

# **ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**November 8, 2007**

## **Summary**

Fr. Art Coyle opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Cardinal Sean announced that after receiving the report of the Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation Committee, the Archdiocese plans to make changes to the Office of Youth and Young Adult ministry next month. He also highly recommended the pro-life film, *Bella*.

### **Report on the Catholic Appeal, 2007 and Beyond**

Scot Landry, Cabinet Secretary for Institutional Advancement, and Stephen Colella, Manager of the Catholic Appeal, reported on the status of the 2007 Appeal. \$11.7 M has been raised towards the target of \$14 M. The Appeal staff is proposing to start the Cardinal's Appeal in March next year and finish at the end of June. This would align the Cardinal's Appeal with the end of the diocesan fiscal year and also minimize its impact on the parishes' Grand Annual fundraising.

Scot also discussed another approach used in most U.S. dioceses which involves consolidating various types of support into an assessed Appeal and a parish tax. The major benefits of the national "common practice" model are that dioceses and parishes are partners not competitors and the model is simpler and fairer.

### **Discussion of Evangelization**

Members were asked to discuss why many Catholics have left the Faith. Reasons included:

- Outrage at the Church's failure to stop pedophile priests from victimizing children.
- The Church is perceived as having too many rules, too much wealth and too much hypocrisy.
- The Church is out-of-date with current society particularly in its treatment of women.
- Many people are attracted to the faith, but disillusioned with the institution.
- The Church is no longer the social hub in the community especially since most Catholic children attend public schools. Therefore, parents' time is claimed by activities at the public schools or other organizations in which their children are involved.
- The core group of Catholic believers is now elderly. The generation of Baby Boomers (ages 45 to 65) missed out on the strong religious education prevalent prior to Vatican II.
- People are disappointed with the weak level of holiness seen in the clergy. Some have sought and found more authentic spiritual leadership in other faith communities.
- Parish closings have excluded elders without means of transportation.
- GLTB population does not feel accepted.

Members were also queried about Catholic parishes that are growing and thriving. The Chinese Catholic community is flourishing at St. James the Great in Boston. Their Chinese New Year event

attracts many people each year. The community is also known for helping Chinese families new to the area. Other parishes were not specifically named but several 'best practices' were identified.

- Vibrant liturgy (emphasized several times)
- A warm and welcoming attitude established by the pastor
- Activities for families
- Strong religious education program
- Adult religious education program
- Eucharistic Adoration
- A pastor who trusts and delegates to the laity
- Influx of immigrants
- Parishes with many young families
- A pastor who is visible in the community
- Focus on evangelization and personal invitation to join parish
- Congregation that is non-judgmental of those new to the faith community
- Parishes making families feel welcome when they return for weddings and funerals

### **What Does the Cardinal Need to Hear**

Someone asked when a permanent superintendent of schools would be named. Fr. Art responded that the names of several candidates were soon to be given to the Cardinal. A comment was made that the RENEW information sessions were very good and energizing. The Cardinal was commended for attending the March for Life. Fr. Erikson was complimented on his recent article about the Convocation of Priests in October.

It was suggested that the Cardinal might write about how things have progressed in the Archdiocese since he first arrived in Boston. He was also encouraged to speak about how the APC could be more helpful to him and to address the Archdiocese more often on topics such as Holiness, penance, and how to be Catholic.

Concern was raised about parishes which are sold to developers and then resold to another entity. One was resold to the non-sanctioned religious group, Willing Shepherds. The Cardinal said that covenants would be drawn up for all future sales to prevent this from happening elsewhere. He also mentioned that the Reconfiguration Committee would be reporting soon on the disposition of sold properties.

Immigrants from Ghana and Vietnamese Catholics need more outreach.

### **Closing Remarks**

Fr. Art Coyle reported that the Scituate Voice of the Faithful has asked Sr. Marian to discuss the role of the APC at their November meeting. Several of the South region APC representatives will join her.

Fr. Erikson expressed his gratitude to the five members completing their service on the APC namely, Annette Bailey, Tim Kelley, John Materazzo, Kevin Redman, Jennifer Schiller and Deacon Stan Straub.

Cardinal Sean heartily invited everyone to come to the cathedral on the first Sunday of Advent for the beginning of the Archdiocesan Bi-Centennial celebration. He asked us to pray for the consistory of new cardinals in Rome this Thanksgiving.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Robotham  
Recording Secretary