



DIOCESE OF
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To: The Faithful of the Diocese of London

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

After a period of consultation and deliberation at various levels and following the recommendation of the Council of Priests, I am pleased to announce my decision to reactivate the Diocesan Pastoral Council. This consultative body, which has been in abeyance for several years, will have an important role within our diocesan governance structure.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is an advisory body to the Bishop. It has a long history in the Diocese of London. My predecessor, Bishop Gerald Carter, established such a council according to the first statute put forward by a diocesan synod in the late 1960s. The constitution of this body was revised in the mid-1990s. It was part of the overall organizational structure of the diocese for the better part of that decade. Now with the move to a more synodal mode in the governance of the Church, as advocated so insistently by Pope Francis, the time has come to reinstate the Diocesan Pastoral Council, which is an authentic expression of synodality at the local level.

While not mandatory, a Diocesan Pastoral Council is, nevertheless, urged by documents issued after the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law. It falls under the authority of the Bishop, and its function is to study and weigh those matters which concern the pastoral works of the diocese and to propose practical conclusions concerning them (Canon 511).

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is not a lay council as opposed to the Council of Priests but a council that is composed of representative members of all the faithful: priests, permanent deacons, religious men and women and lay people. The latter category of members, that is, lay people, will be the largest group on the council, giving the laity a distinct role in this body and thus a prominent voice in the discernment of the future pastoral directions of our diocese.

In the months to come, Father Murray Sample and members of the ad hoc committee who studied the Diocesan Pastoral Council and then produced an updated version of its constitution will be meeting with each of the deaneries to begin the process of discernment that will be used to identify members of this body, who will be appointed by me.

To learn more about the Diocesan Pastoral Council, I invite you to visit the Diocese of London website at www.dol.ca/dpc.

In a time when we have been invited by our Holy Father to journey together, listening to one another and looking to discern where the Spirit is leading us, the People of God, the Diocesan Pastoral Council offers us an opportunity and a means to engage in this unique form of dialogue and interaction as we live out the mission that is ours as Jesus' disciples.

I ask for your prayers during this time of education and discernment as we take steps to reactivate the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
Bishop of London