

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon  
Archdiocesan Pastoral Council  
MINUTES  
October 28, 2017

Present:

Archbishop Alexander Sample, Bishop Peter Smith, Clint Bentz, Eileen Clarkson, Dawn Crow, Michael Ferry, Deacon Jerry Giger, Melinda Guillen, Josh Jones, Msgr. Charles Lienert, Gloria Lyons, Phoebe Meister, Terrance Merritt, Frank Rego, Nancy Smith, Sister Marcia Ternes, FSE, Jesse Villarreal, Paul Wilson.

Staff present: Todd Cooper, Anne Marie Van Dyke

Members Absent:

Alicia Garcia, Father John Henderson, Pamela McLean, Father Cary Reniva, Patrick Walsh.

Bishop Smith offered Mass in the morning.

Clint Bentz called the meeting to order at 10:18 am

Mr. Bentz inquired of Sister Marcia Ternes how the Franciscan Sisters at Bridal Veil had dealt with their evacuation from the recent wildfires in the Gorge. Sister Marcia updated those present on the situation and is happy to report that all the Sisters are back at the Bridal Veil house though the road is still cordoned off for non-residents.

An announcement was made that Melinda Guillen, a council member is now also an employee of the Archdiocese Pastoral Center, working in the Clergy Personnel Office. Melinda is reported to be a terrific asset to the office.

### **Approval of Minutes / Agenda /Executive Committee Report**

The Minutes of the July 22, 2017 meeting were reviewed by the members. It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

During a review of the Agenda, it was decided to switch the agenda items 'Pastoral Priorities Discussion' and 'Annual Vicariate Meetings of Pastoral Councils' so that the Annual Vicariate Meetings would be addressed first. This approach would leave time at the end for discussion if anyone had an issue they wished to bring before the Pastoral Council.

Archbishop Sample stated that clarification and expectations of priorities are needed.

### **APC Formation**

Clint Bentz reviewed the introduction of *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), with the council members. He explained that this is an Apostolic exhortation that encourages the Church to take action, but does not contain doctrine. *Evangelii Gaudium* was written in 2013 after the Synod of Bishops. It was the first writing from Pope Francis and was written to the bishops, clergy, consecrated religious and laity.

There are three main points covered in the introduction:

1. The Church's mission is transformational, not custodial.
2. There is a crisis of communal commitment to the problems and challenges in front of us.
3. Proclamation of the Gospel is what evangelization is.
4. There is a social dimension; the Gospel is not just words, it can change the world.

The joy of the Gospel sets us free. Desolation and anguish are a danger. We are being given an invitation to renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament predicted the JOY of salvation would be rampant in Messianic times. Our society has all sorts of things to give pleasure, but that does not bring joy. Giving our life away is the source of personal fulfillment.

Pastoral Ministry is inflamed by the Spirit. The already baptized must be helped to experience a conversion to bring joy to their hearts. They have the right to receive the Gospel and a duty to proclaim the Gospel. We must move from a Pastoral Ministry of Conservation to a decidedly missionary ministry. It is a radical call.

For the next meeting, Mr. Bentz would like the council members to read the first chapter of *Evangelii Gaudium* and be ready to discuss it.

## **Vicariate Reports**

The APC Area Representatives gave the highlights of their reports of the annual vicariate meetings of the pastoral councils.

### **Albany/Corvallis / Santiam – Mr. Terrence Merritt**

The Albany/Corvallis vicariate held their meeting last May. One of the concerns raised at that meeting regarded disability access, disability parking, hearing assistance, wheelchair access inside the church and involvement of the disabled in worship.

The Albany/Corvallis vicariate would like to see comprehensive formation and training and education and an increased understanding of the Mass by the lay faithful. They also would like the knowledge and reverence of the liturgical ministers increased. They want focus on helping couples with their marriages and child rearing, resources for struggling marriages and resources for those with mental health issues. It was agreed that a culture of mercy needs to be developed at both the local and vicariate level with the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The vicariate wants to promote the involvement of young adults and college students in parish life with the creation of excitement in the Catholic young adult community.

The Santiam vicariate meeting raised the issue of communication within the diocese being critical. They want communication with the parishes enhanced through the use of the website, emails, social media and communication with other churches through an archdiocesan network.

Archbishop Sample said the report had a lot of good ideas, but how do we encourage follow-up? Issues bubble up to the surface; is there a response? A lively discussion ensued.

Msgr. Lienert said that some of these issues are very concrete. There are hearing recommended compatible systems that if installed in churches, a person with hearing aids could go into any church and be able to hear. The Office for People with Disabilities could help parishes with ramping suggestions for churches. Some long-term statistics are needed.

The Office of Communications could work with the parishes on communications. A suggestion was made that on the parish level, there could be a person accountable to distribute the weekly mailings to the staff people who would have an interest in the topic. The question was posed as to whether there is an easy way to send an event in a mailing to a specific person. Todd Cooper suggested going to the link, copying the link and sending the link to the person you want to see it.

As to the issue of feedback to the vicariates, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) representative should take an active role. The APC rep is to communicate action back to the vicariate. Many of the issues are common threads with parishes throughout the diocese.

Permanence needs to be given to the ideas that bubble up. They could be published in the Pastoral Council section of the website. People have difficult time finding the Pastoral Council page on the website. Communications will be asked to make Pastoral Council drop down tab off the main page.

### **Beaverton-Suburban – Ms. Nancy Smith**

The Beaverton Suburban vicariate meeting has not happened yet.

The suggestion was made that the outgoing APC members need to help the incoming members know how to setup area vicariate meetings. There should be templates or guidelines.

### **Columbia County/North Coast - Gloria Lyons**

The Columbia County/North Coast held their area meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Our Lady of Victory Parish in Seaside. This vicariate has made assignments to different parishes in the vicariate as to what their main focus will be. Sacred Heart – Youth programs, (this includes Religious Education programs and follow-up with parents), Seaside – Marriage and Family Life; Astoria received a new parish priest two weeks ago and the Parish Council there is in flux.

### **Downtown Portland – Mr. Josh Jones**

The Downtown vicariate met on May 20, 2017. This was the first full area meeting for the Downtown vicariate in ten years. The concerns expressed at the meeting included: Catechesis and Faith Formation. People don't know what the Archdiocese is doing. They suggested an all-diocese bulletin.

Catechesis and Faith Formation – the top priorities were training for catechists, and standardized sacramental prep. A suggestion was made to have the diocese send out a weekly standardized printout on catechesis that could be standard in parish bulletins.

Divine Worship – how do you find people to commit to a schedule? Alternative ways must be investigated.

Marriage and Family Life - The top concern expressed was guidance on LGBTQ issues and mental health resources. Suggestions included: a list of Catholic counselors provided – on the website? Pro – bono options for the poor would be helpful. There is a sense that people would like to hear from their pastors on LGBTQ issues. It was questioned whether the pastors needed encouragement from the bishop that they are allowed and encouraged to speak on a controversial topic.

Vocations – There was a request for opportunities to meet religious communities outside of the Archdiocese.

Works of Mercy – The strongest initiatives were to increase participation and incorporating the corporal and spiritual works of mercy into family life. A concern that people released from prison have ongoing ministry was expressed. There is a need for works of mercy but parishes need to communicate with each other what they are doing

Young Adult Ministry – Again there was support for increased communications and the idea of forming students in a parish environment.

### **Southeast Portland – Mr. Josh Jones**

The Southeast Portland vicariate met on June 17, 2017. Representatives were present from eight parishes in the vicariate. After a welcome, prayer and introductions, those present asked the APC representative (Josh Jones) for clarification on a number of issues. On the issue of catechesis, there were questions as to whether the priority included teaching/catechesis on Church social doctrine. Mr. Jones stated it was his understanding that it should. The standardization of catechetical materials was also questioned. Is the purpose to provide suggestions/guidelines or is the goal to mandate specific curriculums for all Religious Education? Will the minority community be included in the process of identifying materials for minority communities?

After voting, the initiatives identified as having the highest priority in the Southeast Vicariate were formation of catechists and catechetical resources.

**Divine Worship** – this discussion was brief with little need for clarification. Liturgical Music and Culture of Hospitality were the priorities.

**Marriage and Family Life** – Concerns expressed were that couples should already have some formation before marriage prep begins, and expecting a marriage prep program to be successful without that foundation is unrealistic. After voting, the top priorities that emerged were to articulate Church teaching and provide pastoral care for LGBTQ issues and to more properly prepare Catholics for marriage. There was concern that the way the initiatives were written, some were repetitive and so the vote was being split among similar initiatives.

**Vocations** – After clarification that religious vocations were being discussed as marriage had already been covered under Marriage and Family Life, the priorities identified were 1) Arranging encounters with those in religious life and 2) Providing formation on how to discern a vocation.

**Works of Mercy** – the identified priorities were: 1) Increase participation in programs, and 4) Incorporate works of mercy into family life.

**Young Adult Ministry** – After a brief discussion the top initiatives were 1) Young Adult Liturgy Conference, and 2) Hosting regional events.

### **East Portland Suburban / South Portland Suburban - Ms. Phoebe Eufemia Meister**

Ms. Meister is meeting with the East Portland Suburban vicariate. She has been going to the Pastoral Council meetings in South Portland Suburban parishes, sitting in on their meetings and listening to the needs expressed. The next vicariate meeting is November 2, 2017. The parishes are each busy with their own schedules.

The Gresham and Sandy parishes are facing challenges ministering to the large Hispanic population.

## **Metropolitan Eugene – Todd Cooper gave the report for Patrick Walsh**

The Metro Eugene Annual Vicariate Meeting of Pastoral Councils was Saturday, September 30, 2017 at St. Paul Parish. Twenty-five parish representatives including six priests and a deacon participated.

The group was broken up into six groups with each group given one Pastoral Priority to review, discuss and provide feedback to the large group. During the large group discussion, it became clear that the common theme was a need for more communication between parishes to share best practices, resources and expertise for parish operations and to share the same for sacramental prep, religious education and other faith formation programs. This promised to lead to cost efficiency and consistent education and training.

The small group reports follow:

### **Catechesis and Faith Formation**

This group is enthusiastic about the re-opening of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis and Faith Formation and felt it must include consistent Confirmation preparation throughout the diocese and faith formation opportunities for adults. More multi-lingual (and simultaneous) translation resources are needed for Mass and for educational purposes. Parishes need to be informed as to resource availability and affordability.

### **Divine Worship**

There should be standardized training and expectations for liturgical ministers and musicians. Music must be 'sing-able' by the average parishioner. More local workshops on training for liturgical ministers and musicians are requested. Homilies need to combine teaching with a real call to action. Hospitality is important to build community.

### **Marriage and Family Life**

Training is needed at the parish level on how to lovingly address the LGBTQ culture. *Courage* chapters should be formed as needed in parishes or on the vicariate level.

It was suggested that a vicariate initiative could be that engaged couples, young married couple and those struggling in their marriages meet with a married couple from a parish in the vicariate that is not their own parish to help with marriage prep, to help navigate the challenges of marriage for couples already married and to give support to the struggling marriages.

### **Vocations**

Vocations must have ongoing discussion and promotion. Families and Catholic Schools should present religious vocations as career options as easily as becoming a teacher, doctor, etc.

### **Works of Mercy**

Education is needed about the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and how to live them. Catholic Community Services or St. Vincent de Paul activities offer practical opportunities to locally live the works of mercy. Resources and education are needed to address some specific issues that parishes are dealing with. Some of these issues could be addressed on the vicariate level and some need to be handled at the parish level.

### **Catholic Young Adult Ministry**

Engaging young adults where they live and using social media are important with special emphasis on using the proper message.

## **Metropolitan Salem – Pamela McLean**

In the absence of Ms. McLean, there was no report from the Metropolitan Salem vicariate.

## **Northeast Portland – Mr. Frank Rego**

The Northeast Portland vicariate met on May 27, 2017 at St. Rose of Lima Parish. They identified their priorities as 1. New Evangelization – outreach to the fallen away and unchurched. This is not currently listed as one of the initiatives, but it was a priority to them, and 2. Establishing leaders capable of proclaiming the faith.

### **Catechesis and Faith Formation**

Training is needed to empower people to reach out to the disenfranchised or disinterested. The group agreed that parish shopping on the basis of catechesis programs is a ‘real thing’. We need standardized processes, but parishes should be free to design the content that works for them. People don’t feel comfortable responding to the call to teach because their own formation is lacking.

### **Divine Worship**

- 1) Welcoming: how do we present an environment where ALL are welcome?
- 2) There needs to be a focus on knowledge and an appreciation of the Mass to lead people to an encounter with Christ.

The group felt that a focus on fixing music is a red herring – not what draws people in and keeps them coming back. The consensus was that the reason people come to Church is the homily.

### **Marriage and Family**

In a culture where LGBT is prominent, there must be development of the family.

### **Vocations**

Every parish should have a Vocations Committee. Archbishop Sample interjected that the former ‘Andrew Dinners’ has now become ‘Vocation Nights’, which now includes Miriam Dinners for girls. The evening begins with Mass and a meal. After dinner the group splits and the boys meet with Archbishop and priests and the girls meet with Archbishop and some Sisters.

### **Works of Mercy**

We need to create a culture of mercy, not a program. Mercy is who we are. We don’t need to process everything.

## **South Coast – Dawn Crow**

Ms. Crow reported that all ten South Coast parishes had representatives at the Vicariate meeting and that all priorities were reflected in the pastoral initiatives.

They had a discussion on the help they feel they need from the Archdiocese. The South Coast needs resources, training and program ideas. They request this in-person from Archdiocesan staff. Webinars could be used effectively.

Some parishes are in decline and need monetary help for basic interaction with the Archdiocese. They need computers and computer programs that will assist with this interaction. Currently there are ten parishes and five priests so they share resources. They share a marriage preparation minister and have a monthly on-line sharing of liturgical music ideas.

Ms. Crow expressed her personal concerns about the functioning of the parish councils that are dealing with everything including maintenance issues. There has been quite a bit of turnover in priests at the South Coast and that means some of them have not had much experience with Pastoral Councils. In her own parish, the Pastoral Council Chair is a convert and so has no experience to help with direction. She stated that some mentoring would be helpful. She suggests that someone from the archdiocese come in and get all the vicariate's pastoral councils together for some in-depth training. It would be great if the pastoral council could help the pastor assess the pastoral needs of the community and support practical ways to implement them.

Msgr. Lienert observed that it would be good to have a really strong Area Vicar. In his experience as a pastor, he said that working with a council is an art that needs to be learned.

The South Coast has some issues of isolation, suspicion and distrust in the wider culture as well as within the Church. Possibly a series of town halls could help the South Coast.

### **Southern Oregon – Paul Wilson**

The Southern Oregon Vicariate meeting was held six months ago on April 28, 2017. There was a good attendance.

Those assembled came up with the top two initiatives for each priority. At the time they met, none of the initiatives focused on end of marriage issues, i.e., divorce, annulments. There is concern over the time it takes to process an annulment and many find the process more cumbersome than they expected. Archbishop Sample said those concerns have been heard by himself and the Tribunal and staff is working on it. The Tribunal is currently under-staffed and overwhelmed with the sheer number of cases.

### **Tualatin Valley – Michael Ferry**

The Tualatin Valley Vicariate met on June 1, 2017.

**Catechesis and Faith Formation** The Vicariate came to an agreement on Catechesis and Faith Formation that there should be a focus on training of catechists during the summer and moving the Catechetical Conference to summer would help. The conference should keep costs down or be free for catechists.

### **Marriage and Family Life**

The Vicariate discussed a uniform Marriage Formation program. Marriage Formation should convey the importance of marriage and educate young adults about that importance. There should be an emphasis on Adult Faith Formation and the RCIA. A teaching of Theology of the Body is important.

There should be a list available of Christian based counselors and /or work with NAMI.

### **Divine Worship**

The Vicariate discussed hospitality and 'Welcome Booths' or information booths for newcomers. An altar server "boot camp" would be helpful with programs that make it fun for children, not like school.

### **Works of Mercy**

The focus of works of mercy should be on prevention and being pro-active, especially on issues of suicide prevention. There are state, county and city resources that should be utilized.

### **West Portland, Suburban – Eileen Clarkson**

Seven parishes in this vicariate sent representatives to a May, 2017 meeting. They agreed there needs to be a focus on Formation and Catechesis and that Confirmation should be celebrated at a lower age.

### **Yamhill/Marion County – Jesse Villarreal**

All twelve parishes of the vicariate sent representatives to the May, 2017 meeting. There were 47 people present. They brought up the same issues and needs that have already been expressed by other vicariates. There are staff problems in some parishes and trained catechists are an issue.

### **Divine Worship**

There was an agreement that some policing of the liturgy should be done and that parishes must obey instructions and follow the rules of the GIRM. We must stop softening the rules.

### **LUNCH**

### **Pastoral Priorities Discussion – Todd Cooper**

The early draft of the Pastoral Priorities was done last spring and they were unofficially released before being finalized. Some pastors are overwhelmed by the priorities.

Discussion ensued and it was stated that not all priorities are created equally. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council does not establish the mission of a parish and the pastors should have some flexibility to determine what is most important for their parish to focus on. The priorities should be a guide for the parishes.

A revised draft of the Pastoral Priorities was distributed and is included and considered part of these minutes. The changes that were made included:

Page 1 – The preamble in italics, the second paragraph was moved from the end of the document to be the second paragraph of the document.

Page 4 – Marriage and Family Life Priority – Initiative B

The second sentence, the word “counselors” was added and the phrase, “while supporting their life of faith.”

Under the focus section of Initiative B: the phrase was added, “that have struggling marriages and /or are dealing with issues such as depression”.

Archbishop Sample asked if divorced and re-married couples referred to under Initiative B refers to a couple re-married in the Church or a couple civilly re-married in a marriage that has not been validated by the Church. This needs to be clarified. In the focus section, a second sentence needs to be added: “Divorced and civilly re-married Catholic to approach the Tribunal to regulate their marriage.”

Todd Cooper pointed out to those present that Initiative E on page 4 was originally Initiative A, but he did not want to lead the Priority with it, so the initiative was moved to E.

Page 6 – One of the changes on this Pastoral Priority was that Initiative B was originally Initiative D.

Under Initiative E, additions should be made to include programs and resources available through state agencies and resources that could be cultivated.

The first two paragraphs of this Pastoral Priority (Works of Mercy) should be seen in the overall mission of evangelization.

Archbishop Sample stated that this pastoral priority is about creating missionary disciples; we must strengthen the Church itself, and articulate beautiful inspiring liturgies and works of mercy. We must renew ourselves, welcome people and live justly in the world.

This document is the priorities. It is up to the Archbishop and the staff to figure out how to implement the priorities.

It was moved by Terence Merritt and seconded to submit the Pastoral Initiatives as they have been amended to Archbishop Sample. Motion passed unanimously.

The Pastoral Initiatives will be taken to the Priest's Convocation next year.

### **Updates and Announcements – Todd Cooper**

Parish leadership gatherings are a sustained effort.

Synod on Young People Consultation – There is a sense that we “heard from the choir”.

Catechetical Conference had 500 attendees.

A Task Force has been assembled to deal with the pervasiveness of pornography among youth. It has become an impediment to evangelization. We need to raise awareness of the problem and help people deal with it. Some concrete things we can do are get the information out there: raise awareness of the problem among parents and put them in touch with resources, helpful tools, and speakers on how to overcome the problem. Confessors are in need of support and training. Pornography is addictive.

### **Archbishop's Report – Archbishop Alexander Sample**

Archbishop Sample reported that we have a new Director of Divine Worship, Msgr. Gerard O'Connor and a new chancellor has been chosen. The new chancellor is a woman religious. We also possibly have a new Director of Youth/Young Adult Ministry. The Superintendent of Schools, Brother William Dygert, is retiring at the end of the school year so a Search Committee will be forming to find and hire a new superintendent.

Archbishop Sample is currently in discussion with the priests over the need for long-term strategic pastoral planning. We need to look at the configuration of all the parishes, and our personnel resources. With the resources we have, how do we take care of the people of God best for the next 5, 10, 25 years? If we were starting over, how would we organize geographically? How to best configure ourselves for the future? We are currently in a re-active mode. We need a plan going forward.

There is the possibility of bringing in a professional consultant for the parish, vicariate and archdiocesan levels.

**Next meeting – Needs to be scheduled. Members will be notified when a date is set.**

**Meeting closed with a prayer and adjourned at 3:00 p.m.**

