

SANTA ROSA DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD
DPC Annual Plenary Session, March 28, 2009
“THE DPC LOOKS TO THE FUTURE!”
RECORD

Over 40 Diocesan Pastoral Council Parish Representatives and Clergy, representing 19 Parishes and Missions, met at Saint Mary of the Angels Church, Ukiah, on Saturday, March 28th to hear **Bishop Walsh's Report** on the Diocese, learn of new **DPC projects**, and **exchange ideas**.

Chair's Keynote

Bob Leet, DPC Executive Board Chair (Resurrection), having led the *Invocation*, thanked our host, **Father Raul Lemus**, St Mary's Administrator, who warmly welcomed the Assembled. Bob went on to *Keynote* the day's proceedings: how best to disseminate among our Parishes the *DPC Lay Pastoral Director Project** as a critical response to the urgent challenge of fewer Clergy, and how Parishioners' recent declarations, *"What I Am Most Proud of in My Parishes"* can be a platform on which to build communication among our Parishes. Bob concluded by urging Plenary Participants to enjoy the day's activities and camaraderie—spiritual and temporal—in order to return to our Parishes renewed in our resolve to advance the DPC. He then introduced Master of Ceremonies, **Phil Minor**, longtime St Bernard's Representative and former Ex. Board Member.



Bishop's Report

After outlining the Plenary Session Program,* Phil introduced **Bishop Walsh** who reported on our Diocese:

Bishop Walsh opened his remarks by congratulating the DPC: “We started the DPC Plenary Session seven years ago, and each year we come back to be refreshed. The Spirit will guide through all.”

His remarks on the fiscal status of the Diocese began on a light note. “The good news is I'm not in jail, and we haven't gone into bankruptcy,” and “since we have no stocks, we have no problems!” He went on to outline other diocesan matters:

- The Rev. Ted Oswald case was recently settled by mediation, despite Fr. Oswald never having admitted to the charges against him.

Insurance and the St William's Fund (Funds from other Dioceses) each paid half the settlement.

- The Rev. Gary Timmons Cases continue pending the courts' resolution of the 'recovered memory' vs 'repressed memory' controversy. The Church's position is that victims should be compensated, but questions the court system. (“Lawyers seem to be the only ones benefiting from these settlements.”)

- We have cut \$180K from our budget.

- We owe the Dioceses of Los Angeles \$1.5M, Oakland \$500K, Orange \$500K, San Francisco \$1.5M, and Seattle \$400K, all at no interest.

- A mailing of 41K Annual Ministry (includes the DPC) Appeal brochures generated 2927 pledges. O L of Guadalupe, under the leadership of DPC Representative **Joe Tembroke**, generated \$43,154, far exceeding its goal of \$28,488. (Bishop Walsh reports that subsequently 7 other Parishes have exceed their goal.) The Appeal, which is crucial to the Diocese' future, will be revamped as recommended by the Priests Council.

- Today's impressive presentation of **Lay Pastoral Directors Program** (see below) presents two challenges: cost to small Parishes and the grouping of Parishes.

- The future relative to our Priest Shortage: a) We will have to institute 'Circuit Priests.' b) We look forward to the ordination in 6 mos. of two transitional Deacons. c) We have urgent need of Spanish-speaking priests: 41% Mass attendance and 75% of our Baptisms are Hispanic.

- Director of Youth Ministry, **Stan Cordero**, has developed a splendid Pastoral Plan for Youth.

- **Joe Shea's** promotion of the “Divine Mercy” deserves our strong support.

Bishop Walsh went on to answer Questions from the Participants:

Q. “Are Parishes dealing with the Hispanic Population?”

A. “Yes. We need to develop vocations in Spanish Communities, and we need to recruit among immigrants and in Mexico as well.

Immigration law and acculturation present challenges.”

Q. “Can you help us prioritize collections? We have 2 at each Mass plus fund-raisers.”

A. “National Collections, Mission Collections (October Mission Sunday), Local School Collections, Others e.g., the Knights of Columbus, St Vincent de Paul.”

Q. “Can there be a requirement that Seminarians learn Spanish?”

A. “That is our goal, but we're not there yet.”

Q. “During the picketing campaign against abortion, we got no support or press from the Church.”

A. “We did not want to deflect focus from the Lenten Period. It was a question of appropriate timing.”



Lay Pastoral Director Project

Phil introduced **Len Marabella**, DPC *Lay Pastoral Director Project* Task Force Chair (St Rose) [Other Task Force Members: **Brian Connolly** (Holy Spirit), **Joe Tembroke** (OLG)]. Len showed a 20-minute PowerPoint* that set forth a comprehensive program, including job description and qualifications, costs, and scenarios, of how a paid professionally trained Layman/woman, Deacon or Religious, can relieve Pastors of burdensome administrative and ministerial chores, to free them to focus on their priestly office. Len's emphasized that some 15 Clergy (including Bishop Walsh), DPC Representatives and Laity, had already viewed the *LPD Project* and endorsed it with enthusiasm.

He then entertained reaction from the Floor. There was general admiration for the professionalism and thoroughness of the presentation.

Brian Connolly pointed out that similar programs exist widely throughout the United States. **Yvette Fallandy** reminded that LPDs are not new to our Diocese; **Deacon Bob Little**, recent Parish Coordinator at St Helena, and **Sister Patricia Carson**, highly experienced and successful Director of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, currently serve as LPDs. Len added that Sister Patricia Carson had contributed generously to the *LPD* job

description. There was some concern expressed whether Pastors would be receptive of the program and whether it is fiscally feasible in Parishes where they would be most needed.

The discussion ended with unanimous consensus that the Lay Pastoral Director Program be forwarded by the Task Force and the Executive Board to Bishop Walsh with the request for his formal approval.

Participants then met in their Deaneries (Mendocino/Lake and Napa joined with others) to discuss three aspects of the LPD Program:

1. *How would my fellow Parishioners and I react to a Lay Pastoral Director?*
2. *How would my Parish's Staff react to a Lay Pastoral Director?*
3. *Where would our Diocese recruit Lay Pastoral Directors?*

Humboldt/Del Norte, Mendocino/Lake and Napa Deaneries: The LPD would have to be dedicated, flexible and practical. // Would the Hispanic Parishioners accept a LPD? // There would have to be openness in the selection of the LPD. // Should be someone who knows the Parish. // Would have to be very collaborative and reach out to all sectors of the Parish. // There could be great benefits from an LPD. // Parish Laity would have to take the initiative. // Acceptance of the LPD Program will have to evolve. // Pastor would have to endorse.

Sonoma North Deanery: LPD Program well received. // Requires support of Bishop and Pastor. // Must be bilingual. // Staff, Ministers, and Parish Council would have to support. // Recruiting the right person critical.

Sonoma South Deanery: All Pastors need to be 'brought on board.' // Recruit from inactive Priests/Religious. // Support of Parish Council important. // The LPD would sustain the Parish. // The LPD must not be a dictator. // Has potential for developing the People of God, Faith formation, education.



"What I Am Most Proud of in My Parish"*

Bob Leet reviewed the *Report on the "What I Am Most Proud of in My Parish"* informal Survey sent to all Pastors for distribution among their Parishioners. He emphasized how gratifying were responses; they dwell on unstinting appreciation/affection for our Pastors and the warm spirit of community in our Parishes. Such positive evidence of the spiritual and temporal vitality of our Parishes justifies optimism for the future and for the DPC to persevere in its Mission. He assured that the *Report* would be made available to all Pastors.

Participants again met in their Deaneries to discuss two aspects of the *"What I Am Most Proud of in My Parish Report"*:

1. *Please identify by group consensus the 2-3 most interest or unique WIAMPOIMPs that were shared at your table.*
2. *Please select 1-2 WIAMPOIMPs and explain how they help encourage:*
 - a) *deeper involvement in the Parish Community.*
 - b) *evangelization of inactive Catholics and Newcomers.*

Responses were homogeneous and can be synthesized as follows:

- Outreach (within the Parish and beyond) programs and activities are impressive and eloquent testimony to the Christian commitment of Parishioners.
- Our Parish Schools thrive and are a source of Parish Strength
- Our Parishes offer a warm welcome to strangers and newcomers, and substantial solace to those in need.
- Our Pastors are not only respected as spiritual and temporal leaders, but also held in warm affection.
- Parishioners are able and willing to 'step up', to volunteer when needed.
- Fellowship, energy, leadership, communication, avenues of engagement, priorities and stewardship are required elements for a successful Parish.

Phil summarized the afternoon discussion as evidence that the DPC has ample reason to be optimistic about the future. It remains for each of us to return to our Parishes with renewed resolve to share actively our optimism with our fellow Parishioners and our Pastors.



Benediction and Farewell

Bob Leet concluded the Plenary Session by thanking each Participant for having assured a very successful meeting, urged to continue the work of the DPC in anticipation of next year's Plenary, and invoked a Benediction of Thanksgiving.



* Available on DPC Website, santarosadpc.com. LPD PowerPoint available from Len Marabella, marabella@earthlink.net.

DPC Plenary Session 2009 Participants

Amato, Mel St John the Baptist, Healdsburg
Barrett, Jim St Joseph, Crescent City
Bishop Walsh
Chapman, Helen Star of the Valley
Connelly, Brian Holy Spirit
Connelly, Kevin Resurrection
Cunniff, Declan/Mary Pat St Leo
DeCrevel, Sara St Apollinaris
Fallandy, Yvette St Eugene
Focha, Margaret Star of the Valley
Gilmore, Karen St Mary of the Angels
Gnam, John St Eugene

Gould, Carlin/Dave St Francis Solano
John, Nora St Elizabeth Seton
Kearney, Sr Frances St Leo
Keys, Msgr Tom Star of the Valley
Killian, Sister Antonia SEC
Leet, Bob Resurrection
Lemus, Fr. Raul St Mary of the Angels
Lyons, Mary St Leo
Magaña, Fernando St Mary of the Angels
Marabella, Len St Rose
McCaffry, Mac St Elizabeth Seton
McCarthy, John Star of the Valley
McCarthy, Tom Resurrection/St Eugene

MInor, Phil St Bernard
Murray, Nancy St Leo
Norman, Richard St Mary of the Angels
Parnow, Julie St James
Pregent, Ray/Sigrid Star of the Valley
Rogers, Fr Sean St Mary of the Angels
Savage, Michele St Apollinaris
Seago, Pauline St John the Baptist, Napa
Shea, Joe St Leo
Tembroke, Joe O. L. of Guadalupe
Wall, Mike St Eugene
Williams, Doug St Mary, Arcata