



The mission of the Vicariate is to be responsive to the ministry of its parishes, schools, institutions, and agencies by:



Coordinating pastoral planning



Enhancing communications and networking



Promoting collegiality



Identifying and utilizing all resources which can be shared

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Pontiac Area Vicariate Moves Forward on Pastoral Care of the Sick Recommendations

Last fall, the PAV Quarterly Newsletter reported on the formation of an ad hoc committee to study pastoral care of the sick in our Vicariate. This effort emerged from the Together in Faith process and focused on concerns about adequately meeting the pastoral care needs of the sick in our Area Church, especially with regard to the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

The committee began their work in January 2006 and issued a final report containing their conclusions and recommendations last October. These have been presented to the Vicariate Pastoral Council and the Pastoral Ministers' Association and are summarized here.

What is Pastoral Care?

Pastoral care of the sick is one of the significant ways that we as the Body of Christ continue the mission and ministry of Jesus. With four major hospitals located within our Vicariate as well as numerous nursing homes and assisted living centers, the demand for pastoral care of the sick is great, and the burden on those providing this care is significant. For this reason, the Pontiac Area Vicariate chose to study this area of concern, in the hope of identifying needs, resources, and current gaps in services and then making appropriate recommendations for improvement.

An ad hoc committee, comprised of six persons involved in parish-based or hospital-based ministry along with two consultants from the Archdiocese of Detroit, was formed to study Pastoral Care of the Sick. They conducted a survey for parishes and health care institutions located within the PAV. Of the 43 surveys disseminated, 29 were completed and returned. A good deal of descriptive data emerged from the study, which was analyzed first by the archdiocesan consultants and then by the entire committee in order to draw meaningful conclusions.

Summary of Findings

While an extensive summary of the findings included in the final report is not possible here, we can highlight some of the most significant. Several parishes or health care facilities reported a high number of requests for anointing, especially the Pontiac parish cluster and the Pontiac hospitals. Two sites reported requests for a priest going unmet on

occasion. Half of the reporting sites offer communal anointing services, and nearly two thirds reported offering Communion to the sick regularly. Respondents indicated a rise in the number of requests for sacramental care of the sick, and expect that this rising trend will continue.

Volunteers involved in ministering to the sick are a largely homogenous group ministering to a diverse population, especially in the Pontiac area and in all four hospitals, and our present volunteer corps does not reflect the diversity of those being ministered to. Training is offered to volunteers involved in pastoral care of the sick, but many feel it needs to be more comprehensive. Less than half of the survey respondents reported a need to better understand cultural diversity, in spite of significant diversity among those receiving pastoral care in the vicariate, especially in the hospitals and in the Pontiac parish cluster.

"The need is great. The mandate is clear. We are the Body of Christ, sent forth to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus who commanded us to 'go and do likewise'."

Conclusion from final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Pastoral Care of the Sick

Committee's Conclusions

The ad hoc study committee reached the following conclusions:

- Gaps exist in our provision of pastoral care of the sick in the Vicariate. Parishes closest to our four hospitals are feeling overwhelmed.
- More opportunities should be provided to receive the Sacrament of Anointing to avoid urgency.
- Chaplain coverage in most of our four hospitals is less than adequate.
- Improved communication and coordination of services between chaplains and parishes needed.
- More education needed on the Sacrament of Anointing and other forms of pastoral care.
- Information needed regarding perceptions and understanding of "people in the pews."
- More diversity training needed to identify with the population being served.
- Demographics of those providing pastoral care do not match the demographics of those receiving it.
- More comprehensive training programs needed for those providing pastoral care to the sick.
- Support among vicariate ministers for certain strategies (i.e. on-call, staggered schedule of communal anointings, beeper/answering service).
- Tracking mechanism required to confirm perceptions about trends to provide accurate data.

(Continued on page 2)

Members:

Parishes

- Christ the Redeemer, Orion Township
- Pontiac Catholic Community
 - St. Michael
 - St. Joseph
 - St. Vincent
- Sacred Heart of the Hills, Auburn Hills
- St. Andrew, Rochester
- St. Benedict, Waterford
- St. Irenaeus, Rochester Hills
- St. John Fisher, Auburn Hills
- St. Joseph, Lake Orion
- St. Mary of the Hills, Rochester Hills
- St. Paul Albanian, Rochester Hills

Schools

- Holy Family Elementary, Rochester/Rochester Hills
- Marist Academy Lower Level St. Benedict Campus, Waterford
- St. Joseph School, Lake Orion
- Marist Academy Middle School, Pontiac
- Notre Dame Preparatory, Pontiac

Catholic Cemeteries

- Guardian Angels
- Mt. Hope

(Continued from page 1)

- Many parish and health care facilities are doing a good job in training laypersons. Encourage continued mobilization of parish communities.
- Regarding the question of seeking permission for others (e.g. deacons, lay chaplains) to anoint, the committee felt we should focus on a few key strategies first. Thereafter, evaluate effectiveness of those strategies and reassess.

Implementation Committee Formed

Work is already underway by the newly formed Pastoral Care Implementation Committee. Chaired by Deacon Ron Rohlman, this committee will develop a workable plan and timeline of implementation of pastoral care for the Pontiac Area Vicariate. Their first step will be to conduct a survey of parishioners regarding their views on Pastoral Care of the Sick. Using both the study committee's recommendations (see box) and the findings of the parishioner survey, the Implementation Committee will prioritize recommendations, report to and seek support from the PAV priests and the Vicariate Pastoral Council, and set up a plan for implementation. Look for updates on the Implementation Committee in future issues of the PAV Quarterly.

Pastoral care of the sick is the responsibility of all the baptized, and the care of our sick brothers and sisters needs to be shared by the entire area church. The work so far has begun a wider and deeper conversation about pastoral care of the sick in this vicariate, one that we hope will continue. It is the hope of this committee that this study may light the way for us as an area church, provide a map for the road ahead of us, and ultimately help us to better continue the ministry of Jesus who told us to "go and do likewise." *

Pastoral Care Recommendations

- Increase opportunities within the PAV for persons to celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing.
- Provide more education to the faithful about the Sacrament of Anointing and about the full range of pastoral care services to the sick.
- Seek additional information from the laity regarding their current understanding, perceptions, and practices.
- Seek input of the PAV priests regarding the suggested strategies generated by this study.
- Identify current gaps in our ability as an Area Church to provide adequate pastoral care of sick in a timely manner.
- Improve recruitment and training of those involved in providing pastoral care to the sick.
- Improve networking and dialogue between ministers at archdiocesan, vicariate and parish levels, and those of health care institutions and extended care facilities.
- Form a PAV Implementation Committee to address next steps from the study.

Upon review of the preliminary report, several vicariate priests have submitted the following additional recommendations:

- Prepare a vicariate-wide pastoral letter to educate persons about pastoral care.
- Arrange a PAV networking meeting of priests, chaplains, directors of hospital spiritual care departments, and pastoral ministers to discuss areas of concern.
- Utilize PAV gatherings to share best practices.
- Communicate within the vicariate information about scheduled communal anointings.

Communal Anointing Services in the Pontiac Area Vicariate

St. John Fisher Chapel University Parish
3665 E. Walton, Auburn Hills 248-373-6457
March 15, 2007 Mass of Anointing 7:15 PM
June 16, 2007 Mass of Anointing 5:30 PM
June 17, 2007 Mass of Anointing 10:00 AM

St. Joseph Parish,
715 Lapeer Rd, Lake Orion 248-693-0440
April 21, 2007 Mass of Anointing 11:00 AM

Christ the Redeemer,
2700 Waldon, Lake Orion 248-391-1621
Non-sacramental healing service every first Friday
(Call for time)

St Michael Parish
120 Lewis, Pontiac, 248-332-9167
April 23, 2007 Mass of Anointing 7:00 PM
(In Spanish)
May 19, 2007 Mass of Anointing 4:30 PM
(In English)

Shrine Church of St. Joseph
400 South Blvd, Pontiac, 248-332-9872
Mass of Anointing every 2nd Sunday at 12:30 PM

Together In Faith and Hispanic Ministry

As an integral part of the Together in Faith planning process, the Pontiac Area Vicariate is addressing the reality of a Church facing demographic change. How do we welcome a large Hispanic population who come to this country with a profound Catholic faith but find sometime difficult to integrate in an “Anglo” church?

In September 2006, the leadership of the Vicariate, including pastors, parish councils, agency boards, pastoral staff and the many people who work in our communities gathered to learn about the Hispanic Pastoral Plan established by the Archdiocese of Detroit. For many it was an occasion to learn more about the demographic changes of our parishes. More importantly, it was the beginning of a reflection on our responsibility to welcome our Hispanic brothers and sisters into our communities.

Following several discussions at Parish Councils and the Vicariate Pastoral Council, we are ready to undertake or continue several practical initiatives which are all geared toward making sure that we move from “Welcoming the Stranger” (first letter from the US Bishops regarding the immigration issue) to a time where our Hispanic brothers and sisters will be able to say “Stranger No More” (second letter from US Bishops on the same subject. Copies of both statements are available on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website www.nccbuscc.org.)

The following initiatives are in the process of being discussed and implemented in our parishes. They will require the support of all the members of our communities.

Liturgical:

- Sensitivity to Hispanic Catholic traditions: feast days, expressions of devotion etc.

- Introduction of Spanish songs in liturgy.
- Possibility of Spanish masses from time to time in different parishes.
 - Train liturgical ministers to assist in celebration of liturgies (masses, sacraments, etc.).



Organizational:

- Spanish speaking staff (if possible).
- Representation of Hispanics in Parish Councils, Vicariate Pastoral Council, etc.

Educational:

- Better links with our Catholic Schools for ensuring that Hispanic children are supported financially and educationally.
- Educate our communities on cross-cultural issues.

Inclusion:

- Assure that Hispanics are welcome and active in all parish ministries.
- Assure inclusion of Hispanic youth in youth ministries and activities.

Other important suggestions:

- Develop education of communities and services to help the Hispanic population settle in the area: issues of immigration, housing, worker rights, transportation.
- Direct support of Catholic Social Services Oakland County which already provides many services but needs support from parishes (i.e. youth ministry activities).
- Make Vicariate bulletins more friendly and relevant to Hispanics. ✱

Fishermen’s Fund Aims to Finance Vocations



Did you know that undergraduate seminarians studying for the priesthood pay almost \$16,000 per year to attend Sacred Heart Major Seminary? While financial aid is available, many of our undergraduate seminarians (and students studying to become lay ministers) take on personal debt to complete their education.

To respond to this need, a committed group of Catholic lay community leaders has launched a vocations initiative called the Fishermen’s Fund to provide financial assistance students attending Sacred Heart. The mission of the Fund is to ensure that no vocation to the Roman Catholic priesthood, diaconate or lay ministry is hindered due to financial need.

If you would be interested in learning more about or making a contribution to the Fishermen’s Fund please contact 313-883-8779 or visit our website at www.FishermensFund.com. ✱

Casting a net for Sacred Heart Major Seminary students.

Members:

Religious Communities

- Oxford Dominican Sisters
- St. Benedict Monastery

Chaplaincies

- Crittenton Hospital
- North Oakland Medical Center
- Oakland County Jail
- Oakland County Juveniles
- POH Medical Center
- St. Joseph Mercy Oakland

Nursing Homes

- Lake Orion
- Mercy Bellbrook
- Oakland County Medical Care Facility
- Lourdes Campus

Oakland County

- Campus Ministry
- Catholic Community Response Team
- Catholic Social Services
- Genesis Young Adult/Campus Ministry
- Fusion Ministry
- Guest House

