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January 18, 2016

To my Brother Priests and Deacons,

This past Saturday, youth, parents and youth leaders from all over the diocese attended a youth rally marking the re-launch of youth ministry in the diocese. Thanks to Nolan Conrad and all who assisted in making this event a great success, in spite of the weather.

Personnel Issues

Please include the following people in your prayers:

- Fr. Peter Piva has moved from Xavier Apartments to Harbourstone (Kimberley Hall).
- Fr. Peter Baccardax's sister, Theresa Digout, of River Bourgeois, died on November 23, 2015 at the Strait Richmond Hospital.
- Fr. Tom Lathigee's sister, Thelma Barbara Tryon, died on November 21, 2015, at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, Sydney, following a brief illness.
- Fr. Evo DiPierro's mother, Gina, died on Friday, December 4, 2015.
- David Hatt, the father of Jennifer Hatt, our Communications Officer, died on December 13, 2015.
- Norma Violet Fraser, the grandmother of Nolan Conrad, our Diocesan Youth Minister, died on December 8, 2015.
- Cathy Farrow's sister-in-law, Mary Langlois, died on January 5, 2015 after fighting Parkinson's Disease for 23 years.
- Helen Sinnett (nee Seminowicz), former Secretary of the Bishop of Antigonish, died at St. Catharine's on Friday, January 15, 2016 at the age of 81 after a long series of illnesses.

Historical Issues on Financial Report

You will notice that an extra sheet has been added to the Financial Report. This is to ensure we have a record of the historical events that have happened in every parish during the year. Please include every event that is important to remember.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: January 18 to 25

The Canadian Council of Churches is providing a complete set of materials to assist Christian Churches in celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. I ask parishes and/or deaneries to either initiate this celebration in your area or to participate with other Christian Churches.

Resources for 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

English - <http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/announcements/4354-resources-for-2016-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity>; French - <http://www.cccb.ca/site/frc/salle-de-presse/annonces/4354-ressources-pour-la-semaine-de-priere-pour-lunite-chretienne-2016>

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 those involved in these councils. Further information will be forthcoming.

The Issue of Pornography

The US Bishops released a statement on Pornography: *Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography*. It provides an overview of the Church's teaching on sexuality, the human person, and chastity; an explanation of why pornography is sinful and harmful; a survey of the wide-reaching effects of pornography in our culture; a closer look at the effects of pornography on men, women, young people, and children; a word of hope and healing to those harmed by pornography and an appendix with a link to targeted resources for particular audiences. You may want to put a statement in your bulletin on this document, since this issue is so pervasive within our culture.

"Round Table" on Nature and Creation: Pope Francis on Care for our Common Home

This discussion will take place on Thursday, January 28, 7:30 pm in Schwartz Building, Room 205. Speakers will include Dr Steven Baldner, Dr Santo Dodaro, and Sr Joanne O'Regan. The moderator will be Dr William Sweet. There will also be a ceremony to present Catholic Studies awards to students. Please encourage parishioners to attend.

Pastoral Zones

We have completed all sessions of the education for Team Ministry, as we move toward the creation of Pastoral Zones. The Inverness Deanery and the Pictou Deanery will continue with this formation by taking part in a book study on Principled Ministry. Thanks to all who have taken the time to participate in these sessions.

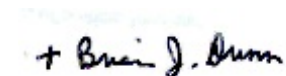
Year of Mercy

We began the Year of Mercy on December 8 and through this Year, we are invited to take this opportunity to experience the mercy of God in a new and deeper way. You 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 are designated as pilgrimage sites for the year. Please consider making a parish pilgrimage during the year. Please see my letter on the Year of Mercy for ideas to assist how parishes might celebrate this special Year.

Closing

As we begin a new year, we have to consider again the issue of weather. In spite of this, I wish you all a happy and holy year with the perspective that we can experience the Lord's mercy in a deeper way. May the Lord continue to bless you as you minister to parishioners.

Sincerely in Christ,



† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish