



**Office of the Bishop**  
Diocese of Antigonish  
168 Hawthorne Street, P.O. Box 1330  
Antigonish, NS B2G 2L7  
Chancery 902-863-3335 / Fax 902-863-0037  
Residence 902-863-1557  
E-mail: [bishopdunn@dioceseofantigonish.ca](mailto:bishopdunn@dioceseofantigonish.ca)

## **Notes from Bishop Dunn's Letter to Priests and Deacons July 27, 2016**

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

Hope you are enjoying the summer weather. This can be a wonderful time for relaxation and rejuvenation.

### **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](mailto: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.

### **Seminarian**

Jordan MacKinnon will be returning to St. Pater's Seminary in London, Ontario in September. Jordan is mid-way through his theology program. Please pray for him as he discerns his call.

### **Revitalization of Development and Peace**

This is to inform you that the Antigonish Diocesan Council of Development and Peace is planning a revitalization program to renew active support of Development and Peace in our diocese, effective this upcoming September. I support and promote the work and mission of Development and Peace, and approve of this project to revitalize our Diocese's participation in the campaigns of Development and Peace.

The Diocesan Council will be recruiting and training Parish Representative to act as leaders in each parish to promote and encourage parish participation in the campaigns and activities of Development and Peace. These Parish Representatives will receive formation training twice each year, beginning with Fall Education and Action workshops that have already been scheduled for this upcoming fall:

1. October 22<sup>nd</sup>: Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, Northside/Victoria
2. October 29<sup>th</sup>: Inverness, Richmond
3. November 5<sup>th</sup>: Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou

The Diocesan Council will lay the groundwork of this goal by visiting parishes in August and September to meet with Parish Priests (and other parish leaders) to discuss this revitalization project. I encourage you to receive Diocesan Council members who request a meeting about this matter, and to put the topic of Development and Peace revitalization on the agendas of your first Deanery

meetings in the fall. I wish the Diocesan Council of Antigonish God's blessing in their work, and encourage you to welcome and assist them generously.

### **Announcement regarding Sisters of St. Martha: July 12, 2016**

After a lengthy and thorough process, the Sisters of Saint Martha announced that they will live in a newly built facility that will be owned and operated by the Shannex Company. They believe that Shannex will be able to provide for their long term care replacement beds as well as their need for Assisted Living and Retirement living. The move will allow them to: remain together as a community; live on their property, and be able to visit their cemetery; lessen their carbon footprint; reduce costs from fixed to variable; share this facility with the General Public and enhance the community of Antigonish; have a solution to an aged infrastructure that is too large for their needs and too expensive to renovate or operate. They are now able to move forward with a permanent solution for members of their congregation currently living in long term care at Bethany.

The Sisters of Saint Martha currently hold the license for 25 long term care beds occupied by members of their congregation. The construction of a new facility solves their safety problem of residing in an un-sprinklered area. There are also a number of sisters requiring assisted living and independent living with services. The arrangement with Shannex will offer multiple levels of care in one campus. Shannex's signature campus model is a well-established proven concept which offers a full continuum of care and service. Shannex has similar partnerships with the Sisters of Notre Dame in Sydney, the Sisters of Charity in Halifax and Les Filles de Jesus in Riverview, NB.

In the summer of 2016, construction will begin on a residence with 25 long term care beds, 19 rooms for assisted living, 22 rooms for independent living with services and 3 guest rooms. There will also be an additional floor of approximately 20 rooms of Independent living for the general public. If all goes well, the Sisters could be moving into the new facility by February, 2018.

### **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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 500<sup>th</sup> 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](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](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 the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2017.**

### **Mass for Sexual Abuse Victims**

The scourge of sexual abuse by priests has been a great cross we have carried in our Diocese for many years now. This continues to affect us as we support victims and survivors and their families. While the guilty are few, nevertheless we bear the heavy burden of these actions and their consequences as we strive to make amends. We must always be vigilant, so that the abuse of minors will never happen again. To that end, the Professional Standards Committee is in the process of updating our Sexual Abuse Policy, especially as a call from the 2013 Renewal Congress. I hope the latest revision will be available in the Fall.

However, policies can do only so much; prayer and atonement can do so much more. In light of Pope Francis' call for true conversion in this Year of Mercy and the work in our own Diocese, I am directing that on **Wednesday, September 14, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross**, there will be a Mass in every parish community for the victims and survivors of sexual abuse, for their healing and for the reparation of the sins of the abusers. I am asking that:

1. There is to be one Mass in each parish or cluster, with no other announced intentions but this: "For the healing of victims and survivors of sexual abuse, their families and our communities, and for the reparation of the sins of the abusers."
2. It is desirable that the Mass be scheduled in the evening so that as many as possible may attend.
3. The readings for the feast will be used.

I ask that you book this date and Mass for your parishes, so that the whole Diocese may manifest our unity of heart and mind for this important moment of grace. May the example of the Lord's suffering bring healing and new life to all of us as we continue to support victims and survivors and their families, and as we seek reparation for the harm done. May the merciful God grant us peace!

### ***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 the end of August.** 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>

### **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. 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. **Please encourage anyone who might benefit from this program.**

### **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.

### **Bishop's Apartment in Sydney**

After considering the expenses connected with this apartment over the past few years, I believe it is cheaper to use a hotel or some other arrangement. This way the Diocese can save between \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year. Thus, I will be giving up the Bishop's apartment in Xavier Apartments and shall be moving out at the end of July. At the same time, I shall continue to have the same presence in Sydney and area as I have had over the past few years.

### **Implementation Committee to Become Diocesan Pastoral Council**

At the most recent meeting of the Implementation Committee, the members present agreed that the Implementation Committee would be transformed into a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). The DPC would assume the mandate of the implementation committee and would have this issue as an agenda item at each meeting. The DPC would have a larger agenda, including other issues in the Diocese. This will be discussed further at the Sept 24 meeting and would take effect in November. At this point, I am looking for any feedback on this move. Please respond before September 24.

## **New Ritual for Sacrament of Confirmation**

The CCCB has published the new translation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This new Ritual provides a new translation for all the prayers for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Emmaus Center will have copies of this ritual if you would like to obtain one for your parish.

## **Closing**

You have probably seen the new Apostolic Constitution on women's contemplative life, *Vultum Dei quaerere*, "Seeking the face of God". As I read through this document I was struck by many passages as they describe our spiritual life. I offer the following passages for your own reflection:

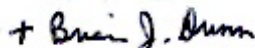
"In seeking God, we quickly realise that no one is self-sufficient. Rather, we are called, in the light of faith, to move beyond self-centredness, drawn by God's Holy Face and by the "sacred ground of the other", to an ever more profound experience of communion" (no. 1).

"If "prayer is the 'core' of consecrated life", it is even more so for the contemplative life. Today many persons do not know how to pray. Many simply feel no need to pray, or limit their relationship with God to a plea for help at times of difficulty when there is no one else to turn to. For others, prayer is merely praise in moments of happiness. In reciting and singing the praises of the Lord with the Liturgy of the Hours, you also pray for these persons and, like the prophets, you intercede for the salvation of all. Personal prayer will help keep you united to the Lord like branches on the vine, and thus your life will bear abundant fruit. But never forget that your life of prayer and contemplation must not be lived as a form of self-absorption; it must enlarge your heart to embrace all humanity, especially those who suffer" (no. 16).

"The relationship of communion is the manifestation of that love which wells up in the heart of the Father and is poured into our hearts by the Spirit whom Jesus has bestowed on us. Simply by making this reality visible, the Church, God's family, is the sign of profound union with Him and appears as the home in which this life-giving experience is possible for all. By calling some men and women to share in His life, Christ the Lord formed a community that makes visible "the capacity for the communion of goods, for fraternal love, for shared projects and activities; and this capacity comes from having accepted the invitation to follow Him more freely and more closely". The fraternal life, in virtue of which consecrated men and women seek to become "one heart and one soul" on the model of the earliest Christian communities, "aims to be an eloquent witness to the Trinity"(no. 24)

"I consider it important to heed the silence filled by God's presence as the necessary "space" for hearing and pondering (ruminatio) his word. Silence is a prerequisite to that gaze of faith that enables us to welcome God's presence into our own life, that of the brothers and sisters given us by the Lord, and the events of today's world. Silence entails self-emptying in order to grow in receptivity; interior noise makes it impossible to welcome anyone or anything. Your wholly contemplative life calls for "time and the ability to be silent and listen" to God and the plea of humanity" (no. 33).

Sincerely in Christ,



† Brian Joseph Dunn  
Bishop of Antigonish