

The current situation and the results of the Diocesan reflection

“Lord, you who makes all things new, give us the grace of a renewed vision to look at things in a way which does not focus on the mere surface of things, nor on our image of others, nor the fear of what others may think about us.”

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 evolution of the situation over the past few years as well as the action taken. Today we will look at the scenario proposed by the Diocesan commission on our mission and on our pastoral actions.

On April 6, 2016, Msgr Pierre Morissette, established a commission. It’s mandate was to respond to Pope Francis’s call for the Church to be a missionary church. The bishop made this group responsible to research ways to announce the Good News in our environment and the changes that must be made in order to achieve our goals.

“Q. Why speak about a call to be missionaries at this time?”

For several reasons: the low rate of participation at Sunday Mass (which is 2%,)

The financial difficulties of many parishes,

The large number of churches to maintain,

The scarcity of priests and pastoral agents as well their aging.

This forces us to do things differently.

Q. Is it really urgent to do things differently?

Yes, because when you take into account the finances of parishes, we are headed for bankruptcy. This jeopardizes the transmission of the faith in our diocese.

Q. What has the Commission done so far?

The members of the Commission first investigated the current situation to ensure they understood the problems and what is at stake. Then they organized reflection days in order to ask parishioners (and members of the faithful community) to express their thoughts.

Q. What are the subjects and themes that were discussed at these reflection days?

(1) The participants first expressed their hopes for the diocese of St. Jerome. This can be summarized as a desire for a family of believers re-centered and united around the mission of announcing Jesus Christ

(2) Then each was asked what he/she was ready to do individually and as a group to achieve rebuilding the desired Church. The answer was that individually, believers must be witnesses of God, happy in their belief.

As a community our Church must be a welcoming Church, open to all.

(3) Finally, after informing the participants of the financial situation, the Commission asked how this could concretely be accomplished.

Answers included that we must stop maintaining all the present places of worship, so we can invest in the mission. We also must bring about changes and inform the population at large.

Q. In a few words, what are the ideas and main proposals which came out of these consultations?

The proposals which spoke to all were the following:

- The mission, which is to announce Jesus Christ -- is paramount
- The time to act is now
- It is important to work together

Q. Where is this going to bring us?

Towards change!

Changes in the structure of the parish,

Changes in pastoral activities,

Changes in our spending,

Changes in the places of worship, etc.

Changes on many levels are required.

Q. Are we the only Diocese which must accomplish such major changes?

Absolutely not! The entire Church is in a period of reflection concerning the future.

Pope Francis says, "I hope that all communities will do what is necessary to go forward on the road to a pastoral and missionary conversion. Things cannot remain as they are." (in the Pope's apostolic exhortation, *"The Joy of the Gospel"*)

Q. How does that concern me, personally?

As a believer, we have a role to play

- Pray for the Good News of Jesus Christ to spread and remain our priority
- Reflect honestly on the changes that are coming and work to understand them
- Avoid the syndrome "not in my backyard"
- Participate by giving our opinion politely and respectfully
- Be involved as a volunteer in our parish, according to our strengths and abilities, in order to contribute, even modestly, at this crucial moment in our history.

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