

Diocese of Western Newfoundland
Report to Provincial Council
September 2005

The period 2004 to 2005 has seen a fair amount of strategic planning for the future of the church in this Diocese. We had spent some considerable time in visioning for the future and had now reached a point where action was called for in order to bring to fruition our hopes and dreams.

Late September, early October, 2004 our Diocesan Synod met in Grand Bay to formally adopt the five year strategic plan for the Diocese. Regina Warren, the consultant who assisted us in the formulation of the plan, helped to generate some excitement about the implementation of the plan within the diocese. The plan was formally accepted by the Synod and, as a Diocese we were ready to move forward. Late fall saw the Strategic Plan Implementation and Monitoring Committee put in place. That Committee began working to devise working plans for each of the areas targeted in the strategic plan. These work plans were then given to the appropriate Diocesan committees for implementation. A number of strategies were already in the action stages - Internet access for all parishes, Communications officers for all parishes, ongoing plans for a Diocesan Youth conference for the spring of 2006, Teens Encounter Christ was being re-activated within the Diocese, the Christian Education Committee was doing ongoing work of assessment of the Diocesan programs for Confirmation, Baptism, Marriages, the Diocesan Bookroom was moving ahead with creating a catalogue of resources available, ongoing work on the Lay Ministers' Association handbook, the Diocesan Mission committee was seeking a Companion Diocese relationship with another Canadian Diocese, a committee had been put in place to assist in the ongoing discussions about human sexuality, especially in the area of same gender relationships.

Arising from the 2004 Fall Synod was a motion to have a major component in the spring 2005 Synod devoted to Total Ministry with a keynote speaker. Much of the winter and spring was devoted to preparations for the work to be done in the area of Baptismal/Total Ministry and to involve the congregations/parishes/deaneries in the preparation process. We engaged The Rev. Dr. Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook from the Episcopal Divinity School as keynote speaker and to facilitate the discussions. The Synod was structured for the parishes to meet in clusters and to begin a process of sharing to discover areas of possibility. The Synod was primarily carried out in these small cluster groups and met only in plenary for reports. Dr. Sheryl set each of the five sessions into a context and used directed questions to facilitate the discussion. A great deal of excitement and enthusiasm was generated around the whole idea of doing ministry in new ways and finding new vessels to carry the message. By the end of the Synod a majority of the cluster groups had made plans to meet after the Synod to continue the work of seeking ways to share the gifts of ministry.

Subsequent to the Synod the Diocesan program committee was restructured into subcommittees that would carry forward the work of Total Ministry as perceived during the 2005 Synod and to facilitate the actions necessary to move forward strategically from the 2004 Synod. In early June one of our priests pursued a seminar course at the Episcopal School of Divinity in Total Ministry and new ways

of doing ministry. The Diocese has also received an invitation to send observers to a Living Stones Conference on Total Ministry to be held next year. As a follow up to Synod 2005 the Cathedral Parish is preparing for a fall Mission on Baptismal Ministry to be held in November.

We have made a presentation to the National Committee for Letting Down the Nets Financial strategy in the hopes of receiving a pilot project for Stewardship. In response to that we are moving ahead with plans for our Diocesan Stewardship committee and its ongoing work, sending persons to the stewardship conference taking place in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, and having the Planned Giving consultant from National Church, Kevin Smith, to speak to our clergy conference in October

The restructuring of the Diocesan Program Committee has resulted in a number of subcommittees that are either new or have taken on a renewed mandate for Diocesan work. Our Stewardship committee is working towards implementing a diocesan stewardship program; the Mission committee is continuing work with refugees and PWRDF, as well as exploring companion relationships with Dioceses both within and outside the Canadian church; the Christian Education Committee is continuing its work finding and recommending suitable programs for Sunday School as well as ongoing assessment of our Diocesan programs; the Evangelism committee coordinates the work of Cursillo and T.E.C., and explores ways and means of encouraging renewal within parishes, deaneries and the diocese; the Youth committee is working apace on plans for the upcoming diocesan youth conference in the spring of 2006, and the fall T.E.C. weekend, as well as other youth ventures for the diocese; the Communications committee is struggling with ways and means of improving diocesan communications through the Diocesan website, exploring ways of assisting with the set up of parish websites and encouraging better use of the technology available; the Human Sexuality committee is gathering timely information and balanced reading materials to assist the diocese in its conversations and discussions on the issue with clergy and lay throughout the diocese.

The Bishop is addressing the Lay Ministers' Association in October to encourage them in their ongoing ministry and to place that ministry into the wider context of Total Ministry as envisioned by our strategic plan and our 2005 Synod. The deaneries have also begun a series of inservice workshops to assist vestries and parish councils to better understand their roles and to be more aware of diocesan procedures as well as the diocesan constitution - Humber Deanery met in late spring and invited the Archdeacon to inservice the vestries/parish councils within the deanery and the St. Barbe Deanery has an inservice scheduled for this fall. A handbook for congregational/parish treasurers is being updated as is the diocesan policies and procedures handbook.

The year has been a very busy time as we continue to struggle with the challenges of delivering ministry in a time of major out-migration and hard economic times for the church. We continue to search for ways to 'be church' in a fragmented society and a fragmented church.