



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF SAINT JOHN
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Letter to the Faithful of the Diocese of Saint John
“A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE” (JEREMIAH 29:11)

October 5, 2010

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

The process of consultation to prepare a Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Saint John for the next five years is about to be put in motion.

Much reflection has gone into the preparation. The Visioning Committee, composed of fourteen persons from the three regions of our diocese, has fine-tuned the process which you will be receiving in the third week of October. I take this opportunity to welcome Ms. Jean Marie Donovan, who will coordinate the process and assist us in the formulation of the Pastoral Plan.

The goal of this process of consultation is to prepare a Pastoral Plan for the next five years. It is my hope that what we propose will revitalize our diocesan church. Throughout the consultation, we need to keep in mind how we are experiencing being Church at the present time; how we are caring for this Church; and, how we propose to grow the Church. Under the present circumstance, what mechanisms can we put in place to assure that our communities can be all that a Catholic parish or mission should be? How can we live out and witness to the faith in the world in which we live?

The procedure will be as follows:

Preliminary Preparation:

- the pastor and the chair of the Parish Council will receive the material. It will be important for the Council to review the material and reflect on it in preparation for the meeting of parishioners.

Parish Meeting/Information Session:

- All parishioners, young and old, should participate in the parish information session. Each person's voice needs to be heard. In order to own the outcome of the process, each person must contribute. Both pastor and Parish Council chair need to motivate a high turnout, of parishioners for the parish meeting. Please note that this is an information session. The actual consultation takes place at the Inter-Parish level.

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Inter-Parish Consultation:

- Twelve venues have been designated for the inter-parish consultation. Mrs. Jean Marie Donovan and Mrs. Margaret Anne Smith, Director of Adult Faith Formation, will coordinate the process and assist the Visioning Committee in the formulation of the Pastoral Plan.

As many parishioners as possible should take part in the inter-parish consultation. From each parish (mission) at least the members of the Parish Council should participate and many more should be encouraged to engage in the process. This broad-based consultation will provide an opportunity for each person's voice to be heard in our pastoral plan.

Pastoral Plan:

- Once the consultation has taken place, a Pastoral Plan will be brought together and promulgated for Pentecost 2011. After we have laid out the detail of a strategic plan, the conversation will need to be ongoing as we implement the dream.

Please pray that this process is both faith filled and fruitful. This is the Lord's Church. We need to pray that his will be done and that we collaborate in making his will come about.

The Lord says: "I know the plans I have in mind for you... plans for a future full of hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Blessings on the project: blessings on each of you.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Robert Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+Robert Harris
Bishop of Saint John