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August 28, 2015

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

As we near the end of the summer, I want to touch base with you again. The BBQ went exceptionally well, thanks to the organization of Fr. John Barry and his parishioners. Thanks to all who made an effort to attend. The summer has gone by rather quickly and I trust everyone has had a little time to relax. My vacation to Newfoundland included return trips to the Diocese for the funerals of Fr. Malcolm MacDonell and Fr. Neil McKenna. The deaths of these two priests makes us only too aware of the nearness of death and reminds us of our need to grieve these deaths.

When I returned to Newfoundland from Fr. Malcolm's funeral, I hit a moose in central Newfoundland. I struck the moose, it landed on the hood and then went over the car. I was not hurt, but my car was a write-off. I am filled with gratitude, surviving this kind of accident unharmed.

Personnel Issues

Please include the following people in your prayers:

- Fr. John J. MacDonald (Port Hawkesbury) remains in the Richmond Hospital and continues to experience declining health.
- Fr. A.D. Campbell was admitted to the Northside General Hospital and is put on a list for the guest home.
- Fr. Reg Currie was admitted to the Northside General Hospital.
- Fr. Malcolm MacDonell died on Saturday July 25 at 11:30 am at St. Martha's Hospital and was buried Thursday, July 30 at St. Andrew Church, Judique.
- Fr. Neil McKenna died suddenly on Saturday, August 1 and his funeral Mass took place on Wednesday, August 5, at Saint Ninian Cathedral.
- I have appointed Fr. Gerry MacInnis as chaplain for Bethany for a one year period to replace Fr. Neil. I am grateful that Fr. Gerry is available for this ministry.

Ms. Jennifer Wadden, New Executive Assistant and Vice-Chancellor

I am pleased to announce that Jennifer Wadden has been hired as the new Executive Assistant and Vice Chancellor, Diocese of Antigonish, effective July 27, 2015. During her period of training, Pauline MacDonald decided not to take the position. Jennifer lives in New Glasgow, Pictou County, and is a member of St. John the Baptist Parish, having served as a Lector and Catechist, and is a graduate of St. FX University. For the past six years she worked as Senior Regional Advisor to the Honourable Peter MacKay in his various portfolios. Please welcome Jennifer as she serves the diocese. Meanwhile, Cathy Walsh has moved to Halifax to become the chaplain of Sacred Heart School.

Mr. Nolan Conrad, New Director of Youth Ministry

I am pleased to announce that Nolan Conrad has been hired as the new Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese. He grew up in Victoria Mines, Cape Breton, with his mother, Debbie, his father, Millan, his twin brother, Daniel and his older brother Randy. He graduated high school in 2010 from Riverview Rural High School. He attended St. Mary's University in Halifax "for some of the best years of my life growing in many friendships." This past year he worked with youth and family ministry in Western Canada in connection with the Diocese of Saskatoon. In that capacity, he traveled all over Western Canada doing retreats and parish missions, etc. He has great hope for what can be achieved this year in youth ministry. He notes that "This is my home, where I discovered the love that Jesus had for me, which changed my life for ever. Through movements such as Challenge and through the care of priests in the diocese, I fell in love with God and realized that life with Him is full, and beautiful. I look forward to serving in this role in meeting the needs of youth in our Church, and also giving young people the opportunity to encounter Christ like I had." Nolan began his ministry on Monday, August 24 and can be reached at the Pastoral Centre or by email nolan@dioceseofantigonish.ca.

Welcome Back Catholics Sunday and Catechetical Sunday: Finding God, It's A Family Affair Sunday September 20, 2015

This year we have decided to combine two celebrations: "Welcome Back Catholics" Sunday and Catechetical Sunday. The launch of *Finding God* makes the beginning of this catechetical year special for our Diocese as we introduce this wonderful program to our children, young people and their parents. To help parishes celebrate the launch of the new catechetical program and to encourage parent participation, the Emmaus Centre in conjunction with the Welcome Back Catholics Committee have put together a package of materials you may find useful. The package contains: Family Invitations to attend Mass on Sunday September 20 (and every Sunday), Catechetical Sunday Brochures introducing *Finding God* to parents, a launch event outline to introduce *Finding God* to your parish and a handout on creating a prayer space at home. The package is being distributed this week (August 24-28) to pastors and/or coordinators. Please watch for your package. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie at catecheticalconsultant@dioceseofantigonish.ca.

2015 Federal Election Guide

With the federal election campaign underway, the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCJ) has issued a guide inviting Catholics to vote with discernment (CCCJ website: http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/2015_Federal_Election_Guide_EN.pdf). In its "2015 Federal Election Guide", the Commission lists some basic principles from Catholic moral and social teaching to help voters analyze and evaluate public policies and programs. The document focuses on respect for life and the dignity of the human person, social justice, the family, world peace, and the environment. While recognizing that there are times when "choices may prove very difficult," the Episcopal Commission recalls that "it is a sign of a healthy community when informed and responsible citizens engage in an ongoing dialogue on major social issues with their political leaders." Parishes might use this guide in bulletins or within a parish discussion group.

Consultation Regarding Euthanasia

On July 17, 2015, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Peter MacKay, and Minister of Health, Rona Ambrose, announced the establishment of an External Panel of experts who will consult with stakeholders and with all Canadians on options for dealing with the Supreme Court

of Canada's lifting of the prohibition against physician-assisted suicide. The External Panel has created a website, in English and in French, by which it plans to coordinate its consultation efforts with Canadians. I believe that we need to respond as parishes to this consultation. The website can be viewed at the following web address: English site: <http://ep-ce.ca/en/home/>; French site: <http://ep-ce.ca/fr/accueil/>

New Directory for 2015 and New Necrology (up to July 31, 2015)

The Diocese has published a New Directory for 2015 and a new version of the Necrology. These were distributed at the BBQ and will continue to be distributed in the coming weeks. If you see any errors, please contact the Chancery Office as soon as possible. The Necrology can be an important way for us to pray for priests who have served this diocese.

Ongoing Formation for Priests: November 24-26

The Committee for the Ongoing Formation of Priests has invited, Fr. Paul Turner, a world renown author on liturgy, to be our resource person for our next session of ongoing formation on November 24-26, 2015. Fr. Paul will consider the theology of the Eucharist and then present on the theme of presiding at the Eucharist and at other liturgical events. Since our ministry has its focus on the Eucharist, this workshop could be a wonderful opportunity for all of us to review our role in celebrating with parishioners. Since deacons are also involved in some elements of presiding at the liturgy, they are invited as well. I would ask that all priests set aside this time so that we can take advantage of this opportunity to be renewed in our role of presiding at liturgy.

Brief Thoughts on the Rosary: Gospel Values for Today's Families

A pamphlet for praying the Rosary is available from the Chancery Office (or Emmaus Center). This pamphlet was created in support of the World Meeting of Families 2015 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The design outlines the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries with words and icons. Each mystery offers a single word reflection such as Love, Service, Hope, Joy followed by a reflection based on family life and prayer intention. You might wish to share this pamphlet with CWL, KofC, and parish ministries / committees.

Biblical Formation Program

The "Biblical Formation Program" will take place next year in Ecce Homo, Jerusalem. This program offers a unique opportunity to study, contemplate and pray with the biblical text in the Land so central to its composition. The program allows the participants to be part of an international, ecumenical community exposed to the best of contemporary Christian and Jewish scholarship. Living in this bustling and cosmopolitan city, central to Jews, Christians and Muslims, the Program (entitled PASSOVER & EASTER) may well be of interest. For more information about this program, see the website: <http://www.biblicalformationcentre.com/>.

Pastoral Zones

Beginning in September, our Diocese will move in the direction of the creation of Pastoral Zones with a Team Ministry in each Zone. The Inverness Deanery and the Pictou Deanery will be pilots for this new direction. Are there other areas or parishes which would like to experience the formation and education needed to move in this direction? Debbie Aker from the Emmaus Centre will oversee the arrangements necessary for this new direction. She will assist in facilitating the educational/formational sessions. She will be contacting parishes to ensure that everyone will be ready for these sessions.

This Formation connected with Pastoral Zones will be offered to the participants in the two

Inverness Deanery Pastoral Zones and to the Pictou Deanery as well as any interested parishes. The formation will be available at no cost to participants and will benefit any parish seeking to develop strong parish based team ministry. Pastors are invited to enroll with their deacons (should the parish have a deacon) and three or four laypeople who would benefit from this formation. Once priests have identified and named their participants, you are asked to forward their names, email addresses and the ministry in which they serve, to Debbie Aker, the Formation Coordinator for Pastoral Zones. A special evening is being planned on September 17 for all those who plan to take the sessions.

The formation will include 5 sessions on the following Saturday mornings: September 26, October 3, October 31, November 7, and November 28, 2015. The sessions will begin at 9:30am and will be between 2 and 2.5 hours in duration and will be facilitated via internet. Each Pastoral Zone or parish needs a computer (with dedicated line) and an LCD projector and participants will gather at a local gathering space, e.g., parish glebe, parish hall. For further information or to enroll in the formation sessions, please contact Debbie or phone 1-800-656-5311 or 902-539-6188 ext. 226.

Summer Student Opportunities

Our summer students, Kenzie MacNeil, a student from Antigonish, and Chelsea Corbett, a student from Dutch Brook, were hired for summer job opportunities. We are grateful to them for the fine work that they have done over the past two months. We wish them well as they continue their academic pursuits

“Come and See” Vocation Day, October 25 (Please note the new Date)

Please be aware that the Priests’ Vocation Committee has set aside a date for an afternoon of prayer for vocations and an invitation for young men who might be interested in this day of discernment. It will take place at St. FX on Sunday, October 25th from 1:30-6 pm. Please contact Fr. Dan MacDonald if you have anyone interested.

International Eucharistic Congress

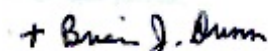
The next International Eucharistic Congress will take place in Cebu, Philippines from January 24-31. Fr. Antolin Asor has been appointed to provide information for the whole diocese. The registration form for the Congress itself is available in English and French and can be accessed at <https://registration.iec2016.ph/>.

Priests’ Annual Retreat will take place in Mabou, May 22-27, 2016 (not correction from last letter). Bishop Gary Gordon will be our retreat director. I am encouraging all priests to consider being available for this retreat next year. This can be a significant way to support one another in our ministry.

Closing

As I celebrate my 35th anniversary of my ordination to priesthood on this Feast of St. Augustine, I want to thank God for the blessings that I have received as a priest and I want to thank you for your support over the past five years in assisting me to appreciate these blessings in new and deeper ways.

Sincerely in Christ,



† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish