

The Evolution of the Situation of the Church in the Last Years and the Actions Taken

“Lord, you are making all things new, give us the grace to listen freely, without prejudice, without hasty interpretation and without fear”

On July 1 and 2nd, I spoke to you about information we received from St. Jerome. At that time, I said that Parishes in the area were forming a committee that would meet starting in August, and that Holy Family was participating.

These meetings started immediately after I spoke with you; nobody wanted to wait too long.

This week, and in the coming weeks, we have been asked by this committee to update you about the work this group is doing.

In the coming weeks, we will publish a series of communiqués, as an insert in the bulletin and on the Parish 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 would like 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.

During this time, we will discuss the Diocesan Commission which was created to study the mission and pastoral action of the Church, the changes which are facing us presently, the Parish reflections which are ongoing, as well as the results and deadlines which are facing us. As a first step, we should recall the evolution of the situation which our Church has lived for a certain time already.

For many years, the changes in our world have put pressure on our Church to change the way we perform our pastoral ministry as we fulfill our mission from Christ. The Catholic Church has lost much of its traditional support in Quebec culture and society.

“Evangelisation today takes place in the context of a western world which has become secular where faith and culture are separate. Lack of knowledge, misunderstandings, and resistance to religion in general, and Christianity in particular, are of a lingering nature.”

Even though the population on the territory of the Diocese has grown in the last years, the trend has been towards an important decrease in participation in religious celebrations and in the life of the Church.

The number of people committed to the service of the Church, be it priests, pastoral agents, deacons, lay volunteers and others involved in various activities, has seen a significant decrease.

The mission of the Diocese itself has not changed, but major modifications have affected the way things are done in the last few years to adjust to the new conditions.

As early as 2009, when Msgr Pierre Morissette became bishop of the Diocese, he began meeting with the Presbyteral Committee, which is made up of 6 diocesan priests. They investigated the question: “what will be the situation of the Church in the Diocese in 2019 at the end of his mandate?” This question echoed at the core of the Diocese and many actions were taken so that the faithful would become aware of the situation and would seek a path to resolution of the difficulties:

In 2010, there was a presentation of reports on the difficulties of the Church by a group of priests assigned to this task

In 2011, the Bishop toured the Diocese to validate these findings.

In 2012, Bishop Morissette issued a Pastoral letter to the Diocese, recalling the results of that tour, and the short and long term actions planned, along with presentation of the mission of the Church, of the vision, of the values... of a Diocesan approach aimed at Parish reflections to elicit a pastoral plan for that Parish.

Then a second pastoral letter was issued from Bishop Morissette on November 2, 2015 entitled “Avec le Christ, faire des disciples” (with Christ, make disciples)

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.

Wardens

Antonina Arena
Carolyn Curiale
Lorna Halderman (also Parish Council)
Art Harris
Laurie King
Allen Wood
Wayne Riddell (also Parish Council)

Parish Council Members

Gemma Brooks
Christine Collins
Linda Harris
Russell O’Neill
Heather Tremblay