



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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The Archdiocese of St. Boniface consults with lay people and French-speaking clergy to ensure the vitality of the francophone Catholic community

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface will consult with French Catholics, through an online survey and focus groups, to paint a picture of the francophone Catholic community in Manitoba, in order to better understand its needs and challenges, and propose approaches that will ensure its long-term vitality.

Manitoba's French-speaking Catholics have a rich history and tradition, dating back even before Father Norbert Provencher arrived at the Red River Colony in 1818. Indeed, over the past two centuries, the Catholic Church has played an important role in ensuring the vitality of the francophone community, as well as French language school, family and social services.

However, the French-speaking Catholic community has evolved considerably, since its beginnings and especially in recent decades. The increase in exogamous families, the increasing number of French-speaking newcomers, the depopulation of rural areas and the decline of local vocations to the priesthood are among the many challenges facing French-speaking Catholics today and, by extension, the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

Consultation

These challenges, however, are a positive opportunity for the changing francophone community. And so, in December 2020, the Archdiocese established an Advisory Committee, whose objective is to study the current state of the francophone Catholic community, in order to better respond to today's challenges, and those of tomorrow.

With this in mind, the Archbishop of St. Boniface, Archbishop Albert LeGatt, states:

The situation requires two things. On the one hand, that our consultation process reaches as many French-speaking Catholics as possible, regardless of which parish they are currently members of, or even if they are not members of a parish or have moved away from the Church. As well, we need to look at the whole life of the Church from this perspective to ensure and advance the vitality of the faith lived out in French. This includes not only the liturgy, but adult faith formation, catechism, the structures of a parish, evangelization and diocesan services.

During this process, let's remember bishop Provencher, who laid the foundations of our Church and the experience of the Catholic faith in French in the plains and forests of Manitoba. Let us think of those who followed him on this great adventure, our predecessors who left us a rich legacy of faith, language and culture. As in a canoe, let's move forward with the wind in our backs. And this wind is the Holy Spirit.

The Advisory Committee is composed of: Albert LeGatt, Archbishop of St. Boniface, Agnès Mao-Tougas (Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Parish), Father Charles Fillion (Saint-Norbert Parish), Aurèle Boisvert (Sainte-Anne-des-Chênes Parish), Danielle de Moissac (Cœur-Immaculée-de-Marie Parish), Brenda Arakaza (Cathédrale Parish) et Mireille Grenier, Director of Pastoral Services at the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

Women, men, clergy and laity, young people, young adults, adults and seniors are invited to help create an accurate picture of the Catholic francophone community, by participating in a consultation with first and second-language francophones, whether immigrants or locals, or whether they live in rural areas or in the city.

Online Survey

In May and June, francophone Catholics are invited to fill out a short online survey. There, they can describe their faith lives, the most important aspects to consider in order to live a dynamic faith in French, the challenges to be overcome, the future of the francophone Catholic community in Manitoba and ways to ensure the continuation of the transmission of the faith in the future.

The online survey is available as of May 12, 2021. To participate, [click here](#).

Focus Groups

Focus groups will also meet in the different regions of the diocese. The archdiocese will organize several of them, and will invite francophones to form others. Each French-speaking or bilingual parish will be invited to form at least one focus group. As well, anyone can form a focus group, composed of small groups of parishioners, families or circles of friends or colleagues.

Each Focus Group will consist of a facilitator, and will be open to any francophone, whether he or she is attached to a parish or not, so that they can share their perspectives. Facilitators will have access to a kit created to ensure the group runs smoothly.

During the group discussions, information on each participant will be collected to help the Advisory Committee ensure that it has adequate representation of all different demographic groups.

Timeline

The group discussions will take place in May and June. The data will be analyzed in July and August. The Advisory Committee will identify key themes from the consultation and then make recommendations. A final report will be published in October, with recommendations and possible next steps to be taken.

For more information, or to interview a member of the Advisory Committee, please contact:

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