



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S

A PROMISE FOR NEW LIFE IN OUR PARISHES AND IN OUR ARCHDIOCESE

Introduction

In June the Archbishop and Strategic Planning Committee sent a message to all parishioners in the Archdiocese summarizing the results of the Parish Ministerial Questionnaire AND the “Let’s Talk” sessions with parish representatives in all Deaneries. Those of you who participated in one or both of these happenings identified a number of concerns with parish life at the present time in our Archdiocese: the need to strengthen the role of lay persons in a real way, the desire for more collaboration among priests and laity in ministry in parishes, a strong request for renewal, a concern about the number of churches and parish buildings we are trying to support, an awareness that we have fewer priests and fewer persons attending church services, a reminder that church is about people and not buildings, a plea for better communications, and a plea to make our parishes and our Archdiocese more inclusive.

These issues are not only true for our Archdiocese but for every diocese in our Church around the world. Pope Francis touches on these same issues when he strongly encourages all of us to be missionary disciples, to work to make each parish a community of communities, a place “for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”

Pastoral Zones

Encouraged by Pope Francis’s message and aware of our own realities, the Strategic Planning Committee is recommending to you a plan for renewal and new life in our Archdiocese. We are proposing that the parishes of the Archdiocese be reorganized into nine pastoral zones led by pastoral teams. These pastoral zones would be based on geography, properties, general population and worshipping communities. In each pastoral zone, all the elements of the mission of the church – worship, sacraments, evangelization, apostolic outreach and pastoral care – would be integrated in a way that would allow more reasonable work commitments for our priests, more involvement of lay persons and more efficient sharing of resources.

One possible arrangement of the nine pastoral zones is outlined in the attached document. Once the pastoral zones are agreed upon, the people of the area will then need to come together to decide how best to use the resources in their zone. This will include their leadership teams, volunteer groups, ministry teams, buildings and properties, finances and community groups.

Pastoral Teams

Each pastoral zone would be led by a pastoral team made up of one or two priests and one or two lay ministers. The lay ministers would be recruited and recommended to the Archbishop and the Vocations Committee. They would be supported financially by the Archdiocese as they complete necessary education and training similar to that completed by those who are ordained as priests. On the recommendation of the Vocations Committee, they would be commissioned by the Archbishop for special ministry in the Archdiocese. With the advice and recommendation of the Personnel Committee, they would be assigned to a pastoral zone and paid by the zone according to the standards of the Archdiocese.

In the pastoral team, the priests and lay ministers would work together in leading the people in the worship and mission of the church within that zone. Lay ministers would share in all of the aspects of administrative and liturgical leadership of the church that priests share in, except sacramental actions

that are reserved to priests – consecration of the Eucharist, sacramental absolution of sins, Anointing of the sick, Confirmation of the faithful, and Ordination of deacons, priests and bishops.

This means that lay ministers would preside at funeral services (without Mass), preside at wedding services (without Mass), baptize, preside and preach each week at Sunday Liturgies of the Word with Communion, be responsible for making decisions and choices for the efficient, life-giving growth of the pastoral zone. This would require that they meet regularly with Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, administrative teams and individuals, liturgical and ministry teams; be attentive to the sick and those in special need, bringing pastoral care and ministry as is possible; and meet and work with Archdiocesan administrators, staff, teams and committees to avail of resources and be accountable in their work.

Our Request

Over the next month, the Strategic Planning Committee invites you to review this proposal by considering the following questions:

1. Does the concept of a pastoral zone make sense in light of our present realities?
2. Does the arrangement for the pastoral zone in your area make sense? Would some communities be better placed in another zone? Would some communities from another zone makes more sense in your zone?
3. Does the concept of a pastoral team of priests and lay ministers make sense?
4. What would be the implications of implementing the pastoral zone in your area?
5. Do you have any concerns with the feasibility of the overall plan of the pastoral zone and pastoral teams?

We invite all parishioners to engage in conversations relating to these proposed pastoral zones and pastoral teams. We ask the designated leaders in the parishes – members of the Parish Councils, Finance Committees, Altar Societies, Liturgy Committees and other parish committees or groups – as well as members of the Catholic Women’s League and Knights of Columbus and women and men religious to encourage as many as possible to do so.

Next Steps

During the months of October and November, the Strategic Planning Committee will set up meetings in each of the nine proposed pastoral zones. We encourage parish leaders and members of the parishes to attend these meetings and participate in the conversations. Based on these conversations, we will amend the proposed pastoral zone plan and decide on the next steps.

The renewal of life in our Archdiocese will need all of us together praying, reflecting, talking, sharing ideas and finding new insights. Together we will dare to do something new, trusting that God’s Spirit of wisdom and courage and hope will be with us on this journey in faith.



PROPOSED PASTORAL ZONES

A Pastoral Zone is a grouping of parishes and churches that serve a geographic area. Each pastoral zone is served by a pastoral team. We propose the following Pastoral Zones:

ZONE ONE

Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, Bell Island, Pouch Cove, Flatrock, Torbay, Outer Cove-Middle Cove-Logy Bay, Bauline

ZONE TWO

St. Paul's, St. Pius X, Basilica, and Mary Queen of Peace in St. John's

ZONE THREE

St. John Bosco, St. Patrick's, St. Teresa's, Corpus Christi in St. John's

ZONE FOUR

Mary Queen of the World, St. Peter's in Mount Pearl, St. Kevin's, Goulds and St. Joseph's, Petty Harbour-Maddox Cove

ZONE FIVE

Kelligrews, Topsail, Manuels and Paradise

ZONE SIX

Bay Bulls, Witless Bay, St. Michael's, Cape Broyle, Calvert, Ferryland, Aquaforte, Fermeuse, Renews

ZONE SEVEN

North Harbour, Colinet, Admiral's Beach, Mount Carmel, St. Joseph's, Riverhead, St. Mary's, St. Vincent's, Trepassey, St. Shott's and Biscay Bay

ZONE EIGHT

St. Bride's, Branch, Patrick's Cove, Point Lance, Placentia, Freshwater, Fox Harbour, Ship Harbour, Dunville, Long Harbour and Southern Harbour

ZONE NINE

Terrenceville, English Harbour East, Grande Le Pierre, St. Bernard's, Rencontre, Rushoon, Parker's Cove, Petite Forte, Southeast Bight, Marystown, Burin, Frenchman's Cove, St. Lawrence, Lawn, Lord's Cove, Lamaline, Point May, Grand Bank.

Contact the members of the Strategic Planning Committee with your input by e-mailing strategicplanning@rcsj.org

More information is available at: <http://rcsj.org/strategic-planning-2>





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SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

WE NEED TO CHANGE! Pope Francis says this, and so do people and priests throughout the Archdiocese over the last twenty years, and particularly during this last year. You've been talking and we've been listening! With all that we've heard, the Strategic Planning Committee is proposing a plan for renewal with two key elements:

PASTORAL ZONES

We recommend establishing nine Pastoral Zones based on geography, properties, general population and worshipping communities encompassing all our existing parishes. In each Pastoral Zone, all the ministry and operations of parish life would be integrated and would allow:

- **More reasonable work for our priests,**
- **More involvement of lay persons and**
- **More efficient sharing of resources**



PASTORAL TEAMS

Each Zone would be led by a Pastoral Team made up of at least one priest and at least one lay minister, all full-time and paid. The lay ministers would receive appropriate training funded by the Archdiocese and would be appointed by the Archbishop. Pastoral Teams of Priests and Lay Ministers would work together equally in serving the people in their zone. Many sacramental actions are reserved to priests and bishops:

- **Consecration of the Eucharist**
- **Sacramental absolution of sins**
- **Anointing of the sick**
- **Confirmation of the faithful and Ordinations**

Otherwise, Lay Ministers would share in all of the work of the church as priests do. They would:

- **Preside at funerals (without Mass)**
- **Preside at weddings (without Mass)**
- **Baptize**
- **Preside and preach each weekend at Liturgies of the Word with Communion**

Over the next month, the Strategic Planning Committee invites all parishioners to review and talk about the proposal by considering the following questions:

1. Does the concept of a pastoral zone make sense in light of our present realities?
2. Does the arrangement for the pastoral zone in your area make sense? Would some communities be better placed in another zone? Would some communities from another zone make more sense in your zone?
3. Does the concept of a pastoral team of priests and lay ministers make sense?
4. What would be the implications of implementing the pastoral zone in your area?
5. Do you have any concerns with the feasibility of the overall plan of the Pastoral Zone and Pastoral Teams?

Within the next month, the Committee will meet with Parish Councils and Finance Committees in each zone. Then we ask as many concerned people as possible to come to a public meeting in each Zone, to raise concerns and to give input on how this proposal can be strengthened. Based on these conversations, we will amend the proposed pastoral zone plan and decide on the next steps. The renewal of life in our Archdiocese will need all of us praying, reflecting, talking, sharing ideas and finding new insights. Moved by the Holy Spirit we will dare to do something new.