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TO: Clergy and Church Wardens of the Diocese of Fredericton  
RE: Parish Self-assessment

Dear Friends,

In response to two important task force reports, members of Synod 2009 said very clearly that we, as parishes together as the Diocese, need to take deliberate steps to address the demographic change that has resulted in the slow and steady decline that has affected the Church in recent years. Resolutions charged the Diocesan Council with facilitating change across the Diocese.

The Nicodemus Project was born and many initiatives have so far been the result. Here are a few:

- Bishop Edward Salmon returned for a highly successful stewardship workshop last fall
- the Spiritual Development Team of the Diocesan Council prepared a common Lenten program for 2010 and is planning another for 2011
- the Clergy Conference and a Clergy Day this year both focused on preparing for a different future (one of Synod's priorities)
- the Parish of Coldbrook and St. Mary recently hosted a successful mission and leadership conference with diocesan support to which clergy and other leaders were invited
- A Foundation for Life has been launched (an example of how we can help parishes grow)
- in response to parish requests the Council Stewardship Team will host a workshop on parish "every member visitations" in November
- the Archdeaconry of St. Andrews has hosted a diocesan workshop on Natural Church Development (NCD)
- a task force is reviewing our governance structures and processes
- Archdeaconry Greater Chapter meetings are focusing more on the need for shared ministry, inter-parish communication and cooperation
- facilitators have been trained to help parishes with self-assessments.

As part of the Nicodemus Project, every parish has been asked to develop a 'plan for ministry.' Such a plan begins with a broad self-assessment designed to engage and excite our congregations. A particular focus of these plans is spiritual, numerical and financial growth. Diocesan Council approved a June 30, 2010 deadline for all parishes to complete their self-assessments. Every parish is expected to have a written plan for ministry. Each parish's plan may then contribute to an archdeaconry plan for ministry – one that encourages greater inter-parish/archdeaconry support and cooperation. Archdeaconry Greater Chapters will begin this process very soon (if not already) and it is hoped that all seven archdeaconry plans will be complete in time for tabling at a meeting of the Synod in 2011.

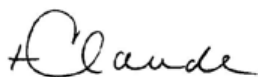
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**Our purpose in writing is to encourage you and your parish to embrace this process of engaging the congregation in a self-assessment that leads to a new plan for ministry.**

Your plan, in keeping with the Nicodemus Project, ought to focus on effective congregational development; understood as spiritual, numerical and financial growth for God's mission. As people, as parishes and as a diocese we need to prayerfully consider whether we are the church and the individuals that God is calling us to be. We need to reassess personal and parish ministry and mission against our most important vocation: "to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the making of disciples."

Many parishes have begun or have completed the assessment process. If you have not, we encourage you to begin. There are trained facilitators, resource materials and tools available to assist you. Contact your territorial Archdeacon if you need help. And when your Archdeacon leads the development of a plan for ministry in your archdeaconry, we urge you to actively join in and contribute to discussions and new initiatives.

Wishing you and the people with whom you worship and work God's richest blessings,



Archbishop Claude W. Miller  
Bishop of Fredericton



Mr. Jim Morell  
Diocesan Council Administration Team

