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To: The Faithful of the Diocese of London

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Early in the Gospel of Mark we read:

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest awhile." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves (6:30-32).

The life and ministry of a priest in our times is one filled with numerous satisfactions and untold blessings, but it is also one that includes many demands and challenges: how to proclaim the gospel in a society often closed to its message; how to provide pastoral care in an increasingly complex world; and how to adapt to the new realities of ministry in parishes that are changing. To meet these difficult situations and circumstances with wisdom and serenity requires not only personal skills and abilities, but, first and foremost, it necessitates that every priest be grounded in prayer in order to sustain and nourish his relationship to the Lord Jesus, who has designated him a shepherd of his people. In order to do so, priests, like the apostles in the gospel, need to "come away" for a while to be renewed in heart, mind and spirit.

It has been my long-held hope that the priests of our diocese might be able to "come away" together as a body for a time of silence, prayer and reflection. Now after much planning, my hope will be realized as all our priests will join together in a common retreat in two groups during the month of May.

Having chosen to disconnect from their pastoral responsibilities for a few days to purposely draw near to the Lord and each other, they need the prayerful support of the people of the diocese. *Therefore, I am inviting you to pray and offer sacrifices throughout the entire month of May for the priests of this diocese.* As individuals, as families and as communities, pray for your pastors, your associate pastors, your priest-chaplains and all of the priests who have touched your life over the years. Pray that they may be faithful and constant in carrying out the mission of Christ and that they may be reinvigorated and strengthened to serve in imitation of the one who came to serve and not be served and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.
Bishop of London