



June 6, 2009

To the parishioners, Parish Pastoral Council members, and pastoral team of St. Leonard Parish:

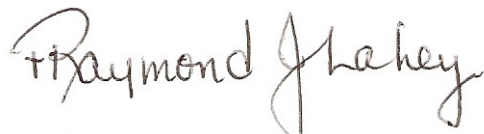
As you know, the Parish Pastoral Council has presented to me three options regarding the future use of your parish buildings. Included with them were the Trifos report, the Steering Committee report, the notes of your most recent parish meeting, and the many individual written comments of parishioners. When I received them, I appointed a special committee to examine the three options and to make recommendations to me. I have now received and studied their recommendations, which were unanimous, and in light of them I would make the following provisions, which correspond to one of the three options presented:

- 1) As of 1 September, 2009, the present Mount Carmel church will serve as the one church building for Saint Leonard Parish. The day chapel of the church will be used to celebrate weekday Mass. As of that date, the church will be called "The Parish Church of St. Leonard," thus using the title of the patron saint of the parish. For many reasons, one place of worship was often stated as an ideal for the parish. This church building was chosen because of the combination of its large size, its noble character, its excellent structural condition, and the fact that it can be used without large capital expenditures.
- 2) As of the same date, the present Saint Michael's church building will no longer be used for worship, but will become the Saint Leonard Parish Pastoral Center. This could include facilities for parish offices, intergenerational catechesis, social gatherings, parish or community conferences and workshops, parish meetings, document storage, Youth Ministry, Cursillo and Challenge gatherings, etc. This change should require a minimum of renovation.
- 3) St. Agnes Hall should be used as a parish hall and St. Vincent de Paul centre under the title of St. Leonard Parish Hall, with the understanding that the Parish should carry out a review as soon as possible of both it and the new St. Leonard Parish Pastoral Center so as to assess whether, and in what ways, both buildings are required in light of the pastoral needs and financial situation of the parish.
- 4) The former Mount Carmel Glebe House, currently housing parish offices, should be demolished as early as is feasible.

- 5) The present residence for priests will continue to be used for this purpose.
- 6) Since they will no longer be in active use by the parish, and after taking careful account of other potential uses that may serve the community, the parish will begin immediately to develop an orderly and financially prudent plan regarding the future of the following parish buildings: Saint Agnes Church, Saint Alphonsus Church, Saint Joseph's Church, New Victoria, Saint Joseph's Church, Lingan, and Saint Joseph's Hall, Lingan. Recommendations regarding the future of each building should be presented to the Diocese as appropriate, but no later than the end of 2011. In the meantime, any necessary steps should be taken to avoid structural deterioration and to ensure public safety.

As I present these provisions I know that you as parishioners are fully aware of the changed financial and demographic realities that the Parish faces. At the same time I can easily recognize and respect the fact that provisions like these have to be accompanied by some real sadness. But I know from your parish meetings that the people of New Waterford and area are a very united and caring community, and I present them to you today as a way forward, knowing that you want to build in your area a vibrant parish, a parish that will continue to serve your current needs and be there strong and renewed for generations yet to come. I wish you every blessing and encouragement for these years ahead.

Yours sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond J. Lahey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

+ Raymond J. Lahey
Bishop of Antigonish