



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 9 – Parish Representatives**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 9 – Burin Peninsula & Area
Parish Representatives
November 03, 2016
27 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- Agree with the need for Zones or some sort of re-organization process, however, leaving it to the Zones to decide will be problematic. We may be setting up Zones for failure as it is too much pressure to decide on church closures and how to use buildings
- When will Zones be established? It may be as late as the latter part of next year. There are too many variables to discuss.
- What about church buildings (and other buildings)? How will we decide and who will decide? We need to establish the framework of Zones and Teams and then determine with the people and Teams there to discuss and come to consensus on the best use of properties.
- What happens to the parish structures now with this idea of “Zones”? Parishes will continue to exist within Zones. They will share in the ministry and resources of the Team, but will continue to exist as parishes.
- The database on buildings and properties should be made available to the Zones for helping to determine future use of these properties.
- Not only do we have shrinking numbers of churches, we have less people in our congregations. Is our mission about keeping buildings open or about passing on our faith?
- Our people have always identified, as a community, with their particular church and their particular priest. These Zones and Teams may eliminate that relationship.



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QUESTION #1 CONT.

- Have all the alternatives been exhausted? We love our foreign born priests and would prefer holy priests from away than going down this road. - We will continue to recruit and welcome foreign priests but desire to encourage the gifts and vocations of our own people here as well.

QUESTION #2

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

- There is a need of more than just two priests and two lay ministers. There is too much work and area to cover. They will be burned out. Either more numbers in the Team or the Zone will have to be split.
- Has the committee ever considered making this two Zones instead of one? Short answer – yes.

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

- Rencontre does not make sense here. It should be part of Corner Brook diocese again.

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?

- Will marriages and baptisms done by lay people be valid? Yes, if done according to the norms of the church and with the due authorization of the bishop.
- Support for priests by lay ministers should be in the area of catechesis and evangelization. Ministerial and liturgical needs should be taken care of by priests and permanent deacons.
- Will people be able to avail of sacraments in emergency situations, such as last rites, if there are so few priests spread over such a large area?



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QUESTION #3 CONT.

- What happens when a priest is not available, but the family wants a priest for, say, a funeral? Arrangements will be made as they are now when a priest is not available.
- Besides the permanent diaconate, there will still be a need for lay ministers to help in sacramental work. Deacons can only be men so we lose the ministry of so many women.
- How much training will “Lay Ministers” get? Could one of the religious priests continue to live in their community but administer another church in St. John's so as to free up a priest to come to the Burin Peninsula?
- Parishioners need to learn about these concepts and become comfortable with them.
- The downside of recruiting and assigning lay ministers is their lack of freedom to move and adapt to other areas of the Archdiocese if they are not from that area or a similar area. It will be near impossible to expect them to move every six years.
- How long would it take to educate a candidate for Lay Minister? Typically three years, but it would depend upon the needs and the educational background of the individual.

QUESTION #4

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

- Current parishioners would have trouble accepting new lay ministers
- We would need more than one or two lay ministers dedicated to particular areas
- This area is too large to be run as one zone with just two priests
- Many parishioners will not be able to accept a Lay Minister presiding at church services.
- These are only proposals to be worked on and then presented to the bishop. All, some or none of this may be implemented.



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QUESTION #4 CONT.

- Canon 230 about lay ministry was quoted. There will be a lack of support from regular parishioners who may turn to other denominations. People may even start their own churches.
- Ordained ministry in this current proposed Zone 9 may be very stressful in attempting to cover emergencies and hospital calls. The geographic area will require a need for ordained persons to be available and for Lay Ministers to be able to cover more non-sacramental ministry.

QUESTION #5

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

- Financially, will individual parishes continue to operate independently?
- Will there be a sharing of costs that is equitable to varying financial situations of parishes?

QUESTION #6

What should be the next steps in our planning process?

- After this consultation, there should be a synopsis of what was learned, an updated proposal incorporating needs and suggestions, and then a presentation of the new proposal to the people with further feedback.
- We propose that action be actually taken to communicate these issues.

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- We need the support of local Lay Ministers to support and assist the foreign born priests who come to our area.
- Before going forward, we should exhaust every avenue for bringing in foreign born priests.
- We have been talking about renewal and revitalizing processes since the 90's. We're still talking about these issues and we've adopted many of the practices being suggested.



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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS CONT.

- We have to continue to educate people that we gather to be in the presence of God, not the priest. The priest or Lay minister presides over the worshipping community. The priest's traditional role has been and will continue to be presider at Mass and other liturgies. But the newness of this ministry offered by Lay Ministry may attract young people.



**Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's
STRATEGIC PLANNING
Zone 9 – Public Meeting**

**NOTES FROM CONSULTATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
PROPOSED ZONE 9 – Burin Peninsula & Area
Public Meeting
November 04, 2016
59 in Attendance**

QUESTION #1

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

- Twinning Marystown and Burin was difficult enough 20 years ago. It seems almost insurmountable to tackle this large Zone.
- Agree with these Zones. Is it fair to have six Masses in Marystown and hardly ever having Mass in more remote areas? How will this proposal make a more equal sharing in the ministry available? Could an older priest take care of the larger areas (with less travel) and leave the more remote areas to the “younger” priests.
- How many priests and lay people will be in this Zone?
- This is the largest Zone of all. We are all too aware of the resettlement program which consolidated, but traumatized communities. Will people have to travel to far distant communities to become a larger church community for celebration of Mass? What will this new approach do to our communities and parishes.
- There are a lot of resources that aren't being used well.

QUESTION #2

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

- Geographic area is too large? Could this be two Zones?

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



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QUESTION #3

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

YES.

- Not sure if this is the best route to go. We should ensure that as many foreign born priests that can be recruited to fill our needs has been done so that we can have enough priests to provide the sacraments and rites of the church.
- There are efforts to recruit priests from other countries and there are a lot of obstacles to overcome, including immigration and naturalization processes here in Canada.
- We want to ensure that there will always be priests and sacramental ministry provided to our communities. Lay ministry should not supplant the ministry of the ordained.
- Quote of Pope Francis from priests' retreat in Rome. Priests have their duties, lay people have theirs.
- This is only a proposal and we are discussing how to mold it. A deacon is a separate calling.
- Will there be cases where there will be no priest and we will have to have service only from a lay minister?
- As long as we could ensure the regular, even if infrequent, presence of the priest.
- There is a worry that under this proposal, a priest not be regularly available, even once every month in an area, to provide for regular attendance at sacraments – particularly Mass and Confession.
- What would be the role of the Pastoral Team? Will the Team in each Zone determine its role or would that be decided by a template from the diocese?
- Is there a plan in place for housing the Team? Sub-committee is examining the properties of every place in every Zone. We will work with Teams and parishioners in Zones to figure out where and how people will live.
- What will be the level of education for these Lay Ministers?



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QUESTION #3 CONT.

- Will Parish Councils be replaced by one large Zone Pastoral Council? No, unless the people in a particular Zone or area of a Zone determine that it would be better to merge in some way.
- How will resources be divided or shared in a Zone? The Parish Councils, Finance Committees of each parish within a Zone with their Pastoral Team would determine how this would happen.

QUESTION #4

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

- Numbers of Team members hired will depend on the financial ability of the Zone to do so.
- Weather and geography will determine the ministerial needs of the area as well.
- Geographic size is only mitigated by the way that the area is staffed (priests and lay ministers).
- Big issue: how many we need will be affected by how many we can afford.

QUESTION #5

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

- How do we retain young families? We should focus the ministry of the Lay Ministers on catechesis and evangelization to help develop the faith and interest of young families.
- Will recruitment of Lay Ministers be focused on single people in the hope of finding or nurturing more vocations to the priesthood and religious life? Not necessarily, but it is hoped that those called to this life may **find their route through this ministry or be inspired by it to follow their own call.**

QUESTION #6

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS IN OUR PLANNING PROCESS?

- Prayer and fasting to call upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



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OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS

- If the Sunday obligation could be covered by offering Mass on a weekday when a priest is available, there would be more people at Mass.
- The church needs to become more relevant to the people. We need more people involved in the day to day life of the communities to help people to see that the life of the church is part of our lived experience.