

## ShareLife Sample Speech/Homily – Fall 2020

*Note: We invite pastors and ShareLife committee members to use the following speech at Mass or parish events. You are welcome to adapt this text to your audience.*

How many of us would have imagined just seven months ago the world we live in today? If you had said back in February that we would be wearing masks, eating outside at restaurants, and standing six feet apart from our friends, who would have believed you?

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our society. Many people are working from home – if they are still working – and relying on some form of assistance to help meet the basic needs of their families.

Our ShareLife campaign supports the work of 42 agencies, providing support to the entire community, regardless of religious affiliation. More than ever, ShareLife-funded agencies have been called upon during this pandemic to provide services in increased and innovative ways. Some examples include:

- LA Centre for Active Living has been delivering food hampers and prepared meals, while making phone calls to isolated seniors.
- The Rose of Durham has been meeting their clients virtually. They report increased anxiety, mental health breakdowns, and substance abuse issues.
- Catholic Family Services agencies are seeing escalations of domestic violence, as well as an increase in the complexity of the issues their clients are dealing with.
- Silent Voice, which serves the Deaf community, notes the challenge of masks for those who read lips. Masks can conceal elements of grammar and inflections that affect meaning.

These agencies are some examples of how our support is making an impact during this difficult time in our history.

I always like to share one tangible story that demonstrates this impact. During the past few months, our society has prominently thanked the many front line workers who keep our society moving – the doctors, nurses, grocery store employees, pharmacists, hydro and gas workers, and many others.

Susan is one of these people and she turned to one of our Catholic Family Services agencies through a virtual walk-in clinic. Susan needed help to deal with the increased anxiety she was facing as a health care provider. She reported that she needed a safe place to process the emotions that were surfacing as she realized how dangerous her job had become. Most health care workers enter the profession with a desire to help those who are ill, but now she found herself in a situation where going to work meant potentially catching the virus and risking her life – something that caused her to feel anxious and stressed.

Through a single virtual session, Susan learned strategies for coping with her anxiety, and reported that session helped her to feel hope in response to her situation and greater confidence in her ability to deal with what was ahead in the days and weeks to come.

As I heard this story, my thoughts went back to the front line workers who kept our society running in these difficult times. They are here for us, but who is there for them?

Due to the pandemic, our three ShareLife collections have not taken place; these will now happen on September 12-13, October 11-12 and November 7-8. At the beginning of this year, ShareLife allocated nearly \$13.8 million to our agencies. We have committed to maintain 90% of this funding, with the reduction primarily coming from programs that were unable to operate (such as summer camps for children). We are grateful for the \$8.4 million raised to date from our parish communities, and now need to work toward our parish campaign goal of \$13.8 million. At our parish, we have achieved [amount] toward our parish goal of [amount]. I would like to thank those who have made a contribution to ShareLife to date. Mindful that there are many people across our archdiocese who will not be able to contribute this year (or who need to contribute a reduced amount), I invite you to do the following:

- If you have not made a contribution to ShareLife this year, I ask you to prayerfully consider doing so. Envelopes are available [location].
- If you already made a contribution, we are grateful for your generosity. If possible, I ask you to consider an additional gift if you are able to do so.
- If you are unable to make a contribution this year, we ask you to pray that those who are able to do so will support the work of ShareLife agencies.

As a Catholic community, we have a long history of being the hands of Christ for those in need. This year, more than ever, we are called to be there for our brothers and sisters in Christ. One of the ways that we do this in the Archdiocese of Toronto is through our ShareLife campaign. In closing, I would like to quote the words of Cardinal Collins in a message he has released for ShareLife (which can also be found on the ShareLife website):

*In ShareLife we find the presence of Christ in the midst of those who suffer. We are there with them because He is with us, sending us out to be with those who are in need. That's the purpose of ShareLife. Especially in this time of such great need in the midst of this pandemic, I ask you to, in a very particular way, be generous in supporting those in need during the ShareLife Sunday collection.*