

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
MINUTES
September 29, 2018
Pastoral Center

Present:

Archbishop Alexander Sample, Bishop Peter Smith, Clint Bentz, Eileen Clarkson, Dawn Crow, Michael Ferry, Alicia Garcia, Deacon Jerry Giger, Fr. John Henderson, Josh Jones, Gloria Lyons, Pamela McLean, Phoebe Meister, Terrance Merritt, Frank Rego, Fr. Cary Reniva, Nancy Smith, Patrick Walsh.

Staff present: Todd Cooper; absent: Msgr. Charles Lienert

Members Absent:

Jesse Villarreal, Paul Wilson.

Archbishop Sample offered Mass in the morning. Clint Bentz called the meeting to order following Mass.

Approval of Minutes & Agenda /Executive Committee Report

The Minutes of the May 12, 2018 meeting were approved, as was the agenda for today's meeting.

- We will forego our normal formation time at the beginning of the meeting to allow adequate time for discussion of the sex abuse scandal

Sex Abuse Scandal Discussion

Archbishop Sample said that he hopes everyone had a chance to read his letter, listen to his homily and read his recent Sentinel column regarding the sex abuse scandal.

[Editor's note: the letter and homily can be found here: <https://archdpdx.org/archdiocese-responds-to-clergy-abuse-report> . The column is here: <https://www.catholic sentinel.org/Content/Faith-Spirituality/Archbishop-Sample-s-Column/Article/No-fear-of-the-truth/4/253/36401>]

Archbishop Sample's Opening Remarks

- The Archbishop expressed that in his 28 ½ years as a priest and 12 ½ as a bishop, this has been the most difficult time he's had as a priest. The scandal has taken a toll on him. In his previous diocese, he was the point person for the bishop when the abuse scandal broke in 2002. As a priest, he met with many victims, staffed the diocesan review board, and prepared cases to send to Rome. Back then, the focus was primarily on the priest abusers. Now, as a bishop, the spotlight resulting from the current scandal is on the bishops and their failures to adequately protect children. People are very angry.
- Without trying to minimize the horror of the abuse, it should be noted that this is not a whole new wave of abuse. That is the perception, but these are new revelations of abuse that took place many years ago. The number of new cases since 2002 is small. The problem is that some cases of abuse never came to light in 2002. With regard to McCarrick, it is

unfathomable to the Archbishop how he rose through the ranks and wielded such great power and influence in the Church. For the upcoming meeting of the US Bishops, he wants to carry in his heart all the anger and disgust of the people of western Oregon.

- All credible accusations against priests have been publicized in the Archdiocese. Since 2002 and the subsequent bankruptcy, we have had three instances of clergy misconduct. All three were dealt with swiftly and forcefully. They can no longer serve as priests.
- Victims must be considered first. We can't let them be forgotten.
- Some say of the abuse "Well, that was 30 years ago, why are they bringing it up now?" But unless you sit across from a victim and hear their story and the devastation it has brought to their life, it may be difficult to understand.
- We can't let the scandal divide us as Catholics and be pitted against each other. The Evil One is exploiting the anger to divide us. Anyone who already has a grievance against the Church is using this to push an agenda. This is true of the more progressive and the more traditional sides.
- We must deal with the scandal on two fronts: the practical and the spiritual. We priests and bishops need to carry the load of prayer and penance. I have asked priests to re-introduce the Prayer of St. Michael after Masses. Pope Francis has asked every Catholic in the world to pray the rosary daily in October, the month of Mary.
- The scandal seems worse this time around. Perhaps because we thought it was done. Priests are suffering in this. People view them with suspicion. The people are suffering, too.
- The Archbishop is hoping to have an impact at the USCCB meeting in November.

Discussion and Comments of APC Members

- A lot of people are collectively holding their breath to see what happens nationally and in Rome.
- A few dioceses have been forced to be transparent. Why are we only transparent when forced?
- The problem is what the leadership continues to NOT do.
- The Church may need an objective outside organization to evaluate us.
- The "Dallas Charter" for the protection of children young people was developed by the US Bishops and calls for care of victims, safe environment training, and an annual audit.
- What are the teeth of the audit? In non-compliance situations?
- For good priests, it limits their ability to be charitable and to serve.
- The biggest complaint that the Archdiocese gets regarding the requirement for safe environment training for staff and volunteers is "Why do we have to do this?"
- Who determines what is a credible accusation?
- Diocesan review boards are required and made up mostly of lay people not employed by the diocese.
- Bishops were exempted from the charter – because only the Pope has authority over them.
- Some individual priests have not addressed the scandal from the pulpit, but many have.
- There are priests who are angry. Some don't know how to deal with it.
- People are holding their money. They don't trust the bishops. How do I have a voice? How do I speak my anger? By withholding money.
- There seems to be lots of anger about "the bishops" in general, but confidence in Archbishop Sample.

- USCCB – they’re missing the point. Anger that the bishops didn’t handle this adequately in 2002.
- An attitude could develop if the bishops look to an outside organization to handle things that they can wash their hands and no longer take responsibility for the reform. The bishops need to stay on top of it themselves.
- Some are saying “the bishops made mistakes”. No! The bishops participated in grave evil.
- Victims must be listened to. I’m glad the Church is doing something.
- Sometimes, what is needed is to hear someone say “I’m so sorry this happened to you.”
- A priest gave a homily saying the sexual revolution opened the doors for this. Some felt like he was making an excuse for it.
- The way the media presented it was that 300 priests and 1000 victims happened right now.
- If you leave the Church, it is less. It is not less because of the scandal.
- An ecumenical group promised prayers for the Catholic Church and indicated that they, too are impacted by the scandal because in general, it puts people of faith in a bad light.
- Divine renovation is at work. Yes, the Evil One is at work, but so is the Holy Spirit – and in a much more powerful way. We must be strong witnesses.
- There is no vehicle for sharing my doubts about the faith. We need a forum.
- We are the Church. We must work together. Be united. Be strong, your faith is important.
- Seminarians are part of the solution – not part of the problem.
- Focus on the victims.
- At the USCCB meeting, can the bishops take on a penance as a sign of commitment to renew the Church?
- Not many of our people understand the significant steps the Church has taken to eliminate abuse. We need a mass mailing to let them know.
- The bishops need to put their house in order – be pro-active and aggressive because it is the right thing to do.
- The Blessed Mother is helping us. We must make the reforms ourselves or it will be done to us.
- God is powerfully at work in the Church. God allows evil to bring a greater good. We are called to holiness.
- This must be about renewal of the episcopacy. God: Didn’t get it right in 2002. Try again. The needed renewal didn’t come.
- We can’t walk away from the Eucharist. Jesus walks with us. We’re carrying his cross.
- The Archbishop commented that this discussion has been one of the most important had by the APC. He thanked the council members for their input.

Annual Vicariate Meetings of Pastoral Councils

Albany-Corvallis/Santiam - Terence Merritt

Santiam – 21 people. Marriage prep is tough. Most parishioners are older. Ministry to the elderly is needed. Difficulties at Regis – St. Mary’s. Attendance is down 50%. Rick Schindler is the principal. They will know you are my disciples by your love for one another.

Albany-Corvallis – Following the liturgical guidelines, priests are organizing to have a Mass in the vicariate on a Monday. The recent Extraordinary Minister training was excellent. In general, training for ministry skills is needed.

Beaverton Suburban – Nancy Smith

Meeting will be on Nov. 3

Downtown/SE Portland – Josh Jones

SE Portland – The cultural diversity piece of the pastoral priorities seems to have gotten lost. No mention of care for the elderly or pro-life issues. Communications improvement is needed. We need to foster a culture of vicariate collaboration. There is information overload. Prioritize info. One parish had event calendar items rejected by the Pastoral Center for inclusion on the web. We can only do what our pastors allow. Any talk of young adult ministry leads to talk of high school youth. Young adults are neglected. We need to clearly define “young adult” and what to do to reach them.

Downtown – no meeting.

Archbishop: By identifying priorities, we give them an extra push, but we don't neglect everything else.

Metropolitan Eugene – Pat Walsh

Eugene – 18 people attended. Jason Kidd from the Pastoral Center attended via Skype. Communication is key, and it is the biggest challenge. Flocknotes can be used as a tool. Fr. Ron Nelson will update the vicariate website. The vicariate will meet quarterly. We looked at the priorities. How can we do this together? The priorities are in line with what we are doing. How can we do them bigger and better as a vicariate? Ideas include: Re-institute the Miriam & Andrew dinners for vocations. Youth ministry projects together – pizza & game nights. Have one or two RCIA programs – someone entering the Church is not entering a parish, but the larger Church. We need to get more Eugene/Springfield info and coverage in the Sentinel. Good meeting.

Metropolitan Salem – Pam McLean

Salem – 30 people attended. There are new pastoral councils. Each parish shared what they were focusing on. Youth ministry is important. We need to reach more high school kids. There is lots of money out there. How can we build? How can we ensure Catholic education is faith-based and Catholic? There has been help for the new pastor at St. Vincent's. Lots of good communication. The meeting helped the new people know that the vicariate is working together. We discussed the sex abuse scandal and the Pope's letter. One of the priests struggled about what to say in his homily. Fr. Gary gave a great talk about it that is on the St. Ed's website. This was so hard to deal with in 2002 and now, we're still trying to figure it out.

South Coast – Dawn Crow

South Coast – well attended. All ten parishes represented. Have kept vicariate up to date on all that is happening. Of the two-hour meeting, 90 minutes spent on vicariate business. Much of the time was spent discussing why priests shouldn't give blessings to people in the Communion line. Miriam Marston and Deacon Felix Garcia attended. The “Formed” program was discussed. When parishes were asked if they are doing well with the priorities, not one hand went up. There is confusion about how to use the pastoral priorities document. One parish is focusing on families.

Archbishop Sample: It falls to the pastors to provide leadership. As a diocese, we are not yet used to thinking with a unified vision and plan. Are we a loose confederation? Or a unified Body of Christ? Communion and unity are needed.

Tualatin Valley – Michael Ferry

Tualatin Valley – 30 people attended. Catechesis is key. “Formed” program is good tool. Faith formation and Catholic schools need to be connected. The idea of parents as primary educators needs to be reinforced. The Divine Worship handbook should be in Spanish. Some disappointment that the hospitality element of divine worship got no attention. Identify best practices for hospitality. Look to Protestant communities for borrowing ideas. How to do things at the vicariate level? Share events. Called to Protect should be in multiple languages. Tribunal resources (staffing) should be in Spanish. Mindset for ministry is English language first; Spanish is an afterthought. Marriage & family life should speak of cohabitation. Change “same sex marriage” terminology to “same sex union.” For vocations, more materials needed. Is there a directory for religious and vocations directories? More priests are needed in prison ministry. We need to train laity in works of mercy. Consistent standards for religious education are needed. We need resources for Catholics. How do we retain children after First Communion?

Archdiocesan Pastoral Assembly – Clint Bentz

We will discuss this at our next meeting since time is short. The Catholic Leadership gathering has been postponed. During the sex abuse crisis, it might seem out of place to announce and hold such a gathering. People will want a response to the scandal first.

Oregon Catholic Conference – Todd Cooper

OCC has supported statewide ballot Measure 106 to limit taxpayer funding of abortion. Vote YES on M106.

Archbishop’s Report

The Archbishop attended the Quinto (V) Encuentro (Fifth Encounter) in Dallas, Texas. The event in Dallas was the culmination of a series of events calling Spanish speaking Catholics and the whole Church to become missionary disciples and to encounter Christ within the community. Over 100 bishops and thousands of people attended. The focus was to find the best ways to live as missionary disciples. Outcomes were: 1) Great need for forming leaders within the Hispanic community. 2) The Church must stop thinking we are providing ministry “to” the Hispanic community. We are not an Anglo Church taking care of visitors. They are the Church! We must be one Church. We are not two communities worshipping in one building. We must integrate them into the full life of the Church. Their family and community values are a gift to the Church. 3) Young Adults – we will lose them if we don’t engage them. They have lots of gifts. Our Church leadership and advisory boards at the diocesan level do not reflect the fact that 50% of our Catholics are Spanish speakers.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 3:15 p.m.

Next meeting of the APC: Saturday, November 17, 2018.