



**Office of the Bishop**  
Diocese of Antigonish  
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November 20, 2015

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

On Wednesday of this week we celebrated the Ordination of John Scott to the diaconate. This ceremony calls all of us to recognize the Lord's call in our lives, a call that needs continual discernment as we recognize that God invites us to new areas of ministry in our lives. Thanks to all who attended this celebration.

### **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. Evo's mother, Gina, had another slight heart attack in mid November. She spent some time in hospital and is back home recovering.
- Fr. Doug MacIntyre died on November 1, 2015 and his funeral took place at St. Leonard Church, New Waterford, on Thursday, November 5. May he rest in peace.
- Fr. Reginald Currie died on November 10, 2015 and his funeral took place at St. Joseph's Church, Reserve Mines, on Friday, November 13. May he rest in peace.
- Fr. Frank Morley died on November 16, 2015 and his funeral will take place at St. Anne Church, Glace Bay on Friday, November 20 May he rest in peace.
- In light of Fr. Michael Rankin's declining health, Fr. Dan MacInnis has agreed to provide for the celebration of Masses at MacGillivray Nursing Home, Sydney.
- Fr. Angus MacDougall will complete his ministry at Eskasoni and will begin ministry at Our Lady of Lourdes on Friday, December 5, 2015.

### **Pastoral Centre Relocation**

Please be advised that the Committee to consider the relocation of the Pastoral Centre has completed its review of the various options as they considered the relocation of the Pastoral Centre back to Sydney. In accord with the recommendations from this review, a suite in Membertou (in one of the strip malls) will become the Diocesan Pastoral Center. We have entered into a five year lease with an option to renew for another five years. A floor plan has been completed to suit our current needs and allow for some growth in the future. We hope that we will occupy the new office early in the new year.

### **Pastoral Visit to Parishes**

During the past few years I have mentioned that I would like to make a Pastoral Visit to all parishes of the diocese. I have been able to visit many parishes, but still have not had a Pastoral Visit with

many others. I am still open to do that visit over the next few months. In the mean time, I hope to have meetings with Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils/Committees beginning in January. I will come to the parish on a weekday evening and meet with this involved in these councils. Further information will be forthcoming.

### **Workshops for Parish Finance Councils/Committees and for Communication Ministry**

The Diocese is sponsoring workshops for Priests and Parish Finance Committees on issues of finance and communication. Two workshops are planned: Friday, November 27, 2015 from 10 to 12 pm at St. Ninian Place in Antigonish and Thursday, December 3 from 1 to 3 pm at Our Lady of Fatima Parish Hall in Sydney. All priests are asked to attend one of these workshops with one or two members of their Pastoral/Finance Committee as well as any staff members involved in finances. This will be an opportunity to review the levy policies and financial reporting. People may attend either workshop. As well, Jennifer Hatt, Communications Officer for the Diocese, will be in attendance to update everyone on her communications plan and to provide an update on the development of the website.

### **Invitation to Priests from Saint Francis Xavier University**

You will recall that the new President of St. FX wanted to acknowledge the priests of the diocese and their contributions to the university. He sponsored a dinner in the spring at Sydney and will sponsor another dinner at St. FX on December 2. Thus, his invitation states:

Dr. Kent MacDonald, President St. Francis Xavier University, cordially invites Priests of the Diocese to a dinner in honour of the Feast of St. Francis Xavier December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4:00pm at the Priest's Dining Room, Morrison Hall, St. Francis Xavier University. Mass to follow at 6:00 pm in the University Chapel.

***RSVP by November 26 to Jennifer at 902-863-3335 or [chancery.ant@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:chancery.ant@ns.sympatico.ca)***

### **Support for Family Services**

Please be aware of the work of Family Services. This Agency has more than twenty service projects offering counseling and programs to both families and individuals serving all of Cape Breton, Antigonish, Guysborough and Pictou counties. Services include a referral network for both parish priests and pastoral workers for parenting, marriage, pre-marriage, adoption options, youth outreach services, facilitated parish sessions, availability of social workers to process discussions around freedom to marry after a declaration of nullity as well as grief and loss issues.

Support from Parish, religious and Diocese has aided and continues to aid the Agency in providing these services. Donations received directly subsidize the working poor which includes the majority of our clientele (3,500 clients were served this past year). Please be generous in donating to the annual collection for this Agency.

### **Special Collection on Behalf of Syrian Refugees**

It seems that about five or six parishes are in the process of sponsoring a refugee family. In order to assist these parishes, I am asking that parishes take up a **Special Collection on December 13**, which will be used to assist the families who will be sponsored in our diocese. Please encourage your parishioners to be generous. Please send your collection to the Business Office which will distribute it to the various parishes.

### **Ongoing Formation for Priests: November 24-26**

Ongoing Formation of Priests will take place with Fr. Paul Turner 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. Please **register today** if you plan to attend.

Please note that Fr. Turner will also give a presentation to lay people on Wednesday. He will give a public talk entitled "The Body of Christ at Prayer" on Wednesday, November 25 at 7 p.m. at St. Ninian Place, Antigonish. Please encourage your parishioners to attend.

### **Attendance Count at Weekend Liturgies**

At this time of the year, I am asking each parish to count those who attend our churches for Mass on the weekend. Please arrange to have this done for the weekends of December 6 and December 13. Please forward the numbers to Jennifer Wadden at the Chancery Office. Thank you.

### **Pastoral Zones**

We have completed four of the five sessions of the education for Team Ministry, as we move toward the creation of Pastoral Zones. The Inverness Deanery and the Pictou Deanery will be pilots for this new direction, but other areas have agreed to join in the formation. Thanks to all who have taken the time to participate in these sessions.

### **Year of Mercy**

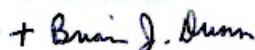
We will begin the Year of Mercy on December 8 and we are all invited to take this opportunity to experience the mercy of God in a new and deeper way. Priests are reminded of the Day of Recollection on February 16, 2016 at St. Joseph's Church, Port Hawkesbury where the theme will focus on the gift of the Lord's mercy. The Cathedral and St. Marguerite Bourgeoys will be designated as pilgrimage sites for the year. Further information will be circulated next week as to assist how parishes might celebrate this Year as we experience the Lord's mercy.

**Priests' Annual Retreat** will take place in Mabou, May 22-27, 2016. Bishop Gary Gordon will be our retreat director and he is quite excited to come. 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 we bury some of our brother priests during this month of November, we remember how our senior priests have given so much time in serving the needs of parishioners within this diocese. Let us continue to acknowledge and appreciate the ways that brother priests have contributed to the life of this diocese. May the Lord continue to bless you as you minister to parishioners.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Brian J. Dunn".

† Brian Joseph Dunn  
Bishop of Antigonish