



InFormation

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality!

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Summer's Over!

Most parishes are in a summer mode. Making starting up in the fall a major event. With school starting, trying to secure all aspects of PREP, plus the start to Parish Pastoral Council meetings and in some cases a complete or partial turnover in council members. A variety of meetings are probably scheduled every night in September and beyond. Then there is the usual Fall promise, next summer we'll get a head start maybe one or two council meetings in the summer. Ah yes a great idea that never seems to materialize.

Why not set up a summer program for a few key members to work a project so that the council would have some things to consider when start up happens next fall? What are some of the pressing issues? An evangelization program, a financial plan, a self study, Annual review of Catholic education in the parish, Wouldn't it be nice if on the first council meeting in the fall you had some plans to look at and consider? The following 9 months could be very productive when an agenda and time line has been laid out. - *by Ron Lill* -

Benefits of belief

By Father John Flynn, L.C.



ROME, JUNE 18, 2007 (Zenit.org).-

Patrick Fagan in a paper published by the Heritage Foundation "Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability," argues that "religious practice promotes the well-being of individuals, families and the community."

"Regular attendance at religious services is linked to healthy, stable family life, strong marriages and well-behaved children," he pointed out. Numerous sociological studies, Fagan continued, show that valuing religion and regularly practicing it are associated with greater marital stability, higher levels of marital satisfaction and an increased likelihood that an individual will be inclined to marry.

Among other points, these studies reveal that:

- Women who are more religious are less likely to experience divorce or separation than their less religious peers.
- Marriages in which both spouses attend religious services frequently are 2.4 times less likely to end in divorce than marriages in which neither spouse worships.
- Religious attendance is the most important predictor of marital stability, confirming studies conducted as far back as 50 years ago.
- Couples who share the same faith are more likely to reunite if they separate

than are couples who do not share the same religious affiliation.

Moreover, religious practice is also related to a reduction in such negative behaviors as domestic abuse, crime, substance abuse and addiction.

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The InFormation Newsletter is published by:

The Office of Research & Planning
for the use of Parish Pastoral Planners and
those who implement those plans.

Suggestions for future articles should be directed to Ron Lill *editor*

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Phone: 1-215-587-3545

These suggestions are encouraged and welcomed


Disciples on the Journey

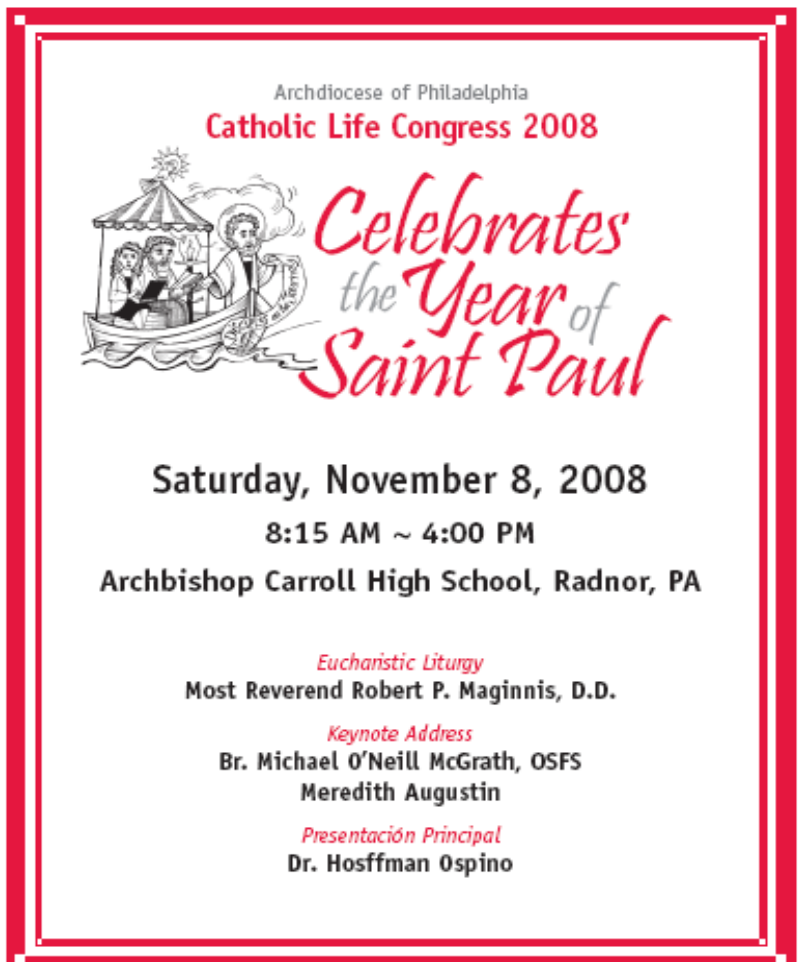
The Catholic Life Congress 2008!

The ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
WILL HOLD THE CATHOLIC LIFE CONGRESS
ON-SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH, 2008
AT- ARCHBISHOP CARROLL HIGH SCHOOL


FEATURING WORKSHOPS
BY DR. MARYANNE GUBISH
AUTHOR OF REVISIONING
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS
A MUST FOR YOUR P.P.C.
TIME- 8:30 AM TO 3:30 PM

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT:
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Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Catholic Life Congress 2008



*Celebrates
the Year of
Saint Paul*

Saturday, November 8, 2008
8:15 AM ~ 4:00 PM
Archbishop Carroll High School, Radnor, PA

Eucharistic Liturgy
Most Reverend Robert P. Maginnis, D.D.

Keynote Address
Br. Michael O'Neill McGrath, OSFS
Meredith Augustin

Presentación Principal
Dr. Hosffman Ospino



The Post-Construction Blues

Adapted From the Alban Weekly -
Week of 5/8/2006

Dan Hotchkiss, Alban Consultant

Few projects excite and galvanize a

parish more than a new building or a major renovation. People complain about construction delays, capital campaigns, and the general din and dust, but their blood pumps, their wallets loosen, and their enthusiasm rises. Lyle Schaller went so far as to generalize that parishes that build capital are happier than those that spend it. Most parishes in the midst of a construction project illustrate his point: as they convert their members' cash into real estate, their spirits rise, peaking at the dedication service.

But what happens then? Usually there is a period of euphoria. Occasionally a parish goes on from strength to strength without a pause. More often, though, there is a letdown, a period of slump? in finances, in program, in morale: the post-construction blues. This happens for several reasons:

Increased operating costs. From the moment of groundbreaking, the parish needs to begin payments on any loans. New buildings mean new costs for heating, cooling, and cleaning. And so on and on. Those who were against building now have cause to say "I told you so."

Loss of a major point of focus. People love a project. A building project, even an annoying one, focuses decision making. Money flows to it; lay leadership and staff time go to it; ministries and programs move aside or even stop cold to make way for the jackhammers and cranes. Then, suddenly, the noisy building site becomes a seriously quiet building. Opportunities abound; without a plan, the parish may be paralyzed. The people ask, "What now?"

Shift of emphasis from money and building to ministry and program. A parish that has focused on a building program for the last few years is apt to have a council full of people who like fund-raising, financial planning, and construction. What the hour demands, though, is ministry and programs to fill up the new space with people. Parish Council members who try to stay focused on finances and construction may be frustrated and angry. Worse, they may prevent a necessary shift to new priorities or create conflict when "those new people" want to do new things.

A change of leadership. There is no law requiring Leaders or staff to move after a building project, but many do. Nor is it necessary for parishes to tread water during a transition between leadership, but many do. At a time when the parish needs not less but more work, money, and enthusiasm from its members, a pastoral transition can stall a parish's movement into its next cycle of growth.

What can be done to avoid the post-construction syndrome or to mitigate its consequences? First of all, if you are planning a building campaign, choose the timing wisely.

Maximize the use of your current facility before building. have more worship services, each with high attendance, active children's ministry, and participatory music program. Parishes frequently emphasize the sanctuary in phase one of a staged building plan. But sanctuary space costs much more per square foot than classrooms and offices, so small parishes often build too small. Lack of seating space, program space, parking, and staff offices limit growth, and phase two never happens or is long delayed.

The reverse sequence. Building a modest sanctuary plus ample space for small group programs and staff offices usually makes more sense. With multiple Masses, space for program and, last but by no means least, a manageable debt load, the parish can more easily grow to the point of building a truly adequate sanctuary.

Another kind of preplanning that can head off the post-construction blues anticipates the need for a new cadre of leaders for the post-construction period. Some lay leaders do their best work helping parishes build and find the program-building aftermath less interesting. A few can manage both. A little foresight can prevent the leadership from leaving unhappily, a needless victim of the parish's post-construction blues.

An open conversation about the fact that different leaders offer different gifts empowers the parish to select one mix of leaders to build the building and another group to plan how ministry and program will ramp up quickly once the new space is completed. As with clergy, frank conversation ahead of time can keep the leadership transition, once it occurs, upbeat and intentional instead of angry and demoralizing. When this happens, lay leaders have a responsibility to keep the program and the parish on a growth curve. Some growth may be necessary to "catch up" to the debt-payment obligations. More important, the parish owes it to the donors to fulfill the dream for which the ...[page 4](#)



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Trivia Box

How many self identified Catholics are registered in a parish?

How many self identified Catholics attend Mass weekly?

(Answer on page 3 in the answer box)

**Has your parish or Cluster entered into a
Planning or Study Process?**

Do you need a professional Facilitator?
The office of Research and Planning maintains a list of
trained and experienced Resource people.

Contact us at: *The Archdiocese of Philadelphia*
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Philadelphia, Pa 19103

tn#215-587-3545 E-mail orp@adphila.org

FROM THE BOOKSHELF



By Marti Harrington

Coordinator, Parish Pastoral Councils, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Make Room for the Holy Spirit!

Characteristics of good Parish Pastoral Council meetings:

- Begin with prayer
- Establish a clear purpose for the meeting
- Prepare an agenda
 - ◊ Distribute the agenda in advance
 - ◊ Indicate the required time required for each segment
- Start on time
- End on time
- Identify a leader/facilitator
- Use a consensus decision making process
- End with prayer
- Follow up with clear minutes

Prayer and faith sharing are essential to the life and effectiveness of PPC's.

When asked why successful PPC's are successful, the inevitable answer is "we pray together, we faith share". *Successful PPC's invite the Holy Spirit to be present at each meeting.*

Characteristics of good prayer and faith sharing:

- Allow time to settle from the day
- Intentionally focus one's attention, talent and energy on the agenda
- Prepare scripture reading
- Allow reflection time
- Allow time to share faith and feelings

Below are some resources available for you in preparing prayer:

Prayer for Parish Groups: Preparing and leading prayer for group meetings, Donal Harrington & Julie Cavanaugh, Saint Mary's Press, 1998, \$12.95.

This book begins with two brief chapters on the importance of prayer as the heartbeat of every parish group and specific suggestions and guidance on preparing a prayer session. The main body of the book provides over 100 resource texts for your use.

Meeting Prayers, Philip A. Verhalen, Editor, The Liturgical Press, 2002, \$9.95.

The introduction of this book acknowledges that coming together for a meeting is community building work in itself. The prayers included here pull us out of our own agenda and allow us to reflect on the more encompassing agenda that works for the honor of God. There are prayers for each month of the year, for the end of meetings and prayers in anticipation of a critical meeting.

Prayer Services for Parishes, Karen Berry, O.S.F., St. Anthony Messenger, 2005, \$9.95.

This book provides prayer services for many occasions, seasons and programs. Each service provides a springboard for opening people to the action of God in the church community. Prayers services for the liturgical year, sacraments, parish groups and seasons and holidays are included.

Feel free to contact Marti Harrington at maharrin@adphila.org or 215.587.3694, to obtain these books.

Trivia Answer Box

About two thirds of self identified Catholics are registered in a parish. About one third of self identified Catholics attend Mass weekly. source: Davidson, James and Suzanne Fournier. 2006 "Recent Research on Catholic Parishes"



Active social life delays memory loss

Chatting with the neighbors or joining a parish group can help stave off memory loss. In a major long-term study by the Harvard School of Public Health, the most socially engaged people had the slowest rate of decline (SeniorJournal.com 6.4.08). Researchers analyzed memory assessments of U.S. adults age 50 or older from 1998 to 2004. The results, published in the July 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, showed that memory decline among the biggest social butterflies was less than half the rate of the least inte-

grated loners. Interacting with fellow humans is a boon for physical health, too. Previous studies have found that people with many social ties have lower mortality rates.

Homes slimming down

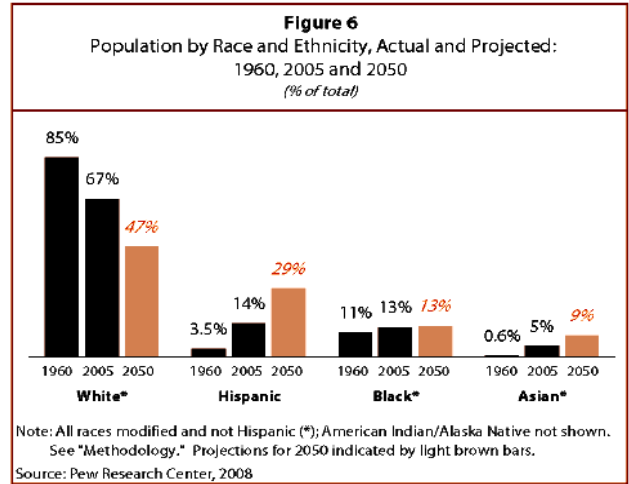
The current economic downturn, population shifts and increased environmental awareness have all contributed to a desire for smaller house. A National Association of Home Builders survey recently found 60% of potential homebuyers would rather have a smaller house with more amenities than vice versa (Realtor.org 5.12.08). From sky-rocketing utility costs to the need for universal design, many are finding that a morbidly obese McMansion just isn't sustainable.

The Changing Face of

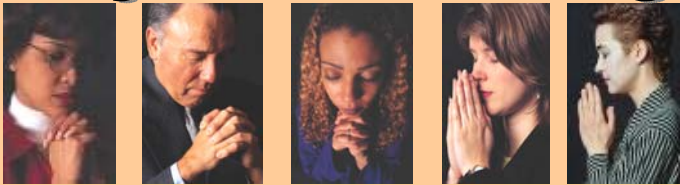


America

The Hispanic population, 42 million in 2005, will rise to 128 million in 2050, tripling in size. Latinos will be 29% of the population, compared with 14% in 2005. (Figure 6) Latinos will account for 60% of the nation's population growth from 2005 to 2050.



Prayer for a Meeting



Leader:

heavenly Father guide us by your word that we might become inspired by your Holy Spirit to do your will as we gather in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen

- 1: Select an appropriate verse of scripture. Read the scripture passage aloud once and allow some time for reflection
- 2: Read the passage a second time and invite all those present to share aloud one word from the passage that speaks to them or resonates with them right now
- 3: Read the passage a third time and invite all those present to share aloud one phrase from the passage that speaks to them or resonates with them right now
- 4 invite all those present to share aloud why this phrase holds some significance for them or why it resonates with them.
(Refer to the page 3 article "From the Bookshelf")

POST CONSTRUCTION-BLUES



Continued from page 2

for which the project was begun in the first place. Again, the best cure lies in the early planning stages. With a deliberate strategic plan in place for increased ministry and program, the parish is less vulnerable to loss of momentum should its clergy leader move on after the building program.

The dedication of a new or renovated or expanded building ranks among the most memorable high points of a parish's life. Like most

moments of glory, the high is often followed by a letdown, by the post-construction blues. We can anticipate it, plan around it, or pretend it isn't there, but in the end we have to sing each other through it, knowing that our best defense is no defense. Like the man said, "The best cure for the blues, is the blues."

"The Post-Construction Blues" originally appeared in the March 2006 issue of the Clergy Journal -Source: Alban Weekly © 2006 The Alban Institute, Inc.