

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
January 31, 2008
Minutes

Sister Marian Batho opened the meeting at 6:20PM with a welcome to our new members. She introduced Msgr. Dennis Sheehan, recently appointed as Moderator of the Presbyteral Council. Sr. Marian requested nominations for the vacant position on the Steering Committee and asked APC members to give Thong Phamduy update forms if their contact information had changed.

Opening Remarks

Cardinal Sean welcomed Msgr. Sheehan and the new APC members. He expressed sorrow for the recent death of Fr. Dan Kennedy who was ordained only last spring. Cardinal Sean spoke about the fiftieth anniversary of the St. James Society. Over the years, Boston has sent 36 priests to work in South America with the St. James Society. He is looking forward to the ordination of seven new priests in May.

'State of the Archdiocese' Report

Cardinal Sean reported on the fiscal recovery of the Archdiocese. Four years ago there was a \$15-16 million operating deficit, a \$30 million debt to the Knights of Columbus, 1000 lawsuits filed against the Archdiocese, Catholic hospitals were losing money and there loomed a real possibility of going into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Now, the budget is balanced, the Knights of Columbus debt is paid, the lawsuits are settled (from the proceeds of the sale of the former Cardinal's residence), Catholic hospitals are back in the black and the lay pension fund is much healthier. With the gift of the Braintree office property, the Brighton property is being sold to Boston College. This turnaround could not have happened without the help of many people who volunteered their time and expertise to bring financial stability and transparency to the Archdiocese.

Boston's Catholic schools are doing well today. A study in the 1990's which recommended radical changes was considered too challenging at that time. The 2010 Initiative is the result of a more recent evaluation funded by a local benefactor. Now, three schools in Brockton have been merged into a single brand-new one and the Dorchester schools have been consolidated in two new buildings. Peter Lynch has organized multiple fundraising banquets to support these urban schools. Consequently, the tuition at Cathedral High School remains low (two thousand dollars) with many students receiving scholarship assistance.

New rectors have been appointed at the two seminaries and enrollment has doubled at St. John's. Last fall, the Clergy Support Office sponsored two well-attended convocations for priests followed by a series of regional meetings.

The Archdiocesan Committee on Youth and Young Adult Faith Formation presented its findings to the Cardinal, the APC and the Presbyteral Council last December. Since then Fr. Matt Williams, chair of the committee, has been appointed Director of the Office for the New Evangelization of Youth and Young Adults. He will oversee the efforts of all Archdiocesan offices ministering to this population to better coordinate their outreach. Four hundred young people from New Bedford and Boston participated in the recent Pro-Life March. Twenty thousand young people, including 600 seminarians, celebrated a Youth Mass at the MCI Center. World Youth Day will be held in Sydney,

Australia this year. Due to the high cost of travel, only about 200 young people will represent Boston.

The Archdiocesan guidelines for marriage preparation are being restructured following the recommendation of the Marriage Committee last May. Religious education programs will include segments on marriage beginning in the early grades to provide young people with a better understanding of the vocation of Christian marriage.

The Pastoral Planning Committee, led by Fr. George Evans, outlined the future staff needs of the Archdiocese. Parishes are now being asked to look at how they might work together to optimally provide services to their congregations with fewer priests available in the years ahead. Ways to better utilize and train Church staff are being considered.

The Archdiocesan Bi-Centennial Committee started off this anniversary year on the first Sunday of Advent with a Mass at the Cathedral celebrated by Cardinal Sean and many priests of the Archdiocese. The RENEW program, 'Arise Together in Christ', will begin soon offering spiritual renewal to the people of the Archdiocese. This outreach will be the anchor of the Bi-centennial celebration.

In terms of Church governance, Cardinal Sean mentioned the good work of our new chancellor, Mr. Jim McDonough, new Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dr. Mary O'Neill, and Fr. Richard Erikson as Moderator of the Curia. The Archdiocese is still seeking a new CEO for the Catholic hospital system which managed a \$30M profit last year. The search committee identified several qualified candidates however they were hired by competing institutions. The Archdiocese continues to seek affiliation with another association of Catholic hospitals.

In June the Archdiocesan offices will relocate to a new office building in Braintree donated by Mr. Flatley. This will enable all of the Archdiocesan offices including Catholic Charities and the Tribunal to work in one building. In addition to promoting more efficient administration, there will be parking for 700, a cafeteria and a religious goods store at the new site.

Reports of Cabinet Secretaries

Chancellor

Mr. Jim Walsh spoke for Jim McDonough who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Walsh described the atmosphere in the chancellor's office as a 'culture of service'. The office has worked to develop a leadership team and operating principles based upon a mission statement. The team is responsible for overseeing the financial services, audit, MIS and financial reporting of the Archdiocesan offices and related agencies. Grant Thornton is the external auditing company. Mr. F. Beirne Lovely has been hired as the first in-house legal counsel. The third annual report is due in six weeks.

The sale of the Brighton property to Boston College has allowed repayment of the \$30M owed to the Knights of Columbus. There is currently a \$14M balance in the Reconfiguration account. As part of the 2010 Initiative, a state-of-the-art Catholic school is now open in Brockton. In Dorchester, enrollment at the Pope John XXIII Academy is going well. The move to Braintree brings the opportunity for modern new filing and archiving systems, significant software upgrades, a centralized benefits office and employee training and a new program to enhance employee retention.

Communications

Terry Donilon reported that an updated RCAB website, funded by a grant from Catholic TV, would be launched in June. The new website will have the capability to send news and capture emails. The Pilot's website, now updated on a daily basis, recently won an award. The new studio for BCTV in Watertown, managed by Fr. Reed, is an outstanding facility, better even than some commercial studios. APC members are encouraged to check out www.Catholictv.com and to tour the studio. These measures are part of an effort to better coordinate and improve the work of The Pilot, rcab.org and Catholic TV.

The recent publicity about the Cardinal's involvement in Theology on Tap, the Braintree Pastoral Center, RENEW and the successful 2007 Catholic Appeal all highlight the brighter outlook of the Archdiocese. Press releases for the 2010 Initiative promote the Archdiocesan commitment to our urban schools. Terry also mentioned the department's effort to reach out more to local public officials.

Education

Sr. Clare Bertero, Secretary of Catholic Education Services, distributed a handout outlining the accomplishments and current challenges of the four offices that report to her. (See the handout for full details.)

Despite budget cuts by the Archdiocese that make campus ministries more dependent upon their educational institutions, the Campus Ministry Office (CMO) is busy co-sponsoring two events, one in February and another in March. The Arise Together in Christ program is scheduled to begin on local campuses next fall. CMO now has a webpage and newsletter.

The Office of Religious Education continues to support whole community catechesis programs in parishes, offers educational opportunities for catechists and DREs, a workshop for Infant Baptism teams and courses to train those who teach persons with disabilities. The office also works with the Office for Child Advocacy on the child safety curriculum.

The Office of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs participated in the September 2007 pilgrimage to Rome, Constantinople and St. Petersburg. In November the staff presented a workshop on interfaith marriage at the Catechetical Conference. They also meet regularly with the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Commission on Christian Unity, the Massachusetts Interfaith Climate Action Network and other religious organizations. Challenges include finding funds to support membership in ecumenical groups and travel to ecumenical meetings. The office would like to engage more clergy and lay people in their work.

5,700 students attended Jason Evert's presentations on abstinence last fall. The Respect Life Education Office reports that sixty parishes have requested Respect Life speakers this year. The Office has trained fifty-five volunteers to assist with these programs. A curriculum for middle and junior high students was piloted last year. 'Theology of the Body' is being implemented for high school students.

Pastoral and Ministerial Services

Father Art Coyle gave an update on the various ministries that he advises.

- About 450 clergy participated in the two convocations held last fall by the Office of Clergy Support and Ongoing Formation. Meetings were then held in each of the five regions.
- Forty-seven men are currently enrolled in the two seminaries. Seven ordinations are planned for May.
- Twenty-eight new deacons will complete their formation in May 2008. A task force will review the deaconate training and make recommendations to enhance the program.
- Approximately thirty students in the Masters of Arts in Ministry program are taking courses designed to train parish business managers and pastoral associates.
- The Office for the New Evangelization of Youth and Young Adults, created in January 2008, is now working with all the Archdiocesan offices that minister to young people. Their mission is to coordinate and link these ministries to provide continuous and age-appropriate support for this population.
- As a result of the recommendations of the Marriage Committee in May 2007, the marriage guidelines for the Archdiocese are being updated.
- ‘Arise Together in Christ’ begins next week. Another part of the Bi-Centennial celebration is an exhibit on the ethnic history of the Archdiocese. During the year this exhibit will travel throughout the Boston area. Also, the Office for Cultural Diversity is sponsoring courses on Migration Theology.

Development

Scot Landry, who presented a report at the November APC meeting, was not able to attend tonight.

Regional Services

Sr. Marian explained the goal of Regional Services: to bring the services of the Archdiocese to the parishes. The Parish Staff Development Committee meets monthly to coordinate their efforts, share experiences and anticipate the needs of parishes. As the result of the reconfiguration process, twenty priests have responsibility for more than one parish. Several parishes are still ‘in transition’.

As Moderator of the APC, Sr. Marian and five APC representatives met in December with the Scituate affiliate of Voice Of The Faithful and parishioners of St. Mary’s Church. Approximately 65 people attended the meeting. Sr. Marian and APC members spoke about their experiences on the APC and fielded many questions. In conclusion, the audience seemed pleased with the work of the Council. A meeting with the VOTF in Winchester is planned for February.

Sr. Marian distributed an outline of suggested next steps in pastoral planning for the Archdiocese and a response sheet with specific questions. In preparing our responses, she asked members to think about how we can move ahead together as Church to make the Archdiocese more vibrant.

Catholic Citizenship

Congratulations were offered to Victor Pap and his wife on the birth of their second child.

Before joining Catholic Citizenship, Victor worked on the campaigns of both Democratic and Republican candidates for the Massachusetts legislature. In 2004, Ray Flynn started Catholic Citizenship for the purpose of educating Catholics about the importance of the political process. Check their website at www.catholiccitizenship.org. For a few years, the group primarily worked on the Marriage Amendment which was narrowly defeated in 2007. Since then, their emphasis has been to encourage Catholics to run for local office.

The organization does not endorse or support candidates, but instead teaches them how to raise funds and campaign effectively. Eleven of thirteen candidates recently aided by Catholic Citizenship won their elections. While Catholic Citizenship works on a grass roots level, the Massachusetts Catholic Conference represents the voices of the four Boston bishops to the legislature. Cardinal Sean commended the work of Catholic Citizenship, noting that their efforts benefit all of society.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM leaving time for APC committees to meet.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Robotham
Recording Secretary