

MEETING MINUTES

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL (DPC)

April 25, 2026
Holy Cross Parish,
252 Dubuc St.,
Winnipeg, MB

PARTICIPANTS

Archbishop LeGatt; Paulette Vielfaure Dupuis (Chair of the Committee for the Renewal & Growth of Parish Pastoral Councils; Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council); **James Kautz** (Director of Pastoral Services); **Grace Dumont** (Admin. Assistant for Pastoral Services); **Koreen Hrizai** (Coordinator of Catechetics – English Office); **Fr. Chrys Agu** (Christ the King); **Fr. Serge Buissé** (St-Joachim); **Henry Burzynski** (St. Alphonsus); **Denise B Campbell** (Holy Family); **John Ross Catibog** (St. John the Evangelist); **Lauraine Demare** (Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativité); **Angel Rigoberto De Paz** (Nuestra Señora de la Asunción); **Monique Desrosiers** (Holy Family); **Rolande Durand** (Renewal & Growth Committee); **Gisele Evecsyn** (Renewal & Growth Committee); **Frances Everett** (Christ the King); **Denis Foidart** (St-Pierre-Jolys); **Ivy Claire Fraser** (St. Francis of Assisi); **Hector Gaglo** (St. Kizito); **Chris Kiazzyk** (St. Mary); **Carla Kibiuk** (St. Alphonsus); **Louise Lambert** (St. Eugene); **Sr. Charlotte Leake** (Holy Cross); **Fr. Arockiya Pradeep Louis** (Sacred Heart of Jesus); **Fr. Iradin Louis** (Nuestra Señora de la Asunción); **Gisèle Maynard** (St. Malo); **Sr. Marie Moquin** (Filles de la Croix, St. Eugène); **Fr. Chukwuemeka Okafor** (St. Bernadette); **Lisa Perrin** (St. Joachim); **Cathy Rathert** (St. Paul); **Jacqueline Ratte Kohut** (St. Emile); **Corinna Rivard** (Notre-Dame-de-la-Nativité); **Garth Rowswell** (St. Timothy); **Corina Ruus** (Notre-Dame-de-la-Misericorde); **Francis Simard** (St. Michael); **Roland Simard** (Notre-Dame-du-Lac); **Bryce Simes** (St. Bernadette); **Alesa Sutherland** (Renewal & Growth Committee); **Richard Warsza** (St. Alphonsus); **Teresia Yavala** (St. John the Evangelist); **Annette Young** (Our Lady of the Cypress, Holland Catholic Centre)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Read by Paulette Vielfaure Dupuis.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Spring 2026 Diocesan Pastoral Council!

- Thank you to Holy Cross parish, for hosting this DPC.
- Congratulations to St. Gerard Parish, who are in the process of forming a new PPC. Please pray for them as they undertake this journey, with the help of the Renewal and Growth Committee.

HOUSEHOLDS OF FAITH

Led by James Kautz. Acts 15: 36-41.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Agenda:

Moved as presented by: Kathy Rathert

Seconded by: Gisèle Maynard

Minutes:

Moved as presented by: Lisa Perrin

Seconded by: Rolande Durand

OBJECTIVES

The goal for this meeting is to discuss the newest draft of the *Relationship Restoration* document, and to determine the best practices for dealing with conflicts within parishes, and reestablishing trust and compassion in relationships.

TABLE DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION 1

The group split into table groups to discuss the following topic:

When relationships in parish leadership or organization become strained or wounded, what patterns, attitudes, or unmet needs tend to lie beneath the surface? How do these manifest?

Table presentations:

We found that in many parishes, power dynamics are a driving factor behind many conflicts, as the same people are often in positions of leadership or control, which can cause personal agendas, and a controlling, possessive attitude to come forward. We can often allow our own individual desires to get in the way of the needs of the community, which can be overlooked. Our egos can get in the way of effective dialogue, and we may even resort to emotional blackmail (manipulating the emotions of others to get what we want). These attitudes and dynamics can stem from a fear of change or division, which can also cause wariness when dealing with new priests, as some may not be willing to accept changes proposed by the priest, or to even give him a chance, based on preference or on what they're used to, and may even become hostile when opposed.

On the opposite end of things, some may have trouble communicating their ideas, and feel that they are not heard or given a voice in the parish. Several tables mentioned that

parishes don't always have an effective forum for discussing hurts or concerns, which can lead to these issues festering instead of being resolved, creating resentment, bitterness and distrust. Individual situations and issues are often not given enough priority by the parish. This being said, the parish priest often has a lot on his plate, and these issues should not fall solely to him. The laity needs to take on issues and solve them amongst themselves so that the priest does not become overburdened.

Other patterns and attitudes identified by our table groups included parishioners not prioritizing their life in the parish, and allowing the business of life keep them from getting involved, causing a lack of volunteers, as well as trust issues and lack of forgiveness/holding grudges, and lack of humility to recognize our own faults and ask for forgiveness. This can even lead to families leaving the parish, and engaging in gossip, rumours, etc., which can create a generational pattern of non-attendance. There is also a problem of lack of communication within parishes, which leads to people not knowing what is expected of them, assumptions and missing understanding. Some parishioners may also have a tendency to avoid conflict or withdraw, and to form cliques with like-minded parishioners. This can cause further division, including division between cultures and language groups. The PPC may also lack diverse representation of the people from all walks of life who form the parish.

TABLE DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION 2

The group split into table groups to discuss the following topic:

Given the patterns, attitudes, and unmet needs we've identified within parish life, what concrete practices, structures, or spiritual habits could help parish leaders foster healthier relationships and prevent these wounds from recurring?

Table presentations:

Our table groups expressed that in order to foster healthier parish relationships, parish leaders must first cultivate in themselves an attitude of humility, recognizing our own limitations and accepting personal ownership of situations. We should be willing to encourage and accompany all parishioners, and to meet people where they're at. The first thing to keep in mind if we are to achieve this is that prayer is essential. We should always ask for the help of the Holy Spirit when beginning any difficult conversation. There are also many spiritual practices that can be helpful in facilitating unity and dialogue, such as Households of Faith and other prayer groups, Healing Masses, and Conversations in the Spirit as a format to synodally address difficult topics. It can also be helpful to create a

parish prayer which outlines specific spiritual goals of the parish, and to pray it frequently, including before mass and at meetings, so as to remain united in these goals.

It is very important to set clear goals as a parish and to keep them in mind during any parish discussion. Those in leadership positions should regularly discuss the best ways to strengthen faith in the parish. Learning healthy conflict resolution was also mentioned as an important practice for parish leaders, and all parishioners. Some strategies to learn about would include active listening, de-escalation techniques, and understanding the personalities of others. It may be beneficial to practice conflict resolution in a group setting. We should also always remember that when in a conflict, in-person resolutions are always favourable to email or phone communication.

Clear guidelines and expectations need to be established in parishes around conflict resolution, as well as consistent messaging. It's important that parishioners know where they can find information or get the help they need. It may be helpful for the PPC to become a mediator at times, or for another mediating services to be used when needed. This being said, the PPC should always be visible and accessible to those in the parish, and the parish priest should be involved in the PPC as well, though not taking on all roles himself, but rather relying on the laity for support when needed. All those in ministry should receive good-quality formation. Parishioners should also be encouraged to join the PPC, or to use their various talents and skills elsewhere and get involved in parish life. Awareness and collaboration should be encouraged between various parish groups, as well as between parishioners and groups with different styles of prayer.

Other ideas that were mentioned included having an annual discussion around respectful conversation and communication, having a forum where people can freely bring up concerns (i.e. AGM), parish surveys, and monthly reports posted on the website and bulletin.

TABLE DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION 3

The group split into table groups to discuss the following topics:

Examining the *Relationship Restoration* document, specifically pages 8 & 9 on *Suggested Steps to Have a Fruitful Hard Conversation*: How could this be

improved to incorporate the necessary practices, structures, and spiritual habits we've identified?

Table presentations:

In our final discussion, we identified some areas of the document that might need to be clarified or added to. These included:

- Having a model/template for identifying the sources of the conflict, severity, reasons/motivations, facts, etc. in preparation for the meeting
- Explaining how to decide if a 3rd person should be present
- Outlining the requirements for a mediator
- More how-to resources for active listening
- De-escalation techniques
- Specification: what conflicts should be dealt with at a parish vs diocesan level?
- Conversations in the Spirit template for discussions
- Point 9 of Steps: needs suggestions on how to seek common ground

Our table groups also provided the following suggestions to add:

- Invite the other party to confession and mass
- Bring complaints to PPC
- Support should be granted if parties feel the need
- Bring in a third person/mediator right from the start to help de escalate
- Alternatively, address with the other first, if not resolved bring to the next level
- Set up a follow-up meeting to ensure the situation is satisfactorily resolved
- Pray as a beginning to the meeting/conversation
- Focus on common ground (Church doctrine and the mission of Christ)
- Have a conflict resolution committee (example: Christ the King parish) with 4 (or more) members on a panel who are neutral, well-respected members of the community
- Ombudsman style mediators, not involved in anything else that could cause bias
- Clearly defined and reasonable time frame for addressing issues
- Consider a pre-meeting to prepare for conversation

Finally, we also discussed the attitudes and practices that should be mentioned for the individual to make use of during a difficult conversation:

- Use 'I feel...' language
- Keep tone neutral
- Paraphrase what the other has said to confirm mutual understanding
- Allow time to absorb and heal
- Avoid rumours, stick to facts.

- Be proactive, not reactive
- Confirm and communicate clear boundaries
- Listen openly without interruption
- Note specific concerns
- Confirm recap of complaints
- Ask opinion on potential resolutions
- Note suggestions, bring complaint and suggested resolution to PPC if necessary
- Keep in communication until resolved

CLOSING REMARKS FROM PAULETTE

Thank you to everyone who attended the DPC today. A great resource for anyone wanting to learn more about the process of relationship restoration is the book *The Space Between Us* by Betty Pries.

AD LIMINA PRESENTATION BY ARCHBISHOP LEGATT AND QUESTIONNAIRE

His Grace explained the upcoming Ad Limina visits to Rome. Ad Limina means 'outside the walls'. These visits are for bishops of every diocese to meet with the Holy Father, and occur about every 10 years now (as opposed to in the past when they were every 5 years). The Archbishop will join with other bishops to visit various dicastries and congregations in Rome, and then to visit all together with Pope Leo, and dialogue about how things are going in each diocese.

The Archbishop is also required to present a report to inform Rome on the state of our diocese. One section of this report comments on the state of the clergy in our diocese, and the Bishop would like the input of the DPC for this section. A questionnaire was circulated for participants to fill out with how they would rate the state of the clergy in our diocese, based on various aspects.

ARCHBISHOP LEGATT'S CLOSING WORDS AND FINAL BLESSING

Thank you once again to all those who have attended today, and to all PPC members.

May God bless you all!