

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council

May 22, 2008

Summary

Sister Marian Batho opened the meeting at 6:30PM. She informed the Council that Linda Riley of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Saugus had asked to resign from the APC due to health concerns.

Opening Remarks

Cardinal Sean reported that many Bostonians traveled to New York City to attend the Pope's Mass at Yankee Stadium in April. He expressed gratitude that the Pope's meeting with five clergy abuse survivors had gone well. On May 24th, Cardinal Sean anticipates ordaining seven new priests. Twenty-seven permanent deacons will be ordained later this spring and thirteen lay ecclesial ministers will graduate from the Masters of Arts in Ministry (MAM) program. Msgr. William Fay is currently conducting a review of all the available programs for training lay ecclesial ministers, including distance learning programs.

Fr. Brian Kiely is leading a committee to evaluate the catechetical materials being used in the Boston area. Sr. Clare Bertero, Secretary for Religious Education, will be administering tests to 5th, 8th and 10th grade students to determine which religious education programs are the most effective. Cardinal Sean recently had lunch with a Mormon bishop and learned about the Church of Latter Day Saints' Seminary program where LDS (Mormon) youth learn about their religion.

At a previous APC meeting, a member asked Cardinal Sean to suggest some books that would make a good "summer reading list" for lay people interested in church ministry. The book list follows these minutes.

Lastly, the Cardinal mentioned a Pastoral Planning Workshop to take place the next day. The Boston regional bishops, vicars forane, cabinet members and other key personnel will meet with Dr. Robert Miller, Director of Pastoral Planning for the Philadelphia Archdiocese. The Cardinal emphasized that the workshop continues the efforts of the Pastoral Planning Committee which reported to the APC in May 2007

Pastoral Planning Discussion

Sr. Marian outlined the five-fold focus of Dr. Miller's workshop:

1. the connection between pastoral planning and spiritual renewal (ARISE);
2. good pastoral planning is rooted in prayer;
3. the requirement for well-formed PPCs with a clear understanding of their mission and role;
4. appropriate formation of lay and clergy ministers;
5. effective communication of what is happening and why.

APC members were seated by region and asked to discuss questions pertaining to pastoral planning in their small groups. The small group comments were then shared with the meeting at large.

West Region:

- How can we determine what is a reasonable workload for a priest?
- Should a priest's duties be correlated to his particular talents?
- Parishioners do not understand the scope of a pastor's responsibilities.
- Most Catholics do not know how the Archdiocese is structured and administered.
- To maintain our existing faith communities, new staffing models are imperative.

South Region:

- All pastors need to be on board in the pastoral planning effort.
- Clarify that collaborative pastoral planning is not about closing parishes.
- What can be learned from parishes in vigil about the prerequisites for successful transition?
- Downplay parish identity; emphasize our common membership in Christ's one Body
- The pastoral planning process cannot be rushed.
- Parishes in Brockton have already regionalized some ministries, even across vicariates.

North Region:

- Collaboration is impeded by fear of parish closings.
- Sharing the goals and achievements of PPCs will foster the best practices.
- Teach pastors the dynamics of change management to enable better collaboration.
- Encouraging priests in a particular area to live together in a rectory offers psychological, financial and strategic benefits.
- A collaborative could easily share one financial manager and coordinate Mass schedules for maximum availability.

Central Region:

- Catholic schools should be part of the planning process.
- Allow flexibility and offer incentives for good planning.
- Emphasize the advantages technology provides in planning; make process less territorial.
- It should be relatively easy to regionalize Pre-Cana programs and social service programs.
- What does it mean when a priest is listed as "unavailable"?

Merrimack Region:

- Parishes in this region often have two or more priests.
- Priests and laity need to better understand how lay ecclesial ministers can contribute to the parish.
- Encourage PPCs to collaborate as well as pastors.
- Plans need to be flexible, but have clear guidelines.

Cardinal Sean added that the pastoral planning workshop would address issues such as analyzing the needs of each vicariate, accurate data collection, nurturing religious vocations and stewardship, the need for deacons, getting beyond inter-parish competition and appropriate salary ranges for lay ministers.

A question was asked about the possibility of married men or women helping to fill the need for priests. Cardinal Sean replied that although most of the leadership in parishes is carried out by

women, particularly in the areas of finance and faith formation, he thought that the Church would probably not change its position on married or women clergy. Today's world does not appreciate the value of chastity and virginity. The Archdiocese is organizing a seminar on understanding celibacy for the fall of 2009.

Parish Linkage

When Cardinal Sean first came to Boston, the APC identified better communication between the Archdiocese and parishes as a major goal. Since then, each APC member receives the names of several parishes with whom they are asked to establish contact. Tom Nutall and Kevin Casey offered some of their approaches to achieving successful communication with pastors and PPCs.

Someone asked if there was a central web directory with email addresses of the PPC vice-chairs, suggesting that APC members contact them if the pastor was not receptive. Monsignor Sheehan and Fr. Erikson responded emphatically that this should not be done. An APC member suggested that the Presbyteral Council and the APC occasionally meet jointly so they could better appreciate their respective roles. Msgr. Sheehan said "No, although this was a healthy idea, the two councils have very different styles." He answered the next question, "Why is it so difficult for APC members to meet with pastors?" citing "a certain tension between clergy and laity". Fr. Frank Silva recommended that members emphasize their APC role as "a consultative body".

Sister Marian suggested that she research the USCCB documents on best practices for diocesan pastoral councils in order to find what has been energizing and effective in other parts of the country. Cardinal Sean agreed that the USCCB documents should be consulted.

Closing remarks

Cardinal Sean made several announcements:

- The Pauline Year to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of St. Paul's birth starts this June.
- The Archdiocesan offices begin the move to Braintree late in June.
- The launch of the new Archdiocesan website will be delayed until September.
- The direct email initiative of Archdiocesan news and announcements will start in the next few weeks and will reach over 50 thousand people.
- He will travel to Quebec in June for the Eucharistic Congress and then in July he will accompany over 300 young people to World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia.
- Fr. Art Coyle will become Episcopal vicar of the Merrimack region as Bishop Allue leads the new Office for the Hispanic Apostolate and Evangelization this summer.

Fr. Erikson asked everyone to pray for a smooth transition to the Braintree Pastoral Center as the Archdiocese tries to refocus their priorities and realign their resources. He announced the appointment of Fr. Tom Foley to lead the Parish Life and Leadership Office. Sr. Marian thanked Cardinal Sean, Fr. Erikson and Msgr. Sheehan for their help in planning the meeting as well as for their participation. Cardinal Sean closed the meeting with prayer at 9:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Robotham
Recording Secretary

Cardinal Sean's Suggested Reading List

1. Duty of Delight, the Diary of Dorothy Day
2. A Life with Karol, by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz
3. Jesus of Nazareth, by Pope Benedict XVI
4. Civilization of Love, by Carl Anderson
5. Righteous Gentiles, by Ronald J. Rychlak
6. Hitler, the War, and the Pope, by Ronald J. Rychlak
7. Come Be My Light, by Mother Theresa
8. Dreams and Visions: Pastoral Planning for Lifelong Faith Formation, by Bill Huebsch