

Securing the Mission of the Catholic Church in Halifax

Halifax Deanery Consultation
June 2026

A process of listening, discernment, and shared responsibility for the Dioceses of Leeds, Middlesbrough, and Hallam.





A Call to Discernment

Heavenly Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon the people of Halifax Deanery.

Where there is uncertainty, give trust. Where there is fear, give hope.
Where there are differences, give charity and mutual understanding.

Teach us to listen deeply, to speak with wisdom and humility,
and to seek not our own will, but your will for your Church.

May any steps we take be rooted in prayer, guided by your Spirit,
and directed always toward the building up of your Body
and the proclamation of your Gospel.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The enduring mandate of the Church

The wider diocesan consultation and the specific path forward in Halifax are rooted entirely in the mission given by Christ.

The Mission

“Go and make disciples of all nations.”
(Matthew 28:19)

The Vision

“That they may all be one.” (John 17:21)

Our task is to organize parish life, worship, and resources to serve this mandate effectively.



Structural change is a historic reality of the Church



1850–1878

The Diocese of Beverley encompassed the entirety of Yorkshire. Catholic life flourished.

1878

Beverley divided into the Dioceses of Leeds and Middlesbrough to serve shifting populations.

1980

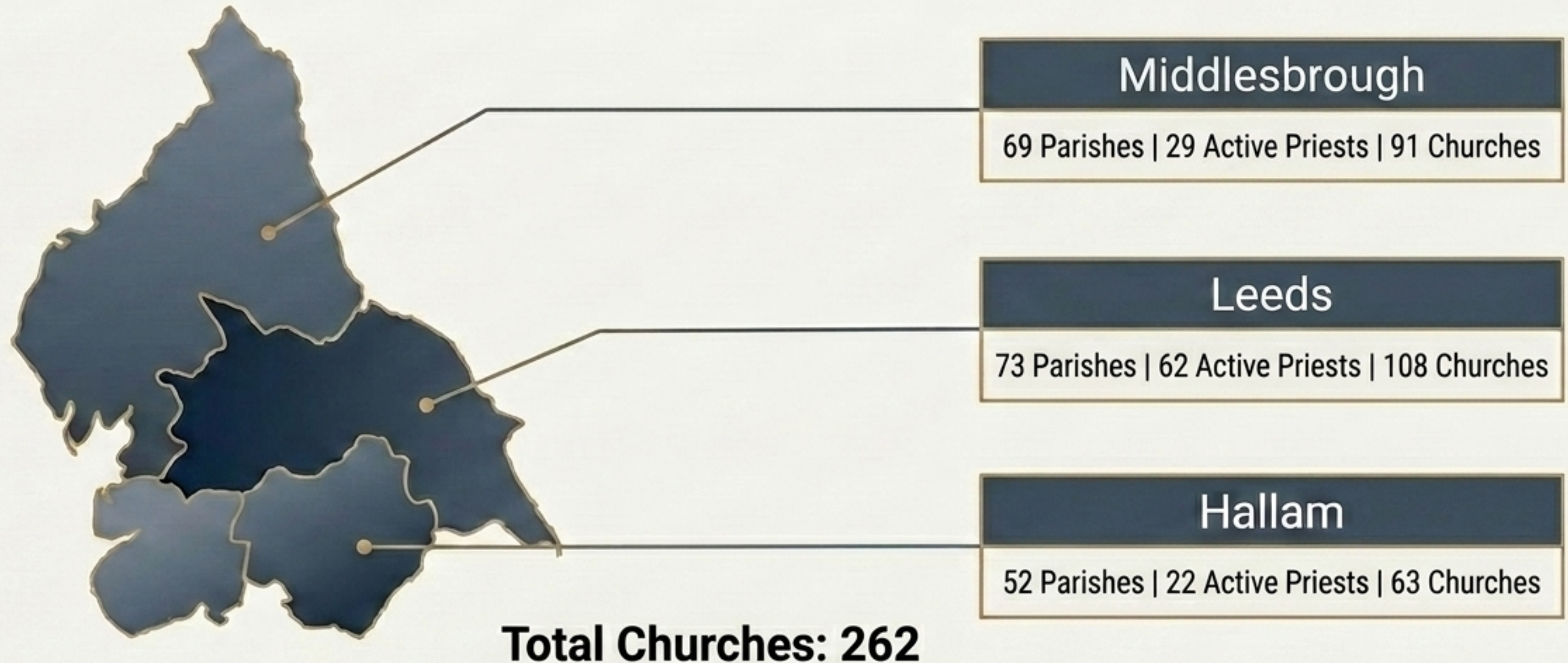
The Diocese of Hallam was created, ceding 55 parishes from Leeds.

Today

We are discerning the reunification of these territories to protect the mission for the next generation.

Boundaries change; the mission does not.

The current reality across the region



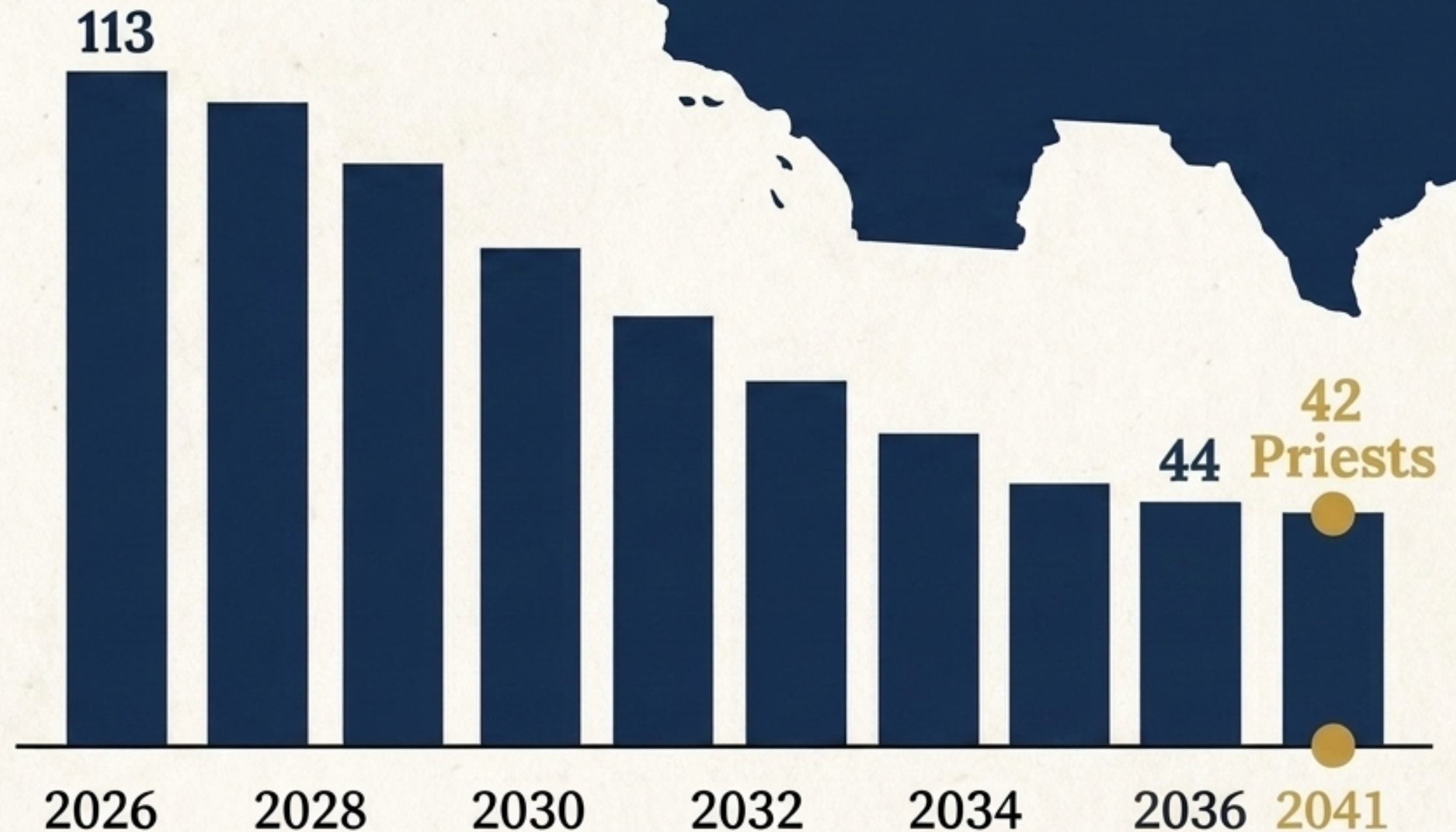
Across all three dioceses, we are facing an immediate necessity to rethink how we distribute pastoral care.

The 15-Year Demographic Cliff

Bishop Marcus has presented a stark reality for the proposed combined diocese—which would be geographically the largest in the country.

This reality mandates an urgent, careful review of the future use of buildings, administration, and Mass provision.

Within 15 years, the combined region is projected to have **only 42 active priests.**



The Halifax Deanery Dashboard

726

Mass attendees across
Halifax and Queensbury

6

Distinct church buildings
currently maintained

8

Separate Masses offered
every weekend

Are our current structures the best way to serve the people we have, and the communities we are called to reach?

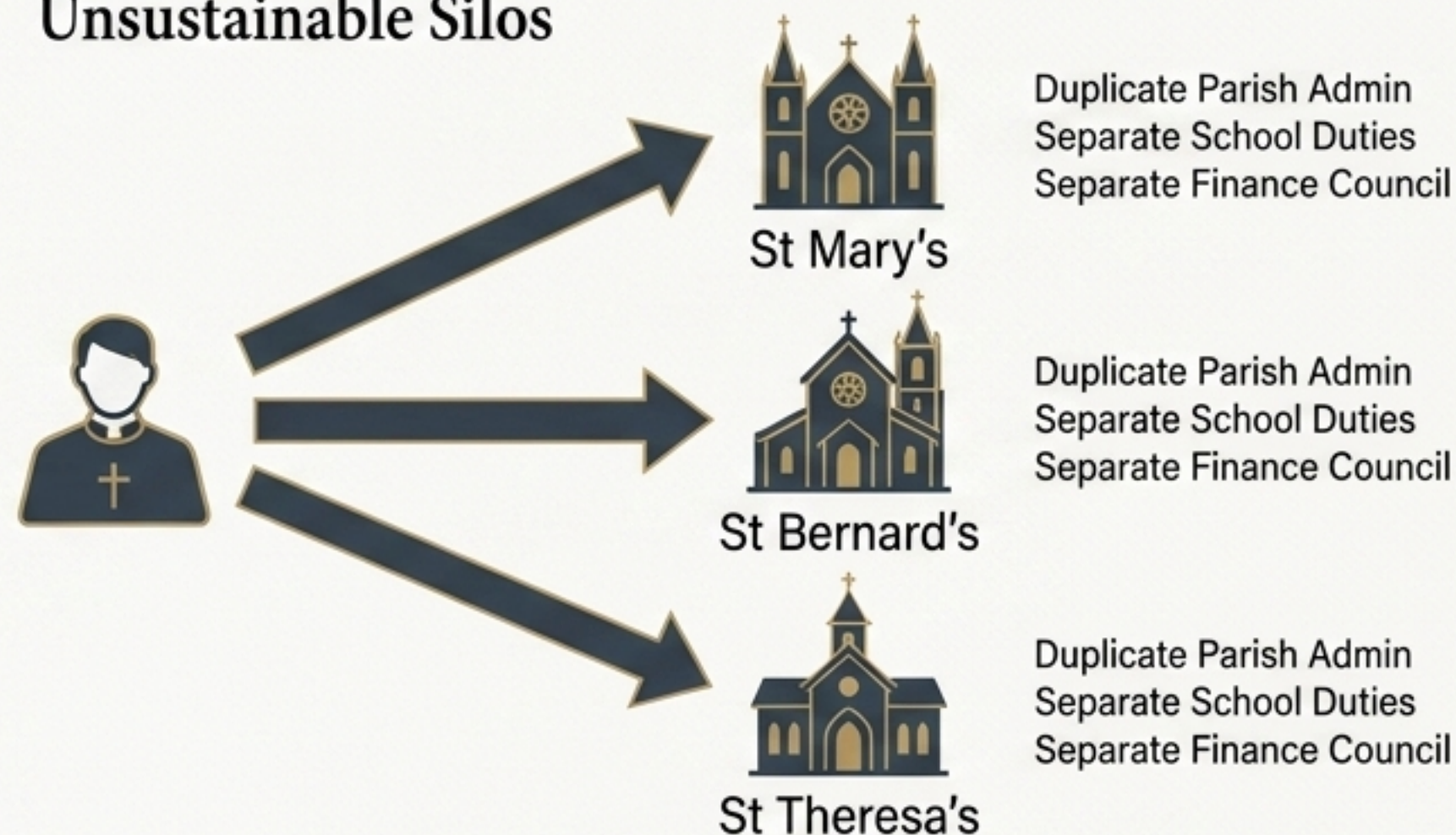
The Pastoral Load Model

Following the retirement of Fr Owens, Fr Hilton (St Mary's) becomes Parochial Administrator for St Bernard's and St Theresa's.

The Directive: Bishop Marcus has made clear that Fr Hilton cannot maintain separate administrative structures across these three parishes and schools.

The Need: A streamlined, integrated, and sustainable approach to protect pastoral care.

Unsustainable Silos



Streamlined Hub



Centralized administration, finance, and school oversight, enabling focused pastoral care.

Parish Vitality & Sustainability Matrix (2024–2025)

Parish	Operating Surplus/(Loss)	Offertory & Donations
St Mary's	£8,000	£102,000
St Bernard's	(£7,000)	£30,000
St Columba's	(£3,000)	£34,000
St Malachy's	(£1,000)	£35,000
St Theresa's	£11,000	£29,000

Note: Offertory and Donations have been combined for clarity of total community contribution.

The Mission Remains; The Structure Must Adapt

The Unchangeable Core

The Gospel mandate

Sacramental life

Pastoral care

Making disciples

The Flexible Variables

Parish boundaries

Building footprints

Mass schedules

Administrative duplication

We are not being asked to compromise our faith; we are being asked to redesign the vessel that carries it into the future.

Principles for Reflection

PRAYER

Rooted in discernment, not anxiety or self-interest.

HONESTY

Facing the realities of priest numbers, buildings, and pastoral needs truthfully.

CHARITY

Hearing different concerns with respect and understanding.

MISSION

Always returning to what most effectively serves the Gospel.

FLEXIBILITY

Recognizing that adaptation is required to survive and thrive.

The core focus of our discernment

1. How can the mission of the Catholic Church be secured in Halifax?

2. What are the resources we need to make that a reality?

Five Pillars for Local Discussion

Mission & Evangelisation

What does a strong Catholic presence look like today?

Sacramental Life

What should be prioritised if priestly availability becomes limited?

Buildings & Resources

Which buildings are strictly necessary to sustain worship?

Leadership & Collaboration

How can parishes collaborate without losing local identity?

Administration

How can we reduce duplication to support our remaining priests?

Structured Discussion

Core Question 1: How can the mission of the Catholic Church be secured in Halifax?

Securing the mission requires moving beyond simply maintaining existing structures to actively organising for the future.

Core Question 2: What are the resources we need to make that a reality?

To sustain the mission, the deanery must strategically manage its human, financial, and physical assets. Collaboration share resources effectively

Closing Blessing for Discernment

O God,
who have gathered us to listen, reflect, and discern together,
we give you thanks for the gifts shared among us this day.

As we bring this consultation gathering to its close,
send forth your Holy Spirit upon the work begun,
that what has been spoken and heard
may bear fruit in wisdom, unity, and peace.

Keep us faithful to your will
and generous in service to your Church.

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, pray for us.
Saint Wilfrid, pray for us.*

