

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council



22 September 2005

On 22 September 2005 the APC met at 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel of Saint John's Seminary, Brighton for evening prayer and Grace both led by Bishop Lennon. A light dinner was available in Bishop Peterson Hall Meeting Room for all in attendance and the meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m.

- I. *Opening Remarks: Archbishop Seán was hospitalized and Bishop Lennon opened the meeting.*
- II. *2010 Initiative - Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools (presenter: Mr. Neil Meitler, Founder and Executive Director of Meitler Consultants.*
 - a. Archbishop Seán & Sr. Kathleen Carr, Superintendent of Schools, are committed to Catholic School Education
 - b. Goal is to identify demographic opportunities and address challenges
 - c. Website for specific details: www.meitler.com/support.asp Access code: Boston
 - d. Telephone for Meitler Consultants is 414-529-3366
 - e. Ideas or questions for this agenda item may be sent to Sr. Mary Ann Doyle snadoyle@abcso.org
- IIA. *Vatican's response to Suppressed Parishes: Bishop Lennon & Rev. M. O'Connell*
 - a. **Unplanned agenda item** proved very valuable information for APC members
 - b. Bishop Lennon handed out the two (2) attached letters dated 13 February 2004 and 27 July 2004 and reviewed the Disposition of Asset's from Suppressed parishes with the APC.
 - c. Rev. Mark O'Connell discussed specifically the process by which the AOB utilized to suppress parishes and the Vatican's response given a number of parishes' recourse in Rome.
 - i. Process used seems okay
 - ii. Process to close Churches seems okay
 - iii. Appears to be a flaw in decree
 - iv. Technical law dispute still in process
 - v. Suggested summation, due to flaw assets follow people not AOB
 - vi. After parish suppression AOB met with or will meet with pastor's to gain their approval so AOB may assume financial assets. AOB in turn will distribute to parishes in need.
 - d. Archbishop Seán insists, according to Bishop Lennon, that no money from reconfiguration or the Annual Appeal will be used for sexual abuse settlements. Sexual abuse settlement will be funded by sale of Lake Street property.
 - e. Looking forward, both curriculum training for priests and parish manuals are in development to include business & finance models because a parish needs to be run according to all federal, state and archdiocesan regulations so as to meet the financial stewardship/responsibilities of its flock. The AOB will always assist parishes in financial need but hopefully there will be fewer in the future given the inclusion of working business and financial models and practices at each parish with the AOB.
- III. *Briefing on the APC Website: Thong Phamduy and Nancy Cirone*
 - a. Hand out attached depicting
 - i. URL: www.apcboston.org
 - ii. Log in process
 - iii. Site Links
 - b. Site reviewed and will be kept updated

- c. Action items to be discussed & decided upon:
 - i. Protocol for
 - 1. who should have authorization to keep links current
 - 2. who should approve contents
 - 3. who should receive public emails
 - 4. where on the RCAB site should our link be located
 - 5. etc.

IV. *Reports of the APC Committees given by Committee Chairs:*

- a. All minutes of all subcommittees have been posted on the website so please log on for specifics
 - ✓ Communications Committee Report: www.apcboston.org "Report" link after Member LOGIN
 - i. Cluster representation rolled to members, for specific details please refer to the website and their presentation.
 - ii. Recommended protocol for introductions rolled out
 - iii. Communication piece may be included in The Pilot about the APC website
 - ✓ Parish Life and Leadership Committee: www.apcboston.org "Report" link after Member LOGIN
 - i. Parish information being obtained
 - ✓ Catholic Evangelization and Faith Formation Committee www.apcboston.org "Report" link after Member LOGIN
 - i. Missions & Goals discussed
 - ii. Questionnaire discussed

V. *General Sharing of Issues and Concerns:*

- a. Tabled for next meeting given the late hour and inclusion of agenda item **IIA**

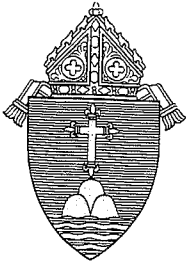
VI. *Announcements:*

- a. Please pray for speedy recovery for Archbishop Seán

VII. *Closing Remarks & Prayer: Bishop Lennon*

- ❖ Gratitude was extended to all for the recommendations and commitment to the APC committee structure as it affords greater depth and focus.
- ❖ To all who have so generously served as an APC member and whose term is expiring, Matthew 25:21
- ❖ Archbishop Seán will be appointing new members who may be in attendance at the November APC meeting.
- ❖ After closing prayer the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

/ndc



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13 February 2004

Dear Monsignor/Father:

As I write to you I wish first to acknowledge the difficult task that you are presently involved in responding to Archbishop Seán's call for Cluster Meetings for the purpose of reconfiguration and to thank you for what you are doing to help realize his goal, and our goal, of having a more vibrant Archdiocese of Boston.

There are several items I wish to present for your information, so that you may appreciate what is going on and be able to share this information with your staff and with those whom you serve.

Archbishop Seán has indicated on more than one occasion two specific concerns which need to be carefully attended to in the whole reconfiguration process. Thus, in formulating the cluster's response to the two questions presented in my 10 January 2004 letter, these two concerns need to be addressed in the response. The first is the inclusion of established and recognized ethnic communities presently being served in a cluster as active participants in the cluster discussions. In presenting a plan in response to the questions please be sure to indicate how this ministry might continue within the reconfigured parishes. The second focuses on maintaining strong Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese. A cluster's response needs to address this important aspect of parish life in a way that will serve Catholic Education well into the future.

In Archbishop Seán's letter of 9 January 2004 and his talk on BCTV on 4 February 2004, he spoke about the closure of parishes. It is the Archbishop's intention that the reconfiguration process will lead to some parishes closing and other parishes welcoming parishioners from the closed parishes. The Archbishop has deliberately chosen the canonical procedure of suppression rather than that of merger. There are many reasons for this choice. As you probably already know, when there is a merger of two or more parishes the assets and liabilities of the parishes belong to the new parish that is formed from the merger, whereas when there is a suppression, the assets and liabilities of the parish that is suppressed or closed belong to the Archdiocese of Boston.

The Archbishop has chosen this approach so that many issues may be addressed. First, let me say again none of the assets from suppressed parishes will be used to fund clergy sexual abuse cases. Funds for that purpose will come from the proceeds of the sale of part of the Brighton land and from insurance coverages. The proceeds from the assets of suppressed parishes will provide monies due employees of suppressed parishes for past work and separation assistance, for vendors who are owed monies from suppressed parishes, for amounts for past employee benefits and parish insurances due from suppressed parishes, for run out costs of

Health Insurance for separated employees, for covering unfunded pension liability for employees of suppressed parishes, for repayment of revolving loans from suppressed parishes, for expenses involved in the closure of suppressed parishes, for assistance to parishes that are unable to fund needed church repairs, for expenses for providing current support services to parishes, for establishing an endowment fund for parish support for those parishes that cannot be self-supporting, for recapitalizing the Revolving Loan Fund, and I am sure there are other needs that I have not yet thought of which will benefit from the assets of suppressed parishes. As you can see a large portion of the assets from suppressed parishes will be needed to address very immediate past due obligations and employee benefits of the suppressed parishes.

With regard to employees who will lose their positions due to reconfiguration, please know we are committed to helping them secure positions at parishes if at all possible or to assist them with finding other employment. Also, presently a policy is in draft form which will address the various benefits to employees who lose their positions due to reconfiguration. As soon as the policy is completed and reviewed by various groups, it will be presented to Archbishop Seán for his approval. The policy will be distributed to all parishes as soon as the approval is granted. In consideration for all of our employees and to provide fair and equal treatment, I ask that there be no separate arrangements at the parish level, nor any new employment contracts entered into or extended beyond July 1, 2004.

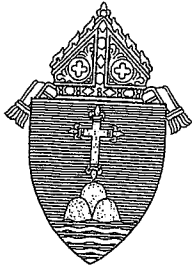
Also, a policy is in process to address Promise for Tomorrow funds, especially the monies designated for parishes. The Pastors Advisory Committee has reviewed the policy and has offered its recommendations. There will be a few more consultations before it is ready for the Archbishop's consideration. Again, once it is approved I will make sure that you receive a copy of the policy so that the information may be shared with parishioners.

Lastly, appreciating the challenges you have in all of this process, especially as a leader in the community, Father Robert Connors and Father James Mahoney are scheduling Regional Meetings for the middle of March to more thoroughly address the many issues you now face. Archbishop Seán hopes to attend as many of these meetings as possible and the Regional Bishops will be present for the meeting in their Region. I encourage all priests to attend these meetings to hear what is said, to ask questions or make comments, and to spend time with one another in priestly fraternity. Additionally, there will be general orientations scheduled in each region for parish staffs and informational meetings specifically for pastoral associates, DRE's and school principals.

As we move forward let us do so united with one another and united with our Archbishop focused on the goal: *Rebuild Our Church*.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Lennon".



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27 July 2004

Dear Monsignor/Father:

Since Archbishop O'Malley met with the priests of the Archdiocese on December 16, 2003 to discuss parish reconfiguration much has happened. Hundreds of hours of meetings have taken place at which parishioners, clergy and religious discussed parish life. From the gatherings of parish clusters, recommendations were made for achieving a more vibrant Archdiocese of Boston. These recommendations were then reviewed by the vicars forane and the regional bishops, who in a number of cases offered additional recommendations. All of this work was reviewed by a central committee made up primarily of lay people, with representation from clergy and religious. This group also made recommendations. The Archbishop then reviewed all of this work with the Presbyteral Council, and on May 25 announced the suppression of 70 parishes. While the suppression of these parishes has caused pain and some anger, it had to be done for the greater good of the Church. With changing demographics, 60% of our active clergy over the age of 60, with one-fifth of our parishes unable to pay their operating bills, and needed renovations to churches and other parish property costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars, reconfiguration was necessary to rebuild our Church. Together, these factors make a compelling case for the reallocation of parish resources.

Unfortunately, one particular issue has caused considerable pain and misunderstanding. Many people continue to insist that the reconfiguration effort is all about the Archdiocese of Boston getting money. While it is true that many parishes are experiencing financial challenges and that there are needs in the Archdiocese for money, this reconfiguration effort was not driven by money nor were the decisions as to which parishes would close determined by the value of assets of any particular parish. In my February 13, 2004 letter I put forth important points about the use of assets. I wish to reiterate this information and ask that you share it with your parishioners.

The funds raised from the sale of suppressed properties will be used to address past due obligations and employee benefits of the suppressed parishes, including:

1. Monies due employees of suppressed parishes for past work and separation assistance;
2. For vendors who are owed monies from suppressed parishes;
3. For amounts for past employee benefits and parish insurance due from suppressed parishes;
4. For run-out costs of health insurance for separated employees;

5. For repayment of revolving loans from suppressed parishes; and
6. For expenses involved in the closure of suppressed parishes.

In addition, these funds will be used to assist in rebuilding our Archdiocese as we go forward:

1. For assistance to parishes that are unable to fund needed church repairs;
2. For expenses to provide current direct and indirect support services to parishes;
3. For establishing an endowment fund for parish support for those parishes that cannot be self-supporting;
4. For covering unfunded pension liability for lay employees and clergy of all parishes; and
5. For restoring the \$28 million of equity to the various funds that provided "Jubilee Year" debt forgiveness.

Moreover, we remain committed to employees who will lose their positions due to reconfiguration and will help them secure positions at parishes if at all possible or to assist them with finding other employment.

The process of reconfiguration has affected all the parishes in the Archdiocese. This process is not just about closing parishes; it is all about strengthening and revitalizing the Church as we go forward together as the Catholic faith community of Boston. This process will provide our Church a solid foundation for the ministry entrusted to us, and will provide the Church in Boston with the capacity to address the needs of its people and to fulfill its mission.

It is our fervent hope that with this process of reconfiguration we may begin to move forward revitalized and energized. Our parishes will be stronger, more able to respond to people's needs, better staffed and with more resources for ministry. In welcoming parishioners from our closed parishes, our parishes will be better equipped to carry on the work of evangelization, to reach our young people, to serve our shut-ins, to pass on the faith to future generations and, together, exceed our present accomplishments as a Church.

I want to thank you for your cooperation and support through this difficult time. I am very appreciative of your efforts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Richard G. Lennon

A.P.C. Web Site Address: www.apcboston.org



Archdiocese of Boston Pastoral Council

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Comments/Ideas: Contact Nancy D. Cirone or Thong Phamduy via email
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