

FINAL
Minutes of Sonoma North Deanery Meeting
July 28, 2007, Resurrection, Santa Rosa

Call to Order

ATTENDING: Bob Leet and Kevin Connolly (Resurrection); John Gnam and Mike Wall (St. Eugene's); Len Marabella (St. Rose); Margaret Focha and Helen M. Chapman (Star of the Valley); Lilla Orr and Patricia Babb (Holy Spirit); Ann Clark (St. Teresa/St. Philip). Lilla Orr called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. which was followed by introductions.

Opening Prayer

Kevin Connolly led us in the opening prayer.

Minutes and Agenda

It was moved and seconded to accept the draft minutes of June 30, 2007 and all approved, except Len Marabella added the correction that there are still Spanish masses at St. Rose. The minutes were then approved unanimously. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Public comment: There was no public comment and the council members present moved on to continuing business.

Bob Leet brought up the subject of deanery communiqués and asked that all members send him any changes and additions. Bob began discussion of the work of the Evangelization Committee. Margaret Focha stated that St. Leo's Parish had conducted a reunion and contacted all old parishioners by going through old directories and inviting everyone. At the reunion, which was very successful, the original mission statement and parish plan were discussed. It was commented that when revisiting the mission statement it was an excellent idea to have the founding parishioners present. Margaret Focha mentioned an ad hoc committee that would look at the mission statement as well as the pastoral plan and that the pastoral council had been without a plan for six months. It was mentioned of the chair person and a reconfiguration and whether an entirely new process needed to be begun to formulate a pastoral plan.

There was discussion of financial needs of each parish and whether these were more successfully met by appeals by the pastor or a lay person. It appeared that most parishes were meeting their financial needs at this time. It was discussed whether one or two accountings to parishioners per year were sufficient, the need for transparency in looking at the parishes' financial transactions, the possibility of donating stock, bequests, in the sense of estate planning and structuring gifts to meet specific needs. Accountings show how the budget is spent and what items are actually paid for. It was discussed at the pulpit that requests would be more directed to general needs, not specific ones. An experience at Star of the Valley which serves Oakmont was a meeting to which all single, widowed, divorced and always single people in the entire community were invited. It

started with a Mass and about 80 people attended. The phone committee called every single person in Oakmont whether in the parish or not. The need for grief counseling in this community was discussed.

Kevin Connolly reported on his eight day retreat at El Retiro and a Mass said by Fr. Fabing commenting how loneliness is so prevalent in today's society. He made a comment about caregivers having a network meeting that is preceded by Mass. John Gnam reported on his activities as a member of the pastoral council with parishioners at St. Eugene's. He had made himself available at Mass for parishioners who had questions and said this was a good thing. He also gave a long report about a visiting choir from Uganda Christ the King Catholic Church. One of the visitors was a Fr. Tony and he said the 7:30 Mass at St. Eugene's with the permission of Msgr. Pulscamp. The possibility of African priests serving parishes in this country was discussed.

Len Marabella from St. Rose stated that there had not been a parish meeting since last month's DPC meeting. He was unable to go to the parish meetings because of work commitments and needed a co-member from St. Rose who could attend those meetings. Maintenance needs at St. Rose, the use of direct deposits, the time bomb effect of deferred maintenance was brought out as well as the St. Vincent de Paul truck being at St. Rose today. Pat Babb discussed the Festival at Holy Spirit and making available the summary of minutes of the pastoral council meeting to parishioners. It was discussed whether it should go in the bulletin or on-line or whether a summary would be sufficient.

A facilitator for buildings and grounds who was not the sole parish priest is a need at Holy Spirit and the parish is working on improvements to the plan. Holy Spirit has an annual barbeque fund raiser which has been successful, and the parish discusses how the money is allocated. They are using or attempting to use direct deposit in lieu of collections. Ann Clark from St. Teresa spoke about people being hurt by the financial scandals of the church and the large settlement in Los Angeles. That parish sponsors a food collection for the rural needy people and that it was holding steady as meeting that need. Fr. Logan is still there and he is a spiritual leader. The parishioners were insisting that "something be done" regarding the sexual scandals and money paid. Kevin Connolly spoke of a religion reporter for the Los Angeles Times and how this person had been deeply affected in an adverse way by the scandals.

Ann spoke about the centrality of the Eucharist. Pat Babb raised the subject of the credibility of the hierarchy and it was discussed by many members of the failure of Bishop Walsh to timely report the child molestation that had been reported to him last year which allowed the priest to escape to Mexico. Bob Leet commented on the shortage of priests that pushed the parishes in the United States to employ lay administrators and repeated the necessity for a pastoral plan. Also whether it was more worthwhile to write individual letters or as members of the council clergy as spiritual leaders and lay people as spiritual leaders. It was discussed how a spiritual director needs to listen and share and that lay people are going to do this in the present and future. John Gnam commented that we speak on behalf of the parishioners and that "we the people" do not endorse the

hierarchy historical management that has led to sexual and financial scandals. The risk of speaking up and getting silence was mentioned. A question of whether we are doing anything and the current practice of diocesan wide training in response to the sex scandal issue was discussed. This is going on throughout the United States in every diocese. The hierarchy's response to the press was discussed by John Gnam, Kevin Connolly and Bob Leet particularly and how the hierarchy reacts to pressure.

Issues regarding SNAP and their relations to the press were discussed as well as the need for the council to be ready to deal with the press. John Gnam on behalf of the DPC stated that we needed to make a statement to Bishop Walsh raising our concerns about the Pope's recent statement which got worldwide press attention regarding the one true church. That statement is appended at the end of these minutes and was e-mailed by Mike Wall to Bob Leet to present to Bishop Walsh. Bob was asked to speak on behalf of the entire committee. There was further discussion of an incident involving molestation by a Salesian Order priest in Middletown at a camp there. There was discussion about who the spokes person should be on behalf of the diocese when dealing with the media and what the media perception is of the Bishop's responsibility. It was discussed that he does not have control over certain entities such as Hanna Center, Camp McGucken, and Santa Rosa Memorial, though he may sit on their Boards of Directors. Further discussion by Bob Leet and others about divorced and remarried Catholics as lectors and how this should be up to the pastor and it's a good idea to follow the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

New Business

New chair person: Mike Wall was elected as the new chairperson and John Gnam as the vice-chair. Colleen McMahon was to continue as secretary. This was Lilla Orr's last meeting. She resigned as chair person and everyone on the council thanked her for her service.

Other new business: Bob Leet discussed some problems with accessing the website and getting the minutes to the webmaster who is Joe Tonkovich who lives in Medford, Oregon. Colleen, who was not present, is supposed to get the minutes to the website. The Catholic response to the book by Rick Warren's "A Purpose Driven Life" was passed around and discussed briefly. Pat Babb mentioned that Cursillo incorporated lay spiritual direction and that it was not necessary to "reinvent the wheel."

Closing

- A. Review of items to be communicated: Nothing discussed.
- B. Next meeting time and place: St. John's Healdsburg, 9:00 a.m. Saturday, August 25, 2007. Mike Wall to contact Mel Amato who was not present but is a representative from St. John's just to be sure.
- C. Closing prayer: Kevin Connolly read the Magnificat from the Gospel of Luke as closing prayer.
- D. The meeting was adjourned by Lilla Orr. Mike Wall, who served as secretary for this meeting, was asked to prepare the minutes.

Statement to be attached to Bishop Walsh:

“The Sonoma North Deanery of the DPC wants to bring to your attention concerns that we have about the Pope’s statement regarding ecumenism and the one true church that has led to upset and confusion for Catholics and others throughout the world. Is there anything you can do to clarify and mitigate?”

FINAL emailed 8/25/07