

# ***AN INTRODUCTION***

to the

# **PASTORAL PLAN for the DIOCESE of CHRISTCHURCH**

December 2005



**HOLINESS**

**COLLABORATION**

**COMMUNIO**

**MISSION**

## From the Bishop

It is a joy for me to offer you this *Introduction to the Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Christchurch*. I ask you to join me in supporting this Pastoral Plan and praying for every aspect of it. May God bless this exciting venture.



Yours in Christ,

*John Cunneen*

+Bishop John Cunneen  
Bishop of Christchurch

## Background to the Pastoral Plan

In 1997, when Bishop John Cunneen invited the people of Christchurch Diocese to become involved in an initiative called *Looking To Our Future*, two pastoral concerns emerged:

- The need to deploy priests and organise Mass times so that people throughout the Diocese had the best possible access to Masses in an environment of fewer and ageing priests.
- The need to find new ways for priests and lay people to work together to promote the mission of the Church.

As a result, there was an attempt to form parishes into clusters where Mass times could be co-ordinated and different parishes could share resources. However, with the help and advice of many, the Bishop came to see the need for a more comprehensive pastoral plan for the future of the Diocese.

The *Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Christchurch* has at its heart the vision and the breadth of the Church's mission to people everywhere. It also puts in

***The way forward will require courage from us all, bishops, priests and people. It will often mean extending ourselves beyond the way we do things now. It will mean encouraging what we already do well and being creative together in finding new ways to spread the Good News of the Gospel.***  
(Bishop John Cunneen – The Bishop's Letter, Pastoral Plan, December 2005)

place a structure that enables greater collaboration of ministry, and sharing of resources between parishes in recognisable pastoral areas and at the diocesan level.

*Of course the growth of the Kingdom of God in our local Church – Canterbury, Westland and the Chatham Islands – belongs to Christ and will only come about by our listening to and responding to His Spirit. “It is God who gives the growth.” (1 Corinthians 3:6).*

*(Bishop John Cunneen – The Bishop’s Letter, Pastoral Plan, December 2005)*

## The Pastoral Vision

Four principles, the foundation of our life as Church, are at the heart of the pastoral vision for the Diocese of Christchurch:

### Holiness

### Communio

### Collaboration

### Mission

Jesus’ desire is for us to participate in the very life and love of God – to grow in **holiness**. He calls all the members of His Church to be witnesses to His life and love and to proclaim the Good News of God’s kingdom. At the very heart of all that we are and do as a Diocesan family is this call to spread the Gospel.

The Sacraments of Christ and the Church enable us to share in the life of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By Baptism and Confirmation we are united with Christ and one another in His body, the Church. Through the Eucharist – the centre of our life as Church – we recall and renew our **communio** in Christ.



*Jesus said, “...Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave you and know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.”*

*(Matthew 28: 19-20)*

The Spirit of Jesus sends us into our communities to live out Christ’s **mission** – one people committed to love and serve until Christ comes again. This service finds different expressions. Christ’s faithful – bishops, priests, religious and laity – live out Christ’s mission in distinct ways. Together, all **collaborate** to build up the one kingdom of God.

## Christ’s Instruments – Adaptable and Open to Change

Our present situation requires us to be adaptable and open to change. It also gives us a wonderful opportunity for personal conversion and renewal as we explore and implement new pastoral plans and approaches. This journey of faith that we are called to make is not one that we make alone. The mission is Christ’s. We share in His mission.

## Prayer for the Pastoral Plan

Lord, be the beginning and end of all that we do and say.  
Prompt our actions with your grace, and complete them with  
Your all-powerful help.

We make our prayer through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

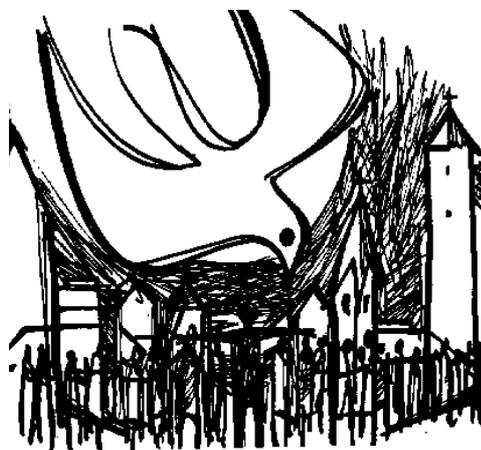
Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us.

Saint John the Baptist, pray for us.

### Eleven New Pastoral Areas

The development of the Pastoral Plan required a review of the existing parish clusters and has led to the formation of eleven new Pastoral Areas. As a result, some parishes find themselves in a different grouping from that of their previous cluster.

Pastoral Areas offer exciting opportunities to be generous and imaginative, enabling parishes to look beyond their boundaries to their neighbouring parishes and better serve the wider needs of the Diocese. The Pastoral Plan invites parishes to identify how they can help each other and share their resources. Increasingly they will share priests.



The adoption of Pastoral Areas gives us an opportunity to review what is happening in our parishes, to acknowledge what is not happening, and to dream what might be possible in the future. Pastoral Areas give our parishes and Diocese the potential to be more vibrant in faith and in mission.

## The Eleven Pastoral Areas

Pastoral Areas	Parishes
Christchurch Shore	Aranui, Lyttleton, New Brighton, Sumner, Woolston
Christchurch South	Addington, Akaroa, Beckenham, Halswell, Hoon Hay Hillmorton Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital (Hospital Chaplaincy)
Christchurch West	Darfield, Hornby, Leeston, Lincoln, Riccarton, Sockburn Canterbury and Lincoln Universities and College of Education (Tertiary Chaplaincy)
Christchurch North	Bryndwr, Burnside, Papanui, St Albans Nurse Maude Hospice (Hospital Chaplaincy)
Christchurch Central	Cathedral, Christchurch North Holy Cross Chapel, Te Rangimarie (Maori Chaplaincy), Christchurch Public Hospital and Nazareth House (Hospital Chaplaincy), Polytech (Tertiary Chaplaincy)
Christchurch East	Burwood, Dallington, Mairehau Burwood Hospital (Hospital Chaplaincy)
North Canterbury	Cheviot, Hawarden, Hanmer, Kaiapoi, Rangiora
West Coast	Grey Valley-Ngahere, Greymouth, Hokitika, Kumara, Runanga-Cobden, South Westland
Mid Canterbury	Ashburton, Methven, Rakaia, Tinwald
Lower Canterbury	Geraldine, Fairlie-Twizel, Pleasant Point, Temuka
South Canterbury	Timaru North, Timaru South, Waimate
The Chatham Islands, which are not formally linked to a particular Pastoral Area, will continue to have regular priestly visits.	

### Diocesan Chaplaincies

The different chaplaincies that operate in the Diocese of Christchurch do so according to various models. Pastoral Areas are asked to ensure that chaplaincies operating there are supported in their ministry.

## **Timeframe**

Over the next five years, by 2011, the eleven Pastoral Areas will be set up in a two-stage process:

- 1. Parish Councils** develop a deeper awareness of their role, working with the priests to foster the pastoral care of the parishes.
- 2. Parish Councils** of the Pastoral Area form a **Pastoral Area Council** and the **Pastoral Area Team** is established.

### **The Bishop**

The Bishop will invite each Pastoral Area to begin working towards the implementation of the Pastoral Plan and will approve the final plan for each Pastoral Area.

### **The Bishop's Deputy**

A Bishop's Deputy for the Pastoral Plan will oversee its implementation and assist each Pastoral Area to decide how it will function. The Bishop's Deputy will help Parish Councils identify their own resources and discover ways they can share these with neighbouring parishes.

### **The Priest-Coordinator**

A Priest-Coordinator in each of the Pastoral Areas is responsible to the Bishop for coordinating the Pastoral Area Team in its provision of pastoral care within a particular Pastoral Area.

### **The Pastoral Area Council**

Each Pastoral Area will have its own Pastoral Area Council. The Bishop's Deputy for the Pastoral Plan and the Priest-Coordinator of the Pastoral Area will organise a combined meeting with the full Parish Council of each member parish to determine the Pastoral Area Council's structure. Parish Councils will nominate from their members representatives for the Pastoral Area Council.

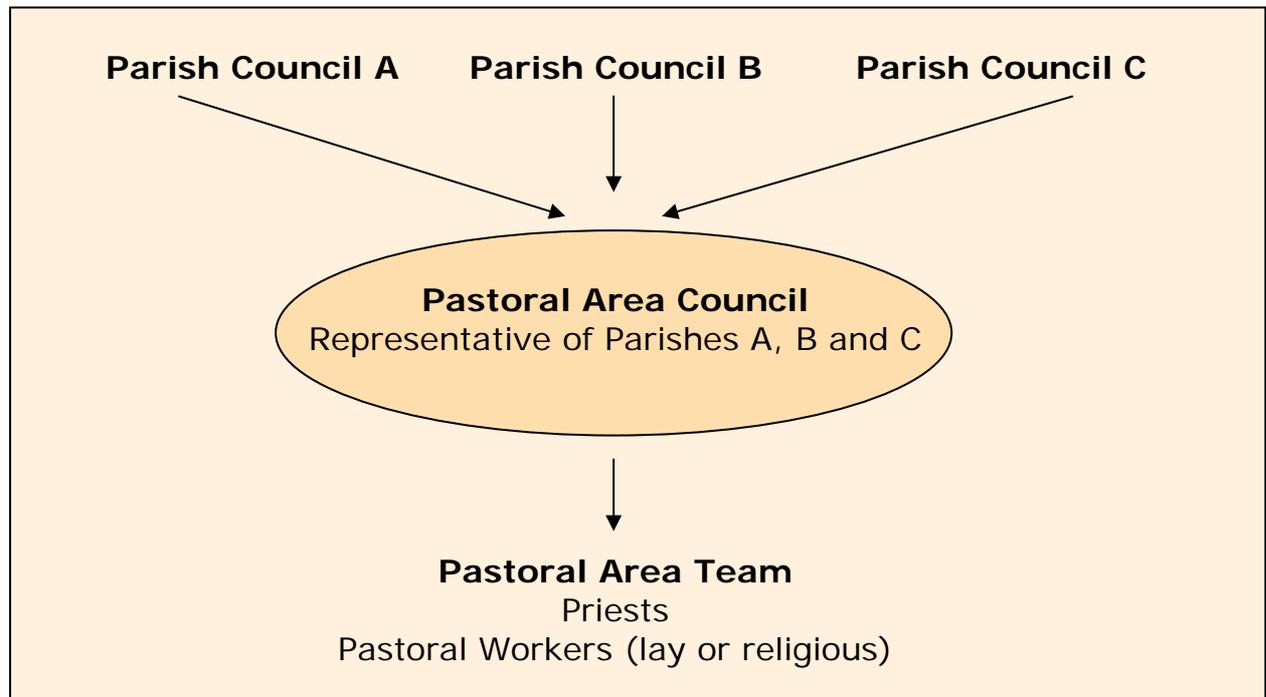
The Pastoral Area Council will work with the priests of the area to determine the makeup of the Pastoral Area Team. Together with the Pastoral Area Team and the parishes of the Pastoral Area it will assist the Pastoral Area in its day to day life.

### **The Pastoral Area Team**

Parish priests – and any assistant priests – will be members of the Pastoral Area Team. It will normally include any full-time Pastoral Workers employed by parishes in the Area and may also include part-time Pastoral Workers or suitable parishioners from parishes in the Pastoral Area.

The Pastoral Area Team is responsible for ensuring that the most effective pastoral care is given to the whole Pastoral Area. This includes the

provision of the Mass and the other sacraments, preparation for receiving sacraments, faith education, social services, parish primary schools, care of the sick, the support and enrichment of marriage and family life, and the support of young people.



### **Pastoral Workers**

Pastoral Workers may have responsibilities which are linked to a particular parish / community or oriented towards a specific pastoral task (such as sacramental preparation, rest home visiting, bereavement group, youth, liturgy etc.)

Ideally, a designated member of the Pastoral Area Team will liaise with the Catholic schools and colleges that operate in the Pastoral Area.

### **Training**

Training for working in a more collaborative environment will be provided, especially for priests and Pastoral Workers.



### **Catholic Schools**

There will be the opportunity in Pastoral Areas for dialogue with Catholic schools about the provision of sacramental and pastoral care.

## Too Few Priests? – Some Facts

### The Size of Our Parishes

*In New Zealand the average number of Catholics per parish is 1,626, well below the world average of 2,475 parishioners per parish. In some countries the average number of Catholics per parish is much higher. To give some examples: in Australia it is 3,560; in Poland 3,467; in Peru 4,979 and in the Philippines 10,106.*



New Zealand's average of 1,626 includes all who are Catholics according to the national census data. Of those some 25 to 30% will be *practising Catholics, or on average 450 per parish*. The fact is: our parishes are small.

### Prayer for Priestly Vocations

Father, in your plan for our salvation you provide shepherds for your people.

Fill your Church with the spirit of courage and love.

Raise up worthy ministers for your altars and ardent but gentle servants of the Gospel.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. Amen.

It is true that the number of priests is declining and that priests are getting older. But it *is not true that we have too few parish priests*. It is *not true that our parish priests have to pastor impossibly large flocks*. Not compared to many other countries in the world. And lastly, it is *not true that we have so few priests*. Not compared to nearly all other countries in the world.

The Spirit is constantly at work in the world and in the Church. We do not live in a time of crisis, we live in a time of grace and opportunity.

(Based on a talk from Cardinal Williams to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, September 2002)

**For a copy of the complete Pastoral Plan please contact Cathedral House, PO Box 45-44, Christchurch. Phone (03) 366-9869. Email [receptionists@chch.catholic.org.nz](mailto:receptionists@chch.catholic.org.nz)**