaders in Rome. He said:

“In the midst of crises, a *solidarity* guided by *faith* enables us to translate the love of God in our globalised culture, not by building towers or walls...that divide, but then collapse, but by interweaving communities and sustaining processes of growth that are truly human and solid”.

Here in Edmonton – thanks be to God – our two communities enjoy many positive and life-giving initiatives through schools and educational forums, through social and civic engagements and through mutual associations with various interfaith organizations in our city. I think we can be very proud of the positive interactions that we have achieved between our two communities, along with many others, in the name of interreligious understanding and cooperation here in Edmonton.

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Still, I wonder sometimes what more we might do *together* to address the needs of the “most vulnerable” sectors in our society. Are there projects that we could undertake together to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked or to shelter the homeless in our city? Particularly during this time of the pandemic, might we engage our younger members into a project that would serve the more senior members? I can only think that such a witness would give glory to the Lord and contribute to the well-being of everyone living here in the Edmonton area.

May the Eternal One bless and enlighten your communities and our cooperation, so that together we can accept and carry out ever better his plans in our world; and may this message from our community to yours add to the joy of your celebrations at this sacred time of the year.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

✠Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton