



**October 7, 2004 - Archbishop O'Malley Forms Committee for External Review Reconfiguration  
Committee to be chaired by Peter Meade and Sr. Janet Eisner, SND to assist with the reconfiguration process**

**Statement by Archbishop O'Malley on the Committee**

(Brighton, MA) October 7, 2004 - Archbishop Sean O'Malley today announced the formation of a eight-person committee to be chaired by Sr. Janet Eisner, SND, President of Emmanuel College, and Peter Meade, Executive Vice President of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and Chairman of the Board of Catholic Charities in Boston. The Committee is tasked with providing a review of the reconfiguration process underway in the Archdiocese of Boston and making recommendations that will help guide the Archdiocese's efforts to serve the needs of the Catholic community going forward.

Stating his conviction that the work of reconfiguration in the Archdiocese of Boston must continue, the Archbishop stated "I have known from the beginning that the consolidation of parishes would be painful to the people directly affected. I believe at this point in the process that I can benefit from an external review of the reconfiguration begun last January. I hope that an assessment of the past by this committee will lead them to make suggestions that will help us to improve the process."

"We have assembled an outstanding group of leaders to function as a resource to the Archbishop as the process moves forward. What is clear is there are no simple or easy answers. We are all committed to working together to assist the Archbishop in one of the most difficult challenges to face the Archdiocese of Boston," said Peter Meade.

Sister Janet Eisner continued, "I care deeply about the Church, especially the Church's future and the Church we will leave to the next generation. As we all know, the challenge of leadership is not only deciding where you are going but how you get there and I am grateful to the Archbishop for entrusting us with the responsibility of assisting him."

In addition to the chairs, the committee is comprised of the community and business leaders both lay and clergy:

Mary Lou Batt, Vice President for Administration and University Centers & Institutes of Lesley University  
Jack Connors, Jr., Chairman of Hill, Holliday  
Neal Finnegan, Chairman of Citizens Bank of Massachusetts  
Donna Latsen Gittens, CEO causemedia, Inc.  
Jeanne Lafond, Pastoral Associate of St. Patrick's in Brockton  
Monsignor Dennis Sheehan, Pastor of St. Paul's in Cambridge

To date, 28 parishes have closed and 54 remain slated for future closure. In asking the committee to undertake its mandate, the Archbishop reaffirmed his commitment to realize the vision of a reconstituted diocesan Church in Boston. Archbishop O'Malley stated: "I await the work of this important committee, promise it serious attention as we move toward a renewal of the Archdiocese."

**October 9, 2004 - Statement of Archbishop Sean O'Malley Regarding Reconfiguration Review Committee**

"Much has been asked of the people of this Archdiocese in recent years. Since the first day I served as your Archbishop I have witnessed your struggle. I have also seen your passion for our faith, a passion I deeply share with you. In the 14 months since I became your Archbishop we have faced two significant problems. The first and the most visible was the drastic consequences of the sexual abuse crisis in the Church. The harm done to children, to their families and to other victims created a crisis of confidence, an erosion of trust in the leadership of the Church and a substantial financial problem. The second problem, less visible at the time but no less challenging, was the pastoral and administrative challenge of planning for the future of the archdiocese in the midst of a decrease in the number of priests, mounting financial problems and the changing demography of Catholics in the archdiocese.

These problems were interrelated: to carry out the necessary structural reform of the diocese, trust was a precondition, but the abuse crisis did not leave significant trust in place. If it had been possible to postpone reconfiguration,



we could have focused exclusively on rebuilding trust. But the pastoral requirements of serving our 2 million Catholics made some decisions concerning structure and finances imperative. Hence, I undertook the process of reconfiguration. I remain convinced it is imperative and I am committed to carrying it through. This includes continuing to receive and consider appeals.

From the beginning of the planning for reconfiguration I have known that the consolidation of parishes would be painful. In order to better communicate our vision, purposes and goals I have decided to evaluate the process in order to plan effectively for its completion. I am most grateful for the advice of a committee of Catholics who will assist me with this review. This committee was appointed earlier this week and I have asked them to identify important issues and to bring to my attention any suggested improvements which will aid us in a fair and compassionate completion of the process.

Twenty-eight parishes have closed, not without sadness, but peacefully. I thank the pastors, parish staffs and the congregations for their hard work and sacrifices. In many places the work of rebuilding the church has begun. Another fifty-four parishes remain slated for closure. While I am certain we must proceed, I also seek to listen and learn from the experience of the last nine months as I fulfill my responsibility as your spiritual leader.

I am sure many Catholics in this archdiocese never expected their familiar spiritual homes would be closing their doors, and we never imagined that trust would be damaged by the scandal of sexual abuse. These recent years have surely seen many moments of anger and sadness among the people of our Archdiocese.

Our faith calls us to transform moments of sadness or anger to strength and conviction. I am convinced that reconfiguration must continue and trust that the assistance of the talented and generous members of this review committee will help us to achieve a successful completion of the process as they complement the efforts of those who have already given so much of their time, talent and energy. We seek to serve the people of our Catholic community in all its diversity. I await the work of this important committee and promise it serious attention as we move toward a renewal of our Archdiocese. May we be strengthened by the bond we share in Christ, together may we rebuild the Church.”

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