



June 16, 2019
Feast of the Holy Trinity

To the Catholic Faithful of the Eastern Shore,

The mission of the church has always been to propose Jesus Christ, to proclaim his gospel and to make disciples ready to follow Christ as the way, the truth and the life.

In recent times, it has become clear that our present efforts to accomplish this mission, both here on the Eastern Shore and across the archdiocese, are struggling to realize this missionary call.

In this region alone, mass attendance declined by 45% between 2001 and 2016, and continues to do so. Many, who remain faithful, are growing older. Young families and children are disinterested in the Church; have little or no knowledge of the Christian faith and attempts to reach them have not succeeded. This demographic shift and cultural disconnect has resulted in fewer active parishioners, directly impacting the ability to support and maintain what we have inherited from the past. What human and financial resources remain must now be directed and invested in securing a better future.

The eight churches in this region spend over 50% of their funds maintaining buildings and require an estimated \$660,000 for various repairs. These eight locations can seat over 1600 people, yet total attendance in the region is less than 600 each weekend. Sustaining facilities built for a different time leaves little energy left over to reach a new generation for the Lord.

Financially, all the churches of this region operate in deficits or near break-even positions trying to keep the doors open. This is not a sign of significant health and vitality but an indication of basic survival, at best. The time has come to get beyond this survival mode, and move into a more missionary mode.

On January 1, 2019 I indicated the major restructuring of our Archdiocese. In this region, the communities connected to the eight churches of the area, I announced, would form one new parish. As a result of all the above mentioned circumstances, and in the interests of giving the new parish for the Eastern Shore the best possible opportunity to grow and thrive I have determined, after a number of public meetings, consultation with the local clergy and the proposal of the local transition team, as well as the support of the full Council of Priests, that there will be one new parish for the area; it will be entrusted to two priests and a leadership team, and three worship sites will be retained:

- St. Genevieve Church, Hall, and Rectory in East Chezzetcook, NS
- St. Denis Church and Hall in East Ship Harbour, NS
- St. Peter Church and Rectory in Sheet Harbour, NS

Sadly, this also means the closure of the following locations:

- St. Anselm, West Chezzetcook, and its mission of Saint Anne, Lake Echo
- The mission churches of St. Philip Neri, Musquodobit Harbour, St. Michael, Quoddy, and St. Martin, Tangier.

The pastoral team will determine a revised mass schedule for the area, centered on the three new locations. This plan will go into effect on the July 28th and 29th weekend. The remaining locations will not be used for regular worship after this point. The future of those churches will be reviewed by the new leadership team and the incoming pastor and should be determined by or before the Feast of Christ the King on November 24th, 2019.

I have included additional information for you to review and next weekend (June 22 and 23) members of my staff will hold two further information sessions in the area to answer your questions. In the meantime, you may also send inquiries to chancery@halifaxyarmouth.org and our team will process your remarks and make every effort to address them when they meet with you next week.

While recognizing the drastic changes and profound sense of loss this course of action causes to individuals and to various levels of the community, I believe these measures are necessary to position the new parish with the realistic human and financial resources to carry on with the needed missionary action for our times. Much is being entrusted to your good will and desire to support the vision and the mission of Evangelization entrusted to the new leadership team and the incoming pastor.

I wish to thank publicly Deacon Bernie Coffin for his work so far in these difficult times as well as all who have contributed to implementing the pastoral plan.

May God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - give us the necessary graces we need to persevere.

Sincerely in Christ,



†Anthony Mancini
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth

Pastoral Factors

The church is primarily the People of God. When considering the sustainability of a parish community the nature and make-up of the community is of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the number of people being served by these eight churches has declined significantly in the past fifteen years. Assuming they meet the same age profile as the rest of the diocese then an estimated 76% of attendees are over the age of 55.

Church	2001	2016	% Change
St. Anselm	375	187	-50%
St. Anne	254	88	-65%
St. Denis	41	36	-12%
St. Peter	178	62	-65%
St. Michael*	--	--	--
St. Martin*	--	--	--
St. Genevieve	47	127	+170%
St. Philip Neri	150	67	-55%
Total	1045	567	-45%

*Historically included with St. Peter's totals

The sacramental life of a parish is also a key indicator of health. Not only do baptisms, first communions, and confirmations show new entrants into the church they also give a picture of the youth and families in a parish. Likewise marriages are an indicator of new families becoming part of the parish community. Unfortunately, these indicators of new Christians are also in decline.

Sacraments for Eastern Shore Parishes

YEAR	Baptisms	First Communion	Confirmation	Marriages	Deaths
2008	32	16	12	11	23
2009	35	20	44	12	27
2010	41	15	19	41	20

2011	39	20	20	6	31
2012	30	10	13	7	40
2013	24	15	16	3	24
2014	8	5	6	3	19
2015	28	10	5	6	26
2016	20	0	4	4	33
2017	20	21	9	7	21
2018	11	16	6	4	23

Economic Factors

In 2018 the combined parishes of the Eastern Shore operated in a deficit position while a few operated around the break-even mark. However, this represents an expenditure of over 52% on building costs, sharing of two priests for eight locations, and minimal pastoral staff. Additionally, 25% of revenue is from extraordinary sources (fundraising, bequests, etc.) and not regular giving. Given declining attendance overall this is not a sustainable financial situation and lacks the capacity to invest in evangelization and growth.

Debt Summary

This is an area of deep concern for the local churches. Accumulated operating losses, unpaid diocesan assessments, insurance, benefits and pension contributions have driven the parishes of St. Anselm and St. Anne into outstanding debts to the diocese of approximately \$973,000. Liabilities from the remaining churches are being paid down.

Church	Loans Outstanding
St. Anselm	\$788,785
St. Anne	\$184,157
St. Denis	\$0
St. Peter	\$2,235
St. Michael*	\$0
St. Martin*	\$0
St. Genevieve	\$60,742
St. Philip Neri	\$52,700
Total	\$1,088,619

Capital Expenditures

The diocese engaged with Dora Construction to prepare a brief overview of the immediate capital needs of each location in the new parish. This report demonstrates almost \$670,000 in estimated capital requirements. The need to finance these repairs in the face of a subsistence level financial position at each church makes this a nearly insurmountable amount to take on either through debt or fundraising.

Current	Estimated Capital Requirements
St. Anselm	\$ 410,000
St. Anne	\$ 36,000
St. Denis	\$ 70,500
St. Peter	\$ 44,375
St. Michael*	\$ 14,500
St. Martin*	\$0
St. Genevieve	\$ 66,500
St. Philip Neri	\$ 27,800
Total	\$669,675

Saint Anselm

Given a number of inquiries and media requests over the past few weeks we have included some additional information on the church of St. Anselm.

The church of St. Anselm in West Chezzetcook is currently closed due to environmental concerns related to mold. This situation combined with a number of other factors, determined that St. Anselm can not be considered one of the three sites of worship for the new parish.

In addition to the factors included in the above tables: 50% attendance decline, outstanding debts of \$788,785 and capital requirements of \$410,000 (including mold remediation). Additionally, the diocese has been subsidizing the parish operations over the past number of years. This is not a sustainable financial model. With looming major repairs required, no path to continue the operation of the church was found.

5 Year Financial Overview per Archdiocesan Business Office

St. Anselm	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013**
Ordinary Revenue	81,898	91,805	94,202	96,822	94,606	83,906
Extraordinary Revenue	45,082	89,463	81,766	68,303	72,223	61,479
Total Revenue*	131,543	208,068	188,199	165,143	167,884	367,292
Total Expenses	177,380	265,801	264,364	233,222	224,191	482,350
Deficit	(45,837)	(57,773)	(76,165)	(68,079)	(56,307)	(115,058)

*Includes other amounts for Misc. Revenue and Diocesan Adjustments

**Diocesan revenue adjustment of \$216,167 for a loan to offset expenses.

Financial Review

Due to discrepancies between parish accounts and diocesan records, the diocese contracted an independent accountant to conduct a review of the parish financial situation in January 2019. The report verifies a number of the key financial concerns presented in the diocesan records and demonstrates concerns about financial reporting.

- “The individual financial statements prepared on an internal basis as at December 31, 2018 show that both St. Anselm and St. Anne are in a deficit position”
- “As well the parish has a combined long term debt to the Archdiocese in the approximate amount of \$876,000 and there have not been any principal payments on this debt in recent years.”
- “Accordingly, it is readily apparent that the Archdiocese has been the primary funder of this Parish for the last number of years.” **Considerations for the New Parish**

Normally when parishes merge the assets and liabilities of all parishes are brought together. To ensure the new parish is not burdened with undue debts the diocese has used the Archdiocesan Contingency Fund to write down \$300,000 in debt owing from St. Anselm for fiscal 2018. The remaining debts and liabilities will require additional negotiation with the diocese in order to mitigate the financial impact on the new entity.

Information Sessions

Two information sessions will be held in the region on June 21 & 22, 2019. Staff from the diocese will endeavor to answer questions and offer further clarification on these issues while speaking to the hope for the future. Comments and inquiries related to these findings can be sent to chancery@halifaxyarmouth.org and will be considered while preparing the information sessions.