

Dear Sisters & Brothers:

In my Christmas message I announced to you that by the last week of January, I would make known to you the plan for the realignment of our diocese. The end of January has arrived. Unfortunately, I am not ready to make known the plan. Despite the dedication and the hard work of the Steering Committee and the Council of Priests, there is still work to be done.

Given that what we are considering will have a major impact on you as well as our priests, both for the present and the future, we owe it to ourselves to take the necessary time. The pastoral care of my people has always been my priority! The plan needs to assure that all will be cared for and that we will be able to grow as a faith community.

As your bishop, I have your best interest at heart. I repeat, I have your best interest at heart. I need more time to continue working out the details, with those who are collaborating with me. I regret the disappointment that this delay may cause.

What should you do in the meantime? I encourage you to continue being women and men of faith. I encourage you to continue investing yourselves in making your parish and mission churches communities of faith that radiate Christ to the world in which we live. That is our privilege, to personally make known and make available to others the One who dwells within us. Ours is the responsibility of making a difference in our world, in communion with Jesus.

I am committed to finalizing the plan in a timely manner. In the meantime, I ask for your patience. Please keep this whole process before the Lord in prayer. Please pray for me. As we move forward, I will need your ongoing support to implement the plan.

Sincerely in Christ,

✠ Robert Harris  
Bishop of Saint John