

Equip *the* Saints

EPH 4:11-13

New Parishes: Stronger Together

Proposal for Discussion
October 27, 2018

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NEW PARISHES: STRONGER TOGETHER

And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Summary

New Parishes: Stronger Together is a proposed action plan dedicated to increasing our mission capacity, a primary objective of *Equip the Saints*, by realigning our parish structure from 65 parishes and 25 missions to 18 canonical parishes plus the cathedral by January 1, 2020. New parishes will benefit from a greater number of people to draw on, improved and transparent leadership structures, and shared ministry and mission.

Equip the Saints Goals

This proposed action plan outlines the next set of concrete steps necessary to accomplish a number of goals set out in the *Equip the Saints* pastoral plan.

Direct Goals

This proposal specifically addresses two key goals related to increasing our missionary capacity and efficiency.

- Develop parish vitality criteria by Fall of 2017¹
- Create new parish configurations by Fall of 2018²

Dependent Goals

This proposal also represents a milestone that is necessary to accomplish additional goals outlined in the plan. New Parishes: Stronger Together provides the framework required to address related goals outlined in *Equip the Saints*. Many of these are predicated on understanding our new parish structures and have been on hold or delayed until this proposal could be implemented.

- Create a comprehensive personnel plan to ensure a smooth and orderly transmission of pastoral responsibilities beginning in 2018³
- Implement a training program for all diocesan pastoral council and finance council members by Spring of 2018⁴
- Conduct training program for all new members of pastoral and finance councils annually beginning in 2019⁵
- Create & Publish a new Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual for the diocese by September 2017⁶
- Create and publish a new Pastoral Reference Manual, related to sacraments and other pastoral activity, by September 2017⁷

Adjusted Goals

Changing external factors have forced us to abandon the legal/civil reorganization of parishes. Instead the priority has shifted to using our own internal canonical means of bringing parishes together. Therefore, the following goals are no longer attainable.

- Gain legislative approval of new civil statutes to go into effect in January 2019⁸
- Implement semi-annual training for all newly elected stewards beginning in 2019⁹

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Proposed Parishes

Using the regional proposals (received June 30, 2018) as a basis point the proposed new parishes are anticipated to have a minimum of 500 weekly attendees, at multiple locations, and be served by at least two priests who will work co-responsibly with other ordained and lay leaders to bring about the mission of Christ in each local community.

In cases where regional proposals were incomplete, or contradicting other proposals, geographic, municipal boundaries, and feedback from our meetings with priests and deacons were considered.

Parish 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Saint Francis of Assisi, Wolfville ◆ Saint Joseph, Kentville ◆ Saint Anthony, Berwick ◆ Saint Monica, Middleton ◆ Saint Alphonsus, Bridgetown ◆ Saint Louis, Annapolis ◆ Saint Brigid, East Dalhousie (closure proposed by community) ◆ Saint Lawrence, Canning (closure proposed by community)
Parish 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Saint Joseph, Bridgewater ◆ Saint Norbert, Lunenburg ◆ Saint Matthew, Elmwood ◆ Saint Gregory, Liverpool ◆ Saint Jerome, Caledonia ◆ Saint Thomas, Shelburne ◆ Saint Philip, Barrington
Parish 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Saint Ambrose Co-Cathedral, Yarmouth ◆ Our Lady of Lourdes, Melbourne ◆ Saint Patrick, Digby ◆ Saint Anne, Bear River ◆ Saint Joseph, Weymouth ◆ Saint Theresa, Southville

Parish 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Anselm, East Chezzetcook ♦ Saint Anne, Lake Echo ♦ Saint Denis, East Ship Harbour ♦ Saint Peter, Sheet Harbour ♦ Saint Martin, Tangier ♦ Saint Michael, East Quoddy ♦ Saint Genevieve, West Chezzetcook ♦ Saint Philip Neri, Musquodoboit Harbour
Parish 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Anthony, Dartmouth ♦ Saint Paul, Dartmouth ♦ Saint Peter, Dartmouth ♦ Immaculate Conception, Dartmouth
Parish 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mission Sainte-Famille, Dartmouth ♦ Saint Thomas More, Dartmouth ♦ Saint Vincent de Paul, Dartmouth
Parish 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Andrew, Eastern Passage ♦ Saint Clement, Dartmouth ♦ Saint John XXIII, Dartmouth
Parish 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint-Joseph, Ile des Surettes ♦ Sainte-Famille, Buttes-Amirault ♦ Sainte-Agnès, Quinan ♦ Sainte-Anne, Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau ♦ Saint-Pierre, Pubnico-Ouest ♦ Immaculée-Conception, Pubnico-Est ♦ Saint-Michel, Wedgeport

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Parish 9

- ◆ Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel, Concessions
- ◆ Sacré-Coeur, Saulnierville
- ◆ Saint-Alphonse de Ligouri, St. Alphonse
- ◆ Saint-Bernard, St-Bernard
- ◆ Sainte-Marie, Pointe de l'Église**
- ◆ Stella Maris, Meteghan

** The diocese is in negotiation with a local society to transfer the church to them.

Parish 10

- ◆ Holy Family, Amherst
- ◆ Saint Brigid, Parrsboro
- ◆ Saint John the Baptist, Springhill
- ◆ Saint Cornelius, Streets Ridge
- ◆ Saint Paul the Apostle, River Hebert
- ◆ Saint Thomas Aquinas, Joggins
- ◆ Saint Thomas More, Pugwash

Parish 11

- ◆ Immaculate Conception, Truro
- ◆ Sacred Heart, Millbrook
- ◆ Saint Ambrose, Londonderry
- ◆ Saint Michael, Tatamagouche (Brule)
- ◆ Saint Bridget, Shubenacadie

Parish 12

- ◆ Saint Rose of Lima, Fall River
- ◆ Saint Bernard, Enfield
- ◆ Holy Cross, Middle Musquodoboit
- ◆ Saint Kateri, Indian Brook*

*will fall under the oversight of the moderator/pastor of this parish

Parish 13

- Saint Agnes, Halifax
- Saint Thomas Aquinas Canadian Martyrs, Halifax

Parish 14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Catherine, Halifax ♦ Saint Theresa, Halifax ♦ Saint Patrick, Halifax ♦ Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata, Halifax
Parish 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Herring Cove and Ketch Harbour ♦ Saint Michael, Spryfield ♦ Saint John the Baptist, Armdale
Parish 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, Upper Tantallon ♦ Saint Augustine, Chester ♦ Saint Patrick, New Ross ♦ Saint Anthony, Hubbards ♦ Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Shad Bay
Parish 17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Ignatius, Bedford ♦ Saint Benedict, Clayton Park
Parish 18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint John Vianney, Lower Sackville ♦ Saint Elizabeth Seton, Lower Sackville ♦ Saint Francis of Assisi, Mount Uniacke ♦ Saint John the Evangelist, Windsor ♦ Saint Mary, Hantsport (closure proposed by community)
Parish 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica, Halifax

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Pastoral Ministry in a Missionary Key

Each proposed parish must concentrate their efforts on nine core activities that indicate the life of a parish is consistent with the vision on values of the diocese. It is these activities - discerned through consultation with the faithful, prayerful discernment of the archbishop, and documents of the Holy See - that represent the work required to meet the challenge of the New Evangelization.

Mission

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.

As “the presence of the church in a particular territory,” the parish is the practical expression of the Church's missionary nature. The parish exists for the same reason the Church exists: to make disciples of all nations. Thus the People of God within the territory of a parish must be “completely mission-oriented.” In fact, Saint John Paul II stated that not only is evangelization an essential task of a parish community, but this activity “is the clearest sign of a mature faith.” Any attempt to consider the missionary nature of our parish communities must hold evangelizing activity as a critical sign of life. Likewise, Pope Francis says that “missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity.” Therefore, “the effectiveness of the Church's organizations, movements, parishes and apostolic works must be measured in the light of this missionary imperative.”

- A tool for evangelization designed to reach out to and invite those outside of our church
- A dedicated service to the most vulnerable in the local area
- Reply on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in pastoral ministries, vision, mission, and discernment of the charisms and gifts of parishioners

Community

In these times of growing isolation, political polarization, and intense loneliness, the witness of the Christian community offers “a way of life that shines out to others.” The love we share for one another and our communal worship of God is essential to our Christian commitment but also to our evangelistic witness. Jesus himself said that people will know we are his disciples by the way we love one another. Our community life is also necessary as communion with the pilgrim Church is an element of a fulfilled conversion.

- Celebrate reverent liturgies with excellent hymns, hospitality, and homilies
- Promote and support small communities that share faith and life together on a regular basis
- Lead through a team approach that follows a consistent vision for the parish

Formation

Formation is the process of maturation in the faith—the “ever-clearer discovery of one’s vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfil one’s mission.” As the leader of a parish, the pastor is entrusted “to take care that the lay members of the Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, especially by giving a homily on Sundays and holy days of obligation and by offering catechetical instruction.” Formation of adults and children for the mission is an important component of parish life. Pope Francis raises the missionary dimension of formation as an evaluative lens by saying that “in all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers.”

- An ongoing process to help people grow in the life of Christ and develop skills in evangelization
- A method to identify and form leaders at every level of parish life
- A means of identifying areas of strength and giving people opportunities to serve in those areas?

The activities are described in detail in the document *Communities of Missionary Disciples* that has been previously published.

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Proposed Leadership Structure

Leadership is an essential part of the cultural change required to become a more missionary Church. Both clergy and laity will need to develop the necessary skills, competencies, and attitudes. In some cases, a conversion of thinking will be required as we adopt a stance of co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. Recent events have demonstrated that clericalism, in its many forms and expressions, can inhibit the healthy functioning of the Church.

Ordained Leadership**Priests**

All priests assigned to parish life will be appointed *in solidum*. That is to say the pastoral care of the new parish is entrusted to them as a group - or team - to exercise their priestly ministry according to their particular gifts and talents. One of these priests shall be named moderator. Other priests on the team should be given specific mandates according to their gifts which are prescribed in the letters of appointment.

Moderator

The priest-moderator is the one who directs and is responsible for the joint ministry of the priests to the bishop. The rights and duties of a moderator are set by the diocesan bishop including his relationship to the pastoral and finance councils (can 537).

As a priest the moderator will, of course, be called upon to proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the Sacraments of the Church, especially the Eucharist. The unique character of the role of the priest-moderator will be the task of leadership. By leadership we mean servant-leadership that is character and influence based, as opposed to positional leadership. Today, if people follow those who have leadership positions it is mostly because they exercise character-based leadership.

Deacons

Deacons are called forth from the community to serve a diaconal ministry in the Church, whether liturgical, pastoral, charitable or social. They are appointed by the bishop to be a part of the clergy team of a parish. In addition to assisting in the liturgical function of the parish deacons, like other clergy, should be assigned to serve according to their gifts and charisms.

Lay Leadership

Parish Leadership Team

A team of three to five key people, lay and ordained, who will assist the moderator in making important tactical moves and provide a structure of accountability for the priest-moderator. This group meets frequently to make the day-to-day decisions that are needed to bring about missionary renewal in the parish.

Pastoral Council

The pastoral council is a strategic body that brings together the diverse strengths and talents of the parishioners to work with the moderator to craft and monitor the vision for the parish. This group meets regularly to discuss and review progress toward the parish's missionary vision. Their meetings should be forward looking and focused on the pastoral and missionary activity of the parish.

Finance Council

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Code of Canon Law, the finance committee is to help the moderator direct the temporal resources of the parish in order to accomplish the missionary vision set out by the moderator and the pastoral council. This group must meet regularly and is responsible for creating the parish budget, approving the financial statements, and overseeing the revenue and expenses related to operating the parish.

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Proposed Transition Process

Not all change can happen immediately on January 1, 2019. Communities will require a period of time to work out the details and preparations for canonical merger. With this in mind, some current parishes have been living and working toward a combined reality for some time. Other parishes function as one *de facto* through shared ministry and experience. While others still have not yet begun to look at the reality of consolidation. As a result, we anticipate mergers happening in phases throughout the course of 2019 following an interim transition period with all mergers completed by January 1, 2020.

Transition Team

After the announcement of the proposed new parishes the local priests in the grouping, will be tasked with forming a transition team. The transition team should represent the diversity of the particular communities as well as have the skills and competencies necessary to steer the process. The main work of this group will be to develop shared moments of prayer within the grouping, review existing pastoral and financial operations, and develop a naming process for the new parish.

The transition team will need to take action and make recommendations on the following areas

- Coordinating Liturgy & Prayer
- Creating a unified parish identity
- Fostering a shared community life
- Reviewing mission and ministry activity
- Reviewing temporal affairs

Diocesan Support Team

The local clergy and the transition team will be supported, directed, and guided by a diocesan support team. This team made up both paid staff and experienced volunteers will provide resources, regular check-ins, on site visits, and a direct avenue to the archbishop and his executive team. The team will also act as a clearing house for feedback from all the transition teams providing the bishop the information needed to make adjustments in policy, procedures, and other issues that will inevitably arise.

The diocesan support team will need to provide support, direction, and guidance in the following areas

- Models and metrics for combined operations
- Coaching in communicating change
- Tools and templates for reviews
- Bringing critical situations to the archbishop
- Onsite workshopping and facilitation

Phasing In Changes

Due to pastoral practice, circumstances, or necessity, our current communities are at different stages of readiness for merger. To recognize this reality and to proceed in an orderly fashion changes will happen throughout the course of 2019. After initial consultation with the transition team, clergy from each grouping will recommend a target date for completion of the merger based on a realistic understanding of the current circumstances.

Additional Feedback

In addition to feedback provided in today's session all are encouraged to return to their parishes, share what they have learned, and offer any additional feedback and reflections over the next few weeks.

The final proposal will be communicated on January 1, 2019.

Feedback can be sent to Archbishop Mancini by mail and e-mail.

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Endnotes

1. Equip the Saints, (4. b. iii)
2. Equip the Saints, (4. b. iii)
3. Equip the Saints, (3. b. ii)
4. Equip the Saints, (3. a. i)
5. Equip the Saints, (3. a. i)
6. Equip the Saints, (4. c. j)
7. Equip the Saints, (4. c. i)
8. Equip the Saints, (4.b.i)
9. Equip the Saints, (4. b. ii.)