

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SASKATCHEWAN

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main objective of this policy is to foster the development of the faith among the faithful of French language and culture, living in a minority situation in Saskatchewan. The implementation of the language policy in Francophone and bilingual parishes must be done with the utmost respect for the people and the two language groups struggling with its application. The persons involved will have to do everything in their power to reach a consensus on its application without prejudice to either of the two linguistic groups. However, the decisions necessary for this implementation should never contribute to the abandonment of the genuine will to live nor to the assimilation of the Francophone grouping.
- 1.2 A spirit of openness and a sense of social justice should be demonstrated towards the linguistic minority. The fundamental principle on which the success of this policy depends on is the desire to promote the common good of the parish and to respond to the particular needs of the groups that constitute it. In addition, the self-determination of the minority group must be respected. The desire of a group of people from the linguistic minority to take control of themselves will be the determining factor in the parish's offer of pastoral services to this linguistic minority.
- 1.3 The responsibilities for the implementation of this policy will be shared between the diocesan staff, the parish pastoral team, the parish pastoral council (PPC) and the grouping of the French speaking Catholics in question. None of these groups can renege on their responsibilities in this regard.

2. Definition of a parish:

2.1 Canon law defines the parish : "Can. 515 §1. A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop. " http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P1U.HTM

"Can 518, As a rule, the parish will be territorial, that is, it will include all the faithful of a given territory; but where it is useful, will be constituted of personal parishes, determined by the rite, the language, the nationality of the faithful of a territory, and still for any other reason. "

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P1U.HTM

2.2 The parish pastoral team:

2.2.1 The parish pastoral team is composed of a group of persons which usually includes the priest or canonical priest, the pastoral agent / minister (*) and in certain cases a deacon, mandated by the bishop of the diocese. These persons jointly assume the pastoral responsibility of a Christian community, that is to say, the parish.

2.2.2 The task of the parish pastoral team is to implement or see to the realization in the Christian community, the project of the Church in its four dimensions, that is to say: the education of faith, fraternity, celebration and commitment. It is a team whose task is to bring together the global responsibility of a Christian community. The parish pastoral team is called upon to offer the services that ensure the full implementation of the Church project for the two linguistic groups of the parish.

2.3 A Francophone parish:

2.3.1 A parish designated Francophone by the bishop of the diocese or traditionally recognized as such. The working language of the Parish Pastoral Council and the staff, as well as the language used in pastoral and liturgical life, is French. The vast majority of parishioners are of French language and culture.

2.3.2 In Saskatchewan the following parishes are designated as Francophone parishes:

Archdiocese of Regina

Saint-Jean Baptiste, Regina,
Notre Dame de l'Assomption, Gravelbourg**
Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Ferland

Diocese of Saskatoon

Sts-Martyrs-canadiens, Saskatoon
Saint Denis, St Denis

Diocese of Prince Albert

Saint Isidore, Bellevue
Saint André, North Battleford
Sacré Coeur, Prince Albert **
Notre Dame de la Nativité, Zenon Park

* Agent / Minister of Pastoral: designates the persons who participate in the pastoral charge, without being ordained.
(See Code, Canon 517.2)

** Due to the parallelism in its current operation, the Francophone component of this parish is also considered Francophone parish.

2.4 A bilingual parish

2.4.1 As a result of history and changing demographics, a bilingual parish is most often located in a community that was traditionally Francophone. Demographic changes over a number of generations have meant that fewer Catholics use French as the usual language of conversation. The decrease in the use of the French language in traditionally Francophone homes and the establishment of new families or extended families that are not necessarily of French language or culture, has dramatically changed the composition of the local church or the mission. Often for practical reasons or to accommodate the majority, English is used in many important aspects of the liturgical and pastoral life of the parish. In some cases, French and English are equally used, resulting in linguistic equity and harmony. Too often, unfortunately, the use of French in liturgical celebrations is declining. This should not be interpreted as expressing a lack of interest on the part of Francophones or a lesser need to use French. Usually, there are a number of Francophone faithful in the parish who would prefer to continue to practice their religion and pray in French and have liturgical and pastoral activities infused with their culture. These people, if they are valued and assured of any support, will assume their responsibilities in the liturgy and pastoral care to ensure the permanent use of French in the parish.

2.4.2 In Saskatchewan, the following parishes have traditionally been recognized as bilingual parishes:

Diocese of Regina

St. Maurice, Bellegarde
Notre Dame d’Auvergne, Ponteix
St. Ignace, Willow Bunch

Diocese of Saskatoon

St .Philippe Néri, Vonda
Sts. Donatien & Rogatien, Prud'homme

Diocese of Prince Albert

Blessed Sacrament, Duck Lake
St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Delmas
St. Brieux, St Brieux
St. Louis, St. Louis
Ste Jeanne d’Arc, Domremy
St. Jacques, Albertville

3. Characteristics:

3.1 A bilingual parish where there are French speaking and English speaking faithful:

- (i) On one hand, there are a certain number of French speaking faithful who wish to celebrate the liturgy and receive pastoral services in French. On the other hand, there are a large number of faithful who do not understand French or who, if they do understand it, choose to celebrate the liturgy and receive pastoral services in English;
- ii) The Francophone faithful want to assume their responsibilities regarding their liturgical life and pastoral services in their language;
- iii) Oral and written communications are bilingual and reflect the parish's composition and traditions as well as the current needs of its parishioners.

3.2 A Francophone parish:

- i) Francophones constitute the majority of parishioners in the parish;
- ii) The language of communication between the administration and the faithful, the language used in liturgical and pastoral services, the language of the CPP and the language between the faithful themselves, for all intents and purposes, is French;
- iii) The parish culture primarily reflects French Canadian culture with its practices and traditions; and,
- iv) The pastoral team is normally made up of French speakers. If any of the members of this team are not French speakers, they are expected to be sensitive to the particular needs of Catholic Francophones and to understand the importance for them to celebrate, pray and live in French, in the life of the parish.

4. The elements necessary for the growth of the Francophone component of a bilingual parish:

- i) French and English are officially recognized and both languages are used to meet the liturgical and pastoral needs of the faithful;
- ii) communications (parish bulletin, pastoral letters, pastoral material, permanent signs, PPC documents, posters, etc.) are in both languages;
- iii) a number of liturgical celebrations are sometimes held exclusively in French and sometimes in English. Extraordinary celebrations, for example, ordinations and the Easter Vigil which, by their nature, cannot or should not be repeated, will be

bilingual. Bilingual celebrations should be recommended by the parish pastoral council in consultation with the French language and English language liturgy committees for consideration by the parish priest or pastoral minister;

- iv) the parish pastoral council and its committees could operate in French or English, depending on the circumstances;
- v) the parish pastoral council will establish a number of committees, especially those dealing with liturgy and faith education, which will operate in French to meet the needs of the French speaking faithful. Only the desire of Francophones to give themselves these committees and to make them work should limit their number. At a minimum, there should be a French liturgical committee for the celebrations that will take place in French; and,
- vi) these committees are assured of the support and training necessary for their development.

5. The implications of being a bilingual parish:

5.1 The pastoral team:

- i) respects both linguistic groups and exercises a leadership role with the parishioners to uphold the linguistic duality of the parish;
- ii) ensures the day-to-day implementation of the language policy;
- iii) devotes the time necessary to prepare the celebrations in both languages;
- iv) makes available in French the documentation, signs, printed and audio-visual material necessary for the development of faith and pastoral life; and,
- v) supports the faithful of the minority language group.

5.2 The parish pastoral council:

- i) recognizes and respects the bilingual nature and character of the parish;
- ii) is attentive to the needs of the Francophone faithful and provides the community with the financial, material and human resources needed to respond appropriately; and,
- iii) prepares a French version of the documents necessary for the growth of the Francophone component of the parish.

5.3 English speaking parishioners:

- i) recognize the need for services, documentation and French resources to support French speaking parishioners;
- ii) agree to share parish resources with French speaking parishioners.

5.4 Francophone parishioners:

- i) actively participate in the pastoral and liturgical life of the parish;
- ii) get involved, among other things, in committees whose purpose is to serve Francophones; and,
- iii) assume some responsibility for the implementation of the activities set up for Francophones, and participate in them.

5.5 The diocese:

- i) formally recognizes the existence and purpose of Francophone and bilingual parishes;
- ii) makes available the appropriate resources to meet their needs;
- iii) recognizes in staff placement that the linguistic duality of bilingual parishes requires staff to exercise a sometimes more demanding leadership role;
- iv) offers to Francophone and bilingual parishes, services in French identified by CPFIS and the Francophone community of dioceses; and,
- v) publishes in both languages the diocesan or other documents that are necessary for the development and growth of Francophone and bilingual parishes.

6. How to become a francophone parish?

- 6.1 A parish becomes a Francophone parish when a large group of Francophone faithful makes a request to their bishop who, at their request, designates their parish as a Francophone parish.

7. How to become a bilingual parish?

- 7.1 A parish becomes a bilingual parish when a group of members of the minority of parish makes a request to its bishop and the bishop, in consultation with the parish in question, approves their request.

7.2 The decision to make such a request to the bishop rests with persons who would like to avail themselves of services in French. It is possible that only a minority of the minority is in favor of receiving services in French. Even in such a case the request should be studied carefully and seriously considered.