

January 12, 2021

To the faithful of Stella Maris Parish:

For the past year, we have had numerous discussions about St. Peter's Church. After hearing from the leadership of the parish and having several meetings with parishioners since the spring of 2019, I believe that we have received the consultation of any who wanted to be heard. It is with sadness that I have decreed the permanent closure of St. Peter Church in Ketch Harbour, effective on the Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul on June 29, 2021. This decree has come after hearing the members of the Council of Priests as required for this procedure of permanent closure.

As a follow up to this decree, it is necessary to dedicate efforts to care for the people who will be impacted by this change. In fact, in one way or another, everyone in Stella Maris Parish will be impacted, especially those in Ketch Harbour who are losing a historic and memorable place of community, belonging, and shared faith. Those in the remaining churches will need to make the necessary efforts to welcome and comfort all those connected with St. Peter's Church.

To support these efforts of comforting and welcome, the parish leadership will undertake a serious plan of integration and pastoral care over the coming months. This plan shall include:

- A commitment to maintaining a Catholic presence in Ketch Harbour, including, but not limited to, faith based small group gatherings and other outreaches.
- A closing liturgy for the community, to be presided by me, and held at St. Peter's site on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29, 2021. If gathering restrictions are still in place at this time, I will discuss with the leadership of the parish another suitable date for the final liturgy.
- A Mass of welcome at St. Michael Church, when all can gather safely again, for the people of St. Peter's church with hospitality extended to all.
- An examination of the options for the preservation of the grotto connected with St. Peter's Church.

Furthermore, a group of retired priests remains available to speak with those who need someone to speak to and pray with during this difficult time.

It remains my hope that this difficult decision will help provide the people of Stella Maris Parish with the resources needed to proclaim the Gospel with ever increasing intensity.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Brian Joseph Dunn
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth