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## DIOCESAN POLICY FOR ERECTING, SUPPRESSING, OR ALTERING PARISHES

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As a follow-up to the diocesan document « Paths to the Future », after consulting with the Priests' Senate and the Bishop's Council, I publish here the procedure to be eventually followed in erecting, suppressing or altering parishes, bearing in mind canon 515 §21 of the Code of Canon Law which states that

« the diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes;  
he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them  
without hearing the presbyteral council ».

As this initiative can be taken by either the parish or the diocese, one of two procedures are to be followed, depending on the case.

### A) Parish Initiative

It is important

to ensure that the pastor, those in charge of the parish, or the pastoral team agree to the erection, suppression, or altering of the parish;

to inform the parishioners of what is happening and allow them to speak on the issue at hand;

for the parish pastoral council(s) in question to draw up and endorse a recommendation describing and justifying the project; unanimity is not required, but dissenting opinions must be noted;

to follow the same procedure at the regular or special parish meeting where this project is first announced;

unanimity is not required, but dissenting opinions must be noted;

to present the financial reports and statements;

to establish in writing the territorial boundaries of the parishes concerned;

to agree as much as possible on the name or names proposed to the bishop for the new parish, if need be.

Following this procedure, those in charge of the parishes concerned must forward to the diocesan chancery the following documents:

an official letter with justification, requesting that a decree be published regarding the proposed project

the recommendation from the PPC

a summary of reactions and comments of parishioners

territorial boundaries of the parish

financial reports and statements

where applicable, what is planned regarding place(s) of worship  
and the place where the parish registers and archives are to be kept

in the case of erecting a new parish, suggestions for names.

## B) Diocesan Initiative

The persons appointed by the Bishop to work in the parishes set for eventual restructuring must:

meet with those in charge of the parishes and the PPCs  
to inform them of the reasons motivating the Bishop  
to eventually make changes  
as soon as he has met with the Priests' Senate;

advise the parishioners  
and give them the opportunity to voice their opinion;

set in writing the territorial limits of the parishes concerned.

Following this procedure, the persons appointed by the Bishop will submit  
the following documents to the diocesan chancery:

the project for modifying the parish structures,  
along with the reasons motivating this

a summary of reactions and comments from persons and groups

financial reports and statements of the parishes concerned

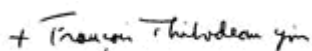
territorial boundaries of the parishes concerned

where applicable, what is planned  
regarding place(s) of worship  
and the place where the registers and archives are to be kept

in case of the erecting of a new parish, suggestions for names

In the light of the documents mentioned in A) and B) above,  
the Bishop will receive the advice of the Priests' Senate,  
following which he shall publish a decree in the parishes concerned.

Given at Edmundston April 20, 1999 with approval of the Bishop's Council



+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.  
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