

# St. Brendan's Parish, Muirhouse, Motherwell

## ***The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church***

issued on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

**[Summary [Part 3] prepared by the lay supervisor of the social media of the Parish from the content of the Vatican document and to be revised and approved by Fr. Ness]**

### **Continuing from Paragraph 42 on to paragraph 61:**

#### **The Parish and other subdivisions within the Diocese**

The gradual renewal of structures within the parish will create a new system of pastoral care involving the whole Church. The Diocese may be organised in a new way for pastoral purposes, and specific new structures may be created to facilitate a closer connection and more effective pastoral care of "the People of God".

The size of the Diocese and the pastoral needs of its parishes will determine the nature of these new structures. Consideration will be given to the customs and characteristics of groups when creating specific territories within the diocese, to foster a close relationship between Priests and other pastoral workers.

#### **How to proceed with the establishment of Parish groupings**

Before establishing Parish groupings, the Bishop must meet with the "Council of Priests" who assist each bishop in an advisory capacity.

Firstly, parishes can be grouped together in a federation, with each parish in the group retaining its own identity.

If the Bishop plans to suppress any parish he must issue a specific decree to this effect, carefully explaining the reasons. The diocesan bishop can create new groupings of parishes by

- merging one parish into another, where one parish is absorbed into the other and parish that has been so absorbed loses its individual identity (this is called extinctive union);
- or by a fusion of two or more parishes to create one new parish, with the former individual parishes being suppressed;
- or finally by dividing an existing parish community into several new ones.

There may be legitimate reasons to suppress a parish by extinctive union, **but shortage of diocesan clergy or lack of general funds within a Diocese would not be sufficient cause, and nor would any other temporary reason such as urban planning, or a lack of financial self-sufficiency in the parish.** *The decision must be motivated by conditions directly connected with the parish, and not based solely "on principle".*

If a Parish is to be suppressed, the decree must clearly and specifically state the reasons that led the Bishop to make this decision, and state the arrangements for parish property- ideally ensuring that the church of the suppressed parish remains open.

Sometimes if a parish is suppressed it may be necessary for the Bishop to reduce a Church building to secular use. The legitimate causes for decreeing such a reduction do not include reasons like the lack of clergy, demographic decline or the grave financial state of the Diocese. However, if the building is in such a state as to be unable to be used for divine worship in any way, and there is no possibility of repairing it, then the Bishop can proceed to reduce it to secular but not immoral use.

### **Vicariates Forane (Deaneries)**

The Deanery is a special group of several neighbouring parishes. The Dean does not necessarily have to be a Parish Priest of a specific parish. His responsibility is to visit the parishes “to promote and coordinate common pastoral action” in the deanery, so that it does not remain a purely formal institution, and the bishop may confer specific powers to enable this.

### **Pastoral Units**

If a Deanery is large or the numbers of the faithful increase, the Bishop can create an institutional grouping of parishes within the deanery in order to foster collaboration among them. Such groupings, known as “pastoral units” should join together similar parishes that can unite and work together effectively.

Each parish within a pastoral unit must be cared for by a parish priest or alternatively if the Bishop sees fit, the grouping could be composed of several Parishes, each having the same Parish Priest. The Bishop will decide on a case-by-case basis the functions of the priest who is the leader of a pastoral unit.

Once the grouping of the parishes has been established – as either deaneries or pastoral units- the Bishop will decide whether each parish should have its own Parish Pastoral Council or whether there should be one Pastoral Council for all of them. In any case, each individual parish must maintain their own Finance Councils. **Pastoral services such as catechesis [EG Children’s Liturgy], charity, youth or family pastoral care should be established in common for the parishes within the grouping, with the participation of clergy, consecrated men and women, and lay faithful.**

### **Pastoral Regions**

If each deanery can contain several “pastoral units”, then similarly in larger dioceses the Bishop could unite several deaneries into “districts” or “pastoral regions”, led by an Episcopal Vicar.