

Renewing the Church in New Brunswick – Phase 2

Discernment Team Meeting March 20, 2012

Attendees: Bishop Paul Bootkoski, Msgr. William Benwell (Vicar General), Ernie Revoir (Director, Office of Social Justice and Catholic Charities), Maria Hunter (Catholic Charities), Ellen Ayoub (Superintendent, Office of Schools), Tab Chukunta (St. Peter's Hospital), Fr. Raymond Nacarino (Pastor, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel), Miguel Colón (OLMC), Esperanza Restrepo (OLMC), Br. Ken Apuzzo (Director, The Catholic Center at Rutgers), Fr. Peter Cebulka (R.U. Catholic Center), Msgr. Joe Kerrigan (Pastor, Sacred Heart), Deacon Nelson Torres (SH), Natalie Borisovets (SH), Tom McNellis (SH), Fr. Marco Caceres (Pastor, St. John the Baptist), Irina Colón (SJB), Yomare Polanco (SJB), Fr. Joe Krajewski (Pastor, St. Joseph), Marie Zach (SJ), Elisabeth Jachowski (SJ), Andres Soriano (SJ), Fr. Capistran Polgar (Pastor, St. Ladislaus), Laszlo Hajdu-Nemeth (SL), Carol Meszaros (SL), Fr. Jimson Varghese (Administrator, St. Mary of Mt. Virgin), Amelia Johnson (SMMV), Sonia Cerngul (SMMV), Fr. Tom Odorizzi (Pastor, St. Peter the Apostle), Marianne Rydel (SP), Lou Garlatti (SP), Jeff Korgen (Executive Director, Dept of Diocesan Planning), Kristen Silowka (Executive Assistant, Dept of Diocesan Planning)

Bishop Paul's Remarks: Bishop Paul thanked everyone for being here. He was happy to see that every parish had full representation.

"It shows a sense of responsibility. New Brunswick is a changing city. The immigrants of old are not the same as the immigrants today. Most ethnic groups are not replenishing themselves, other than Hispanic/Latinos. We have to be creative in order to address the changing demographics. We must allow the Holy Spirit to touch our hearts and figure out what is the best way to minister to all. When these smaller parishes were formed, people were not accepting of other nationalities and they brought their own priests over from their mother country. Now that is not happening and we have to be more accepting of others.

"You are the bricks and mortar of the church, not the buildings. Jesus was not tied to one building, he went to different cities and prayed in every synagogue he found and taught people of all nationalities and religions. We need to be more like Jesus. We need to restructure for Pastoral reasons. We have Latinos in our city that we are not touching. We also cannot afford to keep all of these buildings. We can pray for vocations, but we cannot wait.

"In addition to our parishes in New Brunswick, we have Campus Ministry which serves 40,000 Rutgers's students, 40% of which are Catholic. They are the future of our church. There is also Catholic Charities who minister to the poor, and we have a lot of poor people in our city. How can we integrate them into our parishes? St. Peter's Hospital treats the poor and wealthy alike and is an important part of the Church in New Brunswick. I have spoken to everyone working at the hospital and charged them to treat the poor the same as the wealthy, with respect and dignity because that is the Catholic way. I charge you to find a way to integrate it all together.

"At the end of the process I want 3 parishes in New Brunswick. It is not your job to decide which priests stay or what buildings close. Your job is to come up with a proposal on how to have one unified church in New Brunswick, with 3 parishes, ministering to all the people of this city. You are intelligent, holy people who can do this."

Q & A & S (statements) with Bishop

Q – When you said you wanted 3 parishes, does that include the possibility of St Peter’s and the Catholic Center at Rutgers merging and becoming a University parish?

A– Yes. And if the best model included four parishes, that’s a possibility.

S – When speaking of the Latinos in New Brunswick, we cannot generalize or just group them together. There are many different ethnicities that fall under the term Latino, but all have different cultures and traditions. Also, we (St. John the Baptist) are a very poor Latino parish. People cannot afford to give money every week in the collections, but they can provide services for free. ?

S-- Our church is already full. (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel)

S – We need to do more for the youth. What will we do for the youth?

Q – I think it is wonderful that you mentioned that the people are the church. Our parishes don’t just pull people from within our boundaries. Do you have a plan for that?

A– *These are all of the things this council needs to look at. We do not have a master plan. The solution has to come from you. We need to have programs that touch people’s lives, including the youth. That is more important than attachments to empty buildings. Also among you is a representative from the Office of Schools. We are open to the prospect of developing a new Catholic school in New Brunswick.*

Q – Does 3 parishes mean 4 churches have to close?

A – *No, a parish does not mean a church building.*

Q – When parishes merge, will finances be combined?

A – *Yes, the patrimony (goods and financial accounts) follows the people.*

Demographics of the Parishes and the Community

Please see the Adobe Acrobat version of the presentation, which includes mapping of where parishioners live, the demographics of the boundaries of the two territorial parishes, and sacramental, registration and attendance records.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at Sacred Heart Parish. We will meet at 6:30pm to tour St. John the Baptist Parish and then Sacred Heart and the meeting will begin at 7:30pm.