



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
Zone 1 – Parish Representatives**

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**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION  
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
PROPOSED ZONE 1 – TORBAY & AREA  
Parish Representatives  
38 in Attendance  
November 29, 2016**

**QUESTION #1**

**DOES THE CONCEPT OF A PASTORAL ZONE MAKE SENSE IN  
LIGHT OF OUR PRESENT REALITIES?**

- The zone proposal has been put out there to engender discussion. Better pastoral service, team ministry and shared decision-making are the key elements.
- Was any other model explored?
- The zone concept is a departure, a significant departure; there is a fear that smaller parishes may disappear altogether.
- In this Archdiocese, we have experimented with twinning, clustering, amalgamation.
- We have also experimented with lay ministers leading weddings, funerals, Liturgy of the Word with and without Communion.
- We need to find a model that will work for us.
- Are we headed in a direction where some of our smaller parishes, isolated parishes will disappear?
- Eventually, will we see one parish in Zone 1, one parish in Zone 2, etc. Is that where we want to go?
- Or... is this what will happen if we don't do something now? Managing our future vs. just letting it happen.
- The pastoral zone concept has been used in Edmundston, Calgary, and there has been significant work on zones in NYC, Boston, Chicago...



## Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 1 – Parish Representatives

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### QUESTION #1 CONT.

- Sharing of resources. Who decides and oversees this, e.g. parish halls, cemeteries? We will need to look carefully at what is already in place and working well. Models and working models are already available to us.

### QUESTION #2

#### a) DOES THE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA MAKE SENSE?

- The concept is a good one; but St. Francis of Assisi may be something of an anomaly. The linking with St. Paul's has worked well, and so perhaps St. Francis of Assisi does not properly fit in Zone 1.
- No. St. Francis of Assisi might be more appropriately placed in the same zone as St. Paul's.

#### b) WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES BE BETTER PLACED IN ANOTHER ZONE?

- St. Francis of Assisi and St. Paul's

#### c) WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES FROM ANOTHER ZONE MAKE MORE SENSE IN YOUR ZONE?

- St. Francis of Assisi and St. Paul's

### QUESTION #3

#### DOES THE CONCEPT OF A PASTORAL TEAM OF PRIESTS AND LAY MINISTERS MAKE SENSE?

- What will be the role of the lay minister?
- There is a real movement toward this concept in many places.
- We have to develop a "made in Newfoundland" model.
- The version we now have may not be what we eventually arrive at.
- The concept of the team in the zone will need to be explored and developed. How many priests in a zone? How many lay ministers? What are their roles? What are their responsibilities?
- This clarity will come from the zone, not the Archdiocese. What are the needs? How do people want this to function?



## Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 1 – Parish Representatives

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### QUESTION #3 CONT.

- This information will be required and offered to lay people as well as clergy.
- Exact pictures of what this will look like will vary from zone to zone. It will be based on geography, need and practicality.
- Zones may allow more flexibility than we have at the moment.
- We need mechanisms for conflict resolution and collaboration. Training and formation are needed to shape people to minister collaboratively in new ways.
- Why are we not looking to recruit priests from outside the province or the country?
- Canadian immigration processes can pose quite a challenge.
- There are ethical concerns around bringing trained persons from countries where they are urgently needed.
- A suitable solution might be a combination of approaches.
- The goal is reasonable access to the Sacraments and rites of the Church, as well as enhanced pastoral vitality.
- What is an acceptable level of service? This will vary depending on the needs and realities of the zone.
- Empower teams to determine what is fair and reasonable access.
- The intent is not to create chaos, but to build new and more fitting structures.
- The Strategic Planning Committee will be there to assist.
- Is there any sort of theological issue that will trip us up?
- How long will it take lay people to become adequately trained? There may be some people there, readily available.
- Question of whether the ordination of deacons would be an avenue we would want to explore.



## Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 1 – Parish Representatives

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### QUESTION #3 CONT.

- Whatever a deacon can do by virtue of ordination, a person, properly delegated by the bishop, can do.
- We are being softly moved toward lay ministry; lay ministers are meant to assist priests, not replace them.
- Priesthood must be maintained and encouraged; we will always need priests.
- Workloads are too heavy for priests.
- We do not want to kill off the few priests we have.
- What can we do to ensure people have access to the Sacraments?
- Fear that Eucharist will not be upheld, in favour of Liturgy of the Word? In twenty years, will there be Mass?
- How are we going to make sure that people have reasonable access to Mass?
- Will the role of the priest be diminished somehow?
- What is the balance between having Mass, and looking at a fair assessment of how far people have to drive to get to Mass?
- People need to be educated to accept that Liturgy of the Word is a worthwhile and valued celebration.
- Losing the Eucharist is a fear. There are people who will not go if it is announced that there is a lay-led service. How do we educate people?
- Could it be that we could have services more often than Eucharist?
- We can't lose sight of the centrality of the Eucharist.
- 18% of the population of this Archdiocese attends Mass; there is a need to engage in serious and urgent conversations around what we hold dear and value.



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### QUESTION #4

#### WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA?

- St. Francis of Assisi has established bonds with St. Paul's; the link is to the city, not the proposed Zone 1. A plea for this to be heard and attended to.
- St. Francis and St. Paul's must stay together. But, a key awareness is that we have to start working together as zones, coming together as communities. This is positive. We know what our values are, and we also know that we have to change with the times.
- Portugal Cove and Bell Island are in Zone 1, and Paradise is in Zone 5. Does this need to be addressed? Or...If we are intent on keeping Bell Island and Portugal Cove together, attention must be paid to personnel appointments. Personnel have to be aligned properly across the zones.
- The biggest fear is losing vibrancy. A plea to attend to this, especially re: St. Paul's and St. Francis of Assisi.

### QUESTION #5

#### DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS WITH THE FEASIBILITY OF THE OVERALL PLAN OF THE PASTORAL ZONE AND PASTORAL TEAMS?

- Bell Island may pose particular challenges. We need to be attentive to special geographic situations such as, for example, Bell Island and Southeast Bight. Ferry service dictates need, to some degree.
- Outreach programs and services must be attended to.
- We need to plan to reach out beyond our walls.
- This is a way that we can see pastoral ministry making a vibrant contribution.
- This proposal gives us the scope to look at our real needs, beyond liturgical ministries.
- We can't wait for people to come to us; we have to reach out. There is unlimited scope for creativity and relevancy.
- Will each parish keep its own Pastoral Council, committees, etc?



## Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 1 – Parish Representatives

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### QUESTION #5 CONT.

- Follow-through is a weakness of ours. Is it going to be followed through? We have a history of going so far and stopping. Will this happen again?

### QUESTION #6

#### WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- Look how viable this approach really would be.
- What are the real risks, if we do take this approach? Will this be positive? Are there drawbacks?
- Research needs to be done: Is this happening anywhere else? What is the success? Has there been failure?
- We have to reach the ordinary parishioners. We have to inform those who really have no idea where we are or what we are doing.
- Good communication with people.
- Heed the advice of the people in the consultations.
- Be open to change and to evolving structures and insights.
- Re-draft the proposals to reflect the input from the consultations in the proposed zones.

#### OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- None



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**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION  
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
PROPOSED ZONE 1 – TORBAY & AREA  
Public Meeting  
70 in Attendance  
November 30, 2016**

**QUESTION #1**

**DOES THE CONCEPT OF A PASTORAL ZONE MAKE SENSE IN LIGHT OF OUR PRESENT REALITIES?**

- Yes. It has to happen.
- The focus seems to be on structures, rather than people.
- The term “Pastoral Zone” is a bit problematic; it speaks more to an area, rather than a community. Can we find a word that better reflects our realities and our hopes than “Zone?”
- Would “family of parishes” do it?
- Has any other parish or diocese in Canada entered into a process such as the one in which we are involved here?
- Is this something that’s happening all over the Catholic world? Is the Pope behind these efforts of renewal?
- Are pastoral zones a “done deal?” No. This is a proposal.

**QUESTION #2**

**a) DOES THE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA MAKE SENSE?**

- No. St. Francis of Assisi does not belong in the proposed Zone 1. It would serve great purpose to leave St. Francis of Assisi with St. Paul’s and affirm its connection toward St. John’s, given schools, etc.
- St. Francis of Assisi does not belong in the proposed Zone 1, but gravitates more to St. Paul’s and to St. John’s.
- St. Francis of Assisi is in a proposed zone that does not reflect its reality. The young people feed into schools in St. John’s.



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
Zone 1 – Public Meeting**

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**QUESTION #2 CONT.**

**b) WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES BE BETTER PLACED IN ANOTHER ZONE?**

- St. Francis of Assisi does not belong in the proposed Zone 1

**c) WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES FROM ANOTHER ZONE MAKE MORE SENSE IN YOUR ZONE?**

- None noted

**QUESTION #3**

**DOES THE CONCEPT OF A PASTORAL TEAM OF PRIESTS AND LAY MINISTERS MAKE SENSE?**

- The empowerment of lay people and the extension of ministries to the possible limits allowed by Canon Law makes sense.
- This may allow us to better capitalize on the gifts that are available in the community.
- When will this be implemented?
- We should have some firm direction by mid-next year.
- There are married priests out there. Can we call them into service?

**QUESTION #4**

**WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA?**

- How are we going to decide how many priests and how many lay ministers are assigned to each zone?
- We will need to develop some sort of criteria, which considers needs, etc.

**QUESTION #5**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS WITH THE FEASIBILITY OF THE OVERALL PLAN OF THE PASTORAL ZONE AND PASTORAL TEAMS?**

- Finances and the envisioned cost of training lay pastoral ministers.
- Where is the money going to come from for the training of lay ministers?



## Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 1 – Public Meeting

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### QUESTION #5 CONT.

- Can we be assured that the engagement of lay ministers will not go by the wayside? What is the commitment to this? How can we know that the experience of the dashed hopes of the MLPA will not be repeated?
- There should be something like a “parish health index” developed to assess the vitality of parishes.
- Bell Island is a unique case. It is an island. Boats are always subject to wind and weather, and this has to be taken into consideration.
- We will need to educate our parishioners to accept lay ministers. We have the experience of people who shift lines at Communion time to receive from the priest. Will this affect the new lay pastoral ministers? How will we invite and train people into new ways of thinking and acting?
- If there were no priests around, would Jesus’ command to “Do this in memory of me,” just disappear?
- How do we create welcoming communities? How do we help people to feel comfortable in our parishes?
- Years ago, the Church did not have to worry about attracting people. This need to attract people is new for us.

### QUESTION #6

#### WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- This has to be sold to the congregations. Perhaps education offered at the Masses. We have to assist people to see what we are doing and why we are doing it.
- Use social media.
- You probably can’t communicate enough.
- Does the terminology and the structures for delivery have to be consistent across the Church? Some clarification offered on this—we cannot get rid of the basic structures of families, parishes, dioceses.



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### OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- What is the Church doing to attract youth into Church and to priesthood?
- We would not have a shortage of leadership if all ministries were open to both genders. We think young boys, not married men and women would make wonderful priests.
- We exclude all kinds of really good people from our Church. Many good people, even active participants, are not able to access the Eucharist. We exclude gay people and many others.
- Mother Theresa of Calcutta was able to be canonized a saint, but she could not be ordained.
- In order to engage youth, you have to engage parents. What might draw them? We need to explore this, figure out what makes people come for Baptism... What makes them want to come to “get this done”?