

Minutes of the September 11, 2008 Meeting of the Diaconate Community Board

Present: Cardinal Seán, Fr. Kelly, Mrs. Menz, Deacons Guerrini, Belmonte, DiBello, Fitzgerald, Jennette, King, Mannion, Mesa, Nicholson, Spiri, and Whipple

1. **Opening Prayer (Installation of Members)** Cardinal Seán and Deacon Guerrini led the opening prayer in the form of an installation of the members of the Board.
2. **Welcome and Introductions** Fr. Bill Kelly welcomed the Board, and members introduced themselves.
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** Minutes were included in materials concerning the Board which were given to the members as they arrived for the meeting.
4. **Appointment of DC Board Recording Secretary** Deacon Whipple agreed to take minutes of this meeting. A permanent secretary will be appointed after the meeting.
5. **Open Dialogue re: Hopes and Aspirations for the Deacon Community Board 2008-2009 Session**

Jennette: He coordinated the married deacons' retreat program. Retreats were held at Miramar. He would like to see the program revived. It would be nice to have additional retreat options.

Belmonte: It would be preferable to have retreats at times when there is no snow on the ground.

Mesa: Include the widows of deacons in the community.

Fitzgerald: At the death of a deacon, have the deacons of the region help communicate and coordinate the liturgies.

Guerrini & Fr. Kelly: The regional representatives will be expected to help in these regards.

Belmonte: They will need lists of ordination classes.

Whipple: The regional reps should schedule meetings with the bishop and meetings of the deacons of the region.

Nicholson: It would be useful to have guest speakers, such as Fr. Mahoney or Fr. Erikson.

King: The mentoring program helped newly ordained deacons "hit the ground running."

Guerrini: Deacon Donoghue and he will be looking for a deacon to coordinate the program.

Nicholson: It should continue into the year following ordination.

Belmonte: Where will deacons fit in with the reorganization? Their place should be clarified. Deacons want more of a role.

Fitzgerald: In Framingham the deacons have met and are coordinating their work in three parishes.

Mannion: He is coordinating the RCIA program in Framingham.

Mrs. Menz: Good communication is crucial.

Guerrini: The regional reps should help communicate. They should also get involved in diaconate events and encourage others to do so. They constitute a second stage of communication.

Nicholson: How many deacons are uninvolved? It is our responsibility to reach out.

6. Cardinal Seán

i. He is pleased to be in the new Pastoral Center. It is good to have the offices under one roof. The Center could also serve as the location for various gatherings.

He is anxious to continue to grow the diaconate community. Growth will bring challenges. It will be important to instill a sense of belonging, of community, and of responsibility for their regions in the deacons.

It would be good to develop a five-year post-ordination program similar to the one in place for newly ordained priests. After ordination it is necessary to learn one's new identity — to grow psychologically and emotionally into the new role which is conferred ontologically at ordination.

He is enthusiastic about having the regional representatives meet regularly with the bishops.

It is important to avoid letting deacons become anonymous.

ii. He is pleased with the preparations for the ARISE Together in Christ program and hopes deacons and their wives will be involved.

iii. Pastoral planning is ongoing. Father Evans is working in this area at the Pastoral Center on a part time basis. Deacons have an important role in the process.

Fr. Williams is working on Faith Formation.

Fr. Colella is in charge of the Marriage efforts. A pastoral letter on marriage will be issued. Deacons should discuss it with their wives. We need to reestablish a sense of marriage as a vocation in the Catholic community. There needs to be remote preparation for this understanding of marriage with our teenagers under the aspects of vocation and discipleship.

There are two new committees, one of which is chaired by Fr. Kiley. It is looking at materials and programs used in our schools to determine which are the most effective. It will also consider the problem of CCD children who are not being brought to Mass. The committee will seek to determine best practices to address the problem.

The other committee, chaired by Msgr. Fay, is looking at programs of lay formation, especially for catechists. We are not doing very well as a church in passing on the faith. Business as usual is not enough. Schools need to prepare people for a life of faith. Boards will be set up to consider regionalization, legal questions, academic issues,

funding, and Catholic identity.

It is important to instill in deacons a realization of the need to make other deacons part of our ministry — to maintain a sense of *communio* and mutual support.

Deacon Belmonte asked if Msgr. Fay's committee would deal with more than catechists. Cardinal Seán replied that it would, but that catechists are very important.

7. Report of the Director of Formation Deacon Guerrini delivered the report on behalf of Deacon Donoghue, who is visiting the formation program which is taking place this evening.

There are 16 aspirants in formation at the Reading site.

Deacon Donoghue will be retiring from his position as Director of Formation in December.

Sixteen aspirants will be admitted to candidacy on October 25 at 4:00 p.m. in the Pastoral Center.

Budget cuts have eliminated the position of site coordinator at the Reading site. This may require the eliminating Reading as a site for formation.

8. Report of the Retreat Coordinator Deacon Guerrini gave the report on behalf of Deacon Shanahan.

There will be a retreat at the Campion Center. Registration material will be sent out soon. Deacon Spiri asked if there is anything else in the works, and Deacon Guerrini replied that there is not at this point.

9. Upcoming Events

a. Preaching Workshops 9/9-9/16-9/23

People can still come in as of the date of this meeting, for the final two sessions.

b. Deacons for Life Training 9/25

John Berkely is working with Marianne Luthein. It is a fine program which includes videos with Cardinal Seán. There are three evening training sessions, of which the one on September 25 is the first. The program trains leaders to speak on the issues of respect for life, primarily in their parish, but with some possibility of occasions outside the parish.

c. Priest/Deacon Workshop 10/9

The format will be social but with real content. Fr. Art Coyle will give a talk, followed by time for questions and conversation.

d. Annual Convocation 2/21

It will take place at St. Patrick's in Stoneham. There will be a keynote speaker in the morning and workshops in the afternoon.

e. St. Paul & Ministry Lecture 4/28

This will be a lecture for all priests and deacons on the occasion of the Year of St. Paul. Location and presenter are TBA.

Regional representatives should stimulate interest in these and other diaconate events.

Personal contact is important to invite deacons in the region and classmates.

10. **Projects in Process**

a. Photo Directory of Deacons

The first proofs of the priests' directory will be made available soon. Next they will do the deacons. The project will begin at the Convocation in February.

b. Handbooks for Candidates and Deacons

These are mandated by the directory on the life and formation of deacons.

Deacon Fitzgerald asked how to schedule events in the Pastoral Center. Fr. Kelly replied that they should be booked through the Office of Clergy Support.

11. **Closing Prayer** Cardinal Seán led the Board in a concluding prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon John E. Whipple
Acting Secretary