

Parish Open Forum for Action
Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Trinity Hall
Sunday, November 4, 2018 – 2:30-5:00 pm

Initial notes of planning discussions

This document contains the notes taken during this Forum when nearly 130 Holy Trinity parishioners and others gathered to consider what actions to take regarding five topics of concern. These topics were mentioned in the statements made during listening sessions the Parish conducted in the months of August and September 2018 and from emails sent to the parish during that time.

These groups will continue to meet and members of the Parish Pastoral Council will keep in touch with them as their action plans develop over the coming months. As these plans and discussions evolve, some of these groups may be combined and initiatives focused more specifically.

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Church Structure

1. Change bureaucratic model of church and parish structure
2. [From Bottom Up] Look for history of how Holy Trinity got here, how we make decisions, whether we have transparency around hiring/firing (will have a plan together by December 1;
 1. [From Top Down] Start Vatican III - get laity behind this effort
 2. Change tone from the top
 3. Establish a Parish Research Lab
 4. Require laity involvement in selecting bishops

3. Eliminate clericalism within the church
 1. Define what we has a parish mean by "clericalism"? Then come back to parish as a whole for guidance on next steps
 2. If new Archbishop is already chosen, then demand that "he" host an opportunity to listen - perhaps organize a synod - and include "laity involvement" on the agenda (but synod should cover variety of topics) - could dovetail with Role of Laity group
 3. Can Jesuits release any data now - rather than waiting for other shoe to drop? (may dovetail nicely with group focused on searching HT data, best practices, etc.)

4. Revamp ordination and elevation criteria within the church.
 1. Study/reform criteria for admission and formation within seminaries
 2. Research Canon Law underpinning bishop selection/bishop performance review/bishop term limits...check "Voice of the Faithful at votf.org, searching for "bishop selection"
 3. Research other church models re: bishop selection/review/term limits
 4. Search for other organizations working on women's ordination
 5. Research legal status/potential for women's ordination (Responsible
 6. Research married clergy issue

If you wish to offer comments, input, or suggestions to groups working on Church Structure, send email to: ChurchStructure@trinity.org

Transparency and Accountability

1. Organize the formation of new groups (e.g. Survivors and LGBTI)–and encourage their full participation in the parish community.
 - Matthew Shephard service; National Cathedral - Inclusive
 - Recognize what we don't do. Something has to be done differently
 - Identify if any parish has done this – what challenges have they faced
 - Announce formation of the groups
 - Approval by PPC - Parish Life – determine how groups will be led
 - Approval by parish of their formation
 - Publish the existence of these groups
2. Model Practices/Model Parish
 - Transparency by HT about abuse
 - @HT/Jesuit order - open records
 - Financial/administrative transparency
 - Expand role/power of laity on parish decisions
 - Follow best practices in child abuse prevention beyond what is required by the 2002 Dallas Charter
3. Organize a network of dioceses and parishes advocating for Church Reform
 - Agreement to create a means, a network of parishes advocacy for reform - which we are currently naming Transparency
 - Explore and advocate for the means for and advocacy for transparency
 - Learning from/forming a project for victims
 - Identifying hierarchy of how abuse reported, etc.
 - Pass the word that we can join with other local parishes and Baltimore parishes (and other parishes throughout country to post 5 Theses for reform on eve of Bishops' meeting in Baltimore, Nov. 12 -- www.5theses.org
 - Meet again to establish priorities and how to connect with others
 - E.G We have in group a connect to Shapiro, PA State Attorney General - to intr. on ways - best practices for parish/laity to pursue
4. Persuade diocese to have 60% senior management by women
 - Action: gather data
 - Talk Kate Tromble - how diocese works
 - Get info from religious reporter
 - John Carroll Society - Catholic lawyers
5. National Diocesan Abuse Transparency Scorecard:
 - Check to see if anyone is doing this already
 - Look for site to host
 - Develop questions/items to track

Another sub group of this Breakout group addressed the issue of model practices within Holy Trinity and submitted a separate report of their discussion. These ideas may be merged with number 2 above.

The “Model Parish” group proposed specific action steps by Holy Trinity Parish in three areas, to move the parish toward adoption of best practices on transparency, accountability, and child abuse prevention. Specifically, the “Model Parish” group called for:

Review of Holy Trinity Parish records and prompt disclosure of the names of all clergy and staff credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors, and, in addition, a call by Holy Trinity Parish for a review of the records of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus and prompt disclosure of the names of all members of the Society credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors. [Note: In terms of a starting date for this review, the West Province of the Society just completed a review of its records on sexual abusers, going back through its files to 1950.]

Greater financial and administrative transparency at Holy Trinity Parish, including, for example, monthly publication on the parish website of Parish Pastoral Council minutes and monthly publication on the website of summary statements of the financial status of the parish.

Adoption, publication, and implementation at Holy Trinity parish of best practice standards for child abuse prevention.

If you wish to offer comments, input, or suggestions to groups working on Transparency and Accountability, send email to: Transparency@trinity.org

One of the action groups (#3 above) submitted an updated report to the Parish Pastoral Council on November 14, 2018. Here is their report:

SubGroup Topic: “Organize National Network of Dioceses & Parishes Advocating For Church Reform” AND “Organize network of parishes within Archdiocese of Washington to advocate for church – Update delivered to Parish Pastoral Council 11/14/18

Introduction

In our 11/4/2018 “Listening Session, Part 2”, each of us self-selected to explore the Transparency & Accountability topics: “*Organize National Network of Dioceses & Parishes Advocating For Church Reform*” AND “*Organize network of parishes within Archdiocese of Washington to advocate for church reform.*”

After the meeting, our subgroup continued to meet to ensure that the topic statement worked to clearly communicate a realistic, energizing purpose, headed in a clear direction, with reasonable scope. We shared different perspectives, hopes, and a range

and variety of (sometimes) divergent ideas. Some of us wondered about finding a powerful “engine” to continuously capture and channel the laity’s urgency for institutional and clerical reform.

Through our deliberations, we’ve discovered our “engine” the simple, powerful “5 Theses” (See Below), born right here in Holy Trinity’s “Listening Sessions Part 1” awakenings. Inspired by Reverend Martin Luther’s 95 Theses for Reform, these statements elegantly captures, in one page, the breadth and depth of our own parish’s Parishioner Feedback Document.

Further, the “5 Theses” has power. Day by day, more and more people not only from Holy Trinity but also many other neighboring parishes, are attracted to its witness, ability to facilitate focus and unification for institutional reform.

Therefore, with these understandings, we put forward our developed topic, our recommendation, to this Council and to our fellow parishioners of Holy Trinity.

Recommendation

Build (or adapt) a network around “The 5 Theses” in order to unite, ignite, focus and empower our own Jesuit community, our related Jesuit communities (Retreat Centers, schools, etc.) that is open to serve our neighboring parishioners (and ultimately) any members of the laity anywhere.

We envision that this network would establish a clearinghouse for education, actions, resources, ideas, lessons-learned, experts - as related to the 5 Theses.

Commentary

Regarding the Clearinghouse, our members, just in these few days surfaced a variety of resources to populate the Clearinghouse.

For example,

- One of our members has the 5 Theses “Story” with cases of how it is being delivered in respectful protest. Links to personalize/localize that Witness are available a click away.
- Another member has already gathered a series of compelling resources and systems that educate on the victim’s needs and wants -from how they are regarded and treated post abuse, to the help they need to fairly seek justice, to sensitizing all of us on what forms our compassion may take with victims. Most especially, to ensure that no parishioner money goes to the defense budget of accused priests but is instead allocated to Victim’s Outreach, Counseling Service, and, where just, settlements.
- Others seek to track more closely progress on litigation directed at the removal of the Statute of Limitations For Clerical Abuse Cases
- A member suggested developing or locating an “organization chart” tracing how abuse reports are handled and by whom, parish by parish, diocese by diocese.

- One of us may have access to interview Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania Attorney General who led the landmark Pennsylvania Grand Jury Investigation into Clerical Abuse. The interview guide (TBD) might pursue Mr. Shapiro's thoughts for continued action at the local level, his advice on navigating issues of this kind, etc.
- We all have been made aware of the existence & benefits of developing a "Project Callisto"-like Sexual Assault recording and reporting system designed for use to support and empower victims, improve the reporting experience, etc. [<https://www.projectcallisto.org>].

5 Theses

1. Full transparency

Release the names of clergy in every diocese found by internal processes to be abusers. Pledge to fully cooperate, without question and without qualification, with all new and ongoing investigations initiated by Attorneys General, local prosecutors, and any other law enforcement bodies, especially when evidence points to abuse by clerics and negligence by those with responsibility over them.

2. Survivors' voices

Create and publicize a permanent and prominent place in every issue of every diocesan newspaper in the country for survivors of clergy sexual abuse to share their stories.

3. Simple living

As a symbolic gesture of the commitment to dismantle clericalism, shed the royal raiment and regalia of the episcopate, wearing the plain black garb and liturgical vestments of a parish priest and spending time in service to the poor and marginalized for the coming liturgical year.

4. Put women in church leadership

Ask Pope Francis to restore women to the ordained diaconate, to include women as voting members at meetings of the synod of bishops, to reopen the discussion of women's ordination, and to name women as cardinals at the next consistory and at every consistory going forward until a balance is achieved.

5. Pray for a reformed Church

Require every parish in every diocese to include this prayer, or one based on it, every Sunday in the prayers of the faithful during the next three liturgical years:

"That from this community of gathered people will rise a new church: a church that protects the abused and the marginalized, ministering to all in search of healing; a church that strives continually to overcome every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on gender, race, color, social condition, sexual orientation, language or religion, in order to pave the way for a new future of joy and hope . . . we pray to the Lord.

Role of the Laity

Breakout Group: Assure lay role in Church leadership

Purpose: Why are we here? To make our church better, beginning with our own parish, and moving beyond

Action and To Whom the Action is Directed:

1. Research church leadership, the real power structure, so that we parishioners may understand its composition and parameters, including
 - a. The vision of lay leadership at Vatican II and how that may be interpreted in 2018
 - b. How and what we can and should do to specify and assure the lay role in Church leadership at the parish, diocesan, and global level

Steps:

- i. consult with knowledgeable persons, e.g., John Carr, Tom Reese, to give us a well-informed understanding of church leadership as it is and as it can be
 - ii. consider holding a parish forum to educate our parishioners so that all of us may be able to make informed decisions on how we can better live up to and expand that role
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2. Understand and identify how our parish youth can and need to be protected to prevent abuse

Steps:

- i. Research the process and content for protecting our parish children, school and Religious Education, and identify gaps in both;
- ii. Review content and process for VIRTUS training;
- iii. Ascertain reporting process for children feeling violated at classroom and parish level, as well as legally beyond the parish, including time, place, and adults for reporting purposes;
- iv. Identify the persons to whom reporting is done and what actions are required and followed by each;
- v. Consider hiring a lay person to review the process and follow-through to insure proper reporting is accomplished and appropriate action taken; and
- vi. Consider ways to communicate with parents of children in both school and Religious Education regarding:

- a. their knowledge of ways to protect their children,
 - b. content and timing of education on this topic provided to children
 - c. process for reporting concerns, including what to expect as follow-up
3. Work to develop an across-parish group to be involved in the selection of bishops, and to advocate for our recommendations at the diocesan and national level, as well as at the Vatican

Steps:

- i. Select/elect one or two lay people from our parish to serve as our representatives to develop with other parishes an across-parish/inter-parish group for the purpose of:
 - a. assisting in interviewing and identifying our next bishop,
 - b. recommending a candidate for bishop,
 - c. developing recommendations for the diocese to be taken to the February Vatican meeting,
 - d. meeting with people who will participate in the February meeting in the Vatican to represent our needs and requests/recommendations,
 - e. sharing data on the parish level regarding abuse.

Note: there may be one or more parishes already considering a similar approach (Our Lady of Victory, Blessed Sacrament, etc.)

4. Active Support for Priests of Integrity
 - Contact Fr. Gillespie to get permission to canvass HT priests to get their preferences for this kind of support
 - Based on KG's response, a small group of lay people will meet with individual priests to solicit their needs and preferences
5. Foster training for Lay Involvement
 - Bring together the faith formation from Principium / RCIA Bible Study to show potential for parish leadership
 - Meet with parents and young adults to assess needs
6. Parishioner conversations
 - To gather parishioners in small neighborhood groups for faith formation

7. Online Resources

- To develop online resources as vehicle for small group conversations

If you wish to offer comments, input, or suggestions to groups working on Role of the Laity, send email to: Laity@trinity.org

Support of Survivors and their Families

1. Contact SNAP about their program and what is needed by the victims
 - Find out what public actions are being taken to bring issue of clergy sexual abuse to the public arena
2. Have Holy Trinity build awareness of hotlines and websites (SNAP, Project Callisto, etc.) through various communication channels
3. Explore best practices of mental health, understand of this issue **now**, and their role in dropping the ball
4. Expand Statute of Limitations in DC
 - Contact DC City Council member
 - Support Council member
 - Track lobbying money (Catholic Conference)
 - Support through Congress
5. Bankroll Activists
 - Funds to survivors
 - Down the line- funds to survivors

If you wish to offer comments, input, or suggestions to groups working on Support of Survivors and Their Families, send email to: SurvivorsAndFamily@trinity.org

Prayer

- After initial introductions of those attending this Group, individuals offered suggestions on options for incorporating prayer as part of the plans for action.
- One member raised the possibility of using our new garden as a location for prayer.
- Another described the possibility of recitations of the rosary in a communal setting, coupled with poetic proclamations.
- Another individual referenced the service that formed part of the October PPC meeting as a good example of music and readings led by the laity.
- Another individual stressed the importance of finding a safe space and building on existing structures that are already in place at the parish.
- In addition, another participant indicated that it might be possible to use prayer spaces at the Franciscan Seminary, or at the National Basilica.
- Participants also spoke of the need to allow for reconciliation and healing, as well as to stimulate concrete action.
- It was deemed important to allow feelings of anger and betrayal to be expressed, and to allow some “unstructured” time to allow individuals at the services to offer their own observations.
- It was also raised as a possibility to incorporate a service where stones were set as a sign of remembrance, perhaps in the context of the garden services.
- Finally, in keeping with the Ignatian tradition of the parish, the roles of discernment of spirits was considered: of identifying areas of consolation and desolation, as forms of prayer leading to action.
- These prayer alternatives could be offered at monthly or bi-monthly services, drawing on these different traditions and approaches, and leading to a subsequent discussion among representatives of the other Groups whereby reports would be offered to the community at large, to keep all interested participants informed and ready to propose concrete action steps. The role of the laity as leading these prayer services was deemed important; this role was supported by the Jesuit spirituality of the parish which empowers such action.

If you wish to offer comments, input, or suggestions to groups working on Prayer, send email to: Prayer@trinity.org