



Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Antigonish
168 Hawthorne Street, P.O. Box 1330
Antigonish, NS B2G 2L7
Chancery 902-863-3335 / Fax 902-863-0037
Residence 902-863-1557
E-mail: bdunn3@uwo.ca

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To parishioners, religious and priests of the Diocese of Antigonish,

It is with shock that we all received the news last week that the New Page Port Hawkesbury mill will be shutting down both its paper machines next month for an indefinite period. Moreover, other communities are recently facing employment losses through various closures.

The pulp and paper industry has been the backbone of the Strait area economy for over fifty years. While physically located in Point Tupper we know that this will impact the lives of thousands of people throughout the Diocese. This impending closure directly affects the families of plant workers, wood lot owners, pulpwood cutters and truckers. In addition, many more people are indirectly affected as they are employed in service industries which depend on the existence of the mill.

In this crisis when people become unemployed, solidarity among everyone is fundamentally important. Today, there is a need for united, co-operative action which is geared to arriving at workable solutions, involving local communities, all levels of government, workers and employers.

In the midst of this situation, I wish to express solidarity with all who are affected by these various announcements. It is at times like these, that we rely on the foundations of our faith.

May we experience the Lord's presence and care in these trying times. May the Lord's Spirit be with all who have the responsibility of making decisions in connection with the mill, so that the common good of our communities and families may always be at the forefront of all decisions.

May all of our parish communities be united in prayer and action for all affected by this closure.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Bishop of Antigonish