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Dear friends in Christ,

In July 2017, I accepted the Renewal Plan, "A promise of New Life ... Courage to Renew". When I accepted the plan, which had been developed after much consultation, I had hoped that it would lead to revitalization of our Archdiocesan Church, to help us to create vibrant faith communities which would be an evangelizing presence in our midst and help prepare us for what is happening in our Church.

We live in a changing world vastly different than it was fifty years ago and the same is true of our Church, it is changing. Things are dying all around us in the Church today. Buildings, structures, systems are passing away in front of us. In my eleven years in your presence I can see a continuing decrease in the number of people who gather for Sunday Eucharist, and over half of these are over 50 years of age with many in their 70s and 80s. Many of those who remain are left shouldering heavy burdens at a time when they should be able to sit back and take life easy.

Difficult and painful decisions need to be made everywhere today for the sake of the Gospel if we are to continue the work that Jesus has asked us to do. I feel that we are faced with the terrible legacy of abuse at all levels in our Church and the change in religion and sacramental practice. If we do not change and bring about new growth, new ways of proclaiming the Gospel, and new ways of being Church, we will be facing collapse in the decades ahead as the current leadership cannot continue forever.

Our Implementation Committee and our Coordinator began their work and have made some progress.

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From the time of its proclamation, the strategic plan encountered resistance from some priests and laity who, while seeing the need for change, had a different vision of what was necessary. These differences have, at times, led to strong disagreements and have made it difficult to move forward.

In light of the above, and that my term of office is very limited, I am officially putting aside the plan (A promise of new life.... courage to renew) until the new bishop is appointed.

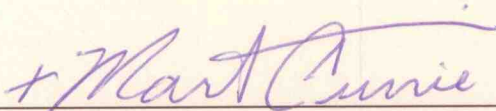
So that the plan can move forward, the next few months will be a time to reflect and seek new ideas, improve morale. The present renewal plan implementation committee are stepping aside and this will provide an opportunity to recruit fresh and enthusiastic individuals to advance the renewal plan.

I would like to thank the members of the Implementation Committee for the time and effort that they gave to renew our Church. As we are awaiting the new bishop, our Coordinator, Mr. Peter Whittle will continue to gather ideas and move the plan forward.

As we recognize the Holy Spirit, both inspiring and supporting the process in which we are involved, let us pray for a new Pentecost for our Church.

May God bless all involved in this difficult process!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



MOST REVEREND MARTIN W. CURRIE, D.D.
Archbishop of St. John's

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