



# DIOCESE DE/OF YARMOUTH

43, RUE ALBERT ST., YARMOUTH, N.-É./N.S. B5A 3N1

January 24, 2011

To all the faithful of the Catholic Church of Yarmouth,

Greetings and best wishes to you, as we enter into a new year with all the challenges which it will bring.

I write to you to share with you my concern for our faith and for the future of our community of faith. My hope is that together, we will be able to face with strength the obstacles which could cause us to be discouraged. To support us in our trial, we must draw on the example of our ancestors in the faith, who were able to face adversity and overcome great obstacles with great heart.

“... the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” (Acts 4:32)

I am calling on this same faith of the Church of Yarmouth, to see us through to better days because our faith, when it is based on the Church’s one foundation, Jesus Christ, can withstand many hardships.

I say this because for some time now, we have been struggling with the impact of sexual abuse on the lives of victims, and on the life of the community. Many have been and continue to be shocked and shamed by the behaviour of some priests. The behaviour of these priests and their failures are criminal, immoral and shameful. There is no excuse for it and there is not much that can be done to change what has happened.

What we can do and must do is try to right the wrongs and make financial settlements as best we can with those who have suffered the effects of sexual abuse. This is what we are trying to do through the process of legal mediations in which we have entered and about which you have heard in the media.

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So far this process has proven to be very difficult, yet successful in arriving at what the concerned parties negotiated and freely accepted as compensation. Whether or not this process and its outcome is ultimately viewed as fair, just and proper, only time will tell. Nevertheless, to have settled a significant number of cases is a relief for everyone even if all the cases are not yet resolved. It is my sincere hope that the outstanding cases can be also thus decided and allow all concerned to move on, the victims with their lives and the whole Church with the purpose and mission for which we exist - which is forgiveness, reconciliation and new life after darkness and death. This will require time for healing and lots of prayer.

Legal settlements of course cost money, money which all of you have generously contributed for the upkeep of our church and the gospel which is ours to proclaim. No one feels good about having to pay out settlements - yet that is the cost for the sins of our past. I wish it were otherwise, but the structure we have and the legal systems with which we must function must be respected and followed so that our legal obligations to victims of abuse can be met.

This means that as a church, we will be stretched to the limits of our capacity to pay out settlements. We hope to survive, poorer yes, but alive nevertheless. No doubt it will be necessary to find alternative ways of financing the next few years and we have competent persons who are generously giving their time and talent to help us through this present state of affairs.

Let me reassure you, that I am doing all I can with the collaboration of all the diocesan staff of the Yarmouth Diocese to steer our church through this stormy period and I count on all of you who are of good will and resolved to stay the course with us.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be discussing with you, your pastors and with those in diocesan leadership, how we can best go forward. If we need to make sacrifices and we will, let us do so with conviction and courage. The church is much more than its failures. It is an assembly of saints as well as sinners and we must not let ourselves be defined solely by sins of sexual abuse. Surely our sins must be faced clearly, confessed truthfully and whatever can be done to amend our behaviour and practices must be done. From our penance and purification will come the re-foundation of our church.

May the Lord stand with us as we face our future and may we go forward in the spirit of our fathers and mothers in the faith as reported in the Acts of the Apostles (2: 42-47) where we are told that they remained faithful to the teachings of the Apostles; faithful to the fellowship of their community by looking after each other; faithful to the breaking of the bread and faithful to the prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anthony Mancini".

†Anthony Mancini  
Apostolic Administrator of Yarmouth