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November 26, 2024

Rev. Patrick Salah
Good Shepherd
6903 Mumford Road
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Dear Fr. Patrick,

Thanks so much for your hospitality as I carried out a parish visitation on this past weekend of November 23-24, 2024. You extended a very warm welcome to me and I am grateful for this. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit with you, with the opportunity of spending the night at your rectory. Thanks for your efforts in organizing my visit and ensuring that I would have contact with the many groups that carry out ministry in your parish. I appreciated the opportunity of blessing the new Carlo Acutis Centre; I believe that this building will provide some wonderful possibilities for your parish. It was a very inspiring weekend for me. Thanks for the meals on Saturday and Sunday and for the various receptions.

I really enjoyed the session on Saturday morning when I met with all the various parishioners who are involved in ministry in the parish. Here are some of my reflections on our time together and I invite you to share these with all involved:
- I appreciated the comment from the PLT that you have the privilege of having two churches to serve the needs of your parishioners;
- I was delighted to hear that you have established a new pastoral council and that many people were nominated to run for positions on the council; this is a sign that you have many keen people who desire to do what is best for the parish; I am glad to hear that the strategic planning in the parish will be a team project;
- I am quite impressed with your well organized religious education program for children and young people; you mentioned that there is much working together of the local children and those who have recently come to Canada; I was delighted to visit the children on Sunday morning and see how these levels of faith formation are served within the parish; I believe that when the children are in class, this could be a wonderful opportunity to provide some faith formation for the parents who are present in the gym, waiting for their children;
- I was delighted to hear about the little church program and to hear that so many children are assisted by your generous efforts;
- I'm happy to hear that you provide Bible camps for the children on March break and during the summer;
- I'm glad that you have a variety of adult formation programs with in-person gatherings and gatherings at home;
- I appreciate what you are doing for marriage preparation and will investigate the possibility of providing a marriage preparation for several parishes together; I will also check on the possibilities of the provision of Natural Family Planning in the Diocese;
- I'm happy that you have three catechumens and three Catholics who desire to be fully initiated into the Church; this is a lovely sign of new life in a parish;
- I am very happy that you have revitalized your Baptism Preparation Program; this is an important way of ensuring that parents and children are welcomed into the community; this is a lovely way of providing care for those preparing for Baptism;
- I was quite impressed with the number of ministers that you have for the celebration of the Eucharist; this ministry will indeed ensure that these parishioners' faith will be deepened and nurtured; your music

ministry seems to be exceptionally developed and people seem to be available for this opportunity to serve at the Eucharist;
- I was quite impressed to hear of the amalgamation of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in your parish; to bring two councils together is a momentous project with many potential obstacles and you have been able to establish a unity that will flow into the entire parish; I appreciate all the work that this council does to address the need for food assistance and to assist with heating bills; I appreciate their weekly visitation of needy people in the area;
- I appreciate the outreach that you are doing as you reach out to the 20 children that you assist throughout the world; this will certainly give the children a wider perspective of helping others; I was delighted to hear of the Prayer Shawl Ministry and the fact that you have reached so many people who have appreciated this support;
- I was happy to hear of the story of your Knights of Columbus which started only seven years ago and have each year received an award from the Supreme Council; I appreciate the ministry to reach out to those who are marginalized; they provide ushers for the Mass, conduct many community events and provide support for HCC and CCO;
- I believe that the rich number of parishioners who are involved in ministry is an occasion for gratitude by the whole parish.

I appreciated the meeting with the finance council and hearing the many good things that are happening. I appreciated the fact that you have a large number of people using PAR. The reception of a large bequest this year has given you a little cushion in terms of finances. At the same time you are aware that your facilities are getting older and the interest rates will be down. You will need to increase regular giving. You mentioned the large capital project of replacing the two roofs of the churches and the need for a possible financial campaign. I appreciated the discussion on the pros and cons of having a capital campaign at this time. You mentioned the importance of building trust as the parish looks toward the future. I appreciated all the competent people involved in the care of the temporal goods of the parish.

I thoroughly enjoyed the blessing of the new Carlo Acutis Centre. I met lots of parishioners at that centre who appreciated this new development in the parish. Congratulations to all who have been involved in the design and building of this new centre. I believe this centre will provide a space for some effective pastoral ministry for the parish.

The people I met throughout the weekend at the various socials and at the gathering on Saturday exhibited a deep commitment to the parish and readily shared some of the excitement that is happening in the parish. I experienced much evidence of people working together and a lovely readiness to take responsibility for the parish.

I acknowledge the work that has been done within your liturgical celebrations, with the assistance of many who are involved in liturgical ministries. You have worked hard to provide good liturgies for your parishioners and this will continue to bear fruit. I am grateful for the many parishioners who are involved in all the necessary liturgical ministers. I want to commend all of them for their service in ministry.

Fr. Patrick, I appreciate the tremendous gifts that you have for pastoral ministry. You show wonderful leadership and you have been particularly effective in working on the unity of the parish. Several parishioners have acknowledged this. You have excellent gifts for organization and for addressing the many details that are necessary to be an effective leader. I appreciate your zeal for ministry and the energy that you use for your ministry. I appreciated our times of sharing during the entire weekend. You have many gifts and you use them generously in your pastoral ministry. I appreciate the faith-filled commitment and vision that underlies your ministry. I want to thank you personally for all the work that

you did in organizing the Eucharistic Congress in October. You were instrumental in its success and I am particular grateful for the many gifts you exhibited in the preparation and celebration of the Congress.

As I reflect on my visit with you, "I give thanks to God for all of you and remember before God your work of faith, your labor of love and your steadfast hope in Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:2). May you continue to grow in your relationship with Christ, the Good Shepherd, the King of the Universe. May the patron saints of your churches, St Agnes and St. Thomas Aquinas, continue to inspire the parishioners to respond with generosity to the Lord's call and to allow the Lord to reign effectively as King in their lives. May God continue to bless you as you grow in holiness through your ministry within your parish community.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Brian J. Dunn

†Brian J. Dunn
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth