

Appendices

to:

A future full of hope

Reimagining the Archdiocese of Wellington

PROMULGATION DOCUMENT

A PROPOSED PROCESS FOR WORKING THROUGH THE MERGER OF PARISHES.

To be reviewed and revised at first planned meeting of the Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) and Parish Finance Committees (PFC) of constituent parishes.

Suggested steps

1. Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Committees begin to jointly work out a process to share with their parishes, providing leadership in initiating a merger process (which also invites feedback and reflection from parishes as a whole). This would begin at first joint meeting.
2. A Working Group (WG) to lead the change is formed, drawing from within the PPC/PFCs and from wider combined parish community. The objectives of the WG would be to:
 - a. Lead the Change
 - b. Engage with the combining parishes
 - c. Engage with the wider community
 - d. Create communications channels for the merger, and provide information through those channels
 - e. Provide a focus point for the parishes.

The WG would meet at regular intervals throughout the amalgamation process.

3. Following this meeting, a Combined Parish Meeting would be held to:
 - a. Explain and discuss the proposed process and invite feedback
 - b. Create a joint vision for community
 - c. Consider a name for the new whole parish entity (using Canon Law guidelines provided).

This could be the first of two or three Combined Parish meetings held.

4. Parallel to this process, a sub-committee of the PPCs/PFCs is formed to proceed as far as possible with planning practicalities required (e.g. liturgy planning, sustaining community(ies) and timetable, potential property planning, bank accounts).

Questions to consider as parishes prepare to engage in a merger process.

What is known so far?

- What has happened so far in terms of communication with parishes about planned merger/amalgamation?
- What are people's perceptions of what has happened so far? This is important to check as we can think we have communicated a particular message only to find it has only been received in part, or that there is some kind of distortion.
- Is there a shared understanding of what has got each parish to this place?

What is the vision for the future after amalgamation?

- What is the vision for the joint community that will be present after amalgamation?
- Who has been involved in creating that vision?
- If there is not yet a clear vision, how will it be created?
- How can the parishes be engaged in contributing to that vision?

How will the parishes move to the shared vision?

- What form will the process take, and how will it be described? e.g. a dialogue which generates practical actions.
- If a series of meetings is required, what is the frequency of the meetings, and how will the rest of the parishioners be kept informed?

Who will take the lead in the process?

- Is the joint PPC/PFC a transition team? [Do they have the right skills?]
- How might leadership emerge (and be invited to emerge) from the parishes as they come together? Will others form part of the team?

Likely skills needed to support this process

- Group facilitation
- Individual and group supervision
- Project planning
- Logical process design/sequencing

Guidance in proposing a new name for the new Parish

As outlined in an article by Trueman & Vere¹ www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/when-parishes-merge-or-close

“Since Churches are sacred places where the faithful gather to worship God, canon law requires that churches be solemnly dedicated or simply blessed (canon 1217) and given a name (canon 1218) that corresponds with certain norms that are found in a liturgical book called the Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar (1989). The name must be:

- The name of the Trinity, or
- A name for Christ, invoked in the liturgy, or a mystery of his life, or
- The name of the Holy Spirit, or
- A name for Mary, invoked under a title for her used in the liturgy, or
- The name of a holy angel, or
- The name of a canonized saint, as it appears in the Roman martyrology (or appendix), or
- The name of a blessed provided the Apostolic See has given its permission.

The code of Canon Law does not give explicit direction to naming parishes, but clarification was provided in 1999 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, stating ‘The name of a parish may commonly be the same name as the title of the parish church’. The norms ... say that if several parishes are merged into one, the names of the churches from the former parishes are retained and the newly merged parish, for pastoral reasons, can adopt a different name from the names of the churches it will inherit.

Canon law leaves it to the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or notably alter parishes (canon 515 §2), so it follows that he enjoys the prerogative to name them. Nonetheless, a diocesan bishop would typically want to hear from the pastor and parishioners as to what names they prefer”.

The *practice* in the United States is to give a parish the name of a canonized saint.

The *practice* in Christchurch in respect of amalgamations was to follow these principles

- A **geographic** name for the new parish, using a standardized formalized title e.g. “The Catholic Parish of Timaru”
- A **patronal** name for the new parish
- Avoiding duplication of names as far as possible
- Names of existing parish churches remain unchanged.

It is suggested that in the Archdiocese of Wellington and following promulgation of formal approval (to merge) parishes be asked to consider the above in choosing prayerfully together a list of possible names for their new parish, to be submitted to the Archbishop for consideration and approval.