



Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Antigonish
168 Hawthorne Street, P.O. Box 1330
Antigonish, NS B2G 2L7
Chancery 902-863-3335 / Fax 902-863-0037
Residence 902-863-1557
E-mail: bishopdunn@dioceseofantigonish.ca

September 20, 2012

Dear Parishioners,

As we near the end of the initial phase of the preparation for our Renewal Congress of October 2013, I want to be in touch with you and thank you for your generous response so far. I am grateful that many parishioners have participated in this process, especially as you have obtained, completed and returned questionnaires and have attended meetings. This participation will ensure that we have heard from many people as we look toward the future of the Church in this diocese. We have heard concerns about many aspects of our faith including the ministry to the youth of the diocese, religious education, the celebration of liturgy, how people have been hurt by the sex abuse crisis and the concern that many have as we face the reorganization of our parishes.

At the same time parishioners have shared the blessings that they experience in their parishes today. Many have spoken of blessings that they experienced through their pastors and others who provide ministry in the parish. They have appreciated the faith that has been passed on as well as the structures which have supported us in our faith. Others acknowledge those who work on committees in the diocese who struggle with difficult decisions that we have to make, e.g., how to lead parishes to greater viability or how to meet the requirements of the Legal Settlement as we try to bring healing to those who have been abused.

I believe that the process associated with "Rebuilding My People the Church – Diocesan Renewal Congress 2013" has enabled both clergy and laity to listen deeply to one another. Many have made recommendations that will assist us to formulate a pastoral plan for the coming years. This plan will help us meet the needs of new circumstances in our church. Throughout this process I have experienced a real faithfulness and optimism for change in the midst of these difficult times in our diocese.

I ask that all clergy and laity of the diocese continue to work together as we listen and discern the call of the Holy Spirit towards new growth in our faith. I believe it can contribute to the reconciliation of those who may not be connected with the church. I am committed to this process because I believe it will assist in the formulation of the pastoral initiatives that we will need over the next few years. I am confident in and am grateful for those involved in planning this process. As I participate in the various meetings, I am filled with hope as I see people working together for the good of our diocese.

I encourage parishioners to obtain the information provided by the committee so that you may more fully appreciate the significance of this process. May we all grow in our listening skills as we listen to one another and grow in faith, in hope and in love.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish