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Notes from Bishop Dunn's Letter to Priests and Deacons September 30, 2016

September 30, 2016

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

During the past week, I attended the Plenary meeting of the CCCB. We had many presentations on a number of topics, including Cardinal Willem Eijk, Archbishop of Utrecht who spoke on the impact of legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia in Holland; Dr. Moira McQueen, Executive Director of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute who spoke on the issue of transgenderism, Ecumenical quests who spoke on the commemoration of the 5th Centenary of the Protestant Reformation, Aboriginal guests who spoke on the commitments and Calls to Action associated with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Bishops also had a special celebration and Pilgrimage for the Year of Mercy at Sainte-Croix Church in Cornwall. It was there that I particularly remembered and prayed for the whole diocese as we continue to celebrate this Year of Mercy.

Resignation of Ms. Joyce MacSween

In late August, Joyce expressed her intent to resign as Coordinator of the Responsible Ministry Protocol for the Diocese of Antigonish. She has worked in this position for the past five years and has brought a significant dimension of organization to the information that we have, especially through the creation of the extensive database. She also has brought her expertise to the level of the Diocesan Finance Council. On behalf of the Diocese of Antigonish, I want to thank her for her work with this protocol, as we continue to create an environment of care within our parishes. Joyce will be working with her successor to ensure that this work will continue. All priests and deacons are asked to ensure that their police checks are up to date.

Pastoral Care of Eastern Catholics

Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* on September 15, 2016, in which he brings the basic legal instruments that govern the Latin Church and the Eastern Churches in communion with Rome more closely into accord with one another in several different specific areas regarding the discipline of the sacraments, and ecclesial identity of the faithful. The Holy Father has introduced material changes only to the Code of Canon Law that governs the Latin Church, in order to bring the Latin code into harmony with the Eastern code, especially regarding the valid celebration of marriages with spouses of mixed Rite, the circumstances under which a spouse may change Rite, how to determine the Rite to which a child belongs properly, and other questions in a similar vein. One area that is important to remember: **Only a priest [and not a deacon] validly assists at the marriage of Eastern parties or between a Latin party and an Eastern party whether Catholic**

or non-Catholic.

The Pass System (2015) - a Documentary Film at the Antigonish Film Festival

The Pass System (2015) is a Documentary Film illuminating Canada's hidden history of racial segregation. For over 60 years, the Canadian government often denied Indigenous peoples the basic freedom to leave their reserves without a pass. Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Ojibwe and Blackfoot elders of the prairie land where this took place tell their stories of living under and resisting the system, and link their experiences to today. Acclaimed Cree actor and activist Tantoo Cardinal (Dances with Wolves, Legends of the Fall) narrates this investigative look into a little-known Canada. The film will be shown on Friday, October 21 from 12 noon to 1 pm at the Town Library in Antigonish. Please make parishioners aware of this film.

Peace in Syria

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace – Caritas Canada is organizing a day of prayer for peace in Syria on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, Tuesday, October 4, 2016. In addition, the Holy See recently announced that there will also be an international and ecumenical day of prayer on October 31, 2016, for peace in the Middle East and especially for all the people of Syria. Please participate in these events as much as possible.

Diocesan Communications update

During the past month, Jennifer Hatt, our Communication Officer has visited several deaneries and she plans to have deanery workshops on communications. Further information will be circulated as soon as it is available.

Youth Ministry

I would like to make you aware of three developments concerning Youth Ministry within the diocese:

1. Reaching Out - Tools for Youth Ministry: We are planning to have a Conference on Youth Ministry using the new Youth Ministry Document *You Give Them Something To Eat* from the CCCB. Anne Walsh, one of the authors of the document, will facilitate the day. You will have opportunities to talk with people from all across our diocese, check out materials and programs for your parish. You will have an opportunity to consider a direction and plan for youth ministry in your parish. This opportunity will take place on November 19th at St. Louis Parish Hall, Louisdale from 10am to 4pm, concluding with Mass. Please encourage any parishioners who are working with young people to attend. This might be an opportunity of calling forth potential leaders for young people. The presence of priests would be a supportive sign to our youth.
2. Several parishes are organizing Youth Alpha as a way to reach out to young people: Youth Alpha is being organized in a number of areas including, New Waterford/Glace Bay Deanery, Sydney Mines, North Sydney, East Margaree. Nolan would be ready to assist any parish which has some interest in this.
3. A Youth Mass will be organized for all high school and university students on Sunday, October 16, 2016 at Saint Marguerite Bourgeois. A young person will speak of his faith journey and why his connection to his church community is important. During Mass, Fr. Bill Burke will be teaching what the Mass *is* and why we do what we do! Gather at 6 pm; Eucharist 7- 8 pm; Social and Pizza 8-9 pm. Encourage your young people to attend.

Revitalization of Development and Peace

The Antigonish Diocesan Council of Development and Peace is planning a revitalization program to renew active support of Development and Peace in our diocese. 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 22nd: Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, Northside/Victoria
2. October 29th: Inverness, Richmond
3. November 5th: Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou

Times and places of meetings will be announced this coming week.

Ritual Lectionary and *Book of Gospels*

As I have visited various parishes, I am delighted to see that many parishes have purchased the Ritual Lectionary and the *Book of Gospels*. These liturgical books can add a dimension of solemnity to the celebration of the liturgy and I encourage all parishes to obtain copies of these liturgical books. The Ritual Lectionary can help parishes avoid the use of sheets of paper for the celebrations of marriage, confirmation and funerals.

Closing of Holy Year of Mercy

The Holy Year began on December 8, 2015, and on December 13, 2015, a Holy Door was opened at the Cathedral of Saint Ninian and a Holy Door was opened on December 12, 2015 at the designated Church of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys in Sydney. These churches were designated as pilgrimage churches for the year, where pilgrims have visited and celebrated the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. On November 13, 2016, the Holy Doors in the diocese will close: at 9:30 am at St. Ninian Cathedral and at 4 pm at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys. The Year of Mercy will officially end on November 20, the Solemnity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, King of the Universe when the Holy Father will close the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. Please encourage parishioners to continue to celebrate this year with an openness to the Gift of Mercy.

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). 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. **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.**

Devotion to Mary

As we move into the month of October, I ask that you encourage popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary for Mary is the mother not only of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but also the Mother of the Church. We are invited to develop a personal and community devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, for this devotion can lead to a deeper appreciation of liturgical worship. We might consider some of the following: the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Rosary, celebration of Saturdays which have been designated as memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or recitation of the *Angelus*. The *Angelus Domini* is the traditional form used by the faithful to commemorate the holy annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary. It is used three times daily, as a recollection of the salvific event in

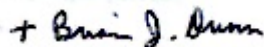
which the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the salvific plan of the Father. These various devotions can deepen our relationship with Mary who can lead us to her Son.

Blessed Pope Paul VI spoke of Mary as a model of virtues:

It is a question of solid, evangelical virtues: faith and the docile acceptance of the Word of God (cf. Lk. 1:26-38, 1:45, 11:27-28; Jn. 2:5); generous obedience (cf. Lk. 1:38); genuine humility (cf. Lk. 1:48); solicitous charity (cf. Lk. 1:39-56); profound wisdom (cf. Lk. 1:29, 34; 2:19, 33:51); worship of God manifested in alacrity in the fulfillment of religious duties (cf. Lk. 2:21-41), in gratitude for gifts received (cf. Lk. 1:46-49), in her offering in the Temple (cf. Lk. 2:22-24) and in her prayer in the midst of the apostolic community (cf. Acts 1:12-14); her fortitude in exile (cf. Mt. 2:13-23) and in suffering (cf. Lk. 2:34-35, 49; Jn. 19:25); her poverty reflecting dignity and trust in God (cf. Lk. 1:48, 2:24) her attentive care for her Son, from His humble birth to the ignominy of the cross (cf. Lk. 2:1-7; Jn. 19:25-27); her delicate forethought (cf. Jn. 2:1-11); her virginal purity (cf. Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-38); her strong and chaste married love. These virtues of the Mother will also adorn her children who steadfastly study her example in order to reflect it in their own lives. And this progress in virtue will appear as the consequence and the already mature fruit of that pastoral zeal which springs from devotion to the Blessed Virgin” (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 57).

May the next few weeks help us to appreciate Mary in a new way as the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord: the disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy; but above all, the disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people’s hearts.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "† Brian J. Dunn". The signature is written in a cursive style.

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish