



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 4 – Parish Representatives**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 4 – Mary Queen of the World Parish & Area
Parish Representatives
December 06, 2016
40 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- Zones do not make sense in many cases, though maybe in some. The expenses of this will burden some places to the point of having to close some churches to afford this endeavour.
- Do we accept the “language” of pastoral zones? Could we not just go with the structure (or re-structure) of deaneries. Unsure that many of these zones could be viable financially.
- If it answers the need of the mission of the church, the evangelization of our people, it would be more feasible to do this on a parish level. Following the focus of discipleship in the mission of the church, we need to trust more in the Holy Spirit. How does the concept of Zones and Teams help to carry out the evangelizing mission of the church? We need to focus our resources on getting more people back in the churches by addressing the symptoms of what is lacking in our parishes. We can solve human resources issues later, now we need to focus on the actual mission of the church in the parishes.
- Is there a template in any other area of the world where this is being done? Is it working or helping elsewhere?
- Can we say there is enough experience to ensure that parishes survive within Pastoral Zones?
- How will this work financially and administratively? Will there be deaneries? How will they be affected?



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QUESTION #2

- a) **DOES THE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA MAKE SENSE?**
- There was a notion that originally there was only Mary Queen of the World Parish and St. Peter's Parish as a Zone.
- b) **WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES BE BETTER PLACED IN ANOTHER ZONE?**
- None noted
- 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?

- Why don't we go the route of the Permanent Diaconate which is approved by the Pope?
- Can we not include a concurrent recruitment and training of permanent deacons and lay ministers?
- Could NL Priests living away be asked to come home and work here?
- Who leads the team? If there is a funeral, who will decide whether there is a priest available for it?
- How long will it take to train and prepare these lay ministers?
- The need for a team can help cover the many needs of such far flung parishes as we have in this diocese.
- How can we afford to pay for the education and formation of these lay ministers?
- The concept of paid lay ministers causes some confusion. Would they be on the same level as the parish priests? The presence of paid lay ministers could have a detrimental impact on the lay volunteers who are already ministering in the parish.
- How will this new structure roll out? Will we each have a resident priest? Will the team serve a parish or the whole Zone?



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QUESTION #3 CONT.

- This will be more destructive to parishes and to priests through this proposal. Priests will be overworked having to cover these Zones and we will lose priests faster. The driving force of this process seems to be the lack of priests, and this won't help.
- What about our immediate problems in our parishes? Lay ministry came about through the support of many workshops and conferences and training programmes. Great work has been done through these lay ministries. However, today, the need for evangelization and catechesis for young families is practically overwhelming. What can we do to help those people? There is no consistency in the approach and method for catechising and ministering to our people today?

QUESTION #4

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

- If we become a Zone it would be a fantastic opportunity to get to know one another and share ideas and resources.
- What would be the timeline for phasing in these Zones and preparing and hiring Lay Ministers to form these Teams?
- There are a number of priests who are where they are and aren't going to be moved. Can they be incorporated into the Team for that Zone?

QUESTION #5

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

- We need to focus on the real issue – getting people evangelized, helping them to know Jesus and to get them to Church. Introduce people to the reality of Jesus in their lives and fire them up with the Holy Spirit and everything else will fall into place – priests, lay ministers, churches.
- A major concern is the time crunch of trying to implement this before the current bishop retires and a new bishop comes here – this needs to be seen as viable by then.
- The operational costs? If one of our buildings are closed, there will be a loss of revenue.



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QUESTION #5 CONT.

- Can we bring in more priests from other areas to help? There are some senior priests who would be willing to stay on in their present context who should not be made to change now and to adapt to a new Zone experience.
- Has the issue of finances been any part of the formation of this proposal?

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- Sooner rather than later! We need to see something happen now.
- We need to use modern communication and social media to help in this process.
- There needs to be a definite financial impact study done on this before anything is implemented.
- There needs to be something concrete in the final proposal that can be discussed and ratified within parishes.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- There is a reality in a lot of rural Newfoundland that there has been a closure of a lot of schools. The church is, in many cases, the last place of gathering for a community. Even though this may cost a lot of money.
- The loss of the young people AND the older generations of our parishes is disturbing.



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 4 – Public Meeting**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 4 – Mary Queen of the World Parish & Area
Public Meeting
December 07, 2016
96 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- If the Zone concept is adopted, what will happen to the deaneries?
- There will be “power struggles” in the Zones with parishes linked when there are events happening in more than one Zone.
- How were the Zones determined? Why nine? For us in Zone 4, we currently have three priests, if we go with these nine Zones, how many priests will be here?
- I am dead set against this proposal. We seem to be becoming more like the other Christian churches and following them rather than leading.
- The changes of the last few decades have met with anger and opposition, but people eventually came around. This is a good proposal for helping to meet the needs of our parishes today.
- What’s going to happen within this Zone when numbers of priests and/or Lay ministers diminish? Smaller communities will suffer first and foremost.
- Do you think that this proposal will bring young people back to the church? What can and will be done to bring people back?
- Is there something about the make-up of these Zones that makes sense? Why are two urban and two rural parishes being linked together?
- Within the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, there is a concept of “twinning” which enables more robust groups to assist others that are struggling and allow both to support one another and to survive.



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QUESTION #2

- a) **DOES THE ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PASTORAL ZONE IN YOUR AREA MAKE SENSE?**
- None noted
- b) **WOULD SOME COMMUNITIES BE BETTER PLACED IN ANOTHER ZONE?**
- None noted
- 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?

- How will teams work? What model of collaboration? Consensus? Democratic process? Will there be someone in charge?
- Will the Pastoral Team work with our parish committees as the priest currently does, or will they replace the work of lay committees currently operating in our parishes? Will they dictate to our parishes how things are going to change and impose those changes themselves?
- I strongly object to this proposal as it is similar to non-Catholic traditions which we are not. Why not use the money for this program to hire priests from other places? This is the Catholic church, not a business and we should pray. Why are we not praying the Rosary, having Masses and Eucharistic adoration? Our Lady of Fatima in her secrets from Fatima gives us the answers we need.
- Are we going to include women as candidates for Lay Ministers in these Zones? Is there a re-prioritizing of Sacraments?
- Is this approach of Pastoral Teams being used elsewhere in Canada? Are other areas using Lay Ministers to the same extent that they are being suggested in this proposal?
- This path will eventually lead us to no priests and a church led by only Lay Ministers. We must make greater efforts to bring young people back and try to recruit some to serve as priests.



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QUESTION #3 CONT.

- We are all called through our baptism to be missionary disciples, priests and lay people. We have all been anointed as priests, prophets and kings through our anointing with chrism at baptism. Our common priesthood of baptism places upon us all the responsibility to evangelize, catechize and minister to the people of God. If we don't, we are abdicating the responsibility of our baptismal call. Within every community, we have enough Gifts to carry out the mission of the church and to be missionary disciples in our church.
- The answer to our problems is to bring in more priests. If we can bring in 25,000 Syrian refugees, then we can find some way to bring in priests.
- The idea of commissioning Lay Ministers is reminiscent of the people of the Ministry Leadership Program for Adults, who were ignored when they completed the program. This needs to be paramount in the minds of anyone forming any plans to bring about lay ministry in the Archdiocese.
- Lay ministers who work in the parish, will have their families as a priority. What will happen to the life of the parishes?
- We need more priests, but we are only going after half the population. The experience of women as clergy in other Christian denominations witnesses to how good and capable the ministry could be and what a loss there is to us in not acknowledging that loss.
- The focus of our Catholic faith is Jesus and the Eucharist. The Companions of the Cross have a lot of seminarians and priests and would come here if they were invited.
- With everything that has happened with abuse crisis, there is no one left in the churches, and the few left are aging. Lay ministers won't have half the training that priests have and will be unable to minister in an equal way.
- As a lay person, I do all in my power to evangelize, but I should not take away the role of the priest. I have a strong objection to lay ministers having Liturgy of the Word instead of a priest having Mass.



Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's STRATEGIC PLANNING Zone 4 – Public Meeting

QUESTION #4

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

- Cost will be the major factor. Finances are already limited and strained.
- What churches are going to close? This seems to be an obvious factor that must be addressed.
- How many of our priests in our diocese actually work with a team? The model of “team work” in our diocese leaves much to be desired.
- How many priests are currently in Zone 4? Shouldn't they be consulted and be able to express their opinions of what they think of this?

QUESTION #5

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

- Is there a time frame for the implementation of this process? The longer you draw out a process the more cumbersome it becomes. Once these consultative meetings are completed we should start moving forward with some signs of implementation.

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- No specific comments to this question noted.
- Where did this committee and its mandate come from? Why didn't it come from a selection of priests from around the Archdiocese?
- The real answer to our problems and needs is the Holy Spirit. Prayer and spiritual renewal will do what is necessary.



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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- There are all sorts of negative things about our history that has caused people to drift away from the church, but there are also many outside influences that are drawing people away and are weakening the faith of our people. We need to do something and whatever we choose to do to keep our church going, we will find the money.
- There are people galore in places like Medjugorje and we should be going after some of them. We are not teaching people the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We need to teach the children the Catechism in a chronological form. How are we going to get people back into the church and how are we going to authentically teach the Catechism to the people.
- What is missing: Every ordained priest makes a promise of celibacy and which commits him to loving exclusively the people he is sent to serve. Second, each priest makes a promise of obedience to the bishop and the teachings of the church. There has been and will continue to be a great collaboration of ordained, religious and lay people and this must be remembered in the proposal.
- Our society has changed drastically in recent years, and, without the support and infrastructure of the past, such as Catholic schools, leaves most of our young people lost. Now we need to have more charismatic leaders – priests and lay people – who can attract people to learning of the faith. With such a loss of infrastructure, we have a breakdown in many things in our society. Perhaps working together could help us to find ways to help those societal problems, such as the rise in mental illness.
- Many of our parishes still have only the rare appearance of priest as there was in widespread practice many years ago throughout the Archdiocese. We have the opportunity to bring true ministry to our communities by Gathering the people in prayer. We should, by now, have it as taken for granted that every church in every community would gather the people and have Sunday worship and prayer and, as often as possible, to have that liturgy as Mass. This proposal seems to be a response to this original concept of church as the gathering of community in prayer. The proposal will have to be changed and adapted, but we have to be open enough to follow the process. We need to eventually suggest what we can recommend to make this happen. Every church should have Eucharist every Sunday, but that will only happen when the church grows to a point of understanding truly that the gifts come from the community and that we need to stop the restriction of priestly ministry being reserved only to celebrants who are men.



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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS CONT.

- The Cure of Ars, through prayers and sacrifice, brought about the revitalizing of his small parish. People would come from all over to go to Confession to him. As long as we pray to God, God will provide for us. There are already lots of women volunteering in our parishes. We need priests!
- A petition of 327 signers, saying that the proposal we received was unclear and confusing is presented. Perhaps this meeting would change the minds of some of the signatories, but it is a response of the people from the area of Petty Hr. and the Goulds. There has to be a way of protecting the integrity of smaller parishes that are viable.