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To: To Clergy and People of the Diocese

Date: June 30th, 2020

Dear friends

Tomorrow is Canada Day. Like everything else since the middle of March, Canada Day celebrations are going to look different this year and will mostly occur on-line. However this is not limited to the effects of Covid-19 on our public gatherings. The public discourse over the past few weeks has drawn renewed attention to long-standing disparities in this country. Perhaps because a pandemic has changed so much around us, there is a desire for even greater change, long lasting change, to the ways that the rights, responsibilities and benefits of citizenship are accorded. There is much of which we may be justifiably proud as Canadians but there remains much more to do. I have observed over the years that as Canadians, we have a tendency to compare ourselves with other countries and to find satisfaction when we are better than... (and we can always find someone to be better than) or to take comfort that we are not a super-power therefore being middle of the pack is good enough. I'm sure that something better is called for from us: "Finally, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (Phil 4:8) What is the more excellent way that we may find racial equality, care and support of those most vulnerable, and find the wealth of the nation shared more equitably. The Collect for Canada Day found in the Book of Alternative Services seeks God's wisdom in bringing both harmony and justice.

Almighty God, whose wisdom and whose love are over all, accept the prayers we offer for our nation. Give integrity to its citizens and wisdom to those in authority, that harmony and justice may be secured in obedience to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. (BAS p. 413)

Re-Opening for In-Person Worship (we never stopped worshipping)

As we move through the response to Novel Corona virus we continue to be attentive to the direction provided by the Public Health authorities. In an earlier letter to the diocese I noted that the two civil provinces which comprise the diocese were not coordinating their regulations regarding gatherings. This continues to be true and continues to change, seemingly on a weekly basis. Last week the Province of Nova Scotia extended limits on groups with respects to a building's rated capacity. However the requirement to maintain 6ft of physical distance between individuals (or family groups) remains.

I have now received 20 "Re-opening Plans" from parishes. As might be expected, these run the gamut from: beginning to gather immediately, to councils and clergy deciding to wait until at least September before beginning in-person worship. Some parishes are beginning to gather using "Services of the Word" as they work out the traffic patterns and begin to acclimatize to this new way of worship.

Parishes may begin in-person worship as long as they have a plan in place which addresses the issues I identified in my June 17th letter. Additional resources are found in the Covid 19 section of our diocesan website and on the websites of both the Province of Nova Scotia and the Province of Prince Edward Island. I continue to request that you forward your parish plans to me before you begin to gather. This is not so that I may approve each plan, but that as a diocese we may be aware of what is happening in parishes and provide advice where necessary. While I am on vacation the plans may be forwarded to Canon Gordon Redden.

Spiritual Direction Survey

“To be a spiritual director, one must inspire trust, the kind of trust that enables the directee to understand that it is for that one's good that all effort will be focused. What a gift to bring to another, the gift of disinterested, loving attention!” Margaret Guenther “Holy Listening: the Art of Spiritual Direction”

Spiritual Direction is a relationship in which one person accompanies another in the process of a growing relationship with God. In some ways, the phrase "spiritual direction" is a misnomer because it is not so much about being directive as it is about being open, receptive, aware of and responsive to the movement of the Spirit in one's life. The "director" is, in effect, a guide. Alternatives might be "soul friendship" (anam cara), "spiritual companion", or "spiritual accompaniment". It is understood that the Holy Spirit is the true director, Advocate, or Counselor given to guide us into truth. (John [16:12-13](#))

The link below leads to a questionnaire which we hope will identify those currently offering Spiritual Direction and who may be willing to accompany additional directees. It also includes a few questions around sharing resources and possibly forming a cohort of those willing to share their experience or desiring to build on their skills. Some of you may have specific training in this ministry, while others may draw on personal prayerful and pastoral experience. All interested persons, from all denominations are welcome to respond. Kindly share this email with others, both lay and ordained, who are engaged in this vital ministry in our region. The closing date of the survey is [July 31, 2020](#). We will send a summary of the survey to all who respond.

Here is the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DioNSPEIsd>

Grace and peace to you,
Frances Drolet Smith
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

Planning for the Electoral Synod The Synod Arrangements Committee met yesterday to continue planning for the September 12 Electoral Synod. Selection of the regional sites for the Synod is ongoing. Synod delegates will be notified in August as to which site they should attend for the Synod

Stipend Support to Parishes The Diocese is continuing to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to lessen the payroll burden on both the Diocese and Parishes. To that end we require some additional revenue information (for the months of June through August). Data collection forms are being distributed to Parish Treasurers to capture that data.

Thanks
Glen Greencorn, MBA, CPA, CMA
Diocesan Controller

I will be away from the office from July 1-14 inclusive. Questions may be directed to the Rev. Canon Gordon Redden in my absence.

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