

**Minutes of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council's  
December 2, 2004 Meeting**

The newly convened Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (the "APC" or the "Council") held its first meeting on Thursday, December 2, 2004, at Peterson Hall on the grounds of St. John's Seminary. It was announced that most of those invited to attend were present and that three were missing due to illness. Among those called to serve on the current APC were several members of the prior Council who have been appointed for a one-year term only; newly called members were appointed to serve a staggered terms of two, three and four years, to allow for a rotation of membership.

Following a prayer service largely constituted by the antiphonal reciting of the Liturgy of the Hours and after the subsequent dinner, the meeting was called to order by Bishop Richard Lennon. He welcomed those present and explained a few administrative points. The Bishop mentioned that every effort will be made to adjourn the APC meetings by 9:00 p.m. due to the long distances from which many members travel. He also explained that although it is hoped that the proposed meeting schedule will remain as currently set, certain dates may unavoidably change due to demands on the Archbishop's schedule. The current APC calendar for 2005 calls for meetings to take place at 5:30 p.m. on the following dates, all of which fall on a Thursday: January 20; March 3; May 12, September 22; and November 10.

Bishop Lennon then called on members to review the Statutes of the APC, a copy of which was provided that evening to everyone. He referred to this as "our guiding document." Directing the members' attention to page 3, the Bishop mentioned that Article VIII refers to a "Steering Committee." He explained that although there currently is no Steering Committee in place, at the end of the next meeting, the APC members will be asked nominate people for the Steering Committee. Toward that end, he asked members to focus during the meeting on who they think might be good in that role.

APC members then had an opportunity to introduce themselves. Going around the table, one by one, they shared a bit about their backgrounds and explained what they thought the APC might be able to accomplish. Most expressed a sense of surprise at being appointed. They stated that they feel honored to have been asked to serve on the Council and are eager to share their gifts and talents toward helping the Archdiocese. Many stated that they would like their efforts on the APC to serve a positive purpose by assisting in revitalizing the Church, by helping it to heal during these painful days of reconfiguration, and by presenting to the Archbishop the position of the people in the pews.

Archbishop Sean then addressed the group. He began by thanking everyone for saying "yes" to the request that they become part of the APC and he stated that in listening to the introductions, he had a good sense of the gifts the Council members have. Stating that he was in the seminary during Vatican II, he went on to add that even as a young priest, he worked with Pastoral Councils in parishes where every language was spoken except his native tongue, English. Explaining that he was made a pastor upon ordination, he said that he had been catapulted into the position and that if it had not been for the advice provided by his Pastoral Council, he doesn't know what he would have done. Accordingly, when he was sent to serve as a bishop in the West Indies, he immediately set up an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. It went on to do many interesting things, including organizing public debates where political candidates presented their positions for the first time in the nation's history.

Adding that the Archdiocese of Boston is the fourth diocese where he has been called to serve as bishop, he stated that he is looking forward to hearing the truth and to hearing all the Council's ideas. Stating that he is concerned about the Church and the great challenges it faces, he added that more healing needs

to be done, but that we must never lose sight of our personal mission, the need to be a proactive, evangelizing, welcoming church. Explaining that this Council is larger than the ones in his three prior dioceses combined, Archbishop Sean stated that its predecessor APC was even larger and was more top heavy with clergy and chancery personnel. He explained that the current version has been streamlined to allow for increased representation of the laity.

An open conversation on the role of the APC then took place with members interjecting their opinions. Among the many suggestions presented were the following:

- APC members should wear nametags and should be provided with a list of each member's name, address, and e-mail address;
- Since members do not know each other well enough to determine who should serve on a Steering Committee, consideration should be given to appointing an "Interim Steering Committee" so that progress may be made without delay;
- Subcommittees should be formed to deal with important topics; otherwise the delay between meetings will cause the APC to be unproductive;
- Archbishop Sean should consider providing a list of topics which the APC could work on;
- A website should be established where Archbishop Sean could pose a question of APC members and immediately receive their feedback via e-mail;
- Consideration should be given as to how the mission and role of the APC will be communicated so that the message will have a widespread distribution;
- APC members should be vehicles of communication and open themselves to listen and learn from other Catholics;
- The difficult subject of the lack of trust between the people and the Archdiocese needs to be addressed.
- Consideration should be given to extending meetings beyond the 9:00 p.m. deadline if the importance of the subject matter warrants continuing the discussion.

The issue of reconfiguration came up with a statement made that a closing parish has not been approached by a welcoming parish. In response, Bishop Lennon stated that all closing parishes had received a manual from the Archdiocese and that in a number of cases, the failure of the reconfiguration system has come from a closing parish's refusal to be in conversation with others.

As time was growing short, this discussion was ended at 8:45 p.m. so that a presentation could be made regarding the March 19, 2005 Men's Catholic Conference. Speakers explained that this event will be aimed at men of all ages, with a hope that at least 500 will participate. Conference speakers are being lined up and hopefully will include a sports figure and a Christian actor. APC members were encouraged to bring information about the event back to their parishes with an aim toward publicizing it, and each person was asked to invite at least one man to attend.

A brief question and answer period was then held. Comments included a remark about the popularity of the "God, Pizza and Beer" sessions for men at St. Theresa's in Sherborn that underscore the need for conferences specifically for men. That was countered with a caveat by one APC member who stated that in publicizing the event, consideration should be given to the feelings of women who may possibly see the conference as one more example of a male-oriented Church doing yet another thing for men. All APC members were given copies of a flier regarding the conference to bring back to their parishes.

Bishop Lennon then explained that changes have been made to the existing charter on protection of the youth. The Bishops are consulting with various groups to collect their thoughts on the charter. Members were asked to take a copy of the original and the revised versions of the Charter and to share any thoughts they might have about the documents as soon as possible. Comments were to be made to Father Arthur Coyle by e-mailing him at reverend arthur coyle@rcab.org. (underscores "\_" between title, first and last names).

The meeting was adjourned promptly at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Anne Scott, Recorder

**THE ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL**  
**of the**  
**Archdiocese of Boston**

**Thursday 2 December 2004**

**Bishop Peterson Hall Meeting Room,  
Saint John's Seminary, Brighton**

**6:00 PM          Evening Prayer – Chapel**

*followed by*

**Dinner – Meeting Room**

**a-g-e-n-d-a**

- I -** Presentation of the “Statutes” of the APC – Bishop Lennon
- II -** Introduction of the Membership – All
- III -** Reflections on / Vision of the APC – Archbishop Seán
- IV -** Open Conversation on
  - a) the “role” of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
  - b) the “Vision of the Parish”
- V -** Overview of the March 19, 2005 Men’s Catholic Conference  
...Rev. Brian Bachand
- VI -** Closing Remarks & Prayer – Archbishop Seán

*Meetings for 2005 are scheduled (subject to change) for*

**Thursday 20 January 2005**

**Thursday 3 March 2005**

**Thursday 12 May 2005**

**Thursday 22 September 2005**

**Thursday 10 November 2005**

**Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held at Bishop Peterson Hall,  
beginning with Evening Prayer & Dinner at 5:30 PM.**