

Directive for Care of National Parishes

1. Parishes that serve people in a language other than French or English are referred to as National Parishes. National Parishes will be a part of the Family of Parishes model of the Diocese of London. All parishes, including National Parishes, should be given the opportunity to express their culture; to exclude or excuse National Parishes from the Family of Parishes model would be to the detriment of all the faithful. The gifts of National Parishes are a blessing to the rest of the members of the Family of Parishes and vice versa.
2. Throughout the Family gathering process, respect will be afforded to the unique culture (e.g., national parish, language groups, or devotional groups) that is found in each of the parishes involved. In Families there are many unique members each with unique gifts, needs, hopes, and concerns. The goal of the Family of Parishes model is not to create a “melting pot”, but rather a rich mosaic where each parish is respected and together create a unique picture of the Catholic faith in an area.
3. The goal is to balance unity in diversity. Overemphasizing diversity can be problematic to any cooperation. Pushing unity too much or too quickly can foster entrenchment and resistance. Pastoral leaders need to constantly monitor the mood of the family of parishes to know when to foster cooperation and when to let unique parish cultures express themselves. (cf. Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium*. see: *Unity prevails over conflict*, 226-230)

Differences between persons and communities can sometimes prove uncomfortable, but the Holy Spirit, who is the source of that diversity, can bring forth something good from all things and turn it into an attractive means of evangelization. Diversity must always be reconciled by the help of the Holy Spirit; he alone can raise up diversity, plurality and multiplicity while at the same time bringing about unity. When we, for our part, aspire to diversity, we become self-enclosed, exclusive and divisive; similarly, whenever we attempt to create unity on the basis of our human calculations, we end up imposing a monolithic uniformity. This is not helpful for the Church’s mission.

Evangelii Gaudium, 131

4. “When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity” (*Evangelii Gaudium*. 117). The temptation toward assimilation and globalization should be avoided, as this does away with local cultures, and people must be met where they are, taking into consideration local culture (e.g., linguistic groups, devotional groups). At the same time, gestures that would be received as a form of tokenism and/or cultural appropriation must be avoided.
5. Throughout the process, and as a Family of Parishes, everyone should work together to respect, protect, and promote the cultural identity of the National Parish. At the same time, national identity, while not limited to a building, includes the building (i.e., the National Church). The identity of the National Parish can be expressed in language, symbol,

celebration, and devotion. The parish building is a part of the cultural identity and should be understood in that way.

6. Entering a “Family of Parishes covenant”: A *Family of Parishes Covenant* is a written document created by the leadership of the Family of Parishes that affirms the uniqueness of each parish in the family while, at the same time, pledging to explore and develop ways to cooperate with one another in ways that are life-giving, just, and helpful to all involved. Pastors, while balancing unity and diversity, are called to be good stewards of the personnel and material gifts with which the Family of Parishes has been blessed.

The history of the Church shows that Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression, but rather, remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church, it will also reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples in which it is received and takes root.
Evangelii Gaudium., 116