

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council

September 28, 2010

Summary

Opening Remarks

Sr. Marian Batho opened the meeting at 6:30PM. Dates for the 2010 -2011 APC meetings are: December 4, January 19, March 31 and June 23. Sister introduced Sr. Paula Coehlo, SUSC, who has joined the APC to fill the remaining term of Sr. Suzanne Fondini, MFIC.

Opening Remarks

Cardinal Sean reported the recent launch of the new Social Media secretariat to coordinate Archdiocesan communications. The Archdiocese has also acquired a printing company to produce the weekly bulletins for many of our parishes, also providing an income stream to fund some outreach programs. In October, Rev. Arthur L. Kennedy and Rev. Peter J. Uglietto will be ordained as bishops for the Archdiocese. The Cardinal asked council members to pray for the twenty new seminarians.

Report on Faith Formation Programs for the Laity

The Committee to Study Lay Formation Programs in Light of Pastoral Needs of the Archdiocese researched the adult religious education opportunities in the Archdiocese. Their report recommends that the Archdiocese define the roles of the lay ecclesial ministers and specify the requirements for lay ministerial candidates. The committee supports the creation of an Institute of Lay Faith Formation under the aegis of St. John's Seminary. This institute would serve people interested in deepening their faith and those also seeking certification in specific parochial ministries. The report also recommends that continuing education be mandatory for both lay ecclesial ministers and priests. A committee has been formed to establish a time frame for the proposed Institute. It will report to Janet Benestad and Rev. Tom Foley. A council member strongly advocated for training in making sound moral decisions. Another member asked about standards for approving formation programs run by other dioceses or institutions.

Catholics Come Home Initiative

David Thorp, Director of the Catholics Come Home Initiative in Boston, described the program as an outreach to the estimated 83% of baptized Catholics who do not regularly participate in Sunday worship. During Lent, radio, TV and other ads will saturate the Boston area. Active Catholics will be encouraged to personally invite neighbors and friends to their parish. Online resources will assist parishes in preparing to welcome and engage returning Catholics.

Catholic Schools Admission Policy

Mary Grassa O'Neill, Superintendent of the Archdiocesan Catholic Schools, presented the proposed policy. It states that the teachings of the Catholic faith are "an essential and required part of the curriculum" in the Archdiocesan schools. It was pointed out that the term "qualified student" used in the draft document needs to be explicitly defined.

Social Justice Convocation

MaryAnn McLaughlin gave an update on the convocation scheduled for October 9th. A council member expressed concern about Rev. Thomas Massaro, S.J., one of the featured speakers. Cardinal Sean responded that he takes Fr. Massaro's work in the context of the priest's life of service to the Church". Another APC member commented that "the most defenseless in society

have the greatest claim to justice” and spoke about the dangers of proportionalism.

Follow-up on Previous Meetings

Sr. Marian offered feedback on some issues considered at recent APC meetings.

- The Archdiocesan funeral policy has not yet been approved. The Archdiocese is aware that more education concerning the new policies is required before they can be consistently applied.
- The need for improved formation of parish pastoral council members has been acknowledged. However, the suggested annual convocations for Parish Pastoral Councils are not currently feasible.
- The proposed pastoral priorities presented to the APC last year by Fr. David Couturier have been finalized. They are Evangelization, Pastoral Planning and the new Social Media group.
- The importance of transparency was reaffirmed at a subsequent discussion of the Public Disclosure Project by priests and bishops of the Archdiocese.
- A discussion with the APC Steering Committee after the May meeting highlighted: the APC’s support of the Cardinal; the lack of clarity about the APC’s function as a link to parishes; and a need for the APC committees to reconsider and redefine their goals.
- Fr. Erikson added that just minutes after the first discussion with the APC about the Public Disclosure Project, the target date for the disclosure was changed.

Anonymous Blogs Concerning the Archdiocese

Fr. Erikson addressed the topic of anonymous bloggers targeting employees of the Archdiocese, as well as the public, with emails harmful to individuals in the Archdiocese and hurtful to the Church. Fr. Erikson explained that he has tried to meet personally with the two bloggers, but neither has agreed to talk with him. Fr. Erikson has staff members monitoring these blogs so that any legitimate concerns can be addressed.

What Do I Need to Hear?

- A member praised the appreciation the Cardinal shows for his priests.
- The Light is On for You program was so successful in one parish that they are continuing the program once a month.
- A member announced that the priest shortage has had a very positive effect in her area; a group of parishes offered a three-night mission together and the people developed a real camaraderie.
- St. Bonaventure Parish is growing and needs to build a new church. The speaker asked for the Archdiocese’s help in getting through the many obstacles that remain in order for the project to go ahead.
- A suggestion was made that the establishment of a policy to protect whistleblowers would help locate the internal leaks at the Pastoral Center.
- A member spoke appreciatively of Cardinal Sean’s public stand on the 40B ballot question and was proud that Cardinal Sean has been chosen to help the bishops in Ireland respond to the sexual abuse crisis there.

Closing Remarks

Cardinal Sean mentioned that the new missal coming soon. Hopefully, the parishes’ preparation for the new missal will help people with the transition. A Catholic radio station will soon be airing in Boston. The new marriage preparation program is going well. He recently met with several

bishops concerning the rebuilding efforts in Haiti which are going slowly. He will be flying to Rome next week to prepare for the work of furthering the cause of healing and transparency in Ireland. Cardinal Sean thanked everyone for their participation, thoughts and ideas. The Cardinal ended the meeting with prayer at 9:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Robotham
Recording Secretary