



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 7 – Parish representatives**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 7 – St. Mary's Bay & Area
Parish Representatives
November 09, 2016
34 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- St. Paul saw the early Christian communities as support groups to each other. The central support was the Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist. The communities would choose a presider. The only way a priest can survive and thrive, is by connecting with a community which won't happen by spreading himself through a "zone". The Archbishop has said that he cannot get priests to go and serve in the rural areas. The priests who actually serve in these areas find great support and strength from their communities who act as a family to them.
- It makes sense provided that it is doable.
- The worst case scenario should be considered first, lest we delude ourselves with planning for something in the far distant future if it is ever to happen.
- There is great cooperation between our communities already and there are great gifts being shared by some incredibly talented people here.
- We need to look at our history. How many schools have been closed and the people came together and made things work. We need to do the same today with our parishes. The numbers of priests are diminishing. We need to encourage people throughout the area to move to the churches where Mass is being celebrated.



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QUESTION #2

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

- We need to re-examine our Deaneries and look at covering priestly ministry in the area.
- Are there any questions being asked about changing the boundaries of the dioceses?
- Don't forget Portugal Cove South. We have gone through a lot of trauma and loss throughout this area. Why disturb what is already working?

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

- Good Shepherd Parish stretches over 90 km without including Branch communities. To add to this area by including Trepassey and Biscay Bay is too much. There are fewer and fewer young people in this area and this is going to continue. Where is the money going to come from to pay Lay Ministers? We can barely afford to maintain what we have and still have problems with maintaining our present buildings.

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

- No comments noted

QUESTION #3

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

- The role of a Lay Minister needs clarification for everyone and the parameters of their ministry need to be understood.
- Where are we going to find the money to train and pay salaries to these Lay Ministers here and throughout the Archdiocese?
- Where are we going to recruit Lay Ministers?



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QUESTION #3 CONT.

- If there is a paid Lay Minister, will we lose the volunteer lay ministers who are doing so much work already? We have to be careful in how we introduce this.
- Lay Ministers to be appointed should be young people, not anyone over 50. There are many ways that this Zone can function, with small ministry groups in each area under the guidance of a pastor. I believe the Holy Spirit is active in this
- We have to get people used to lay led liturgies and have everyone come to buy into it.

QUESTION #4

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

- Would those currently presiding at lay led liturgies be replaced by Lay Ministers coming into the area? Would the local presiders be expected to move to other areas?
- Major concern is that we definitely HAVE to have young people involved. This is a major challenge that needs to be kept before us.
- There is going to be a need for subsidies for areas like this in order to make any of this work.

QUESTION #5

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

- See above.
- Need to ensure that new pastoral team does not step on the toes of the local ministry already active in the area.
- The real ministry of the community is from the area.
- We are blessed in this area with two great priests who have developed great pastoral teams and volunteers.



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QUESTION #5 CONT.

- If there were more spiritually enriching activities and programs being offered in our parishes and they were advertised through social media, there would be more interest from those young people and those who have fallen away.
- There is a high funeral rate here. What is needed in this plan and what is sustainable? With the decline in population and the aging population remaining, there are extreme limits financially and with many other resources as well. A real outreach must be made to reaching out to younger people and to bring about a revitalization of the church.

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- Communication is absolutely key. This is a rough plan and we need to flesh it out to see how it works for our communities. There has to be flexibility.
- Recommendations of closure of churches in this area must be acted upon as quickly as possible for our survival. The decisions have been made after a very emotional process. The final decision should be made without pitting communities against each other.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- None noted



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 7 – Public Meeting**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 7 – St. Mary's Bay & Area
Public Meeting
November 10, 2016
68 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- How do our present parishes compare to Pastoral Zones in regards to numbers?
- The concept of the Pastoral Zone makes sense, but the implementation of these Zones does not seem feasible.
- Why is this only taking place in the Archdiocese? Why not in the other dioceses of NL? Research has been done about what has been done in other dioceses throughout the world, but particularly in Canada, to see what is and has been done, what works and doesn't and what could work here for our needs. There have been four different attempts to develop Plans for renewal, but there was never follow through. This is an attempt to follow through. We are talking about Zones, but there was background in earlier plans about "clusters" that led the Committee to this proposal.
- Is the Zone proposal going to be a pilot project and will there be an evaluation? Zones and Teams will evolve and change according to the needs of the people and the areas. Evaluation will continue with the Strategic Planning Committee as a permanent body in the Archdiocese.
- Pastoral Zones can work. There has to be a sense of cooperation between the priests and the people.
- We must keep in mind that we have an aging population and they cannot expect older people to leave their community to go elsewhere for Mass.



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QUESTION #2

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

- From North Hr. to Portugal Cove South is too big an area for just one priest. Current lay presiders do not get the same attendance at liturgies as the priest. Having lay presiders defeats the purpose of trying to revitalize the church if less rather than more (or even the same number) of people come to church. Is this a done deal or is this open to change?

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

- No Comments Noted

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

- No Comments Noted

QUESTION #3

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

- We already have lay presiders and it is not working well. We may have to close churches.
- Nobody can deny that change is needed and inevitable. Many people, young and old, have difficulty with the concept of Lay Ministry. Is there anything to help people to accept and adapt to Lay Ministry? Will there be no priest (and no Mass for my funeral)? Will we have no choice about these things? These are some of the concerns being expressed in the communities now.
- People will not look kindly upon Lay Ministers and will resist it.
- This makes sense, but it is going to be a slow and evolving process and we need to give it a chance to see if it can serve our needs
- However, even if the priest is here, the numbers of people going to church are steadily declining. From the Pope down, the church has got to consider the ordination of women and that priests be allowed to get married, if they want to.



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QUESTION #4

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

- If a person needs or wants a priest they should have access to a priest and not be told they will have to have only the ministry of the Lay Minister.
- Are we talking about recruiting Lay Ministers from each Zone to work in their home Zone, or would they come from outside that area? (A prophet is not accepted in his own country, among his own people and in his own home.)
- There are also the financial concerns of training and paying salary to Team members.
- There is a need to recruit younger people for Lay Ministry.

QUESTION #5

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

- There is a concern about the length of time. Will we have to wait seven years to train people for Lay Ministry? We need to strike while the iron is hot.
- We need to consult with the youth and to get their input. How do we become relevant to the needs and faith experience of our young people?

QUESTION #6

What should be the next steps in our planning process?

- We need to do something, but not rush forward for the sake of doing something. There is a need for clarity of language and concepts.
- Take components of the proposal and as they begin to work, put the various components together. Keep what works and then change or eliminate the things that do not address the needs of our parishes. Each parish needs to address their concerns and how to work with this together.



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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- How is the Strategic Planning Committee composed?
- Why is an Anglican priest who is married, able to convert to Catholicism and be ordained as a Catholic priest while remaining married?