

The Pope's Pastoral Works



'You need go out and look for the poor'



Pope Francis greets a baby during a dinner with the poor hosted by new Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, in the dining hall at the Vatican June 29. (CNS photo/Gianna Lasilli)

The Office of Papal Charities is the Vatican department charged with exercising charity to the poor in the name of the Holy Father. It is headed by the Almoner of His Holiness, Archbishop Konrad Krajewski.

Shortly after his appointment in 2013, Archbishop Krajewski explained his duties this way: "The Holy Father told me at the beginning, 'You can sell your desk. You don't need it. You need to get out of the Vatican. Don't wait for people to come ringing. You need to go out and look for the poor.'"

He has taken that direction to heart. Archbishop Krajewski visits homes for the elderly and writes cheques to the needy. He travelled to the Italian island of Lampedusa after a migrant boat capsized, and spent four days there, bringing 1,600 phone cards so the survivors could call loved ones back home in Eritrea. He also prayed with police divers as they worked to retrieve the dead from the sea floor.

In Rome he has become known for establishing showers and barber service under the Vatican

colonnade for the poor and homeless, hosting dinners with the Pope for the needy, setting up medical clinics for the poor on the street, and distributing food and sleeping bags in train stations and aid to earthquake victims.

Each morning, he gets a bundle of letters that the Pope has received from the faithful asking for help. On the top of each letter, Francis might write "You know what to do" or "Go find them" or "Go talk to them." In a given year, the almoner (one who distributes alms) may respond with help to over 6,000 such requests.

A sign of the importance of his ministry came earlier this year, when Krajewski was appointed a cardinal.

"But I've done nothing on my own initiative; everything always started from the Pope, so I should not be given any merit," he told The Vatican Insider. "It was enough for me to be the almoner of the Pope, to be heard because I represent him. When they give me offerings for the poor, they trust me because they trust the Pope."

About the Pope's Pastoral Works

The tradition of papal charities goes back to the earliest centuries of the Church. The almoner's duties are twofold: carrying out acts of charity in the name of the Pope, and raising the money to fund them. Our gifts through *Together We Serve* help extend that hand of charity to thousands of people each year.

**Thank you for your generous support of
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Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith



Age, weather, and climate change take toll in the North



In my first half year as bishop in the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, I have spent a great deal of time travelling to our communities near and far. Everywhere I have gone I have met and been encouraged by wonderful, hospitable people in vibrant faith communities. Unfortunately, the state of many of our Church buildings and rectories are not faring as well. Age, weather and climate change are factors that have taken their toll, and the work of maintenance and restoration is ongoing.

With the help of *Together We Serve*, we have brought new life to the mission church and rectory of St. Theresa of Avila in Tulita, on the banks of the Mackenzie River. This beautiful old church was sinking into melting permafrost and its old clapboard siding was weather-worn, but now it sits on a new foundation and has had a facelift of new metal siding.

The changing environment has also played a role in the Arctic.

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The iconic igloo church, Our Lady of Victory in Inuvik, is also subsiding into what was once solid ground. With the help of *Together We Serve* we are able to undertake an engineering study to determine the best way to save the church for the use of generations to come.

In Deline, on the shores of Great Bear Lake, lack of housing in the community means that the resident priest needs a new home. Thanks to *Together We Serve*, the local community is busy renovating a house that was donated to the church.

A church is much more than just a building, but in the Far North good shelter is a necessity and maintaining our buildings is costly. The people of the North are generous with their time and talents. With your help we can put those gifts to use for the good of the Church and the people of God.

Thank you for your generosity.

✠ *Jon Hansen*

Bishop, Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

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