

Madam President,

Solomon wrote in the Canticle of Canticles of the “bride” of the Holy Ghost. A love story...referring to his beloved as an enclosed garden of God. It is a very provocative description of this beautiful “rose” and of the adoration, inspiration, and protectiveness invoked by her beauty. Her eyes are doves’ eyes, her hair like flocks of goats, lips are a scarlet lace, and her speech is ever sweet! She is a strong woman, her neck is as the tower of David. Solomon tells us of how she is fair to all and has no blemish.

Further in the canticle, the tides turn, and the bride describes her groom...how she loves him and how wonderfully she wishes to treat him.

Together they go into the villages, fields and vineyards to allow them to flourish, and bring good will to all. And, the Holy Ghost names her as the Rose of Sharon.

Today, we are called to go into the villages, fields and vineyards to care for the vulnerable, the sick, the homeless in all ways possible. In the London diocese we have provided shelter for the homeless at various agencies such as Streethelp in Windsor, Women’s Interval Home in Sarnia, men’s and women’s shelters in Chatham, London, Woodstock. Donations to St. Vincent de Paul, Drouillard Place, Windsor Youth Center, St. Joseph Hospitality Center, Mission Services of London and other places provided food and clothing for the vulnerable and homeless. Hospice and hospital visits comfort the sick and dying. The Shephard’s Way Inn in Chatham ensures the poor in spirit, poor in money, and the homeless are fed when they walk in off the street, whether they have money or not. Throughout the diocese, we continue to support Right to Life, Salvation Army shelters, food banks, St. Vincent de Paul, Outreach for Hunger, Goodfellow’s. Toiletries, warm socks, scarves, sweaters, feminine hygiene products, baby formula and diapers continue to be collected and donated to the various programs.

Saint Brigid tells us that the rose is beautiful to the sight, and tender to the touch, and yet it grows among thorns, obstructing the beauty and tenderness. We are called to be mild, patient, beautiful in virtue, and be put to a test among adversaries. And as the thorn protects the rose, we are here to protect the vulnerable of our society. The members of the London Diocese will continue to walk in the footsteps of our Mother, the Mystical Rose.

Madame President, this concludes my report.