



This Month in the Diocese

An E-Publication of the Diocese of Antigonish

Summer 2015

Welcome to Issue 1 of our monthly E-News!

This summer has been busy as we develop and test ideas to engage our communities and share our news. For this issue, we have a conversation with our new Communications Officer, local response to Pope Francis' call to action on the environment, and details on our new program for youth catechism.

We welcome your ideas and comments!

Contact Jennifer Hatt, Communications Officer: Jennifer@dioceseofantigonish.ca

Or visit our website: www.antigonishdiocese.com



Beyond the Bio

Meet Jennifer Hatt, who was hired as our Communications Officer effective June 1, 2015. How is this author, Star Trek fan, Scottish drummer and mother of three settling in to this new half-time position, while processing the news that her parish will close this fall? To read more, see Page 3.

Waste or Watts

Laudato Si, the bold new encyclical released by Pope Francis this spring, calls on us to seek "sustainable and integral development." Our Social Justice Committee is working to connect Catholic social teachings to local action. One example? Two high school students developed a science project converting wastewater into electricity. Read more on Page 2.

From our Bookshelf

Finding God is the new diocesan-wide catechetical program for children and young people, starting in September 2015. With hands-on projects and family resources, it is an important link between faith and daily life. How is the rollout going across seven counties in the middle of summer? We had a conversation with our coordinator of catechetics, Debbie Aker, to find out. Read more on Page 2.



Finding God:

A new catechism program for the Diocese

Finding God by Loyola Press will be the program for youth catechism across the Diocese, starting in September. With more than 40 catechism coordinators overseeing programs in seven counties, well, the math alone points to a major project ahead. How are things going? We thank our busy Catechetical Consultant, Debbie Aker, for these details:

Why a new program?

The program for youth catechism across the diocese had not been updated in 20 years. We were in need of a program that was more consistent and adaptable. We also recognized the need to engage our children and their families more in the catechetical process. In 2014 Bishop Dunn convened a committee to recommend a new program. This is the result.

Why *Finding God*?

Through Sacred Art Prints and the wise use of technology, *Finding God*, stands out from other catechetical programs. *Finding God* integrates prayer, sacred scripture and church teaching, offering our children, young people and their families an experience of God; as they come to discover God revealed in the Word, in the Eucharist and in their everyday lives.

What is involved in the program launch?

The Emmaus Centre, the Diocesan Office for Catechesis, provided three Diocesan workshops and several parish-based workshops last year. The Emmaus Centre will continue to support the more than 40 coordinators working in parish ministry and their catechists as *Finding God* is launched in our parishes in September.

Where can we find out more?

Finding God website: www.FindingGod.com
catecheticalconsultant@dioceseofantigonish.ca

Waste or Watts

By Terry O'Toole
Chair, Social Justice Committee

Two Grade 12 students from Sydney came up with a unique idea to curb the production of greenhouse gases. Elzbieta Wawer and Bhreagh Gillis focused on the water that is produced by the seven wastewater treatment facilities in the CBRM and asked the question "Could this water be used to generate electricity for practical purposes?"

To harness the energy of the water leaving a facility, the girls imagined an apparatus that used a waterwheel that attached to a drain spout. They then set out to collect all the data they needed to test the potential of their model.

Ms. Wawer said "We e-mailed the facilities to find out how much water was cleaned in an average year and the average flow rate of water that was leaving the facility. This included water from storms, melting snow and household use. We also asked how much electricity the treatment facility used on average. We discovered that using the water wheel would generate more electricity than necessary to power the facility. This saved a significant amount of government money and allowed for a clean method of producing energy."

The project was entered into the Cape Breton Science Fair competition in the "Taking Science to Market" category. Ms. Wawer said "We labelled this project "Waste or Watts" as we are using water that would otherwise be wasted in the system."

Ms. Wawer is also a member of the Social Justice Committee of the Diocese of Antigonish, and says this project is a way of putting her faith into action. She says "The fight against climate change must be



Waste or Watts continued from Page 2

highlighted as it affects every living creature on the planet." These two young women have put into practice the vital invitation to think globally and act locally.

The Social Justice Committee believes that local solutions, such as the "Waste or Watts" project, are important in the fight against climate change. Such creativity is what Pope Francis is calling for in his encyclical letter *Laudato Si – On Care for our Common Home*, which was released in June of this year. His message, and the work of these women, further embrace the social teachings of the Church: "...the present environmental crisis affects those who are poorest in a particular way, whether they live in those lands subject to erosion and desertification, are involved in armed conflicts, or subject to forced immigration, or because they do not have the economic or technological means to protect themselves from other calamities." - Article 482, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

The Pope says that Christians must realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of our faith. With this in mind, the Social Justice Committee is planning a series of workshops on the issue of climate change as seen through the perspective of Catholic social teaching, including *Laudato Si*. We must all prayerfully reflect, with the encyclical, on how we can contribute to the task of moving our economies and institutions to gear up for a renewable energy future.

The workshops will begin in the fall of 2015. For ease of access, they will be held in different centres of the diocese.

Beyond the Bio

By Jennifer Hatt
Communications Officer

I far prefer gazing through a window to staring into a mirror, which is what talking about myself feels like. So, I'm opening the window and inviting in my preferred persona – the interviewer. Welcome to both sides of my conversation.

You were hired on June 1. How did that come about?

The job itself evolved from the October 2013 Diocesan Congress, which brought 300 clergy and laity together in healing conversations and planning for the future. Communications was identified as a priority area, vital to connecting parishes and faithful across a vast, diverse region, and essential to sharing Church news and healing to parishioners and the public. As for my involvement, it began this past winter after I discovered the job advertisement by sheer chance (or was it?) After a formal application and interview process, I was offered the job and chose to accept the challenge. **More on Page 4**

Beyond the Bio continued from Page 3

What attracted you to this position?

Let me start by changing the past to the present tense. This position attracts me on a daily basis, first and foremost because of the people in our Diocese. All those I have met so far, including Bishop Dunn, our staff in both Antigonish and Sydney Mines, clergy, parishioners, and volunteers are deeply passionate about their faith and the work they do. Anything I can do to honour that passion is very rewarding, if not a bit daunting. The intensity of the human spirit can be frightening and often frustrating, erupting in arguments, impatience, and resistance. However, there is great joy within that intensity, if the energy it embodies can be respected and enabled to flow. That is what communications is all about – the productive flow of information. I see our Diocese as a family, housed in the frames and walls of canon and corporate law. Communications are the systems, like air, water, warmth and appearance, that keep the home comfortable and functional: life-giving to the faithful, inviting to the curious, and welcoming to the doubters. The flow of information may be words and images, but there are also the unseen elements: emotion, spirit, commitment, dedication ... each of these shine through in a message as well.

So, what do you do, exactly?

The official title is Communications Officer. The job description lists both general and specific tasks, from project management to strategy development. But ultimately? My job is about building relationships, ensuring trust and awareness between the various sites, communities, and layers of diocesan life. Building upon these relationships, it is my job to set down paths, tools (such as documents and visuals) and guidelines to keep these various levels connected. The goals are wide-ranging, from ensuring a mass time update can be posted in a timely manner to supporting clarity in communicating more complex issues, such as pastoral planning.

Was your faith a factor in taking this job? You are a Roman Catholic, yes?

Yes, but I wasn't always. I grew up in the United Baptist Church – one of two choices in my tiny community of Milton, Nova Scotia. (The other was the Church of Christ Disciples, referred to by my kin in hushed whispers as 'the lower church' because of its location about 20 metres downriver from our church.) At 16 I was baptized in the Baptist Church, as is the custom, then went off to university – Saint Mary's – and received my first real introduction to the Roman Catholic faith through friends and a lovely campus chaplain. It was years later, after meeting the man I would marry, that I felt the desire to learn more about Catholicism, and was confirmed in 1995. I have always been grateful for my journey –being part of two Christian faith communities has given me a wider window through which to see the world. But back to the original question: my faith did play a role in my decision, both for what I could bring to the job and what the job could do to deepen my own faith connection and understanding. **More on Page 5**

Beyond the Bio continued from Page 4

It has been recently announced that your parish is closing. How do you feel about that?

Our Lady of Lourdes is the only parish to which I have belonged. How do I feel? At the moment there is a dull sting of loss, with the biting chill of dread that surfaces with every major transition in life. I am unsure how this change will unfold in my personal life, but because of my work with the diocese I understand the decision and know there is long-term growth to come from this. Communication becomes all the more important – maintaining openness and connections between individuals and layers is so important to healing. From my grief comes motivation to continue building relationships and paths for this healing and growth. I'll just need to take more mindful moments than usual as the grief runs its course.

The Communication position is half-time. What else do you do?

For starters, my first job title is and always will be Mom. I have three children, ages 17, 14, and 10. Each are delightfully unique, highly involved in school, music and social lives, and at the stage where I am needed in different ways. I left full-time employment in the media for self-employment from home before my eldest child was born, and have embraced the work-home relationship ever since. It's not easy by any means, but that's another story ... humourous and heartbreaking, but I digress ...

Five years ago I released my first novel and became a partner in a publishing company. We've just released the fourth title in our Finding Maria series, and now offer publishing services to other authors. It's another way of helping people connect with their own stories, and in turn with the world. What else? My two older children and I are in the Clan Thompson Pipe Band, spending our summer weekends parading and performing in various parts of the province. And I am a huge fan of science fiction, Star Trek in particular. I am also a lover of solitude – meditation in my room, a prayer at my desk, time at my cottage in Pictou ... there is always time to take a moment.

What's next for your job?

When first hired into this position, I promised to carry out my duties in three ways: Lead, Follow, or Get out of the Way. Several weeks in, I still intend to do all three. Leadership will come in the form of project management and in the development of policies, manuals and workshops to support parishes and committees in their communication efforts. I will Follow when asked for help, perhaps in crafting a document, providing a perspective, or connecting various offices and individuals in their similar efforts. Get out of the Way means just that: allowing people and systems that are currently working well to continue. My job is not to control or interfere, but to fill in gaps, strengthen connections and enable everyone to do what they do best.

Where are you working?

I can be found at the Chancery Office an average of one day per week, and at the Pastoral Centre in Sydney Mines about once a month. The remaining time I am working from my home office in New Glasgow. I am available any time at jennifer@dioceseofantigonish.ca. Please, get in touch! Every conversation adds a piece to the puzzle.