

Milwaukee Archdiocese Priest Alliance

General Meeting, September 29, 2005 at St. Matthias Catholic Church, Steiger Hall

There were 68 priests in attendance

Prayer: Dick Schlenker

Reports:

- 1) We look forward for the equitable treatment of Priest committee report which the Archbishop is releasing to the priest council. We see this as a progress brought about at least partially by the actions of the priest alliance and the priests rights committee.
- 2) Since our last meeting our alliance has been very present in the response to the CSI Protocols.
- 3) A flier went around advertising an upcoming evening with Fr. Donald Cozzens
- 4) A flier is also available regarding an upcoming MAREDA event

Presentation by Dr. David Mannelli communication with our church especially in our Archdiocese.

A. Executive functioning - Hierarchy from the more secular perspective as it informs our discussion about the relationship between the episcopacy and the clergy.

Internal: development of the prefrontal cortex that allows for self-talk, self organization, and therefore decisions for the good of the person.

External: functioning of the prefrontal cortex effects our relationships between persons and our other talk. This conversation has more to do with what is good for the institution and not so much for the individual.

Both: internal and external conversations tend to be conservative in nature. The very point is to preserve the individual or the organization. Therefore with it we are slower to respond. Other characteristics include being reactionary, self-promoting and realistic. The conversation isn't necessarily creative. Depressed people are also some of the more realistic.

The problems of this function

- person and organization conflict when self interest and care conflict with the organization. And the organization will also be seen as being slower, more conservative, reactionary, self-promoting and realistic than an individual who can move more quickly.

- By-product is anger and fear when this discord between individual and institution occurs.

Symptoms: hopelessness, resignation, passive aggressiveness, impulsiveness, cynicism.

Image: two intersecting circles where the point of intersection is the us. This can be a source of strength. This falls apart with sins: lack of commitment especially infidelity. The us needs trust.

Same for episcopacy and clergy: the us (common priesthood) has significant strength when there is this relationship. Can fall apart with lack of commitment or infidelity. This relationship could be magnificent but is instead two circles facing outward, not investing in common relationship (us). This is amplified by various relationships including: Dallas charter, seminary study, homosexuality . . .

Can be described also with the phrase: “what are they thinking of, where do they get this”. Other “us” relationships of the priests are so much better than those within the priesthood.

And so we have the same symptoms as described above. The church is depressed. This depression is overflowing to others in the pews. Getting the feeling of being disjointed.

He suggests: we need to work through our own personal issues first. We must be able to answer the question: do I matter.

External: engage this conversation externally in our prophetic role. We can be a great source of creativity for the world. Shown in confidence, assertiveness, “a voice”, humility. See ourselves as a font of the Holy Spirit. Priests need to find a place in our theological setting to have a home. This would give us a place to get our executive conversation in the external realm; from there it will be able to communicate with the laity, episcopacy, theologians. This will get us away from hopelessness. This will be an act of love. A space where truth won’t need to be proven but will be allowed to emerge. In this circle we will discover in an external realm that we do matter. From this home there can be publications so that pieces of truth and hope can get wider distribution. This is like Chicago’s priests using the periodical Chicago Studies. By our coming together in this manner we can also show a light of possibilities

Open Spaces:

Witch hunt for Gay men in Seminary and priesthood.

Clergy office staff sufficient to visit every priest every year.

General penance and absolution; need to recognize sin and deal with it

The disproportionate power of fringe groups in the church.

Institutional support for laicized priests

Business announcements

- Balance \$3584.59
- Dues for next year will be \$25 for fiscal year 2006
- Our membership is 137 persons
- Our web address is www.milwalliance.org

We did two rounds of the open spaces groups.

Reports:

Priest's rights handed in a written report

Generational issues of priests: came up with caricatures with some descriptions. Some ways to bridge this: have a conversation about *lumen gentium*, do some mutual lampooning , clergy assignments can help search for some balance.

Senior priests: questioning keeping the current description in the constitution.

General absolution group submitted an action plan.

Witch hunt: action step: get three members of the presbyterate to write a document of quality and then pass it by the alliance membership.

David Manelli group spoke about a lack of energy and don't have enough energy to enter into a dialogue. How can we draw tired priests out. The energetic priests can engage Archbishop Dolan. Should write a letter to Bishop Sklba thanking him for making a statement. Could do better if we engage the Archbishop on the pastoral level where we might find a more friendly starting point.

CONSTITUTION: The document was finished for a year and given in advance. The floor was open to major problems. One problem arose around opening the constitution to "former priests". Could interpret wording that laicized priests are included in current description of ordained. Incardinated priests should also be included. The vote was unanimous for the constitution with the inclusion of the incardinated.

Finished at 3:50 p.m.