

## Diocesan Financial Stewardship

### Mortgaged Debt Repayment History

In 2003 when Bishop De Angelis was appointed Bishop of Peterborough the Diocese was faced with a mortgaged indebtedness of approximately \$14 million dollars which in his words “was crippling the diocese”. Now almost 12 years later it appears the goal of eliminating the debt we owe to financial institutions will finally be realized. This is a remarkable story of solidarity, generosity, sacrifice, prudent financial management and the trust that for a short while we have to forego certain pastoral priorities.

Where to begin in sharing this good news! First of all, let me acknowledge with gratitude the perseverance of Bishop De Angelis who did not shirk his responsibility in addressing this enormous challenge. Secondly, there is the commitment and expertise of the Diocesan Finance Committee, under the competent leadership of David Gray. Thirdly, there was the solidarity of other dioceses in Ontario, religious communities and individual benefactors from outside our diocese who offered resources toward retiring the debt while extending the forgiveness of repayment. Finally, there has been the generosity of the lay faithful of our diocese who have given through the annual special collection since 2007 to assist in reducing our mortgaged indebtedness.

They say that “a picture is worth a thousand words” and so I think that it might be helpful to confirm these contributions and accomplishment that have quietly taken place behind the scenes in retiring the diocesan debt. (Fig. 1) is a bar chart that illustrates the downward trend of Diocesan Loan Balances from 2003 until 2014.

As of December 2014 the external mortgaged indebtedness of the Diocese was \$648,630 vs \$13,650,333 million in December 2003. The goal is to have the debt eliminated by April 2016, when the remaining loan agreement(s) term is over. (Fig. 2) is a pie chart illustrating the percentage (%) of sources of funding the repayment of mortgaged debt while (Fig. 3) lists the actual dollar amount applied to the debt from each source.

*Note: The history of the special Diocesan Debt collection that has been taken up annually in the parishes from 2007 until 2014 is shown in (Fig. 4). The sacrifice and generosity of the parishes has contributed just shy of \$1.3 million in reducing the debt, representing approximately 9.5% of the overall sources that have contributed to the debt repayment. 2015 will represent the final year of Diocese special debt collection which is scheduled for July.*

*\*2014 financial figures noted are pre final financial statement completion*

### Priest Benefit Fund

In addition to this diocesan debt repayment history we have also been able to stabilize and to address the sustained growth of the Priest Benefit Fund for the needs of our retired clergy. (Fig. 5) shows an encouraging trend of growth over the last 12 years from approximately \$1,024,000 in the fund in 2003 to now in excess of \$4.8 million as of December 2014. We are presently in the midst of an actuarial study to determine the financial sustainability of the Fund based on projected future needs of our

current retired and active clergy who are eligible to receive pension benefits. The policy and guidelines of the Fund are also being reviewed to ensure that our retired clergy receive just, equitable and compassionate care. When this analysis and information is received the Diocese, we will be sharing it with the priests, parishes and parishioners, and in future articles of the Herald to all the lay faithful.

It is my hope that in being more transparent, by sharing this story of sound financial stewardship, generosity and sacrifice, we can all have confidence that the path we have walked is bringing us closer to our goal of meeting the ongoing and future needs of the Diocese. I thank you all for your ongoing trust in the financial stewardship of the diocese in these difficult times. I am indebted to many of you for the financial sacrifices you have made in generously giving to the annual diocesan debt collection and to the leadership of the pastors who have made it a priority in the last seven years. It is my hope that this year's collection will allow us to reach our funding goal by December 2015, the diocese's fiscal year end. Does this mean that this collection and the sacrifice of the parishes for such future needs that we will face come to an end? For the diocesan external indebtedness ... Yes ... For the future ... No ... for we will have many new endeavours and diocesan priorities which have been placed on hold while we devoted our time, energy and financial resources to this pressing need of repaying or mortgaged indebtedness. Thank you to all who have contributed to this wonderful good news story.