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November 21, 2018

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we recognize the World Day of Cloistered Life on November 21, 2018, I want to acknowledge that the primary purpose of this World Day of Cloistered Life, traditionally known as *Pro Orantibus* Day (“For Those Who Pray”), is to support the gift of the cloistered contemplative life. Pope Francis reminds us: “Let us thank the Lord for the witness of the cloistered life and let us not fail them in our spiritual and material support in accomplishing such an important mission.” This year I am appealing to you in a special way to support the Augustinian Sisters at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, the only cloistered community in Nova Scotia. These Nuns have been present at Monastery since 2007. Since the early 1800s, this property was held as a contemplative presence. The Cistercians were there for over 100 years, followed by the Augustinian Fathers and then the Maronite Order.

Recently the Sisters had to negotiate to buy the property of the monastery for \$500,000 for approximately 234 acres of land inclusive of the structures, the cemetery and Our Lady of Grace Shrine. Thus, the property will belong to the Sisters and not to the diocese. The transaction will be secured by a 30 year collateral mortgage bearing interest at 2%. The ownership of this property will allow for the upkeep and maintenance of the historic buildings, the cemetery and the Shrine and most importantly, the charism and prayer life of the Augustinian Contemplative Nuns resident at the Monastery. Besides the buying of the property, the monastery needs immediate maintenance including two new furnaces at a cost of \$300,000. Thus, a total of \$800,000 is needed to ensure that the Augustinian Sisters remain at Monastery and your financial support is required at this time. Their annual operations are covered quite adequately from annual donations.

The required financial resources for the acquisition and required maintenance are beyond the means of the Nuns resident at the monastery who are dependent on Divine Providence for their daily sustenance. I am asking that **every parish take up a special collection** for this intention on the weekend of December 1-2. As well I am appealing to individuals who may be able to donate \$1000 to this fund; all we need is 800 people who can give \$1000. Donations may be made through the parish or through Paypal on the website of Our Lady of Grace Monastery. The Augustinian Nuns are a registered charity in Canada and can provide official receipts for income tax purposes. Any contribution you are able to provide will be gratefully appreciated and in gratitude, you and your family will be remembered in the daily prayers at the Monastery.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish