

Cluster 21 Pastoral Council
September 16, 2007, 2 – 4 p.m.
Guild Hall, Cathedral

Present: Fr. Fred Morse, Bill Schulz, Peter Donnelly, Ray Rier, Chris Hoppin, Paul Rowland, Penny Kinney, Fr. Kevin Martin, Peter Lancia, Dan Chuhta, Gene Fetteroll, Sr. Theresa Rand, Msgr. Paul Stefanko, Fr. Richard Bertrand, S.J., Lori Arsenault

Minutes:

1. Opening prayer by Msgr. Paul

2. Introductions around the table

3. “Why are we doing this?” Bill Schulz (Bill Schulz is the Diocesan Director of Parish Planning for Evangelization):

- Currently 29 clusters in the state formed from 135 parishes. As of July 1, there are 110 parishes, not by closure but by mergers. Considerable merger activity is expected by July 2008, when there may then be 75 – 80 parishes. In 2010, there is expected to be about 55 – 60 parishes. It is anticipated that there would be 64 active Diocesan priests in 2010.
- One of the reasons each cluster should have a single pastoral council and single finance council is because there will be one pastor. A pastoral council is different than a parish council, which is more of a “doing” body. A pastoral council’s purpose is “to promote community, to be a sign and witness of unity, and to assist the pastor in pastoral planning.” Consultative body to the pastor, and unifying structure of the Roman Catholic community.
- One charge of the cluster pastoral council is to be a positive witness, more of a visioning / dreaming council than a parish council. Challenge over next year or two is to develop out of the five communities a sense of the larger community.
- Two handouts given: “What is a Cluster/Parish Pastoral Council?” and “A tool for the New Evangelization provided by the Diocese of Portland Office of Parish Planning for Evangelization.”

Questions and discussion

- Bill’s charge is to facilitate the forming of clusters throughout the state
- Question: When will there be a single pastor for the cluster? Unknown.
- Question: Has the question of a single pastor come up with regard to the religious orders present? Not really, though the Franciscan’s have now left the cluster, and the two remaining religious priests seem to be willing to work as parochial vicars.
- Further discussion was held about the numbers of priests in the Diocese.

Review of planning process – Peter Lancia:

- Early in the planning process the eight Portland churches divided into two clusters, Cluster 21 and Cluster 28.

- Diversity makes this cluster unique: Polish National Church, Italian National Church, Cathedral for the Diocese, one merged parish, one island parish... a rich fabric. One of the themes of the planning was that the unique character of each part of the cluster should be celebrated and preserved, not wanting any of the communities to lose their identity
- Have more clergy in our cluster because of the religious orders. Cluster staff will eventually be Pastor, Parochial Vicars, Business Coordinator, Parish Life Coordinator. By July of 2009 there will be a Business Coordinator and Parish Life Coordinator. Response from the bishop encourages getting that happening sooner. Other staff currently in parishes would be retained, or reduced through attrition. Eventually a cluster finance council would be established
- The plan is to retain the current facilities
- Cathedral School is an integral part of the cluster.
- Churches are currently maintaining their regular mass schedules, but may be changed. Other parish services will be consolidated, and cluster activities will be planned.
- The formation of this cluster council is happening according to the plan. The work as a cluster has been collaborative, and all of the parishes have worked together toward collaborating, and not closing doors.
- Communications is key. The same information must be given out in each church.
- Work toward positive change.

Comments from Bill:

- Comment: Some parishes around the state are currently doing human resource audits with the assistance of the Chancery Human Resources department. This is available to Cluster 21.
- Question: Do other clusters have BC and PLC before they have one pastor? Yes. Bath/Brunswick is in a similar situation and are hiring a BC while not having a single pastor.
- Comment: Finance council not an immediate concern until there is a single pastor. It is the one canonically required council, needing at least three people, the pastor and two members of the community. Until there are common expenses, this need not be pushed. Each parish will continue to have a finance council. Cluster finance council will have two people from each parish.

4. Mission statement discussion was tabled, and will be worked on by a committee.

Break

5. Council leadership and organization

- Recommendation was made to provide for annual replacement of some of the lay members of the council, in order to provide for differing views and expand involvement. Recommendation was made to also be attentive to gender balance and cultural diversity.
- Question about parish staff. It was decided that paid members of the parish should not be representatives on the council.

- **Vote:** Unanimously to have a chair and vice chair.
- Discussion about using Roberts Rules versus decision by consensus. The point was made that the council is a consultative body and not a legislative body. Bill will send documentation for distribution on why consensus is recommended.
- **Chair.** With unanimous approval, Peter Lancia agreed to chair the group initially, and will form a smaller group to layout specifics of the council. Lori Arsenault was asked to stay on in the role of communicator.
- Peter would like to form three sub groups, 1) to layout specifics of the committee, 2) to study the “mission” document, and 3) a small group to discuss communication. A fourth committee was then added to oversee the planning of “Disciples in Mission” in the Cluster.

6. Committee work prior to next meeting:

Communication - Chris Hoppin, Lori Arsenault, Fr. Richard
 Organizational structure/policies – Dan Chuhta, Paul Rowland, Peter Lancia
 Mission Statement – Peter Donnelly, Ray Rier, Sr. Theresa Rand
 Disciples in Mission planning – Sr. Theresa, Fr. Kevin, Lori Arsenault

7. Cluster activities already planned or anticipated

October 19, Cathedral School’s fundraising auction
 October 20, Silent Auction
 Advent penitential service at SHSDP
 “Disciples in Mission” program
 Redemptorist Mission in every cluster next Fall
 Corpus Christi – invitation each year from St. Louis

Other ideas

Cluster Rally – A big event to feel like a cluster
 Have one Mass on a single weekend with combined ministries at a neutral location
 Adoration visitations during Christmas season

8. Closing Prayer – Prayer for a New Evangelization

Next meeting, October 21st – 2 – 4 p.m. Sacred Heart / St. Dominic Parish Hall

Submitted by Lori Arsenault
 September 16, 2007