

**Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Meeting
June 11, 2009**

The meeting opened with Evening Prayer led by Cardinal Seán followed by dinner.

Sister Marian Batho, CSJ, Facilitator of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council:

- Introduced Br. Anthony Dusza, LBSF of the Little Brothers of St. Francis, a new member of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
- Offered words of congratulations to Libby Yon who graduated from the Masters in Ministry Program at St. John's Seminary in May.
- Welcomed back Bob Gadbois and extended the best wishes of all APC members for a full and speedy recovery.
- Asked for prayers for Tom Nuttall's wife who has some health concerns at this time.

Cardinal Seán offered Opening Remarks that included updates on the work of the Task Forces for Lay Formation and Religious Education. Cardinal Seán also introduced Fr. Brian Kiely, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Natick and Chair of the Religious Education Task Force.

Report of Religious Education Task Force

Fr. Kiely introduced the members of the committee who were present: Susan Abbott, Sister Marian Batho, Jean Lorrey, Fr. Stephen Salocks. Cardinal Seán formed the Religious Education Task Force in May 2008. The Task Force had four subcommittees: Parish Religious Education Programs, Religious Education Programs in Catholic Schools, Curriculum and Priests' Advisory Committee.

Each committee sent out a survey. The Priests' Advisory Committee spoke to over 125 pastors about parish religious education programs. The Sub-Committee for Catholic Schools contacted every Catholic School in the Archdiocese.

The report is positive and affirms the quality of many programs in the Archdiocese. The goal of every religious education program should be "making disciples who are on fire as disciples." Recruiting catechists is a challenge for many parishes. Catechists need ongoing support and formation.

Fr. Kiely affirmed the importance of the priest's role in religious education. Every text used for religious education in the Archdiocese of Boston is in conformity with the teachings of the Church.

The report identifies the following strengths in the religious education programs of the Archdiocese:

- The strong commitment to providing a heightened focus on the centrality of the Eucharist
- The effective pastoral leadership provided to us at both the national and local levels
- The dedicated support and oversight provided to our parishes and schools by the Office for Religious Education and the Catholic Schools Office.
- Conformance to the Catechism of the Catholic Church in all curriculums in parishes and schools.
- The strong commitment to ensuring that appropriate safety measures are implemented in protecting our children.

The Report identifies the following challenges:

- The cultural context in which we live presents significant challenges in promoting the Gospel message.
- The shift from a paradigm of religious education to one of faith formation as a life-long process needs to be understood
- Recruiting and retaining catechists who are true witnesses of the faith is becoming more difficult.
- A more effective use of technology is paramount in reaching out beyond the traditional classroom.

The Report includes the following recommendations:

- The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of our Catholic Faith. Programs must be focused on the development of a life-long relationship with Christ.
- Emphasis must be placed on the need for prayer as the recognition of our fundamental relationship with Christ.
- Recognition must be placed on the importance of Religious Education as part of life-long faith formation
- Recognition must be given to adequate articulation of the goal of genuine catechesis which is to bring people into more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.
- There is a critical need for formal catechetical training for all those involved in teaching and passing on the faith.
- There is a definite need to identify, develop, promote and advance a common understanding for the Church of Boston that evangelization is the agenda, not an “item” on the agenda.

“What do I Need to Hear?” Go Around

- Concern for the situation at Caritas and the proposed agreement with Centene
- The Priests’ Convocation was very well received.
- Kudos for the Master of Arts in Ministry Program. It is very friendly to adult learners

- More communication is needed around the work of the Improved Financial Relationship Committee (IFRC).
 - Fr. Erikson spoke about Regional Meetings to which parish pastoral and finance councils were invited to learn about the work of the IFRC.
- Congratulations on the blog and the ongoing improvement of communication in the Archdiocese.
- The Report of the Religious Education Task Force is well done. It is important to have a standard curriculum for catechesis.
- Could we have a Summer Reading List?

Closing Comments – Cardinal Seán spoke about:

- Priests’ Convocation and activities and programs to celebrate the Year of the Priest that will begin on June 19, the Feast of the Sacred Heart.
- Pentecost at the Cathedral included the Sacrament of Confirmation for 240 members of the Brazilian Community
- Ordination of 6 priests for the Archdiocese of Boston on May 23
- The graduation for the Master of Arts in Ministry Program

On-Line Learning Through the University of Dayton – Susan Abbott

**University of Dayton Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation
Online Course Information <http://vlc.udayton.edu>**

The Archdiocese of Boston currently partners with the University of Dayton making it possible for any Catholic in the Archdiocese to take an on-line course at a reduced rate (\$40.00) The not for credit courses are five weeks long, seminars are three weeks.

Over 60 courses and seminars are offered in these areas: Catechesis, Church Doctrine, Church History, Communication, Ecclesiology, Liturgy, Sacraments and Prayer, Marianist Studies, Morality, Scripture, World Religions and Social Justice.

These courses and seminars are a wonderful, user-friendly way to promote adult faith formation. They are also a valuable resource for lay ministry formation in the parish (catechists, liturgical ministers, parish council members).

Cycles remaining in this calendar year:

- Cycle 5: July 12 - Aug 15
- Cycle 6: Aug 30 - Oct 3
- Cycle 7: Oct 18 - Nov 21

From 8:15 – 9:15 p.m. committees met to discuss goals for 2009 – 2010.