



March 2021

Dear brothers and sisters,

As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, he told his disciples: “Remain here, and stay awake with me.” This simple command, recounted in the Gospel of Matthew, captures so much of what it means to be a disciple. It also illustrates **how you and I are called to respond to the suffering around us**, which has felt so overwhelming since the pandemic began.

When a person in distress calls any one of the 40+ agencies funded by your gift to ShareLife, the first thing they want to know is, “**Does this person care about me?**” Apart from the specific help they are seeking, they want to know they aren’t alone – that they matter.

Sharon Mayne Devine, the director of Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, says Jesus’ words in the garden inspire her agency’s work. The circumstances of her clients, such as victims of domestic violence, are difficult to bear. But she is committed to “staying awake” in that moment. “When people feel witnessed and seen,” she says, “**their hope goes up**. They believe they can go on.”

**Will you, too, stay awake?** As the pandemic continues, we may grow tired of thinking about those in need. But our community agencies on the front lines cannot continue their vital work without you. Your support enables:

- an elderly woman, living alone and afraid of Covid-19, to receive **regular check-ins and weekly grocery hampers**;
- a Deaf child, living with family members who do not speak sign language, to connect with other Deaf peers and **not feel so isolated**;
- a young man struggling with addiction, worsened by the pandemic, to access a drug rehabilitation program that will **save his life**.

These are but a few examples of how your support is tangibly improving thousands of lives. As poor and marginalized people continue to be hit hardest by the pandemic, **their needs are greater now than ever**.

Vulnerable members of our community are **relying on you and me** to ensure ongoing access to the care they so desperately need. This is why it's crucial we meet our parish campaign goal of \$13.8 million. Our goal can be met, but only if we each do our part.

As disciples of Our Lord, we “remain here, and stay awake” with Him when we bear witness to those in need around us, in whom He is present. **Please join me in saying yes** to His call by giving to the ShareLife Campaign to the best of your ability.

Sincerely,

*† Thomas Card. Collins*

Thomas Cardinal Collins  
Archbishop of Toronto

PS Pope Francis says, “To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us.” **Thank you** for your compassionate concern for those in need.