



DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTETOWN

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Media Release

Diocese of Charlottetown Begins Archives Project

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As the Catholic Diocese of Charlottetown approaches its 200th anniversary in 2029, Bishop Joseph Dabrowski has implemented a plan to create a formal archives program. Being the second oldest English-speaking diocese in Canada, it has played a significant role in the formation of our province and of the Church in the Maritimes.

The Diocese was formed in 1829 under the leadership of Bishop Angus MacEachern, who originally came from Scotland to the Island as a priest to serve the early Gaelic, Acadian, and Mi'kmaw Catholics. At that time the Island was part of the vast Archdiocese of Quebec and for ten years employed Father MacEachern as the sole priest. His ministry extended even across the Northumberland Strait to isolated Catholics in Pictou and beyond. The Archives contain fascinating letters and correspondences between MacEachern and the Archbishop of Quebec which offer us a glimpse into his trials, tribulations, and incredible feats as he eventually became the bishop of a new diocese: Charlottetown.

One of his great accomplishments was the establishment of Saint Andrew's College in 1831, the predecessor to Saint Dunstan's University, established 1855, whose campus has become the home to the University of Prince Edward Island, established in 1969.

The Archive holds many historical photos, paintings, records, letters, and unique artifacts. In the future, we are confident that we will be able to present public exhibits and events that honor the unique contributions of Catholic Islanders and the clergy and Bishops who were their shepherds.

The Diocese has received the assistance of Debra Majer, (archivist of the Diocese of London) and Michelle Pariag (archivist for the Loretto Sisters in Canada) to get the project up and running. Members of the PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation and Robertson Library, UPEI, recently met to share information and see how we can support each other throughout this ongoing project.