Dear Friends of St. Joseph’s College,

Celebrating the birth of Jesus allows us to rejoice in His coming, to reflect on the blessings bestowed on us this past year, and to consider the work ahead of us in the coming year. We have much to be thankful for and much to do in order to continue building the St. Joseph’s community.

St. Joseph’s College continues to serve University of Alberta students and the Edmonton community through our engaging classes (this year setting enrolment records — be sure to keep reading), our campus ministry programs, our worshipping community, and our vibrant men’s and women’s residences. For those of you that were able to attend the Advent Season Reception on December 4th, you heard it has been a busy year with many new faces at SJC, and 2020 will bring continued change. I will be leaving St. Joseph’s College next July and will share more about the presidential transition in the Easter letter. Today, I’m writing to share some of the highlights from this past year and our upcoming plans at SJC.

**Revitalizing St. Joseph’s Men’s Residence**

As you can imagine, living in a space built in the 1920’s certainly brings some challenges. However, providing a fresh coat of paint, updating the sink features, and replacing outdated carpet with a wood-like laminate floor makes for quite a face-lift (see the photo on the right). SJC student Jacob, who lives in a room that was renovated this past summer, admits that he’s the envy of all the other men in the building. Through gifts from SJC donors like you, we’re optimistic we can upgrade nearly all the rooms in the Men’s Residence before the Fall 2020 term.

*Jacob’s newly-renovated room!*
Building SJC Community
I also want to highlight a few community building events that donations help support. We started the school year with a campus-wide BBQ that was hugely successful, with over 90% of SJC’s residents, faculty, and staff attending — even our Board Members came to help Chef Ben with the task of filling all the hungry students’ stomachs. This past November, our Campus Ministry office hosted a retreat that focused on the Holy Spirit. Over 26 students headed off to Pigeon Lake with Theresa Robinson, one of our Campus Ministers over Reading Week. As you can see in this photo, even in the cold the group had an amazing time!

Growing Academic Programs
Finally, thanks to the leadership of Dr. Shawn Flynn and the SJC staff and faculty, we are on track to set a record for the number of students in our courses, with over 2400 enrolments for 2019-2020. Can you imagine what our founders back in the 1920's would say about the number of students we are now serving?!

How You Can Help!
You will find within this envelope a one-page donation card. St. Joseph's College is dependent on your donations. I hope that, even through difficult financial times in our province, you will prayerfully consider a contribution of any amount during this holiday season. Whether it is directly to the 2019 Christmas Campaign focused on building improvements, a general gift helping our greatest needs, or something more specific, such as Campus Ministry or Academics, the money collected will continue to allow SJC to fulfill its mandate to be a beacon for Catholic Higher Education both in Alberta and in Canada. I pray this letter finds you both physically and spiritually healthy, and hope our paths will cross in the coming weeks of the Christmas season or in the New Year.

Sincerely,
Fr. Terry Kersch, CSB