

Notes of the Rocky Mountain Regional Council Meeting, 1-4-18

The meeting opened with prayer led by Len S., “Journeys Ended, Journey Begun” and reflections of what we were grateful for in 2017, and looked forward to in 2018.

* marks areas for some action to be taken

Additions to the Agenda: “Financial Budget” (sent out earlier by L Martinez)

Also: Gift for the new Auxiliary Bishop-elect: Rev. Denise Donato, suggested by LOC.

And: a letter from Tom Wilding, concerning an internet service that rates congregation/parish communities on their level of affirmation of LGBTQ persons. (Jim Burnik, COB)

Approval of Minutes from November meeting: was given by members.

Financial Report: (copies are distributed). Kae pointed out, by Feb. RMRC mtg parishes need to bring their *pledges to Region, and to CCC (CO Council of Churches). Michael: In the next few months, St. Paul’s will be ready to commit; they are finalizing their Constitution and close to formal entry to ECC.

Vicar’s Report: Michael distributed Appendix A listing of his activities, collaborations with Rabbi/Minster’s group; cooperation with ELCA initiative to address income equality; and Gathering of Lamentation to take place Jan. 9th, at Colorado 2018 Legislative Session; info on Gay Christian Network’s Women Connect (see handouts); Advocacy – Sandy Hook shooting anniversary. Note: Vicar’s response to RCC’s bishops on transgender people; ECC Diaconate formation sessions with Bp Rafe continue; “Our contribution (RMRC) of \$475 to the CCC, stays same in their 2018 budget but will be revised given membership fluctuations.” Planned work of Committee on Call of a local Bishop, soon to commence. Discussion followed on how much, what form, educational materials on episcopacy should take; generally we said, thorough but limited enough for anyone to read, comprehensive enough for background info for those interested. Education process to happen soon after Easter.

Community/Parish Updates: Positive experiences of Christmas feast day(s); samples – MoM continued interfaith activities and worship planned with partners, Trinity Lutheran and St. Paul’s (Episcopal), next event Jan. 28, a joint service with MoM hosting/ Pax C: community is decreasing in numbers. COB: lector, greeters training occurring, Fr. Paul, again in Central America. LOC: new friends from Italy are participating via FaceBook, and others in 18 states and 4 countries (retreat etc. being led by Fr. Teri). CHF: In Jan. the Call Process Committee, and Site Committee, taking up much work to be done. Vicar Michael asked for *contact information for Council Presidents in parishes, and Administrators, for communication purposes. Please forward to him.

OLD BUSINESS: Roots & Wings: See Appendix B – on Education re: Call of Local Bishop. Question: Will Constitution Commission’s work on “ECC Constitution” effect/change our

understanding of a Regional Bishop? Answer: No Commission is not “changing” the C, but revising it structurally for simplification and clarity. Ad Hoc Committee on Episcopacy Education, to meet soon. Fr. Teri pointed out (re: issue of how long bishops remain in office or are bishops? There are bishops in an “office”, (e.g. presiding bishop) and bishops with “order of bishop” still, e.g. Bishop Peter H.) But note, there are term limits set for any bishop “in office”. Think of the former office-holding bishops as part of a Wisdom Circle in the Episcopal Cnl. *Len will mail to Ad Hoc committee and members, his paper of few years ago, listing distinctions between a RCC bishop and an ECC bishop.

Regional Newsletter: Note – *deadline is Feb. 2nd!!! Send your expected Lenten activities to inform region, e.g. COB does a “ashes in the park” on Ash Wednesday. Idea (Michael), ashes given at DIA. Michael asked, “What might the Vicar’s social media presence be like” going forward. Brainstorming welcomed.

Marketing: (Jim Burnik) Recalls a workshop at last Synod, someone handed out a pamphlet for use with new folks, “Are you a Catholic & divorced” etc. etc. (Actually COB, had such a flier a few years back). Could we do such advertising in areas of our parishes? Jack W: Penny Saver, is very cheap way to put word out there. And, LOC targeted a certain age based population. Saw some return/responses thru FaceBook in 2017, and spent only \$50.

NEW BUSINESS: Constitution Commission (CC)

Bishop Rafe, to Michael: They have a specific mandate, structural and clarification revisions, is their task. (They received no direct feedback thus far to the Commission since Synod.) CC will send “revised” articles before end of January (Len was asked to coordinate our region’s responses) for feedback. CC will send batches of articles over several months, for responses by April. Responses from delegates, but ultimately Synod addresses the work done. CC wants all parishes to choose delegates from your parishes asap.

Gift for Auxiliary Bishop? Precedence...gift given to Bp Francis; need to brainstorm gifts ideas (e.g. stole, but other ideas too) Members favor giving gift. \$\$ for it to come from the parishes.

A Letter from Tom Wilding re: FYI: Method for evaluating affirmation of LGBTQ in our communities; or cf. ChurchCharity.org.

*****Next Meeting: Feb. 1, 2018 6:30 PM, Hosted by LOC.**

Appendix A—Vicar Report for RMRC 01 04 2018

RMRC

12/7 Attended RMRC meeting.

Clarification from CHF on pastor-candidacy via Len: They do not intend to accept any former candidates for the upcoming Call Process and welcome Michael as Vicar for CHF.

12/13-19 Forwarded all bishop-related documents and a **clarifying statement of purpose (Appendix B)** to ad hoc committee

12/19 Mother Kae heard that the Denver Catholic Register published a list of churches that Catholics should not attend on Christmas Day, reiterating the list of So-called Catholic Masses on the Archdiocese website. **Asked region reps if they have connections with the "offending" churches**, that we might explore relationships? (No response at time of this report.)

12/29 Phone conversation with +Rafe; discussed re Constitution Commission methodology eliciting feedback from local venues. Waiting for details from Tom Wilding.

COLLABORATIONS

12/7 Rabbi/Ministers Group: Participated in and forwarded poll soliciting commitment from more Christian clergy to regional clergy (as the rabbis usually outnumber us).

12/20 Dropped off ELCA committee developing a "Memorial" (equivalent to a Proposition at an ECC Synod) to address the issue of Income Inequality. They're approaching the issue by focusing on the value of work/vocation and just/equitable compensation and creative revisions to the tax codes (it's a long-range goal, extending beyond the current mess). Their hope is that, if passed in Synod, they can get ecumenical partners to sign on, so our being involved on the ground level helps. Sent inquiry to regional reps to see if anyone in your communities would like to work with them.

Disseminated info re: **Gathering of Lamentation and Longing for the 2018 Legislative Session**, January 9th at 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church. (Michael asked to provide music.) (12/23 CCC approved being a co-sponsor.)

12/22/17 Disseminated info re: **Gay Christian Network's womenconnect retreat Jan 19**

ADVOCACY

12/13 participated in CFCU Candlelight Vigil on the anniversary of Sandy Hook

12/19 Disseminated my post on Facebook re RC bishops' letter on trans children: <https://thinkprogress.org/catholic-bishops-transgender-bb57ddfdc7e8/>

MY POSTED COMMENT: As a priest of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion, I am appalled. All this retrenchment is based on the fallacy of Natural Law theory (hubris in the face of Mystery) and their obsession with anything that threatens the diabolical binary god of procreation (minimizing other ways of being generative, our broader calling), not to mention the fear of all things sexual....these foolish, dangerous men. The best of Christian theology (I thought mainstream, but evidently at the challenging edges) asserts that all is Mystery unfolding, and that as co-creators with God we are part of that process - of which transgender individuals are a visible sacrament.

...and a progressive RC voice: www.newwaysministry.org

1/2 Circulated info re CFCU response to Denver legislation re bump stock and limited magazines.

1/3 No response from Episcopal Council to date on submitted draft statement on gun-violence.

FORMATION/RECEPTION

12/19 Diakonate 101 - shared "Magnificat of Charity's Roots"

12/29 Phone conversation with +Rafe re possible Synod breakout group on the developing role of the diaconate throughout the Church Catholic.

12/29 clarified deacon candidate education - Education for Ministry (EfM) for Jim B

1/2 Diakonate 101 – proposed Synod break-out session on Deaconate has deacon buy-in

1/3 forwarded balance of incardination documents from Fr. Don Sutton to OPB.

St. Paul in process of completing and ratifying constitution – community conversation 1/14, vote 2/11.

CCC

12/11 CCC Communications meeting

12/14 CCC Board Meeting - passed balanced 2018 budget this morning, **with same \$475 contribution from RMRC expected in Feb.** Clarified that budgeted expectation of personal contribution from each board member is only a guideline, and Council values this ECC vicar's in-kind donation of services.

Discussed beginning stages of possible collaborations to support Expanding School Lunch Protections and Funding SSI and SSDI Application Assistance (although anticipate that both initiatives will be hamstrung by TABOR).

APPENDIX B

TO CALL OR NOT TO CALL A LOCAL BISHOP:

Further education and considerations

THE PROJECT:

After reviewing participation in and feedback to the *ECC 101* Road Show presentations and the *Voices and Ears* leadership gathering, the Rocky Mountain Regional Council has identified the need for further education around the issue of the role of local bishops in the ECC. To address said need, they have requested an ad hoc committee (Lara Martinez, Jack Wolfe, Dcn. Mike Weil, Steve deHaas, and Fr. Michael Nicosia) to prepare an information packet which would include:

- 1) educational materials/resources regarding local bishops, and
- 2) information regarding pros *and* cons of electing a local bishop.

And, to counter any top-heavy perceptions, it should also include:

- 3) the “new” (original?) understanding of bishop local as the matriarch “presiding over” a family gathering, imbued with authority by virtue of her wisdom and place of honor in the “household” (the original meaning of the word *diocese*), and
- 4) reminders about the 3-legged stool’s model of shared leadership and accountability.

In the new year, a gathering of the regional clergy will be held, to learn of their perceived needs for the support (e.g., pastoral, liturgical, collegial, unifying, *et al.*) that a local bishop would provide; their voiced needs, if any, would be included in the packet.

While the committee is encouraged to help us think “out of the box,” creative adaptations of the role of bishop must be in keeping with the ECC Constitution (or the need for revising said document needs to be articulated).

The committee would bring recommendations back to the RMRC with a timeline for education in communities—perhaps during the Easter season, a traditional period of *mystagogy* (“teaching about the mysteries in which we as church are immersed”). The RMRC will consider having a “pilot group” of leadership test the educational packet before broad distribution.

RESOURCES GATHERED TO DATE:

(The majority are for the committee's consideration, while those in **BOLD** face should be included, in whole or in part, in the packet.)

- **brochure_EPISCOPACY - 2011** (*our initial stab at it*)
- **ECC Regional Bishop** and **ministry_regional bishop** documents
- **Affirmations...Concerning the Episcopacy, 2007 Synod statement**
- **Hierarchy, current and proposed** chart
- +Rafe's "RECOVERING AND REVISIONING THE OFFICE OF BISHOP"
and **Rev. Kedda's 1 page summary**
- +Tom Altepeter's "Here I am among you as one who serves"
- +Peter's 2012 Pastoral Letter, "The Bishop as Servant of Catholic Renewal"
- +Francis's talk at *Voices and Ears*, on "communal, collegial, personal *episkopos*" (*Fr. Len*)
- The Episcopal Council's 2013 Pastoral Letter, "Chosen by All" (points re: bishops in general)
- "Diocesan Bishop: ministry description" of the former Florida Diocese
- Proposed Job Description for the Bishop of Colorado 2016

OTHER RESOURCES TO CONSIDER:

- Mid-Atlantic Diocese's Constitution, call process, and related publications
- Pacific Northwest Region's call process, and related publications

OUTLINE:

(Jack's initial suggestion)

- What is a Bishop
- History from the Early Church
- How does the ECC view Bishops
- How does this differ from the RCC
- What would a Regional Bishop's role be
- Reasons why we might want a Regional Bishop
- Reasons why we might not want a Regional Bishop.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

(Fr. Michael's)

- How large of a packet are we envisioning? Something like the 2011 brochure, referencing important documents that can be accessed through each parish?
- First step? Each committee member review the documents, highlighting key points that need to be included? Other suggestions?