

To the Pastoral Council:

I represented St. Catherine parish at the Deanery Pastoral Council Convocation called by the diocese on January 19. I have enclosed Jan Von Handorf's report of the meeting posted on the diocesan website. We received 3-minute speeches from the 17 different offices/departments of the diocese responsible for implementing the diocesan synod. After discussion for clarification, we the representatives were each given the task of presenting this information to our pastoral councils during the February meeting. The job of each parish pastoral council is to agree or disagree with the direction of the office or department.

First of all, please be aware that the Synod is already in place and will not be reconsidered. Each of the departments has studied its directives from the Synod in detail. This presentation is the initial response from each group, the first plan of action or the most pressing problem to be corrected. After the councils in the parishes have discussed these directives, the deaneries will reconvene. If for example 4 of the 6 deaneries report back that a particular directive should be held back, another problem (already mandated by the Synod) being more pressing or substantial, that department will reconsider. Obviously, the diocese is hoping that all measures will meet with general approval so that implementation can begin.

Secondly, unless we wish to rubber stamp what the diocese is planning, some research on your part may be necessary (My, that sounds negative – most of the directives are quite good and should meet little resistance). On the right side of the screen at the home page of "www.covingtondiocese.org" is a box entitled "Diocesan Synod 2003-2006". Aside from the Synod itself, the documents in question are the **Diocesan Annual Plan 2008-2009** and the **Rationale statements**. A full copy of these will be available at council, and I will have pertinent pieces copied for you at our meeting Wed 2/20/08. For discussion purposes, you may wish to review those documents. Each is about 50 pages long, mostly tables and short statements rather than paragraphs.

Let me give an example I believe we should change. The Religious Ed Dept. has already evaluated and changed when necessary the religion textbooks at the high school level. They see their next step as performing the same task for all diocesan grade schools, creating standard and accepted orthodox texts for the diocese. I personally would submit that the St Catherine CCD needs much greater attention than the grade school texts. The proposed evaluation and revamping of grade school texts would be moved back as a lesser priority, not eliminated or re-discussed. The evaluation itself is already mandated by the Synod.

Since I hope to get ratification or rejection of about 50 action points from 17 committees in one hour of meeting time, please allow me to take some committees and statements off the table. For example, the tasks presented for the deacons of the diocese include getting the group of deacons coordinated and communicating, creating bylaws and policies and procedures. To suggest another direction (other than starting the group) would be ludicrous. In that spirit, I'd like to remove from discussion and accept without discussion the directives from the following:

- Cemeteries office(continued upkeep and funding)
- Archives (same)

Tribunal (creating a pamphlet to explain common questions about annulment)
Messenger (opening and continuing avenues for communication)
Marydale (continue retreat options, acquire more acceptable books)
Deacons (as above).

If anyone would like these issues reopened, I will do so without question.

This leaves 11 departments or committees which I will discuss in greater detail, some easier than others and all listed below. Again, I try to make this as smooth as possible. I believe the diocese really wants to know if their prayerful evaluation of the Synod is shared in the pews.

Please feel free to contact me if you want any questions answered before the meeting.

Matt Connolly
mjcdpm@fuse.net

Committees for discussion and ratification:

Worship
Family Life
Stewardship
Finance
Catholic Charities
Planning Office
Administration/Chancery
Religious Education
Pro Life
Youth/Young Adults
Dept. of Catholic Schools