

August 13, 2017 Communiqué

Changes being considered presently

“Lord, you who makes all things new, give us the grace of a clear mind, open, adventurous, capable of putting all things in a wider context, not limited to an old paradigm, or of wanting power.”

We are continuing with our communiqués, which will be available as a handout at the end of Mass and on the Parish Webpage and Facebook page. As well these messages will be published in the local newspapers to inform as many interested people as possible of the changes which are coming for our Parish and our Diocese in the coming years. We invite all interested parties to join us in our reflection on how to do Church differently as we re-centre ourselves around the mission which Christ has given us.

Last week, we examined the current situation and the results of the Diocesan reflection. Today we will look at the actual changes being considered by the Diocesan commission.

In order to fulfill our mission from Christ and to put into place the changes necessary to accomplish this, the Diocese of St. Jerome has had to take into account the financial situations of the Parishes. The Diocese now faces the task of reducing the number of centers of worship, along with teaching and meeting centers on its territory, from 54 to 21. This will have repercussions on the parish structures in all parishes of the Diocese and will entail changes in pastoral activities, in expenses... in all aspects concerning the places of worship.

The St. Eustache zone currently has five parishes (including one anglophone) and twelve places of worship. These include Ste-Marie-Madeleine, St.-Eustache, Holy Family, St.-François-d’Assise and Ste.-Marie-du-Lac. The diocesan Commission invites us to reflect on the relevance of such a structure. The working hypothesis that we are asked to consider for the entire zone of St. Eustache would be one where there remains two parishes and three places of worship along with two additional sites for group instruction.

Our parishes have undertaken a period of reflection which will include public meetings in September. We will be called to develop a project to present to the Diocesan commission in response to their working hypothesis.

The goal of this work is to remove the burden on our structures so we can best live and fulfill the mission of the Church. We find in the Gospel of John 4:19-24 food for thought.

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but the Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

In this dialogue between Christ and the Samaritan woman, we are invited to rediscover the basis of our faith: the Word of God. It doesn't matter where we worship, the Word of God is always fertile and bears fruit inasmuch as our heart is ready to welcome it.

The mission of the Church, presented by the Diocesan commission, is to be witnesses of the Good News, to participate in the creation of the Kingdom, and to make Jesus known. Shouldn't our energies be spent in deepening and living the elements of this mission with other believers? This time of reflection will help us to decide if we must retain all our centres of worship.

We invite you to pursue your personal reflection or to share with others in your family, in your neighbourhood, at work, at school... We invite you to share your reflections at the public meetings which will soon occur. You can also share via the suggestion box (on the red door leading to the rectory from the church), the mail slot, our Parish Facebook page [holyfamilycatholicparishdm](https://www.facebook.com/holyfamilycatholicparishdm), on the Parish website www.holy-family-dm.ca, or by giving it to any warden or member of the Parish Council