

Cluster 21 Pastoral Council

2 – 4 p.m., Sunday, October 21, 2007

Sacred Heart / St. Dominic Parish Hall

Present: Peter Lancia, Dan Chuhta, Msgr. Paul Stefanko, Ray Rier, Fr. Richard Bertrand, S.J., Pennie Kinney, Chris Hoppin, Sr. Theresa Rand, Peter Gribbin, Fr. Kevin Martin, Lori Arsenault

1. Introductions and opening prayer led by chair, Peter Lancia. He will be asking for others to lead the prayer for each meeting. Opening prayer from Corinthians, “one body, many parts.”

2. Minutes from last meeting accepted unanimously.

3. Review of agenda. Request to discuss dates for cluster-wide penance service, confirmation (May 11, Pentecost Sunday, with Bishop Malone at the Cathedral). It was later decided that the Advent penance service will be December 6, 7 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church with combined music ministry.

Further action required: Fr. Richard will ask Bishop Malone to preach. Fr. Kevin will preach if the Bishop to preach.

4. Roundtable: “What is great about your parish?” Peter Lancia opened this discussion to foster communication and evangelization, to know each of the churches in our cluster to promote evangelization, and to know how to speak to people about the cluster, and each church in the cluster.

- St. Christopher – have two parishes, in the summer there are more people and two masses. Summer parishioners bring input from Catholics from all over the country. One event where this is evident is the parish fair before the 4th of July and is a big community-wide celebration. During the winter months, there is fellowship after the 10 a.m. mass, with volunteers putting on a lunch. It’s a good time to catch up. Age diversity is great. This happens pretty much every Sunday through the winter and some of the homebound get visits with Holy Eucharist, and a lunch.
- St. Peter – Was originally founded where it is because of the Italian neighborhood. It’s not like that now, where it takes more effort for people to come in. Some of the Catholic societies have a strong presence. The parish has a great bazaar. Devotion to saints is strong. Parishioners put on a Christmas party and picnic for the handicapped. The parish remains a very active place even though people now travel a distance to get there. Still a majority of Italians, but there are more non-Italians than in the past. Children’s liturgy once each month is very lively with a children’s choir.
- St. Louis – used to have a concentration of Polish and Lithuanian, but in ’68 Portland changed, with modernization. Polish and Lithuanians and Irish were

pushed out through eminent domain before project was stopped. Now the Polish population is more scattered, and come from as far away as Boothbay Harbor. The parish upholds Polish traditions, and also have other nationalities as members, and is also home to refugees.

- Sacred Heart / St. Dominic – Maybe a third of people are single, so single people can feel welcome and freely active in the community. Is a merged parish with strength in diversity. Fr. Richard explained the various ethnic councils, outreach in the community, and great music. Music director has a degree in liturgy, and a welcoming approach to musicians. The parish has several less visible communities, mental health, the blind, those with a mixture of income, the destitute, the refugees. Food Pantry. Outreach to Haiti. The parish also owns the St. Dominic pipe organ, which is for sale.
- Cathedral – RCIA program has been running for a long time, average 30 people each year from all over Portland. Response is positive, and people who receive the sacraments stay a part of the parish. The parish has a good “preparation for marriage” program, led by lay people with Msgr. Paul attending as well. The measure of success is that married couples remain with the parish. Ethnic diversity, and different languages often at mass. St. Vincent’s soup kitchen is also a benefit. Serves 150 people each day, and has been there for a long time, working in tandem with Preble Street. Women and young children come during the summer when there are no school lunch programs. People from all neighboring parishes help with that, and not just Cathedral parishioners.
- Cathedral School – a lot of the same comments as Cathedral Parish. The richness is that it serves such a diverse population.
- Question for discussion: Is there a concern among the parishes about blending and watering down our various heritages, cultures, etc.? Through discussion, there was agreement among the group that this is a concern for individuals and groups of individuals. All of our parishes have unique cultural groups who experience various degrees of fear of losing their heritage... a fear of the unknown. Discussion about cluster-wide councils, and ways to remain sensitive to this issue as clustering moves forward.
- Summary – Peter Lancia asked that as we look to reach out, we should be careful about opening up new things, or inadvertently promoting fear about the balance of becoming one body, but retaining it’s separate parts. Each of the churches has talents and can contribute those talents to help the others.
- Future action – some multi-cultural event or a rally...some large event at a venue such as Merrill Auditorium.

Break

5. Committee Reports:

Organizational Structure – Peter and Dan, the following suggestions were made

- Two reps per parish, plus alternate
- Reps would be recommended by pastor, and appointed by the pastoral council. Procedure can be at the preference of the pastor of each parish.

- Consideration should be made to represent the entire parish
- One of each parish's representatives should also serve on parish council
- Cluster employees would also be members of this council (though this may not be in keeping with current diocesan policies)
- Two (or three) year terms. Staggering of departures. New members would come in on terms.
- Chair for one year, but discuss two for continuity.
- Vice chair not necessarily succeed the chair, or possibly not have a vice chair. Some discussion about that.
- For continuity, chair serve one-year term, and that they be in their second or third year of their service.
- One spot should be for a communicator to take minutes, maintain Web sites and contact lists.
- Establish regular meeting times in various locations around the cluster
- Question for discussion: How are decisions made? It's not a legislative body, but consultative body. Consensus is what is recommended by the diocese, which has proven in other groups to build a greater spirit of cooperation.
- **Further action required: check on diocesan guidelines for councils and research other understanding to establish policies for the cluster council.**

Mission Statement – this committee has not yet meet.

Communication – Lori Arsenault, Chris Hoppin, Fr. Richard Bertrand, S.J.

A handout was given listing short-term goals and long-term goals, and some printed information. Discussion focused on two of the initiatives, printed bulletins and the cluster Web site. Several parish bulletins were shared, and ideas were put on the table for possible consideration as cluster events. This may require an ad hoc “parish life” type of committee to sort out how we might share our resources to adequately reflect the life of the cluster. In the meantime, there will be a master calendar on the Web site, and parishes should send items for the calendar to Lori by e-mail, if possible.

- **Further action:**
 - **Develop options for a design to represent the five churches of the cluster and bring back options for a bulletin cover that would be common to all the churches.**
 - **Obtain the domain www.cluster21portland.org and begin with a link to each parish Web site, and a master calendar (in addition to the existing cluster historical information)**

6. Disciples in Mission - Fr. Kevin had an introductory meeting last Wednesday, inviting people from each of the churches, and he gave a brief explanation of the scripture based small group reflection program for the Lenten season. He asks the parish representatives to work with individuals to begin working on this program, which Bishop Malone is directing all parishes in the diocese to commit to for the next three years. This will be the Lenten program for our cluster. Representatives should connect parishioners with Fr. Kevin who would be available to help parishes get started.

Further action summary:

1. Fr. Richard will ask Bishop Malone to preach. Fr. Kevin will preach if the Bishop Malone is not available.
2. Peter Lancia will check on diocesan guidelines for councils and research other understanding to establish to go beyond.
3. Communications committee will develop options for a design to represent the five churches of the cluster, and obtain the domain www.cluster21portland.org and begin with a link to each parish Web site, and a master calendar (in addition to the existing cluster historical information)
4. "Mission Statement" subcommittee will meet to draft a mission statement
5. All should be working on Disciples in Mission at the parish level, and connect potential group leaders with Fr. Kevin.
6. Sr. Theresa will lead the prayer to open the November 25 meeting.

Next meeting, November 25, 2007, 2 – 4 , St. Louis Parish Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Submitted by Lori Arsenault