



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

**Statement of Archbishop Richard W. Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton  
Regarding the Lac Ste Anne Pilgrimage 2021**

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and following upon the counsel of Alberta Health Services, the Board of Trustees of the Lac Ste Anne Pilgrimage Site has unanimously taken the decision to hold the 2021 pilgrimage virtually, as was done in 2020. The pilgrimage this year will not take place in person.

This is a very sad and difficult decision to make. It was painful not to be able to gather in person last year for our beloved pilgrimage, and we had hoped that this year we could return to our traditional practice. Yet COVID-19 remains with us, now with worrying variants. Furthermore, although the Province has begun its vaccine distribution, nevertheless there will not be a sufficient percentage of the population vaccinated by the time of the pilgrimage for permission to be granted for large outdoor gatherings. Over the course of a few days there can be as many as 30,000 people come on pilgrimage to the Lac Ste Anne site, many of whom are elderly or of poor health. We simply cannot hold this event in person when we know that doing so would risk the health and possibly the life of the people who participate.

We have experience now with holding the pilgrimage virtually, and are prepared to do so again this year. Details will be communicated once they are finalized.

Let's turn at this moment to Good Ste. Anne. She has a special love for us, and we for her. Our tradition of going to her in prayer when we need healing dates back generations. Let's ask now for her intercession that God's blessings come upon all who are ill with the virus or any disease, their families and all who care for them.

Good Ste. Anne, pray for us!

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton  
Chair, Lac Ste. Anne Board of Trustees

April 23, 2021