

FAMILY of PARISHES TRANSITION TEAM MINUTES

February 16, 2021

7:00pm

Zoom Conference Video

Meeting called by: Chris Doyle

Facilitator: Chris Doyle

Note taker: Annie Ferrera

Attendees:

Fr. Brian Jane, Fr. Anthony Eboh, Fr. José Montepeque, Fr. Jan Burczyk, Deacon David Cummings, Leonia Downie, Leanne Moran, Chis Doyle, Annie Ferrera, Bill Nelson, Jay Stewart, Katherine Stoesser, Andrew Jones, Mark Roehler, Roman Norejko, Armando Notte, Regina Croskery, Sylvie Chmielewski, Scott Kellett, Amanda Cimetta, Stella Burns, Steve DeGurse

MINUTES

1. Call to Order: Father Brian:

- a. the role of the Transition Team.
- b. the initial overview of the vision of the Family of Parishes was presented.
- c. how parishioners were to become Missionary Disciples.
- d. the transition team tasks such as choosing a name for the Family, communication to parishioners about concerns such as Mass times changes, staffing etc.
- e. immediate steps going forward.
- f. emphasized that we are led by the Holy Spirit in this exciting journey of forming a Family of Parishes in Sarnia.
- g. thanked everyone for agreeing to be a member of the Transition Team.
- h. introduced Chris Doyle as the interim (1 year) Business Manager hired (through approval from the Diocese) to facilitate the Transition Team Meetings.
- i. team includes the pastors of the 7 Sarnia churches, 1 deacon, 2 pastoral ministers and 2-3 representatives from each church. Chris Doyle will chair meetings and Annie Ferrera will serve as admin assistant
- j. team will meet approximately every 2 weeks.
- k. team is tasked with choosing a name for the family, forming a Mass schedule, the integration of ministries, developing an initial 6-month Pastoral Plan (July-Dec 2021) and a follow up for next 6 months (Jan-July 2022), determining the location of the offices and priest residences, developing a financial plan and an inventory of facilities and resources.

2. Opening Prayer & Welcome: Deacon David Cummings led the team in prayer, scripture and reflection

3. Introductions: each member of the team briefly introduced themselves

Sacred Heart/St. Michael: Leanne Moran, pastoral minister; Scott Kellett (St. Michael), Steve DeGurse (St. Michael), Amanda Cimetta (Sacred Heart), Stella Burns (Sacred Heart)

Queen of Peace: Fr. Jan Burczyk, Roman Norejko (Polish Community), Mark Roehler (English Community)

St. Thomas D'Aquin: Fr. José Montepeque, Deacon David Cummings, Regina Croskery (Latin Community), Armando Notte (French Community), Sylvie Sylvie Chmielewski (English Community)

St. Benedict, Our Lady of Mercy, St. Joseph: Fr. Brian Jane, Fr. Anthony Eboh, Leonia Downie (Pastoral Minister), Chris Doyle (St. Joseph), Bill Nelson (St. Joseph); Annie Ferrera (St. Benedict), Andrew Jones (St. Benedict); Katherine Stoesser (Our Lady of Mercy), Jay Stewart (Our Lady of Mercy)

4. Small Group Discussion:

The team broke into small groups to briefly discuss the question: *From your past experiences of Parish, how would you describe a vibrant, life giving parish?*

One person from each group gave a brief recap of their group's thoughts on the question. Many recurring themes emerged from this discussion.

Group 1:

- A Parish that Communicates - communication is important, the more the better. Need to be super sensitive to all parishioners and make sure they all receive current and accurate information.
- A Parish that is Compassionate - demonstrate authentic compassion to its parishioners and those seeking and those in the peripheral.
- A Parish that is genuinely welcoming - greeters at the church, lots of opportunity for fellowship after Mass, everyone feels accepted.
- A Parish that has a vibrant liturgy and music ministry.
- A Parish that is unified in its diversity - see everyone as a member of the Family.
- A Parish that evangelizes by its demonstrable attitude.
- A Parish where the young people are involved, and see a place for themselves.

Group 2:

- Based on the principal from a book "Christianizing the Original Roman Empire?" - significance of book showed the caring of the sick, and the Christian group helping the community at large.
- Family of Parishes needs to be like a family - Welcoming - Individuals need to want to belong; want to go to church and connect with others.
- Catholic faith needs to be very dynamic. It needs to be similar to vacationing, in that whatever church you go to regardless of location you feel welcome and that you belong. In a similar manner all parishioners of Sarnia must be comfortable in going to any parish in town.
- When people see us in church, we should be happy and showing the love and joy of being at church. We need to walk the walk.
- We need to be vibrant Catholics showing the love for the lord and sharing this with others.
- Each parish should have greeters at the doors welcoming parishioners making them feel at home. Children should participate in choirs to help bring other family members back to the church and bring people together in celebration.

Group 3:

- The focus of our discussion centered on 'belonging'.
- In a Eucharistic grounded faith community, passionate in our belief, 'welcoming and hospitality' were highlighted as central to belonging.
- Creating opportunities for encounters with the risen Christ, through listening and ministering to the needs of others and reaching our youth by strong inter-connectedness of parish school and family, would evangelize and revitalize all.
- Always grounded in the sacramental life of the church and in our private and communal prayer, our focus would be one of inviting, embracing and accompanying others into our family of parishes.

Group 4:

- It was noted that this is the goal of the pastoral plan of St Thomas Aquinas.
- There was agreement that this would be a community focused on reaching out to both those inside the community and those outside in the broader community, especially an outreach to those in need.
- It is a community that is welcoming to all and inclusive.
- All the diverse groups within form a single community that honors the many different cultures together.
- Listening to the Holy Spirit, everyone in this community participates and is engaged.
- There is a special focus on youth, who are our future.
- We listen to them and learn from them, letting them help move us forward.

5. Vision Talk: Father Brian presented a brief overview.

Diocesan vision for Families of Parishes

- a. foster a spirit of communion.
- b. develop a deeper sense of community.
- c. collaboration between pastors, pastoral teams, ministries and laity.

Our vision in Sarnia

- a. become a Roman Catholic church, a mission of Jesus Christ, bringing the good news to the community.

- b. 7 parishes working together to reach this goal.
- c. work within the pastoral plan of the diocese to achieve the 6 goals.
 - ❖ call to personal holiness.
 - ❖ evangelize through the gospel.
 - ❖ minister with compassion to the wounded, and those in need.
 - ❖ provide meaningful liturgical celebrations.
 - ❖ ongoing formation for priests, pastoral ministers and laity.
 - ❖ include laity in decision making, stewardship, transparency and communication
 - ❖ develop a pastoral plan for the family.
- d. main goal is to form intentional disciples among parishioners; become confident to speak about their faith and continue growing in a relationship with Christ.
- e. create ongoing opportunities in all of our churches for those seeking answers, those in crisis, those in need of reinforcement.
- f. encourage each of us to seek for a deeper encounter with Christ.
- g. become so excited about our faith that we can't keep inside, we must share.
- h. provide programmes that include constant opportunity for an encounter with Christ.
- i. include prayer as a central component to all ministries, pastoral programmes and meetings.
- j. transform the family from within, become welcoming, encouraging, drawing people in because of our love.
- k. continuous opportunity for inclusiveness, hospitality, prayer, welcome, open arms and a calling of the Holy Spirit.
- l. invoke St. Joseph, patron saint of the Catholic Church and the New Evangelization, to be our patron for this transition; call on him to pray for us.

6. Questions/Discussion:

- ❖ Come and See...as we become intentional disciples and welcome all to enter our Family, how can we ensure that what we invite those to Come and See is meeting their needs? Do we really know why some have chosen not to come? How can we invite them to share their needs and what it is they are looking for?
- ❖ We tend to assume why people have left the church; we need to hear their story as hard as that might be at times; are we meeting the needs of today or are we simply providing what we think is needed relying on ideas of the past?

Fr. José: We had to be open to the response, open to solutions, show interest in their needs and seek answers, be welcoming and accepting of diversity, talk to youth to know their interests.

Fr. Brian: This is a difficult question and we have to be ready to show we are interested, ask the questions, be ready to speak to people, pray, seek to understand.

- ❖ Are we directed by the Diocese on every aspect of how we are to proceed or can we develop our own plan?

Fr. Brian: There are some directives we have to follow, such as the guidelines for choosing a name. I have consulted with other families who have been established in our Diocese to seek their input on what works best. We will develop a plan specific to our Sarnia Family that meets our needs.

- ## 7. Change and Transition:
- Chris introduced a short Video to emphasize that change is inevitable. God is always calling us to do more. That always means change and change means letting go of what we are comfortable with and moving to something unfamiliar. It will take time and there will be obstacles along the way. We have to be ready and willing to adapt and grow.

8. Wrap up:

- a. 2 things needed to make this vision a reality: prayer and each other.
- b. stay focused, encourages and reminded God is forming us as his people into the vibrant and holier Church of Missionary Disciples that he longs us to be.
- c. recommendation: read Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell.

9. Action Items:

- ❖ read attached Diocesan guidelines for choosing a name for our Family of Parishes; come to next meeting with ideas and suggestions.

- ❖ consider how we can best communicate to our parishioners to ensure they are informed on the transition and progress; written and verbal communication, one website that includes all our churches (example Windsor Heritage Catholic Family of Parishes - <https://windsorheritageparishes.ca/> ; chats and podcasts on YouTube (example St. George's Catholic Church London - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7Vj7ELocBg&feature=emb_logo
- ❖ send contact info to Annie – email & phone number.
- ❖ Annie will send out minutes, list of upcoming meeting dates and times, criteria for naming family, Diocesan vision, agenda for next meeting and Zoom meeting invitation.

10. Prayer Petitions, closing prayer, blessing:

11. Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 9 2021, 7:30 PM on Zoom