



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 3 – Parish Representatives**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 3 – Corpus Christi Parish & Area
Parish Representatives
November 15, 2016
37 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- What are the present realities that are pushing this proposal?
- How are we going to benefit (financially) from this sharing? We will still have the same number of buildings and properties. Right now it is a struggle and we have less money coming in and less people coming to church to contribute. How will this proposal make a difference?
- Is the Archbishop aware and in agreement with this proposal? Shouldn't there be a financial plan in place of how to fund this venture?

QUESTION #2

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

- Geographically it does.

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

- Wouldn't it make better sense to couple St. Patrick's with the Basilica as they are historical buildings that are rather expensive to maintain?

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

- None noted



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Parish Representatives

QUESTION #3

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

- Why not get deacons instead of recruiting lay people? If you have to pay lay people, how will you reduce costs?
- Isn't it true that currently, only males can be ordained as deacons?
- There has to be a rationalization of our services, but not without losing sight of our Catholicism and preserving our tradition. Just because we have a problem does not mean we have to throw everything out and give up on the teachings and precepts of the church which are still being followed elsewhere, including places like Africa and the global south.
- In our parish, we have not had a resident priest for many years. We try to use the gifts of the local lay people to make up for the lack of the presence of a full-time priest. Sometimes, parishioners go to civil ceremonies of weddings or other Christian churches for baptisms. Wouldn't it be better to have a lay person to help people celebrate the rites of the church within our own parish church?
- What other option have we got? As a lay person, my baptism calls me to this work of ministry. We are part of the body of Christ and we are challenged with the knowledge of what we are called to. When we take into account the decreasing numbers of priests and other resources, this concept is a must.
- What is this concept of Lay Ministers? We already have many lay ministers who work well together. There is great evangelization going on in our parish. I have responded to the call of ministry in a community that welcomes and incorporates my gifts. Where is the shortage of priests that is being spoken of? There are a lot of priests around the world.
- I have a fear that we are following a road that will lead us to saying that we don't need priests and we will become like the United Church with a diminished presence of the Eucharist in our lives.
- We are here to face the challenges of today and the reduction of our resources and how we can continue to preach the gospel.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Parish Representatives

QUESTION #3 CONT.

- The laity want to be involved in our church, but what I hear is: what are we going to do with all of these buildings? These are the concerns we need to address. These sorts of proposals have been talked about for 50 years, whereas if we sold off some of these buildings, we could save a lot of money and be able to afford to pay for the people and programs that we need to keep going.
- How do we reach out so as to bring the gospel to others? There are many good people in the parish who are providing this ministry, but they are aging and finding it more trying to maintain the service to the community. There are questions being asked about hiring someone to help out in the parish. We need people to help us to evangelize and catechize and continue the mission of the church in our parishes. How do we go out like the Good Shepherd? As a Zone perhaps we could work together to find new ways to do this and to find resources to hire people to help with this mission of spreading the Gospel. Together we can work toward how to use or dispose of some of our buildings.

QUESTION #4

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

- The biggest thing I hear tonight is fear of change. How do we communicate Christian thought to young people in a secular environment. There are positive and negative aspects to the approach of this proposal, but how are we going to bring this to our young people? This proposal may open ways for us to reach out to young people where they are. We need to talk to the young about social outreach – volunteerism, feeding the poor, seeking social justice. The priests can only do so much and they are limited in what they can do now because of new social structures (i.e. public school system). This Strategic Plan will take a couple of years to work out, and we will make mistakes, but with good people working together, this can work and help to revitalize our church and guide us in new ways of evangelization through the laity.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Parish Representatives

QUESTION #5

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

- The concepts of Zones and Pastoral Teams are just an extension of what we are doing already. The only way that this will add longevity and vitality to our church is by appealing to the young people. For various reasons, we have lost a generation of people who find it difficult if not impossible to return to the church. Many have become very negative to the church. Somehow we have to figure a way to engage the younger people that we have lost, and this proposal could provide a means of doing this in the long run, but only if we keep the young people involved in this process.
- Our aim should be evangelization and faith development, not necessarily having our aim to provide sacraments and rites of the church to everyone. God has a plan in all of this. We need to provide an example of living faith. Our history has many examples of communities that only saw a priest two or three times a year. Yet the faith was strong in these small communities and the sacraments and rites of the church were celebrated with the help of lay people who were leaders in these communities. Many priestly vocations came from these communities from the inspiration of faith of the lay people in these churches. We must emphasize faith development over the idea of providing priests everywhere.

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- Take all the feedback you've gathered, collate it and incorporate it into a follow-up report and bring it back to the parishioners for consideration.
- We need to start creatively reaching out to people and not depend on trying to get them back inside the church buildings. There are a variety of community activities that we can and need to be seen to be a part of.
- There should be ongoing public consultation throughout the process to ensure trust and cooperation.
- We need to keep the momentum of this process. While consultation is wonderful, there can be too much that leads to becoming bogged down. Decisions have to be made and then move on with implementing.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Parish Representatives

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- I appreciate the pro-active approach rather than a reactive approach five years down the road.
- I'm very impressed with the turnout from St. Patrick's.
- I am thankful that we are doing some succession planning, because we didn't do this when we lost the Catholic schools.
- Catholic Campus Outreach is doing great things to attract and engage young people in the practice of faith. Many of these missionary practices are very effective in involving young people.



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 3 – Public Meeting**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 3 – Corpus Christi Parish & Area
Public Meeting
November 16, 2016
156 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- Was there any input from parishioners about the consolidation of parishes? Should this not be considered?
- Concern about the grouping of the Zones. Larger and smaller parishes and wealthy and poor parishes are being joined together which sets up a power imbalance between communities. Recognition of people being more important than buildings, but buildings play an important role in uniting people and symbolizing a sense of community to those who gather in that place. Losing the building can bring about the loss of other gifts of the community.
- What other possible models were considered and could we see these models as comparisons to get a better idea of the pros and cons of this model of Pastoral Zones and Pastoral Teams with Lay Ministers?
- This should be about evangelization. It's not necessarily the mission of the church to ensure Sacraments and rites, but to gather community to hear the word of God and to carry out the mission of the gospel based on the model that developed in the 70's following the emerging vision of the Second Vatican Council.
- This could make sense, but it is important to choose numbers of parishes with more equality between them so that things could be more inclusive in decision making.

QUESTION #2

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

- No comments noted



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Public Meeting

QUESTION #2 CONT.

b) Would some communities be better placed in another zone?

- I would prefer the Basilica and St. Patrick's in the same Zone. Perhaps the centre of St. John's could be considered as a Zone.

c) Would some communities from another zone make more sense in your zone?

- How do we reach out to those we might lose from churches that are closed and make them feel welcome within this Zone?

QUESTION #3

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

- What is the overall cost for Lay Ministers and what would this cover? What is the overall cost then for the Archdiocese across all the Zones?
- We are in financial trouble already as a diocese, this proposal will dig us into a deeper hole. We should identify and address our financial problems and then assess the costs of implementing this proposal.
- The pastoral approach is good, but we will not be able to implement any of this if we do not have the financial wherewithal to be able to do this. We need to consider consolidation and possible elimination of infrastructure so that we can save on costs. Our aging population is being overly burdened with means of raising funds that is increasingly difficult and unnecessary.
- What are we about as a church? We need to spread the peace of Christ. This happens within our parish communities. Money shouldn't be the bottom line. With no money left, we still need to carry out the mission of the gospel. There is no better gift than the peace of Christ, which can be felt and lived outside of ever going into a church. Let's act as if we had no money.
- What about using Permanent Deacons?
- There doesn't seem to be any consideration of catechism of children. If we do not properly catechize our young people, we will eliminate the possibility of vocations in the future. All that the lay ministers are supposed to do in this proposal is actually the ministry of deacons. We should be following the vocations of the church, not turning vocations into jobs. This proposal only scratches the surface of what our church needs.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Public Meeting

QUESTION #3 CONT.

- There is a need for full disclosure. We would prefer to have more priests.
- It would be great to be able to hire a lay person at St. Patrick's Parish, but our costs within the parish are high. Our parishioners are dying off and there are not many young people taking their places. It would be great to hire on lay people to help with all the work, but we can't afford it. We are concerned about the laity, but we need to focus on the expenses of running what we already have, despite hiring on more people. We are not allowed to have overdrafts, so if the money runs low, where is the salary going to come from?
- We need to come together in our passionate commitment to the church. We all want to see priests on our altars, but we need to face the realities of our current situation. I believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding us. Despite the call for deacons, depending solely on this ministry eliminates 50% of our population as, presently, only men can be ordained as deacons. We need to call forward the gifts and vocations of all the baptized.
- Appointing Lay Ministers is in response to the diminishing numbers of priests. This proposal seems to be following this mindset. We have many lay people, many women, who minister ably within our parishes and Archdiocese. It would be greatly appreciated that continued work to bring in foreign priests be done and that inculturation be further developed. The work of women within our church can and should be encouraged.
- A concern about bringing in more and more lay people, in the way that we are doing now, is in response to the lack of priests here. By answering the needs of the church by getting lay people to do the things that were traditionally reserved to the priest, helps the larger church to ignore the crisis we face and to deny the discussion that needs to take place about married clergy and women priests.

QUESTION #4

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

- Has the committee considered the time factor for implementing this proposal? It seems that it will take a long time. Training of Lay Ministers will need to be a rigorous and time consuming process of discernment and preparation. Why has the Committee not considered deacons when so many other dioceses have done this?



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Public Meeting

QUESTION #4 CONT.

- It may be time for us to consider giving up our buildings and going out to the world to bring the gospel to our people.

QUESTION #5

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

- This still seems like a plan without a future. There seems to be a separation between our plan and youth. We need to have a discussion about why we have so few or no youth in our churches and what we can do about it.
- If this model is to work it will depend on leadership. Attempts at lay ministry in other areas has fallen flat due to a lack of investment or support on the part of the leadership. All those with leadership roles must work in a collaborative effort to evoke all the gifts and ministry of the people. The work of all of our parishioners must be toward the building up of the people of God.
- This report seems to be about a way to manage our own extinction. Even with foreign priests coming in, this trend of decline of the church is going to continue. Where Catholic schools exist, the church seems to thrive. Without them, we will continue to lose the young people, and the future, of our church. Amalgamation seems to be avoided here, but it is going to happen, despite being exceedingly unpleasant. Parishes will face contention about having to join another parish. However, joining services, ministries and congregations will help to build up communities, despite the unpopularity of such a move.
- Lay ministry is not something new in our province. Thirty-two years ago I worked in a parish as a pastoral assistant. We lost denominational schools, and this was a good thing, as it was not a good or authentic way of passing on the faith to children. This should be done by families in the home. Where we have parents who are really believers, we have children who are more willing to participate in the faith. We are all ministers and God works through us all in different ways.
- We need to build up our churches, but we need to evangelize ourselves before we go out to evangelize the world. We need solid Catholic catechesis which is lacking in this diocese currently.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 3 – Public Meeting

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- None Noted

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- Over half of our population is female and we are ignoring the vocations of many of them in the ministry they can offer. Many priests have left ministry to marry. Though this is an issue outside of the realm of the Committee, we need to be aware and make the church aware of this as a problem. Not only do we lose the ministry of so many people, the ignoring of their gifts also sends a message to youth and those who have drifted away from church.
- Opus dei could come here and bring in priests who could bring a greater sense of Catholic faith and practice.
- We have to find a way to evangelize our youth. We no longer have Catholic schools and so we need to find new ways to reach out to the youth.
- Children come for sacraments, but disappear after receiving these sacraments. There is a need for better catechesis of, not only the children, but also their families. There needs to be more follow-up with these families.
- Today's parents have had no formation in the faith and so they cannot support the institution of the church that they do not understand. Could we look at what churches like the Pentecostal church are doing to fill their churches with young people and young families.