

# Archbishop Smith: Retreat Time

I'm spending the week in Mabou, Nova Scotia, to lead the annual retreat for the priests of the Diocese of Antigonish. We're gathered at the St. Joseph Renewal Centre, guests of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

The "time away" is a welcome and necessary opportunity to spend precious moments in silence with Our Lord. It is, indeed, a blessing to be able to set aside a block of time like this to focus upon our relationship as priests with Christ and to be renewed in his love.

Truth to tell, "retreat time" should form part of everyone's life. Of course, taking a full week is not realistically possible for everyone. In point of fact, though, some time can be set aside – even daily – for retreat, be it only a few minutes. What is needful is a daily focusing upon what is essential: hearing the Word of our Lord and allowing that Word to open to our view how God sees and judges reality.



Mabou, Nova Scotia

We swim daily in a sea of banality and falsehood, incessant messaging that insists upon the urgency of the unimportant. Without taking time to step back and assess all that comes our way, we can easily fall prey to taking as real what is not. This leads to anxiety and frustration, sentiments that are alarmingly widespread in our day. Hence the need for "retreat," for a pause in the day to turn to Christ and see all things clearly in his light. When we learn to see and judge things in the light of the Word of God, we come to realize what truly matters. This will inevitably lead to a shift in priorities, a transition that might well be challenging but that inevitably creates order in our lives, an order that leads to peace.

Mabou is an extraordinarily beautiful place for retreat, but one doesn't have to travel here in order to make time for the essential. That can happen just about anywhere and at any time. We just need to decide to make the time, and to do so on a regular basis.