



**Pontiac Area Vicariate Assembly Minutes**  
**Racial Sobriety**  
**Monday, February 26, 2007**  
**Meeting held at St. Andrew Parish**

**Welcome**

Vicariate Pastoral Council Vice-Chair Bob Krueger welcomed everyone to St. Andrew Parish and introduced Pontiac Area Vicariate Vicar, Fr. Jerry Brzezinski.

**Opening Prayer and Remarks**

Fr. Jerry gave some background information on the PAV, the Vicariate Pastoral Council and the Pastoral Ministers' Association. He explained that the PAV holds two assemblies each year to bring schools, parishes, agencies, institutions and others in the Vicariate together to focus on an important and timely issue. He led everyone in an opening prayer that was used at every session of the Second Vatican Council.

Fr. Jerry introduced the speaker for the evening, Fr. Clarence Williams, CPPS, Ph.D. Fr. Williams is the founder and director of the Institute for Recovery from Racisms™. For the last fifteen years, he has served as the Director for Black Catholic Ministries in the Archdiocese of Detroit Parish Life Department.

**Racial Sobriety**

Fr. Williams used lecture, Powerpoint slides and table discussion and feedback to develop his theme of "Racial Sobriety: Answering the Prayer of Jesus." Highlights from his opening presentation include:

- Racial Sobriety is a commitment to see each person as my brother or my sister.
- To be racially sober is to See Others as Being Entitled to Respect.
- Discussing racial issues and confronting our own feelings is often a challenging process. We are all hampered by our FIGs – Fears, Ignorance, and Guilt.

After taking a three-minute personal inventory of their fears, ignorance and guilt regarding racial openness, the attendees were assigned to random tables to participate in a "Healing Circle." Each person shared what they had written and the table reporter summarized each category. Selected summaries were shared with the whole group and revealed:

Fears: saying the wrong thing; being misunderstood; being seen as racist or insensitive; maintaining political correctness; not understanding others.

Ignorance: OK to be ignorant, not OK to be insensitive; don't share common experiences; unknowns; issues with racial vocabulary; lack of involvement and/or interaction

Guilt: walking in someone else's shoes; frustration in breaking down barriers; lack of trust; overgeneralization; guilt of being silent; hypocrisy of calling ourselves Christian but failing to act to right injustice.

Fr. Williams said that he has given Racial Sobriety workshops in many countries, environments, and cultures and the feedback on FIG always brings out the same issues. He then gave a seventeen minute history of race and caste in North America, explaining how people were divided into groups based on parentage, color, religion, country of origin, etc. Throughout history there has been an "otherfication" of the human family.

The final group activity was to do a personal racial history journal. The group was asked to recall when they were first aware of differences, both in their early life and at their first job. Table feedback from this discussion included:

- Many differences involved worship practices/faith
- Observing prejudice
- Unequal treatment in the workplace based on color and gender
- No sense of difference as young children; learned behavior

Fr. Williams concluded the evening with the observation that leaders notice change and work for transition. He used sports analogies to make his point: not everyone on the team can participate in the game – you want the best players when the job really needs to get done. He encouraged all present to continue to learn about Racial Sobriety and initiate change.

## Final Prayer

Fr. Jerry thanked everyone for coming and for their leadership in the Vicariate. He led everyone in saying the Lord's Prayer. The assembly ended at 9:05 PM.

## Attendance

Cathy Wagner	AOD
Fr. Joe Dailey	Christ the Redeemer
Janice Gerwolls	Christ the Redeemer
Marilyn Lines	Christ the Redeemer
Lisa Pratt	Christ the Redeemer
Karen Swietlik	Christ the Redeemer
Dianne Zande	Christ the Redeemer
Marge Huggard	Catholic Social Services OC
Diana Atkins	Notre Dame Prep/Marist
Tom Donahoo	OCC/LTU
Constance Cumbey	Pontiac Catholic Community
Paul Hollow	Pontiac Catholic Community
Mary Laseleyne	Pontiac Catholic Community
Patricia Lindley	Pontiac Catholic Community
Sr. Pat Malone	Pontiac Catholic Community
Renee St. Dennis	Pontiac Catholic Community
Janet Dinsmoore	Sacred Heart of the Hills
Ann Meyers	Sacred Heart of the Hills
Marguerite Rouleau	Sacred Heart of the Hills
Ann Thomas	Sacred Heart of the Hills
Rae Stumpf	St Andrew
Ryan Charlton	St. Andrew
Kathleen Fabian	St. Andrew
Richard Koerber	St. Andrew
Bob Krueger	St. Andrew
Joe Soncrant	St. Andrew
Bonnie Banaszek	St. Benedict
Karen Borgeson	St. Benedict
Connie Cunningham	St. Benedict
Rochelle Flanigan	St. Benedict
Maria Geryk	St. Benedict
Grace Imbrunone	St. Benedict
Fr. Tom Kuehnemund	St. Benedict
Cathy Settle	St. Benedict
Theresa Wetherbee	St. Benedict
Larry Gatt	St. Irenaeus
Jack Giblen	St. Irenaeus
Shamil Halabu	St. Irenaeus
Frank Pollie	St. Irenaeus
Art Seidler	St. Irenaeus
Nancy Seidler	St. Irenaeus
Micheline Sommers	St. Irenaeus
Ron Valade	St. Irenaeus
Paul Borucki	St. John Fisher
Tim Brisbois	St. John Fisher
Lisa Brown	St. John Fisher
Jerry Brzezinski	St. John Fisher
Renée DeLauney Smith	St. John Fisher
Kim Dodd	St. John Fisher
Lew Elbert	St. John Fisher
Jan Elbert	St. John Fisher
Mary Fizzell	St. John Fisher
Alyce Gilroy	St. John Fisher

Judy Gordon	St. John Fisher
Margaret Hansen	St. John Fisher
Marv Johnson	St. John Fisher
Tom Kilkenney	St. John Fisher
Sue Kilkenney	St. John Fisher
Jacques Pasquier	St. John Fisher
Janet Remington	St. John Fisher
Allan Reynolds	St. John Fisher
Juliet Sampson-Brown	St. John Fisher
Chuck Slattery	St. John Fisher
Sheran Tioran	St. John Fisher
Fabiola Tonna	St. John Fisher
Fr. Ralph Besterwitch	St. Joseph Lake Orion
Kathy Hasty	St. Joseph Lake Orion
Mary Martin	St. Joseph Lake Orion
Fr. Mike Verschaeve	St. Joseph Lake Orion
Steve Lawless	St. Joseph, Lake Orion
Beth Belesky	St. Mary of the Hills
Karen Dudek	St. Mary of the Hills
Jan Hall	St. Mary of the Hills
John Hundiak	St. Mary of the Hills
Lorraine McGoldrich	St. Mary of the Hills
Christine McGowan	St. Mary of the Hills
Terry Mike	St. Mary of the Hills
Jack Schutzbach	St. Mary of the Hills
Rev. Stanley Ulman	St. Mary of the Hills
Dee Valade	St. Mary of the Hills
Dila Dusovic	St. Paul Albanian