Your Excellencies Mgr Bonazzi, Mgr Gagnon and Mgr Huculak,

Dear Sisters, Priests, Deacons, and friends:

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I speak to all the nuns who have gathered here today. You represent several active congregations in the service of our Manitoba Church. You also represent a legacy of care and compassion of the women religious of all the congregations since your predecessors first arrived in 1844.

On behalf of the previous and current Archdiocese of St. Boniface and of all God’s worshippers, past and present, I therefore want to thank you for the invaluable part that all of those congregations have played in the history of our archdiocese.

You all no doubt agree that a truly typical symbol of Manitoba is the Métis arrowhead sash, or *ceinture fléchée*, whose beauty comes from the diversity of colours woven together. In the same way, throughout the history of our Church, each baptized member through their chosen vocation has brought the life of Christ to others through love, charity, and the sharing of faith and hope.

Today and for many years to come, this monument and space will be an invitation to reflect on the strong and beautiful threads that you as women religious have added to the fabric of our Church life.

Whether these women came from Quebec, Europe, and more recently from Africa and Asia, or from many local families, they have always devotedly loved and served the Church and all their brothers and sisters, according to the charism of their congregation.

Providing a Catholic education in French and English, establishing a host of Catholic health and welfare institutions, leading the pastoral life in our parishes, championing major justice and solidarity causes – all these efforts have shaped the life and the spirit of our beloved St. Boniface Church. You were often the pioneers who plotted the pathways of faith and service ordained by God.

Decade after decade, you faithfully contributed to renewing our Church. Through your stories and prayers, you continue to shape us as our grandmothers did.

In response to all these God-given graces, I want to tell you once again how much we are eternally indebted to you and how much we love all of you. Know that you will always have a special place in the heart of the clergy and the faithful of St. Boniface. May God bless you always!

Archbishop Albert LeGatt