



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF QUEBEC

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Report to Provincial Synod 2012

Provide a brief description of the diocese (statistics and any particular characteristics).

Covering an area of approximately 720,000 km², the Diocese of Quebec is larger in size than France or Afghanistan. The diocesan boundaries stretch from the Magdalen Islands in the east, to Labrador in the north, and to the Eastern Townships in the south. The east-west boundaries are roughly 900 km apart; the north-south boundaries are approximately 1,100 km apart. On our southern edge, which is at most points the border with the United States, we have a three-parish “border ministry” shared with the Episcopal dioceses of New Hampshire and Vermont.

Quebec City, Sherbrooke, and Trois-Rivières are the three urban centres located within our diocesan boundaries. However, in general, the diocese consists of large areas marked by scattered towns and villages. The largest geographical portion of the diocese is home to unfettered wildlife, unseen forest vales, and streams never navigated by man, giving a sense of what God’s vast creation looked like centuries ago.

Historic and picturesque Quebec City is the see of the diocese, with the diocesan offices (Church House) and episcopal residence (Bishopthorpe) located within the close of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. The cathedral close is itself situated inside the historic walled old city of Quebec, which is recognized by the United Nations as a World Heritage Site.

The diocese is divided into four archdeaconries whose boundaries are coterminous with four of the diocese’s deaneries: Gaspé, North Shore, Quebec, and Saint Francis. The fifth deanery, Saint-Laurent, is the most recently constituted and has no geographic boundaries. Rather, it is a grouping of the diocese’s predominantly French-speaking congregations.

There are 77 congregations, serving an overall Anglican population of approximately 3,000 souls. A handful of those congregations have only one service a year and a few serve only summer parishioners. There is a regular worshipping congregation at St. Mark’s Chapel at Bishop’s University in Lennoxville, and the diocese also maintains St. Peter’s Church as an ecumenical chapel in Forillon National Park, on the Gaspé Peninsula.

In addition to the bishop, the diocese is presently served by approximately 25 priests who are assisted by several deacons and about 60 lay readers. The majority of incumbents serve multi-point parishes, and some clergy are engaged in ministry on a non-stipendiary basis.

A dean and four territorial archdeacons currently assist the diocesan bishop. A fifth archdeacon has specific oversight of the diocese’s French-speaking congregations.

There is also an executive archdeacon and an archdeacon missionary. Together these individuals form the Bishop's Council, to offer advice and counsel to our bishop. Other administrative staff include an executive director who is chiefly responsible for finance and administration, an administrative assistant to the bishop, and a part-time bookkeeper.

The 2001 census shows that in the Quebec City region only 1.7 per cent of the local population is English speaking. French is overwhelmingly the language most spoken in the territory covered by the diocese, though there remain important pockets of English speakers in the Eastern Townships, Lower North Shore, Gaspé Peninsula, and Magdalen Islands. Naskapi is the main language spoken by the people of the diocese's largest parish in Kawawachikamach, a First Nation situated near Schefferville.

Roman Catholicism remains by far the largest Christian denomination in Quebec, and relations between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches here have historically been strong and warm, and remain so to this day. Our bishop is presently the co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada.

What good news is taking place in your diocese?

This autumn sees the arrival of four dynamic and well-trained priests into service in the Diocese of Quebec, priests who are at the same time well aware of the challenges the church faces in its current context. Our seminary-trained ordained leadership are adapting to new and collaborative ways of doing ministry during a time when in most areas the one-priest-per-parish is no longer sustainable.

Several members of the diocese took an active role in the vocal opposition to Bill C-31, federal legislation many felt put at risk Canada's well-established vocation as a safe haven for those seeking refuge from oppression, injustice, war, or death in other parts of the world. A public vigil, letter writing, and other gospel-inspired activism helped result in changes to some of the more objectionable aspects of the legislation. For many in our diocese, it was a first experience with the notion that the church can have a voice in the public square and use that voice to speak the truth to power.

French-language ministry continues to slowly but steadily grow in a diocese more accustomed to the decline of our communities. The establishment of a non-territorial deanery for our French-speaking congregations, with its own budget for programs and its own archdeacon, is part of our diocese's commitment to breaking the stereotype that one must be anglophone to be Anglican. In addition to existing francophone or bilingual Anglican congregations in the diocese, new communities are emerging in Sherbooke and outside Quebec City.

The diocese recently entered into a unique and positive partnership with the Quebec government and the city of Trois-Rivières. The small Anglican congregation there worships in the oldest church building in Quebec, and had lost the capacity to maintain the infrastructure. Because of the historical significance of the building, the municipality has purchased the building and will transform it into a multi-purpose

cultural centre while maintaining much of the worship area intact. The Anglican congregation has perpetual rights to use the church for worship and other gatherings free of charge, and the province and municipality together will spend approximately \$2 million in on repair and restoration work.

The Cathedral of the Holy Trinity and the diocese have begun working collaboratively to explore ways in which the cathedral complex, nestled in the heart of Quebec's Old City, can better use its unique and privileged location for outreach. For example, thousands of tourists pass through the cathedral's doors each year, and there is an acknowledgement that the opportunity these unbidden visitors represent is not being fully realized.

In a diocese as vast as ours, communication is crucial, and we have been learning to make better use of both traditional and newer means of sharing information. *The Gazette*, the diocese's 118-year-old newspaper, recently underwent a substantial redesign in both form and content. Some of those changes were recognized earlier this year when *The Gazette* received two first-place prizes at the annual Canadian Church Press awards. The diocesan web site, quebec.anglican.org, has also undergone a complete redesign intended to make it more inviting, user friendly, and accessible both for newcomers seeking information about our diocese and for those of us who already actively engaged in the life and work of our church. The web site is complemented by a diocesan Facebook page and a diocesan Twitter account (@QuebecDiocese). There are also plans to convert part of a chapel adjacent to the bishop's residence into a teleconferencing centre to facilitate communications across our sprawling diocese.

What challenges are the diocese facing?

The Diocese of Quebec faces all of the same demographic, societal, existential, and financial challenges as do Anglicans in the rest of eastern Canada. However, these challenges are exacerbated by the fact that our traditional anglophone constituency has been in a radically rapid decline over recent decades—through relocation or assimilation—even more so that in our neighbouring Diocese of Montreal.

Our diocese grapples with the simultaneous challenge of serving with diminished resources the faithful remnant of Anglicans within our borders and trying to reach out to those who have never been a part of our—or any—faith community. Anglicans in our diocese still have difficulty articulating what it means to be a church that is participating in God's mission for others. There remains a lingering preoccupation with structures—both physical and ecclesiastical—for which the church's leadership must take its share of responsibility for perpetuating over the years.

An inevitable result of all of this is a steady decline in revenue from our congregations for diocesan ministry. Through the Church Society, the Diocese of Quebec has the advantage of being able to generate revenue through its investments. A challenge for the diocese has been how to optimize this investment income to keep pace with the concurrent decline in revenue from the congregations. Further complicating this are the competing desires to generate as much revenue as possible

from our diocesan investments while not wishing to invest in enterprises engaged in ethically or morally objectionable activities, no matter how profitable the results.

In what ways has the diocese “pruned the vine,” cut away or cut back, or redirected resources, in order to promote more vigorous growth and more fruit in other areas of mission and ministry? How can your experience be of value to, or an example for, the rest of the province?

Over the last few years the diocese has been seeking at all levels to reform and adapt its structures so as to make them better reflect the current reality and enhance our capacity to participate in God’s mission.

At the diocesan level, our canons and constitution are in the process of being amended to permit more adaptability to changing circumstances. Many of the rules and regulations governing the administration of our congregations date back 150 years. This type of governance structure dates from a time when most congregations had their own cleric, and churches were full and were growing. That is not our reality in Quebec in the 21st century.

The Deanery of Saint Francis, which encompasses a large part of Quebec’s Eastern Townships, is engaged in a complete restructuring of how ministry is offered to Anglicans there. The scheme involves moving toward a more regional model of ministry, in which congregations throughout the area share in supporting a team of ministers—some seminary-trained priests, some locally raised priests and deacons, some lay readers—who share in the task of providing sacramental, pastoral, and teaching ministry throughout the deanery.

Our conversations with the Diocese of Montreal continue through the Quebec-Montreal Partnership Initiative. The two dioceses have been discussing our common contexts and our common goals, with the objective of sharing resources and engaging in ministry and mission together so as to be more effective and better stewards of our respective resources. These conversations have been wide ranging, and have included the very basic question of whether it any longer makes sense for the Diocese of Quebec to exist as diocese in the traditional sense.

Perhaps the most visible—and sometimes most painful—act of pruning has been the actual closure of churches. Since this Provincial Synod last met in 2009, seven of our congregations have chosen to disestablish and their property has been sold. More such endings are on the horizon. In a sense the good work of these congregations carries on in that the proceeds of the sale of the property are earmarked to support mission and ministry in the deanery in which they are situated.

Some other congregations have pruned for growth by remaining intact as worshipping communities, but by selling property—a rectory, parish hall, a parcel of land, or the church building itself. Relieved of the burden of maintaining buildings they can no longer maintain or have ceased to use, these congregations are now freer to explore what mission to which God might be calling them in their local communities.