



## NEWS RELEASE

# Michael Fullan to Retire from Catholic Charities

**October 20, 2022**

[Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto](#)

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For 29 years, Michael Fullan has served as Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto (CCAT), a role he has embraced as a vocation and describes as “an opportunity and a gift.”

Now, he says it is time to shift his focus to family and volunteer opportunities, announcing that he will retire from Catholic Charities as of December 31, 2022.

Hired during the tenure of His Eminence Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic, Michael’s first day with Catholic Charities was September 27, 1993, a day of great significance for him because not only is it the anniversary of the founding of CCAT, but it is also the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities’ patron, as well as the anniversary of Michael’s marriage to his wife, Frances.

He notes that, in the decades that followed his arrival at CCAT, “the position/vocation allowed the opportunity and gift to blend my professional social work background with my Catholic faith—living out our Catholic Social Teaching and being attentive to the Corporal Works of Mercy.”

His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins, Chairman of Catholic Charities, describes Michael as a creative problem solver who is innovative in his thinking and dedicated to living out his faith.

“Michael has been tireless in his advocacy for the most vulnerable in our society, serving with grace and good humour and an abounding faith,” Cardinal Collins says. “He is admired by all for his intelligence, his goodness and his kindness, and while we will miss his presence at Catholic Charities, we are delighted that he will be able to spend more time with his family and adopt a more relaxed pace.”

Michael’s background in social work meant he was well prepared to work with CCAT’s range of member agencies, which serve everyone from teenaged parents and families who are new to Canada, to seniors and people with exceptional needs.



Regardless of the circumstances CCAT was facing, Michael's philosophy to working with member agencies – a figure that currently stands at 21 – has remained the same, and is particularly true in today's climate, fueled by fears of inflation and economic uncertainty.

"I have always stressed that we need to meet increasing service challenges, in a climate with fewer resources, by working together, differently, to do more versus doing more with less," he says.

When asked about some of the challenges he has faced in his three decades of work with CCAT, his answer includes the work of "supporting and encouraging Catholic agency executive directors to keep the faith while providing a range of important social services, often to the most vulnerable in our communities."

And while there are always needs in the community, he notes that recent years have demonstrated the need to be reading the signs of the times, he added, citing the need to develop resources to assist the Archdiocese to provide viable alternatives to MAID or services to safeguard the intrinsic worth of vulnerable seniors, whose unique challenges were exposed and exacerbated during the COVID pandemic.

"We work with people, who are often broken," he adds, "where life is messy and solutions rarely black and white."

He adds, however, that along with the staff members of CCAT, "I have been inspired and honoured to work with dedicated leaders within our Catholic agencies, including the staff and volunteers, who have served the Church through CCAT. I am particularly grateful to the staff members of CCAT, past and present, for their hard work and their friendship."

His many career highlights include overseeing Catholic Charities' 100th anniversary celebrations in 2012, a year that marked the creation of the Father Paul Lennon/Doreen Cullen Social Work Scholarship. He also takes great pride in the implementation of the Shared Services Model. These services offer pro-rated administrative and back-of-office support to CCAT's member agencies, in the areas of Human Resources, Financial Management and, most recently, Information Technology. The model was developed to enable agency leadership to focus on the community and service development, while still ensuring that administrative obligations were being performed to a high standard. Today, the Shared Services continue to grow, with new services being developed, in response to agency needs.

Other milestones in Michael's career include the broadening of CCAT benefits consortium; and merging of CCAT's pension plan with that of a larger multi-employer pension plan so that employees at smaller member agencies can access important health and retirement benefits. The motivation is to be able to offer peace of mind and the added financial

security, that their colleagues at larger agencies have access to. It's a sign, say board members and those who work with Michael, of his care for agency staff and his commitment to core social justice tenets.

CCAT Board President Maureen Leon calls Michael a bridge builder between member agencies, the board and those CCAT serves. "His unwavering dedication to those in need is an inspiration to everyone who has had the good fortune to work with him. He has consistently approached his role with patience and good humour, bringing out the best in people, allowing them to do their best for the people we serve. He will truly be missed" she says.

Michael's immediate plans include more time with Frances, their three children and their eight grandchildren.

"I look forward to more time for travel, family, volunteer work and working on my tennis, pickleball and golf game," he says.

A search for the next Executive Director of Catholic Charities will begin shortly, Leon says.



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