



April 29, 2018

To the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth

Dear Friends,

For many years, we have talked about a New Evangelization. Believe it or not, it has been almost seven years since I outlined, through a pastoral letter, why we needed to change as a local Church.

Since then, we have walked that journey of change together by focusing on our mission as Catholics. We all strive to live the example of Jesus Christ in love, care, compassion, peace and forgiveness. When the challenges become greater, the need for change becomes necessary even if change is difficult. To proclaim the gospel in today's changing world requires that our local Archdiocesan Church must now adjust to face existing realities and be better equipped for tomorrow. Change is inevitable; it is happening, whether we participate in it or not. I invite you therefore to be part of the process and influence the outcome!

An important milestone on our journey of change was the release last year of [Equip the Saints](#), our 2017-2020 pastoral plan (www.halifaxyarmouth.org/plan).

The plan has four major themes:

- Foster parish communities that form missionary disciples;
- Provide resources to carry out our mission in the world;
- Equip people for our mission through leadership formation opportunities; and
- Increase our mission capacity and efficiency.

As we approach the first anniversary of Equip the Saints, regular updates on the progress of the plan will be provided. With this update, I want to share with you some news around how we are trying to increase our mission capacity and efficiency. This part of the plan is called New Parishes: Stronger Together.

It's about bringing Catholic faithful across the Archdiocese together in a network of new parishes. The new model of parishes will be one canonical parish with multiple sites where pastoral care and ministries would be delivered in collaboration, to local communities of proximity; where human and financial resources will be shared. The leadership for this new parish structure would be entrusted to a pastoral team, made up of formed and mandated lay leaders and clergy; where persons would be using their gifts and strengths in a spirit of co-responsibility and mutuality.

What will this look like? At this stage, it's a work in progress, and we don't know yet. That's why discussions have been underway with clergy and lay leaders about the possibility of forming New Parishes: Stronger Together.

We have been considering what the best possible proposals should be to strengthen our capacity to equip our parishioners for mission, connect and collaborate with other Catholics to provide pastoral care and reach out to those who are not part of the church.

I invite you to join this conversation. To help you, you can go to our website (www.halifaxyarmouth.org) and read some of the background material that's available. Watch this year's video Series. Speak with your pastor, your pastoral and finance councils, your family and friends. I also invite you to share with me your thoughts on the best way we can change to achieve the goal of stronger parishes together.

Some important dates to keep in mind:

- May 20 – as previously announced, the deadline for responses to the Lenten Series;
- June 30 – submissions from the regions on what New Parishes: Stronger Together could look like, for discussion, review, revisions (if necessary) and ultimately approval by the Archbishop;
- January 1, 2019 - the transition to New Parishes: Stronger Together begins; and
- December 31, 2020 – implementation of New Parishes: Stronger Together should be complete.


Over the next number of weeks and months, I will be visiting different parishes around the Archdiocese to talk more about where we are going as a church.

I expect you will have questions, concerns, fears and ideas. That's understandable. Rest assured I have them too. By working together, by listening to each other, by reflecting on where we need to go, I know we can find the right path for our Church to fulfill her mission, in part, through New Parishes: Stronger Together.

During my time as Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth, I have come to appreciate the considerable talents that exist within our clergy, our lay leadership, our staff and our parishioners. I am grateful for the contributions all of you make to bring out the best of our Catholic Church. This is the basis upon which building the future rests.

Let us pray for each other. May our faith in the Lord and the hope that comes from the Spirit of God, sustain us on this journey.

Sincerely yours,



†Anthony Mancini
Archbishop of Halifax-Yarmouth