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SACRAMENTO PRESBYTERAL CONVOCATION

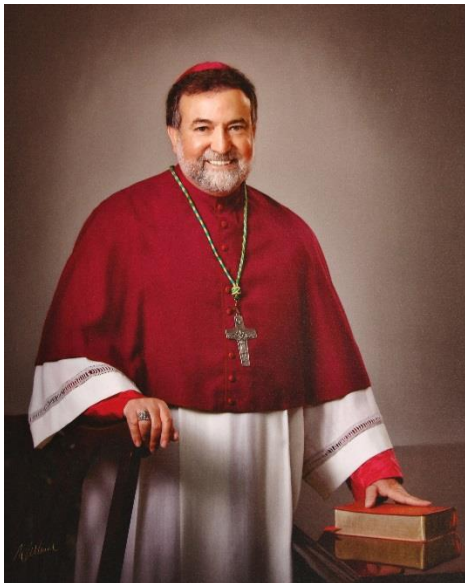
“Fostering a Culture of Leadership”

October 12 – 16, 2015

After a year and a half preparation, the bishops and diocesan and religious priests of the Diocese of Sacramento gathered for the 2015 Presbyteral Convocation, Monday afternoon through Friday morning, October 12-16, at Harvey’s Convention Center in South Lake Tahoe.

The facilitators of the week were Father Gary Kastl and his team from the Catholic Leadership Institute. This Institute “provides bishops, priests, deacons and lay persons in the Roman Catholic Church with world-class, pastoral leadership formation and consulting services that strengthen their confidence and competence in ministry, enabling them to articulate a vision for their local church, to call forth the gifts of those they lead and to create more vibrant faith communities rooted in Jesus Christ.”

Bishop Soto’s Keynote Address



In his Monday evening keynote address to the 151 priests assembled, Bishop Soto reminded us priests that Jesus calls us with a brother’s love to serve the common priesthood of all the baptized disciples of Christ Jesus.

Ordained priests are part of the one flock of Christ. The Lord chooses us to be sharers in his saving sacrifice of love for his flock. We are the friends of the groom and our fraternity is not accidental but intentional.

The charity of Jesus is our model; the mercy Jesus has shown to us is the same mercy we are to share with others in his name. It is the charity of Jesus that sends us to be his charity in the world.

Tuesday’s Focus – Leadership of Self

On Tuesday, Leadership Institute team member Lucille Smith led us in an assessment of our leadership of self. She helped us assess our instinctual behaviors, whether we tend to be extroverted or introverted; whether our personality was more controlling or accepting. This involved a personal assessment of ourselves as individuals. Is our tendency to be indirect or direct? Do we tend to speak using specific qualifying statements to describe the context or is our

tendency to speak bluntly, tersely, or in broad, general succinct statements? Are we risk assessing or risk taking? Are we continuation oriented or change oriented?

Later in the morning we saw a clip from the movie "*Romero*" about the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. In the scene after the military had taken over the use of a village church, Archbishop Romero came to the church. After confronting the military leader, he attempted to remove the Blessed Sacrament. The military *Capitán* raised his gun and opened fire on the crucifix and the tabernacle. The consecrated hosts fell to the floor and Archbishop Romero stooped down to pick them up and take them away. He and his driver then left the village by car but a few minutes later the archbishop returned and led the people into the church to take it back from the soldiers. This was a powerful moment. The deep personal values of Archbishop Romero enabled him to stand up and be shepherd to his people, no longer intimidated by the power and violence of the military.

Wednesday – Priestly Identity and Ministry

On Wednesday, the priests were led through an appreciative inquiry of their own priestly identity and ministry. What did we hope to do in service to God and God's people when we began our priestly ministry? What have been some of the high points in our life as a priest? How did caring for those in need enabled us to see the face of Christ in the poor and marginalized?

Thursday – Appreciating a Presbyterate in Union with the Bishop

On Thursday, the priests discussed together at tables when they had most experienced the joy of priesthood within the Sacramento Presbyterate. How does our diocese honor its priests? What actions or behaviors from others influenced us to be our best? As we look to the future, what do we hope for in our commitment to each other? What is there about our presbyterate in Sacramento that would most inspire others to follow after us in a vocation to ordained priesthood? What actions or activities should we adopt in order to be a stronger, more thoughtful presbyterate?

We were given time to put in writing what we wanted to tell Bishop Soto. These written remarks were collected and given to the bishop to ponder and consider. There was also an open microphone for anyone who wished to speak to the bishop; about five priests did address the bishop. It was an honest and positive exchange between the bishop and his priests.

Friday – Shepherding a Culture of Presbyteral Leadership

Friday morning was our last time together. Father Gary listed four disciplines of a healthy, vibrant diocese:

- Discipline 1:
A cohesive leadership team trusts one another, engages in constructive conflict, commits to group decisions, and holds one another accountable.
- Discipline 2:
Healthy, vibrant dioceses create organizational clarity by definitively answering a series of questions regarding vision, values, purpose, and priorities.

- Discipline 3:
Healthy, vibrant dioceses over-communicate clearly by repetitively and comprehensively communicating all aspects of organizational clarity.
- Discipline 4:
Healthy, vibrant dioceses reinforce clarity through persons, ministries and structures by establishing simple structures around recruiting, developing, resourcing and meetings.

Concluding Liturgy

The convocation concluded with a final Mass at 10:30 am with Bishop Soto as main celebrant and Bishop Cotta as homilist. Most priests left the convocation with a hopeful spirit that through the work of these days together, by October 2016, we will be more unified and happier as a presbyterate as we fulfill our ministry of being a sign of the love and charity of Jesus Christ for his people.

Special Thanks

Planning and overseeing this convocation took a lot of work on the part of many people. We thank Bishop Jaime Soto for his decision to convoke a Presbyteral Convocation this fall. Uli Schmitt, Director of the Office of Clergy Formation, together with Father Blaise Berg, Vicar for Clergy, were the main planners of the Convocation. Others who were vital to the success of the convocation were:

Administration (registration, logistics, finance): Judy Allen

Liturgies: Father Berg, Rex Rallanka, Lola Krist

Homilists: Fathers Jonathan Molina, Giovanni Gamas, Mauricio Hurtado, Roy Doner

Liturgical décor: Barbara Anderson, Father Michael Hebda, James Cavanagh

Liturgical Supplies: Father Mauricio Hurtado and James Cavanagh

Location Selection: Father Liam macCarthy and members of Priestly Life Committee

Logistics during the convocation: Seminarians Jesús Hernández , Joshua Keeney and Ryan Francisco

NEXT STEP: Priestly Life Committee to Develop Next Steps to Implement the Convocation

The following is taken from Bishop Soto's *Sponsorship Document* on next steps in the process to develop presbyteral leadership and fraternal care of the priests of the diocese.

"The goal of the 2015 Presbyteral Convocation was to strengthen the quality of the fraternal lives of the Sacramento Presbyterate. The role of the Implementation Committee is to help the bishop discern standards on how we will engage with one another interpersonally and fraternally as a brotherhood. This will entail coming together socially, pastorally, intellectually and spiritually. If we are to create a culture of leadership in service to the people of the diocese, we must exercise both personal and priestly leadership with one another.

"The primary responsibility of the Implementation Committee is to purposefully and prayerfully engage in conversation with one another, and on behalf of the Presbyterate at large, to assess

the quality of our lives; and to provide an evolving plan that strengthen our fraternal relationship in service to the people of Sacramento.”

Bishop Soto outlines some outcomes he hopes will be accomplish:

- Creating and Endorsing a “Charter” Document that reflects the best of our commitment to each other as we seek to strengthen our Presbyterate.
- Assessing the overall health and hopes of our Presbyterate; surveying needs and opportunities.
- Completing the work of the Priest Personnel Manuel.
- Identifying and promoting standards and norms in support of our fraternal relationships.
- Establishing the framework and membership for an ongoing Priestly Life and Ministry Committee
- Collaborating with the Presbyteral Council in both scheduling and promoting a stronger commitment to engage in Presbyteral activities.
- Proactively supporting and ministering with a *Mutually Shared Vision* that is implemented throughout the diocese.
- To pray with and for one another on a regular basis so as to lead more cooperatively and respectfully--facilitating a culture of leadership and care.

The timing of this process for the Committee is one full year; meeting every 4-6 weeks from 1:00 to 4:30 PM, providing consistency and focus. The Vicar for Clergy will be a member of the committee. The Director of Clergy Formation will staff the committee. Bishop Soto hopes that a larger report on decisions and progress can be communicated and celebrated at the Priest Study Days, October 3-7, 2016.

Membership of the Implementation Committee

The four members of the revised Priestly Life Committee who were pre-selected to be on the Implementation Committee are **Fathers Colin Wen, Brendan McKeefry, Francisco Hernández and Aldrin Basarte.**

During the final session of the Convocation, four additional committee members were selected from the assembly to serve on the Implementation Committee. Those willing to serve on this committee and who felt they had the time to attend the monthly planning meetings during the next 12 months were invited to nominate themselves. Of the 7 who offered to serve on the committee, 4 were chosen by lot. Father Antonio Racela, the youngest priest in the presbyterate, was asked to be the one to pull four names by lot. Those chosen were **Fathers Benedict DeLeon, Vincent O’Reilly, Vincent Juan and Eric Lofgren.** The 8 priests will be the members of the Implementation Committee for the next 12 months.

A Final Thank You

All who came to the Convocation gathered in prayer throughout the Convocation. Thanks to Rex Rallanka and Lola Krist for leading the music at the daily morning and evening prayer as well as the Eucharistic celebrations. We are grateful to our younger brother priests who were homilists

at the weekday Masses – Jonathan Molina, Giovanni Gamas and Mauricio Hurtado. We thank Roy Doner for preaching at the Penance Service on Wednesday evening. Bishops Soto and Cotta were with us throughout the week and Bishop Weigand joined us on Wednesday, serving as presider at the community Mass that day. On Thursday, Father John Grace, our oldest priest at 95, joined us for the evening dinner.

The convocation provided an opportunity for the presbyterate of the diocese to be together for five days and to renew our friendships and life together. Thanks to all who took the time to participate in this positive priestly experience!

Some Photos of the Week

**The following photos were taken by Father John Boll, Diocesan Archivist,
During the course of the week at the Convocation.**



Photo by John E Boll 2015

**Harvey's Convention Center, South Lake Tahoe
The Site of the Presbyteral Convocation**



Bishop Myron Cotta Presided at Tuesday's Eucharist with Bishops Soto and Weigand



Waiting for the Session to Begin



Breakfast on the 19th floor Overlooking Lake Tahoe





Fathers Desmond O'Reilly, Cleetus Karakkat and Jossy Vattottu, CMI



Bishop William Weigand Presides at Wednesday's Mass



Thursday's Mass with Bishop Jaime Soto Presiding



Father Jonathan Molina was Homilist at Tuesday's Mass



Photo by Fr Francisco Hernández-Gómez

Wednesday's Community Mass



Beautiful Lake Tahoe Area's Fall Colors