



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA
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Dear friends in the Muslim community,

As-salamu alaykum. Warm greeting in the name of God, the giver of peace. I hope that the month of Ramadan, this year coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought all of you God's generous blessings. God's generous blessings, despite the enormous challenges that have come our way.

Over the past year, the Christian and Muslim communities in Regina have journeyed together in new and profound ways. A year ago, we grieved together following the tragic violence at the mosques in Christchurch and the churches in Sri Lanka. We also came together to address Islamophobia, racism, and intolerance in our city and within our churches. During an exceptional time in the fall of 2019, we joined together in a public dialogue that witnessed to our mutual desire to be good friends and neighbours. On behalf of the Roman Catholic community, I commit to continuing this work together with you in a spirit of fraternity.

As our country has been forced into quarantine and "social distancing" to protect the vulnerable from the coronavirus, we have continued to build healthy cooperation. I rejoice in our ability to share with you in service to those who are most in need, to those who are ill and those who are isolated. I give thanks to God for all those who give themselves in compassionate service. May they be protected by God's blessings. Each year, during Ramadan, the pope's office for Interreligious Dialogue issues a letter to Muslims for the feast of Id al-Fitr. This year, the attached letter was written before the COVID-19 outbreak. Its theme is "Protecting together places of worship." It recalls the painful memory of the attacks on places of worship in recent years, but also the happy memory of the document on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi in February 2019. It is my hope and prayer that this friendship between pope and imam can be a model for relations between Christians and Muslims everywhere. May we be the brothers and sisters that God has created us to be.

As Christians entered into the season of Lent in March, we found ourselves in a profound period of self-denial and isolation due to the pandemic. As you continue in the holy time of fasting and service during Ramadan, may the blessings of God protect you from all illness and heal you in body and spirit.

In peace,

Most Rev. Donald Bolen
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Regina