

Changes to proposal: from Moderators to Pastoral Area Coordinators

In response to comments, reservations and questions about the role of the Moderator and the use of this title the Bishop and the Pastoral Areas Working Group are now proposing:

- That one priest in each of the 16 pastoral areas will be appointed by the Bishop as the *Pastoral Area Coordinator* this summer

In taking on the role of Pastoral Area Coordinator the priest would:

- Be primarily there to serve the process of growing the pastoral area and meeting with other priest-coordinators as we move forward together
- Liaise with the Pastoral Areas working group and the Parish Pastoral Development team who will support the development of the areas
- He would take a leadership role with the PP's, other clergy, religious and laity in the area as the process moves forward
- Be the link person between the parishes, the Bishop and the diocesan pastoral areas working group

This new proposal emphasises that the development of pastoral areas involves a balance between changes at local level in pastoral areas which will happen according to local realities and the fact that some decisions involve diocese-wide initiatives. Hence , it:

- Allows time for people in areas to get to know each other and for any formation required to be offered in a local area
- Takes account of local realities and allows areas to set realistic goals for themselves
- Keeps this process linked to the Parish Pastoral Development process that is familiar to the majority of parishes
- Does not take from the future needs being met regarding the eventual need for a Moderator in an area (according to c.517§1) as the clergy numbers reduce and the Bishop is unable to appoint a resident PP in each parish
- Allows the current role of PP to continue as the pastoral areas are developing – with the PP continuing to have primary pastoral responsibility for the individual parish
- Allows for areas to discern and assess the future staffing needs
 - is there a need to employ a qualified lay person to the role of pastoral area coordinator
 - is there a need to provide secretarial/administrative support for the Pastoral Area Coordinator

- to look at other possible staffing needs in the area as it develops

And if so, to decide how best to proceed with these projects

Possible sequence of developments:

Based on this new proposal, a different time line and an essentially different process can be envisaged. What this might mean in practice is:

- **September 2008:**
 - 16 Pastoral Area Coordinators would meet together to identify training and support needed for them as they take up this new role
 - and following this the diocese will arrange delivery of training required, and how best to offer the support requested
- Each Pastoral Area Coordinator will meet with the PPD coordinator for the area to look at the current reality, services offered (schools, hospitals), sacramental numbers (Baptisms, weddings, funerals, Confirmations, First Holy Communions and to begin to devise the plan for moving forward collaboratively in the local area.
 - end of November 2008.
- Meeting of the clergy in each pastoral area to look at the current reality and the plan proposed
 - *By end November 2008:*
- Facilitated meeting of all the clergy in each pastoral area to begin to look at specific issues:
 - *By end January 2009:*
 - how can we begin to work together in new ways
 - how can we best support each other in our ministry
 - this may mean looking at rotas for duty/days off
 - how can we plan together for the sacramental programme in the area
 - begin to plan strategy for meeting the needs of the area
 - begin to look at each others strengths and giftedness and how this might be best utilised in the area
 - Mass schedules

These meetings will continue regularly to allow for ongoing forward planning.

- Pastoral Area Coordinator to meet with individual parish groups PA or PPC and FC as an introduction to each other
 - *Between November and end February 2009:*
- First facilitated meeting of the Pastoral Area Coordinating group to begin to work towards developing a plan for the area to include discussion of specific issues:

- *Spring 2009:*
 - Current realities
 - Priorities for the area
 - Mass schedules
 - Joint programmes, initiatives
 - Draw up meeting plan for the coming year

- Using diocesan criteria draw up draft plan for mass schedules to be signed off by Bishop for implementation in January 2010 – this to ensure integration of schedules across neighbouring areas
 - *Autumn 2009:*

This is an outline which provides a framework for discussion and planning and while we need to move forward as a diocese on some issues eg. Mass schedules, other initiatives will be addressed in tune with the local reality in each area.

Pastoral Area Meetings

In response to concerns that pastoral areas would generate a further level of meetings the original proposal has been revised and developed as follows:

Pastoral Area Coordinating Group

Delegates from Individual Assemblies or Pastoral Councils

It will be important that there be continuity and consistency in the representation of parish assemblies (PAs), parish pastoral councils (PPCs) and finance committees (FCs) on the pastoral area coordinating group to ensure good communication between parish and area groups, continuity, and integration of their work. To this end, the original proposal envisaged that the chairperson and secretary of a PA/PPC and the lay chairperson or lay representative of the FC should represent their parish on the pastoral area coordinating group.

Revised proposal:

- That the PA/PPC can nominate any two delegates to represent them on the pastoral area coordinating group. These can still be the officers of the PA/PPC.
- That the FC is represented by a lay delegate.
- That these delegates are nominated for the term of the PA/PPC and FC.

Frequency and Type of Meetings

Many of the pastoral area coordinating groups are potentially quite large, raising questions as to whether these groups could be effective. Equally, in the original proposal the frequency or type of meetings of the pastoral area coordinating group was not set out in detail.

The critical values regarding the frequency and type of meeting of the pastoral area coordinating group are:

- That sufficient and appropriate meetings be held to facilitate the ongoing growth of the pastoral area
- That meetings not be multiplied needlessly.

Hence, as the pastoral areas grow and develop the meetings required will vary and be reviewed, with streamlining of structures where appropriate.

It is envisaged that:

- The pattern of pastoral area coordinating group meetings will be decided locally in each pastoral area
- Full pastoral area coordinating groups might take place three/four times a year, to coordinate activity in the area
- The coordinator of parish pastoral development would be available to help structure these meetings and to facilitate them.
- Between these larger meetings, specific meetings would be held as required, e.g. meetings of:
 - Finance delegates
 - PA/PPC delegates
 - Subgroup representatives: liturgy, youth ministry, faith formation, communication, etc.
 - readers, ministers of Eucharist, etc.

Priests' Pastoral Area Meetings and Deanery Conferences

Priests meet once a month in seven deanery conferences for mutual support and to discuss issues of concern to them. The deanery conferences have delegates on the diocesan Priests' Council and also discuss issues that they wish to be taken up by the Priests' Council or which the Priests' Council asks them to consider.

In some instances, the proposed pastoral areas consist of parishes from more than one deanery conference.

It is proposed that:

- The deaneries will be reconfigured to align deanery and pastoral area boundaries
- Priests would meet once a month in their pastoral areas, beginning when initial preparatory meetings have taken place in the autumn.
- The discussion of local issues and the mutual support provided by the deanery meetings will now be provided by the clergy pastoral area meetings.
- Deanery meetings would take place four times a year. These meetings will have a narrower agenda, dealing principally with issues of regional and diocesan concern, in close cooperation with the Priests' Council.

This proposal will be brought to meetings of the deaneries for consideration.

Finance Issues

The following are the principal issues which have emerged as needing attention:

- ❑ Integrity of parish accounts
- ❑ Effect of Mass time changes
- ❑ Building questions
- ❑ Planning for new needs
- ❑ Maintaining income

The working group has considered these issues briefly and recognizes that they need further attention at diocesan and parish level. These are initial proposals:-

1. A Pastoral Area account
 - a. To fund shared activities across the parishes in an area
 - b. It would receive an agreed percentage from each parish of weekend collections
2. Collection Envelopes
 - a. Each parish to have numbered envelopes for all weekend collections
 - b. Each envelope returned to one's parish irrespective of where one attends Mass.
3. Capital expenditure and asset management
 - a. Bishop to establish an expert group to report on proposals for managing:
 - i. Sale and purchase of fixed assets
 - ii. Maintenance of parish properties
 - iii. Legal and financial issues as may arise
4. Collaboration with religious orders
 - a. Bishop Buckley is to consult with provincials of religious orders and missionary societies to discuss cooperation with parishes
5. Tax
 - a. All parishes to be asked to take advantage of the provisions of Finance Act 2001.
 - b. Use extra income for current expenditure.
 - c. Reclaim tax on PAYE donations
 - d. Provide receipts to all donors
 - e. Anticipate provisions of new laws for charities