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Notes from Bishop Dunn's Letter to Priests and Deacons June 20, 2016

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

With the official opening of the new Pastoral Center, we have now officially moved into our new Diocesan Pastoral Center, Suite 103, 200 Churchill Drive in Membertou. Many people attended the Blessing Ceremony and the reception afterwards. All went well and I want to thank all the diocesan staff who worked so hard to make the official opening such a lovely celebration. Feel free to drop in and see the new space.

Please pray for the following people:

- Fr. Duncan MacIssac, as he mourns the death of his brother, Melvin MacIssac, who died suddenly April 20 in Dartmouth;
- Fr Joe Gillis, who mourns the death of his brother-in-law, Allan Gills, who died on May 16, 2016 at the age of 93;
- Fr. Jake Andrea, who mourns the death of his brother, Joe Andrea, of Sydney Mines, who died at the age of 92, on Monday, June 6, 2016, at the Northside General Hospital;
- Fr. Jonathan Nweke of the Diocese of Awgu, Nigeria, who died suddenly on May 31, 2016. He served as Associate Pastor in New Waterford in 2004-2005 and Administrator for Guysborough and missions from June 29, 2005 – June 27, 2012. At his death, Fr. Nweke was the Rector of St. Vincent De Paul Minor Seminary, Agbogugu, Vocation Director II and the Dean of Awgu Deanery in Nigeria. He will be buried on Wednesday, June 22, 2016.
- Deacon Michael Doyle and his family, as they mourn the death of their father, Walter 'Edward' Doyle, who died on June 11, 2016, at the Northside Guest Home. He was buried on Wednesday, June 15.

Please be advised of the latest changes in some committees and positions in the diocese:

- Fr. Duaine Devereaux will become the new chair of the St. Joseph's Society. Thanks to Fr. Bill Crispo who has served for many years and has led the Society through the significant transition toward annuities for many of our seniors priests.
- Fr. Jim Oliver will become the new chair for the Ongoing Formation for Priests Committee. Thanks to Fr. Duaine Devereaux for his leadership over the past couple of years.
- Fr. Donald MacGillivray, after completing two terms, has resigned from the position as the Director of Pastoral Planning. Thanks to Fr. Donald who has exercised wonderful leadership over the past six years in moving our diocese to address the significant issues that affect us as a diocese, especially the shortage of priests and the declining number of parishioners.

College of Consultors

At the last meeting of the Council of Priests, the College of Consultors was discussed. This College is usually appointed for a five year period, but those who were serving on the Consultors were there for more than five years. Thus, I appointed a new College of Consultors on Friday, June 17, 2016. Thanks to those who served on the former College of Consultors: Rev. Paul Abbass, Rev. Bill Crispo, Rev. Duaine Devereaux, Rev. Angus MacDougall, Rev. Paul McGillvray, Rev. Sandy MacNeil.

Since the College of Consultors must be appointed from the Council of Priests, I appointed the entire membership of the Council of Priests to serve as the new College of Consultors. The following priests will serve as consultors: Fr. Paul Abbass, Fr. John Barry, Fr. Daniel Boudreau, Fr. Bill Burke, Fr. Doug MacDonald, Fr. Duaine Devereaux, Fr. Duncan MacIsaac, Fr. Colin MacKinnon, Fr. Tom MacNeil, Fr. Syd Miffen and Fr. Patrick O'Neill.

Association for Canadian Catholic Adult Formation (ACCAF) Conference

Please see the brochure and registration form for the 2016 Association for Canadian Catholic Adult Formation (ACCAF) Conference. The Conference will take place in Ottawa, ON September 20-23, 2016. Please visit the ACCAF website at <http://www.catholicadultformation.com/#!/conference/n0mge> for additional registration details.

Master of Religious Education Degree

Please see information regarding the Master of Religious Education Degree offered by St. Paul University in Ottawa: <http://ustpaul.ca/program-new/master-in-religious-education-mre-305.htm>.

French-language Lectionaries

Please be advised that the CCCB has approved the new edition of the following three French-language lectionaries: *Lectionnaire dominical*, *Lectionnaire de semaine* and *Lectionnaire sanctoral et messes rituelles*. These lectionaries are mandatory in Canada as of September 4, 2016, the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time of year C, hence replacing any other former edition. May these new lectionaries contribute to restore “a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture” (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, no. 35).

Senior Priests Committee

The Senior Priests Committee has a priority of supporting priests of our Diocese as they plan for their long term health care needs. Planning now for future health care needs while still in good health helps to ensure priests are well prepared for any unexpected situations that may arise.

The following practical arrangements will minimize stress associated with changing health care needs, maintain dignity for priests, ensure personal safety and the appropriate end of life care. As mentioned at the General Assembly, priests are requested to: 1. Appoint a Power of Attorney; 2. Prepare a Personal Care Directive; 3. Prepare a Will; and 4. File copies of these documents at the Chancery Office. Thank you for tending to this request.

2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has recently confirmed that the theme for the 2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is “Reconciliation. The Love of Christ compels us” (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-20) - «*Nous réconcilier. L’amour du Christ nous y presse (cf. 2 Co 5, 14-20)*» The materials for 2017 were developed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, using material provided by an ecumenical group in Germany representing a variety of Christian traditions. The material has a

particular focus on the 500th commemoration of the Reformation, with the intent of focusing not on our painful divisions that originated in that period, but on our common commitment to Christ today. The Pontifical Council has also provided the following web links, which will eventually have all the 2017 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity material listed online:

In English, at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_weeks-prayer.htm.

In French, at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_weeks-prayer_fr.htm

As in past years, in addition to the international resources listed above, there will also be locally adapted material prepared here in Canada for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. **I am asking that, in light of this important anniversary, every parish consider holding an ecumenical prayer service to acknowledge this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**

Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, July 22

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has issued a decree raising the obligatory memorial of St. Mary Magdalene, celebrated on July 22, to the dignity of a feast. In its decree, dated June 3 and released on June 10, the Congregation has published a new proper Latin preface for the feast that will be translated into other languages and upon approval by the Holy See, will be available in the various vernacular languages. Feast days have their own proper readings at Mass. On feast days, the Gloria is recited at Mass, as is the *Te Deum* in the Office of Readings.

The decree states that in our times, the Church is called to a more profound reflection “on the dignity of women, the new evangelization, and the abundance of the mystery of divine mercy,” all of which are manifest in the life of the saint. Archbishop Arthur Roche, the Congregation’s secretary, said the decree was issued in response to the “expressed desire” of Pope Francis.

Bishop’s BBQ

The Bishop’s BBQ will take place at the Parish Hall in Louisdale on Tuesday, August 30, beginning at 4 pm. All priests and deacons are invited to attend. Please keep this date available. Please contact Darlene at the Pastoral Centre darlene@dioceseofantigonish.ca to register by **August 24** indicating your choice of chicken or steak. Thanks for doing this as it will assist in the preparation for this BBQ.

***Ad limina* Visit March 2017**

In March 2017, the Atlantic Bishops shall be making their Ad Limina Visit to Rome. In preparation for this Visit each bishop must prepare a report on various aspects of the diocese. I was hoping that I could have a section on the issues from the priests of the diocese. At the General Assembly I asked priests to write a few lines on the following statement: Provide a general assessment of the situation of the diocese – religious vitality and formation of the faithful, those problems which are regarded as more pressing, listing pastoral challenges in order of priority. **All priests are invited to reflect on this statement and send me comments by July 15.** Thanks for your assistance in this matter.

Catechetical Sunday, September 25, 2016

For the past several years, the Emmaus Centre has been providing parish resources to bring awareness to the vocation of catechist and Catechetical Sunday. On September 25, 2016, Pope Francis will celebrate with catechists around the world the Jubilee of Catechists. The National Office of Evangelization and Catechesis has prepared many excellent resources which can be used

on Catechetical Sunday or any time throughout the year by clergy, coordinators and parents to emphasize the special role of the catechist. These resources can be used for individual reflection or in a larger group setting. You may wish to use the liturgical suggestions for a special blessing of catechists either on Catechetical Sunday, September 25, 2016 or at another time when catechists are gathered together. Please see the link below:

<http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/office-for-evangelization-and-catechesis/4482-jubilee-for-catechists>

Of special interest for French parishes, are the French resources developed by the Office de catéchèse du Québec. Please see the link: http://www.catechetes.qc.ca/dim_kt/index.html

Video Conference (“Eucharist:If we only Knew”)

Fr. Bill Burke was the presenter for the Video Conference on May 14, 2016. His presentation on the Eucharist was appreciated by all and is now available on the Diocesan Website under Liturgy. This presentation might be used for ongoing formation for parishes.

Matrimonial Tribunal

Pope Francis made some changes to the procedure for annulments: new rules for competency, eliminating the need for second instance decisions (unless there is an appeal), etc. The Atlantic Episcopal Assembly (AEA) discussed the issue of Fees within the Marriage Tribunal. Here’s some background:

The Final Report of the 2014 Synod stated: “A great number of synod fathers emphasized the need to make the procedure in cases of nullity more accessible and less time-consuming, and, if possible, at no expense” (no. 48). This was repeated in the *Instrumentum laboris* for the 2015 Synod (no. 114).

Furthermore, Pope Francis in his *Muto Proprio, Mitis iudex* urged that “processes remain free of charge”:

Episcopal conferences, in close collaboration with judges, should ensure, to the best of their ability and with due regard for the just compensation of tribunal employees, that processes remain free of charge, and that the Church, showing herself a generous mother to the faithful, manifest, in a matter so intimately tied to the salvation of souls, the gratuitous love of Christ by which we have all been saved (*Mitis iudex*, VI).

In April 2016, the AEA voted not to charge fees for annulments for the Halifax Regional Tribunal. However, donations will be accepted, especially since the cost of an annulment is still quite substantial. All parishes need to be aware of this change. Perhaps this information could be circulated within parishes and parishioners might be urged to take advantage of these changes. The words of our Holy Father in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, are important in this matter:

I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord. They may not always encounter in them a confirmation of their own ideas or desires, but they will surely receive some light to help them better understand their situation and discover a path to personal growth. I also encourage the Church’s pastors to listen to them with sensitivity and serenity, with a sincere desire to understand their plight and their point of view, in order to help them live better lives and to recognize their proper place in the Church (AL no. 312).

Lay Formation Program: September 2016

The Office of Lay Formation is announcing a Lay Formation Program beginning in September 2016. Participants in the three-year program will be joining the candidates in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program and will be taking courses that will renew their faith and assist them to see their

call in the world. Each year will consist of ten weekends including one retreat weekend, and each weekend will have human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral elements. Courses over the three years will cover topics relating to theological foundations, Christology, ecclesiology and pastoral considerations. There will also be another course on one additional Saturday per month. The program is open to anyone who actively participates in parish life and is interested in a journey of authentic and deeper discovery of faith. Applications should be sent immediately.

2016 Directions in Indigenous Ministry

This event will be sponsored by Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops' Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs and Newman Theological College, Edmonton AB. "Decolonizing Pastoral Ministry II" will include Indigenous Spirituality, Theology and Right Relationships of Respect and Integrity. It takes place from Sunday, July 31, 3:00 PM, 2016 — Thursday, August 4, 2:00 PM, 2016, at Canadian Mennonite University, 500 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg, MB, R3P 2N2.

Foundations in Parish Nursing Program

Parish Nursing has developed in many dioceses. Perhaps you might like to bring this to your parish. Here is an ad for this: "Are you a registered nurse who would like to integrate your spirituality with your nursing practice and also learn more about the exciting field of parish nursing? Join us from July 8 – 14 at Holy Family Retreat House, Oxley, Ontario (121 Victoria St., Harrow). For more information visit www.stpetersseminary.ca or contact Catherine Leach at 519-432-1824 x281."

Closing

Over the past month or so, we have had some very inspiring events: priests' retreat with inspiring talks from Bishop Gordon, the opening of the Pastoral Center with the presence of the Mi'kmaq, the Liturgy Video-conference with a wonderful reflection on the Eucharist by Fr. Bill Burke, a dinner sponsored by St. Francis Xavier University, a wonderful General Assembly of Priests with an uplifting dinner for those celebrating special anniversaries and those who have retired from pastoral ministry. These and other events continue to remind us of the provident care of our God. I invite all to trust in Providence and put the search for His will in first place, ahead of all the desires that fill our hearts. Jesus invites us to trust in the provident care of our heavenly Father and to seek first his Kingdom and its righteousness. May His words inspire us to see all things in their true perspective and to live our lives in joyful faith and sure hope in God's promises.

Sincerely in Christ,



† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish