



General decree concerning the new parishes

I, Daniel Jodoin,
by the grace of God
and the authority of the apostolic See, bishop of Bathurst,
promulgate the following general decree:

In application of the orientations contained in the pastoral letter which I issued on April 25, 2015, the various diocesan Councils concerned having been heard, it is decided that, according to a calendar that can be extended until the start of Advent 2017, new parishes will be established in the diocese of Bathurst.

After having heard the priestly Council during its session of February 17, 2016,
I decree:

1. The erection of each new parish will be by decree of the Bishop after having heard the priestly Council. A religious celebration will follow in each one of the communities so as to pastorally authenticate this founding and to encourage a new sense of belonging as well as a spirit of brotherly communion.
2. Each new parish will be composed of local Christian communities ensuring the proximity of Christian life as close as possible to the population. These communities will be made up of the old parishes composing the current units. To them may be added various associative communities, such as seniors' residences, religious communities, prayer movements, centers of Christian training, or sanctuaries. The parish will thus become a "*Community of communities.*"
3. Each new parish must offer everyone what is essential for a Christian life. It will watch over and encourage the vitality of its local Christian communities. By using the resources, the strength, and the charisma of these local communities, the parish will be able to achieve its mission by deploying the four dimensions that constitute it, which are: education of the faith, brotherhood, celebration of the faith, and engagement or presence in the world (in particular with the young, the poor, and the sick).
4. The territory and the name of the current pastoral units will, respectively, make up the territory (can 518) and the name of the new parishes.
5. Each parish will be under the pastoral responsibility of a priest who will be established as parish priest (can 519).

6. Other priests will be able to lend him their support as assistants or vicars according to the statuses provided by law (can. 545).
7. According to the Code of Canon Law, each parish will be equipped with a parish pastoral Council (can. 536) composed of members or delegates coming from the various local Christian communities on its territory.
8. Each parish will also be equipped, according to the Code of Canon Law, with a parish Council for economic matters (can. 537). Besides the parish priest, who will be its chairperson, this Council will be composed of two members of the management councils of the various local Christian communities of its territory. Its mandate will consist of watching over the good financial health of the parish as a whole, sharing the information coming from each one of the local Christian communities, and sharing the common costs equitably among them.
9. The parish priest will be able to count on the assistance of the permanent deacons or lay people according to the law (can. 519).
10. The local Christian communities will be led by people mandated by the bishop after having been proposed by the parish priest and having heard the parish pastoral Council. Constituting a local Council of pastoral leadership, these mandated people, under the authority of the parish priest, will keep watch to carry out locally and more closely the mission of the Church in its four dimensions. They will take care to motivate and to guide the living strength of their community so as to ensure a future for each one of the local communities as well as of the parish as a whole.
11. In each parish, one of the churches will be identified as being principal and a central secretarial office will assiduously ensure appropriate and complete services for all the local Christian communities.
12. The cemeteries of the local Christian communities will have their own bank accounts, accounting, and sufficient capital to provide for their self-financing and their present and future maintenance.
13. We will keep at least one presbytery on the territory of each parish.
14. Only the parish priest will represent the parish and will watch over the administration of its goods (can. 532). He will do so with the assistance of the parish Council for the economic affairs and the various management councils of the local Christian communities of his territory.
15. Each local Christian community will keep its goods for itself (church, investments, and revenues) and will manage them as best they can under the authority of the parish priest.
16. This decree will enter into effect on March 1, 2016.

*Signed in Bathurst, February 22, 2016
On the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, the Apostle*

*+Daniel Jodoin
Bishop of Bathurst*