

Best Practices for Funerals Across the Diocese Gleaned from Pastoral Associates/Ministers

At the fall workshop we sat around our lunch tables talking about best funeral practices. We also solicited more ideas from ministers that could not attend the workshop. Following are some of the ideas shared from pastoral associates and ministers from all over the diocese.

Preparation for the funeral

The practice I use I learned from taking a course on grief and learning Jewish practices. From their wisdom they said that it is worthless to tell someone "I'm sorry for your loss", in fact it often burdens people. Instead, what I learned is to give the space to them and at the right time I ask them to "tell me about the person they loved." I now share in whatever they are going through without any expectation or needing to say something. I am there for them and whatever they need. Tom Ruda

Others:

- ◇ Have the family members tell you stories or memories or qualities of the deceased and share the notes with whoever is doing the homily so that it can be more personal. Joe Erway
- ◇ Offer a list of readings and hymns and make it clear that we will help them as

much or as little with the planning as they desire. Pat Meyer

- ◇ Email information to family if out of town.
- ◇ Either the pastor, PA or on occasion, deacon, goes to the funeral home about 15 minutes before calling hours to pray with the family. This allows us to pray in a calm atmosphere without interrupting conversations during visiting hours. Marianne Antczak
- ◇ Availability of good, accessible materials for their planning (on website, and in an organized folder) <http://www.sjcpenfield.com/index.cfm?load=page&page=250>, and offering a customizable worship aide/program. Cathy Kamp
- ◇ Have well-formed servers and be prepared to talk about what the Church teaches TODAY about cremation, Christian burial. Cathy Kamp

The funeral itself

Six years ago the "Remarks of Remembrance" were moved to after the Opening Hymn and I highly recommend this

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Question Corner

Question:

What is this new role of Multiparish Finance Director? Will it affect all parishes?

Answer:

This new model of parish financial management entails the hiring of individuals with a higher level of skills in finance by a parish, or by a group of parishes. The Multiparish Finance Director provides a higher level of expertise in finance oversight, budgeting and strategic planning,

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placement. The benefits of immediately hearing about the person sets the right tone of prayerful understanding for the rest of the Mass, helps the priest to coordinate and embellish his own remarks later on and definitely relieves the eulogist's anxious burden of waiting before being able to speak! Barb Hesenius

Others:

- ◇ We offer a funeral program for the mass, so that those attending can follow along. Lori Cunliffe,
- ◇ Before the Opening Prayer, we introduce who will be proclaiming the readings and who will be giving the eulogy, if one is included. This makes those who will be reading a bit more comfortable knowing that I will announce when they need to come forward. June Sherman
- ◇ Our pastor (or his delegate) delivers a homily that is completely unique to each person. This is really impressive when we have two funerals back-to-back that use the same readings! Marianne Antczak

- ◇ The Presider both sprinkles and incenses cremains which are covered with a smaller sized pall. Marlene Vigna
- ◇ At the end of a funeral, we invite each member of the immediate family to sprinkle the casket with holy water. The presider sprinkles last. Marianne Antczak

Following the funeral

When appropriate (eg, infirm immediate family members, terrible storm, burial at another time), we will say the prayers of commendation right in the narthex. Marianne Antczak

Others:

- ◇ Our Martha Ministry prepares a luncheon for all who attend the funeral; this is very much appreciated by the family. There is no charge for this service although we do accept any donation if offered. (Many shared this)
- ◇ Following the funeral, within the next couple weeks, I try to send the families a card letting them know that they remain in our prayers. Pat Meyer

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etc. This position also frees up the Pastor/PA to focus on ministry.

The MFD will report to the pastors who will do the actual hiring, but also have a dotted line responsibility to the diocesan CFO. Urban parishes, who were already struggling with financial viability in 2010, introduced this position of MFD. Already they have seen remarkable financial improvement and stability. It is the hope of the diocese that this model of financial management will strengthen the finances, internal controls, and ultimately the long term spiritual ministries of every parish.

This question was posed by one of the Pastoral Associates. If you have questions about topics or new actions taking place in the diocese, please submit them to Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org.



Notes from the Harvest

- ◇ As of January 13, Holy Family in Auburn has received \$51,268.00 in gifts and pledges towards the new roof. We still have a ways to go but this is a 3 year project and we have been collecting for 6 months. With all the commitments to Diocese, Parish regular expenses, community, taxes, family etc. I think we are doing very well. Helen Delaney
- ◇ We had wonderful numbers attending our Christmas liturgies and now we are beginning to prepare for Lent. I will be giving a presentation on January 23rd entitled, "Footsteps of Faith: Recognizing and following the Holy Spirit In Our Lives." I hope to offer some thoughts on the theology of the Holy Spirit as well as how to recognize the Spirit's presence in the ordinary and extra-ordinary moments of life. Pat Meyer
- ◇ St John of Rochester is worshipping back in our newly renovated church. Our new altar was consecrated by Bishop Matano on January 10th. Alleluia!! Amy Voll



Pastoral Associates'/Pastoral Ministers' Association Executive Committee

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My Faith Journey

By Sheryl Zabel, Pastoral Associate of Assumption Parish, Fairport

I was not raised as a Christian or in any other faith. My grandparents all grew up as Catholics but left the church after they immigrated to the U.S. My parents considered themselves to be agnostics or free thinkers, and my father sometimes wondered how modern people could still be religious. But they were some of the finest and most generous people I have ever known.



Sheryl Zabel

When I was 15, I decided that I did believe in God and headed off to a small Protestant church, a short walk from my home. I was baptized on the day before my 16th birthday. Didn't really understand what baptism meant; just knew that was how you joined a church.

By the time I was in college I had stopped attending church and had decided that Christians were basically

hypocrites. I felt that way until I was in my 30's with a few exceptions. One was the brief time I taught in a Catholic girls' high school. I had tremendous respect for the sisters who staffed the school and who really cared about the students' education.

...It's been a truly amazing journey—an honor and a joy to serve with the people of God.

One year during Lent, I was shopping with a Catholic friend on Hudson Ave. We went into Holy Redeemer Church, still a Catholic parish at the time. As I entered the worship space I had an overwhelming feeling that I was home, and why was I still fighting it?

After several months of thinking about this, I went to see Fr. Tim Horan at Assumption Church in

Fairport. He said to me that I had experienced the Holy Spirit when I visited Holy Redeemer. I wanted to run out of his office! But—I kept coming back, and I eventually became an RCIA candidate at the Church of the Resurrection. It was an incredibly beautiful experience, and I finally realized what I wanted to do when I grew up—ministry.

I applied to St. Bernard's, and Fr. Sebastian Falcone was kind enough to allow me to enter the MA in theology program without having all the undergraduate requirements.

I began working as a pastoral associate in the diocese in 1988 and have never looked back. It's been a truly amazing journey—an honor and a joy to serve with the people of God. One great privilege I've had has been to accompany RCIA catechumens and candidates on their faith journeys, something I've been doing for almost 25 years.

Book Nook

Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Matter

by Father Michael White and Tom Corcoran, Pastoral Associate

In the book 'rebuilt' the authors take a challenging look at what they have tried to do to build up their church and find that many of their efforts have been misguided and ineffectual. They share their struggles, fears, successes and failures. After reading this book the staff of our two churches got together to see how we could improve our own efforts. It will take a long time to revisit our conversations, rework our goals and embrace a different way of being. As the authors remind us, "ministry is a marathon, not a sprint" (pg. 251). One of the notes I made to myself was to find more opportunities to have blessings during Mass times; for expectant parents, the prayer shawls, ministers to the Home Bound etc. These blessings underscore the reality that the baptized are the Church not just an audience. The faithful are the Kingdom builders and their strength of purpose comes from participating in Eucharist.

The most profitable chapter for pastoral associates and ministers might be the one on leadership (Ch. 14). Here we are reminded that our challenge is to be servant leaders in the model and heart of Christ. This is not an easy task and it demands some healthy self-exploration of our motives and desires. The book also stresses the need to be a learner. With humility and enthusiasm we need to gather new knowledge about our ministries and leadership (pg. 249). This final exhortation inspired by Paul's statement in Acts 20:24 was very encouraging, "Aim to finish the race you have set out on, to complete the work God has given you and the share you have in testifying to the gospel of God's grace."



Submitted by Sue Howard, Pastoral Associate at Blessed Sacrament and St. Boniface

Dates of Interest



| 2014 | 2014 | 2014 |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH |
| APRIL | MAY | JUNE |
| JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER |
| OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |

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| Tuesday, March 25, 2014 | Diocesan Day of Penance , <i>More details to follow.</i> |
| Tuesday, April 15, 2014 | Chrism Mass , 7:30 p.m., Sacred Heart Cathedral |
| Monday-Wednesday, April 28-30, 2014 | Priest Convocation |
| Friday, May 2, 2014 | Annual Diocesan Musicians' Dinner , 6:00 pm, Rick's Prime Rib |
| Thursday, May 8, 2014 | Pastoral Associates/Ministers Spring Retreat , 9:30-3:30, <i>Notre Dame Retreat Ctr. Registration details to follow soon! Save the Date!</i> |
| Wednesday, May 21, 2014 | Gathering of the Ministerium , <i>Details to follow.</i> |
| Saturday, June 7, 2014 | Deacon Ordination , 10:30 am, Sacred Heart Cathedral |
| Saturday, June 21, 2014 | Priest Ordination , 10:30 am, Sacred Heart Cathedral. |

Prayer Circle

(These will not be shared on the 'Updates', but only in issues of "Gleanings" going directly to Pastoral Associates & Ministers)

- ⇒ For Sr. Patricia MacDonald, RSM who has suffered a stroke.
- ⇒ One of our pastoral associates asks for prayers for the staff at his parish who are facing retirements, health issues, and other challenges.
- ⇒ For Sr. Dorothy Mary Leising, SSND, who turns 90 (or 22.5) on Feb, 29. Still active as a Parish Minister, she runs circles around everyone!


Question for next Issue

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Who has ideas or best practices *that work* for reaching out to inactive Catholics and younger adults?

Please send your thoughts to Betsy McDermott at bmcdermott@dor.org for next 'Gleanings'

Elections !



Elections for the Pastoral Associate and Pastoral Ministers Executive Committee will be held at the Spring meeting on May 8th. The Nomination Committee will be sending out a call for nominations by mid February. The positions open are **Chairperson** and **Treasurer**. Nominees must be active members (regular participants) of the PA/PM Association and presently employed as Pastoral Associates or Pastoral Ministers in the Diocese of Rochester. The terms are for 3 years. To learn more about the duties of these two positions please refer to your Constitution. For a copy, please email Betsy at bmcdermott@dor.org.