Welcome
To the
NFPC 49th Annual Convocation
and
House of Delegates

Forging a Future
with Pope Francis

NFPC
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRIESTS’ COUNCILS

NFPC 49th Annual Convocation & House of Delegates
Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel April 24 – 27, 2017
NFPC MISSION STATEMENT

The National Federation of Priests’ Councils serves the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of bishops, presbyterates and priests.

Flowing from our mission statement we can discern these vision statements:

- We gather bishops, presbyterates and priests for communion, brotherhood and solidarity.

- We build bridges.

- We provide models for communion, brotherhood and solidarity.

- We affirm each other in the shared priesthood of Jesus Christ.

- We are solution-focused.
April 24, 2017

Dear brothers in the Lord,

I wish to welcome all of you to your annual National Federation of Priests’ Council Convention, which will be held in Anaheim on April 24-27th this year.

As a priest of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, and later Bishop of Fort Worth Texas, and now here, I have been aware of, and followed your commitment to priestly ministry and ecclesial communion all of these years.

The presbyterate of our Diocese has lived out, for many years, the mission of the “intentional presbyterate”. This past fall, at our “Intergenerational convocation”, our priests discerned goals for the next year of a renewal zeal for evangelization and a deeper prayer and spiritual life. We have just finished renewing our Pastoral Plan as a framework for life and ministry here, and recently embarked upon a three day “evangelization summit” for the life of the local Church. This coming June, six new priests, God willing, will be ordained for our local Church.

Welcome to the Diocese of Orange and beautiful Orange County, where one can go from the Pacific to “snowboarding” in less than two hours!

I hope that you enjoy your time on the Christ Cathedral Campus, and I hope to be able to greet you personally before I have to leave for a meeting of the California Catholic Conference.

Thank you for your priestly ministry and your support of all of us. A very blessed season of the Resurrection of the Lord to all!

Fraternally yours in the Lord,

Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D.
Bishop of Orange

KWV/mb
April 2017

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Welcome to 49th annual NFPC Convocation here in Anaheim, California. For the first time in many years, over one-third of you are first-time attendees, and to you we offer a special welcome.

It is good that you took time for yourself to be here to pray, learn, refresh, and rejuvenate. I know that is often hard to do with the demands of parish life.

This year we continue to unpack Pope Francis’ message about immigrants, young people, and his pastoral theology especially as it applies to us, his priests.

Also this year we have set some time aside to discuss the State of the Presbyterate. Your input and insights are most welcome especially as NFPC continues to evolve its mission.

We are very grateful to our hosts, the Diocese of Orange in California and the presbytery for their gracious invitation to have the 49th annual NFPC Convocation here.

As always, I pray that you come away renewed, refreshed and supported, and to take the central message of Pope Francis’ pontificate—joy, mercy, and forgiveness—for yourselves and your parishes.

Your brother in Christ,

Father Anthony E. Cutcher
## 2017 Convocation Schedule

### 2017 NFPC Convocation
**Majestic Garden Hotel, Anaheim, CA**

### Daily Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY, April 24</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00a–Noon</td>
<td>Exhibitor Set-up</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00a–5:00p</td>
<td>Welcome, Information Registration Open</td>
<td>Foyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon–5:00p</td>
<td>Exhibits Open</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon-8:00p</td>
<td>Chapel Open</td>
<td>Kent</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-3:00 p</td>
<td>Council of Consultants Lunch Meeting</td>
<td>Devon</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00p-5:00p</td>
<td>New Delegate Orientation</td>
<td>Devon</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00p–6:00p</td>
<td>Opening Reception</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00p–6:45p</td>
<td>Prayer, Welcome &amp; Introductions</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:45p-7:30p</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30p-8:00p</td>
<td>CARA Presentation – Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<td>8:00p–</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Club Lounge</td>
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<td>11:00p</td>
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<td><strong>TUESDAY, April 25</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00a–3:00p</td>
<td>Chapel Open</td>
<td>Kent</td>
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<td>8:00a–3:00p</td>
<td>Exhibits Open</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00a–3:00p</td>
<td>Welcome, Information Registration Open</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00a–9:00a</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00a</td>
<td>Morning Prayer</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30a–10:30a</td>
<td>Plenary Session – Kevin Appleby, Immigration/Migration</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30a</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Ballroom</td>
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<td>10:45a–</td>
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noon-1:00p Lunch  
1:30p-2:30p Plenary Session – Fr. Ken Simpson – Millennials/Young Adults  
2:30p Break  
3:00p Depart for Christ Cathedral  
3:30p-4:45p Tour of Christ Cathedral  
5:00p Convocation Eucharist, principal celebrant and homilist, Bishop Arturo Cepeda, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit  
6:15p-7.00p Reception  
7:00p-8:30p NFPC Awards Banquet  
8:30p Depart for Hotel  
9:00p-11:00p Hospitality  

**WEDNESDAY, April 26**

7:00a-12:00a Chapel Open  
7:30a-8:00p Eucharist  
8:00a – Noon Exhibits Open  
8:00a-Noon Welcome, Information Registration Open  
8:00-9:00a Breakfast  
9:00a-9:30a Morning Prayer  
9:30a-10:15a NFPC President's Report/Priest-Labor Initiative  
10:15a-10:30a Break  
10:30a-12:30p State of the Presbyterate – Input discussion and issue raising forum  
12:30p Pickup box lunch for open afternoon  
12:30p Board Meeting  
8:00p-11:00p Hospitality  

**THURSDAY, April 27**

7:00a-9:00a Chapel Open  
8:00a-11a Exhibits Open  
7:30a-8:00a Eucharist  
8:00a-9:00a Breakfast  
9:00a Morning Prayer  
9:30a-11:00a Plenary Session – Bishop Robert McElroy, “The Pastoral Theology of Pope Francis”  
11:00a Expression of gratitude and departure
YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT OUR CHAPEL LOCATED IN THE KENT ROOM

Sponsored by the Diocese of Orange

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YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE CONVOCATION HOSPITALITY SUITE IN THE CLUB LOUNGE

For complimentary Drinks, Snack & Camaraderie! Please check the convocation schedule for hours.

Sponsored by Stroke Scan Plus

All priests, go to the Stroke Scan booth to receive your free Stroke screening. It only takes 5 minutes.

NFPC 49th Annual Convocation & House of Delegates
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April 24 – April 23, 2017
Bishop Robert McElroy

- Ordained: April 12, 1980
- Appointed Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco: July 6, 2010
- Consecrated: September 7, 2010
- Succeeded as Sixth Bishop of San Diego: March 3, 2015
- Installed as Sixth Bishop of San Diego: April 15, 2015

Robert W McElroy was born in San Francisco on February 5, 1954 to Walter and Roberta McElroy, who now reside in Santa Rosa, California. A fifth generation San Franciscan, Bishop McElroy lived until he was ten years old in Daly City, attending Our Lady of Mercy Elementary School. His family then moved to Burlingame, where he and his three sisters and brother attended and graduated from Our Lady of Angels School. During these years Bishop McElroy felt called to the Catholic priesthood, and thus after eighth grade he entered Saint Joseph High School in Mountain View, which was the high school seminary of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Upon graduating from Saint Joseph, Bishop McElroy was still committed to seeking a life in the priesthood but concluded that it would be best to pursue his vocation in a college outside the seminary system. Thus in 1972 he entered Harvard College and graduated three years later with a degree in American history. After his graduation from Harvard, Bishop McElroy attended graduate school at Stanford and in 1976 received a master’s degree in American history. Reentering the seminary in the Fall of 1976, Bishop McElroy attended Saint Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, California and was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese on April 12, 1980. His first assignment was Saint Cecilia Parish in San Francisco, which was the parish where both of his parents had grown up and attended grammar school, and the church where they were married.

In 1982 Bishop McElroy became the secretary to San Francisco Archbishop John Quinn, who himself was the first auxiliary bishop of San Diego. Archbishop Quinn asked Father McElroy to undertake graduate studies in the field of Catholic Social Teaching, and thus Bishop McElroy obtained a licentiate in theology from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, a doctorate in moral theology from the Gregorian University in Rome and a doctorate in political science from Stanford.

Bishop McElroy returned to Parish work, which has always been his first love, in 1989
serving as a parochial vicar at Saint Pius Parish in Redwood City. In 1995 Archbishop Quinn appointed Bishop McElroy vicar general of the Archdiocese, a post he continued to hold under Cardinal William Levada, who succeeded Archbishop Quinn. In 1996 Bishop McElroy was made a prelate of honor by Saint John Paul II and appointed Pastor of Saint Gregory Parish in San Mateo by Cardinal Levada. Bishop McElroy had the immense happiness of serving in this same parish for more than fifteen years.

Bishop McElroy was appointed auxiliary bishop of San Francisco by Pope Benedict XVI on July 6, 2010 and was ordained by Archbishop George Niederauer at Saint Mary’s Cathedral on September 7, 2010. He became the Archdiocesan Vicar for Parish Life and Development and has served in that role until his appointment to be the next Bishop of San Diego.

Bishop McElroy has written two books: The Search for an American Public Theology and Morality and American Foreign Policy. In addition, he has written a series of articles in America magazine touching upon key elements of Catholic social teaching.

Bishop McElroy is the vice-president of the California Catholic Conference and serves at the national conference of bishops on the administrative committee, the ecumenical committee on domestic justice and the committee on international affairs. When he was informed that Pope Francis had appointed him to be the sixth bishop of San Diego, Bishop McElroy said:

“When I was growing up, my family would come to San Diego for our summer vacation, and I was captivated by the beauty and vitality of this graced region. During my years as a priest and bishop, I have continually been struck by this same beauty and vitality in the life of the local church — proclaiming the Gospel, embracing the poor and the marginalized, strengthening family life, forging unity in faith and solidarity amidst great cultural diversity. Now I have the privilege of becoming a member and a leader in this magnificent Catholic community and the society which surrounds it. There are not words to describe the tremendous joy and gratitude to God which I feel at this moment.”
J. Kevin Appleby

Kevin Appleby is the Senior Director for International Migration Policy for the Center for Migration Studies of New York, a member of the Scalabrini International Migration Network (SIMN). SIMN is a network of 270 schools, shelters, educational institutes, and community centers for migrants operated globally by the Scalabrini Catholic religious order.

Kevin was formerly director of Migration Policy and Public Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Prior to joining USCCB, Kevin worked as Deputy Director of the Maryland Catholic Conference in Annapolis, Maryland.

Kevin has testified before Congress on immigration issues and represented the U.S. Catholic bishops on these issues at public events and with the media. He is co-editor of the volume, On Strangers No Longer: Perspectives on the U.S.-Mexican Catholic Bishop’s Pastoral Letter on Migration.

Kevin worked for Senator Russell Long of Louisiana and several select committees of the U.S. Senate, including the Senate Select Committee on the Iran-Contra Affair. Kevin received his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame, a M.A. in International Affairs from The George Washington University, and a law degree from the University of Maryland.

Kevin comes from a family of six siblings and lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

In his presentation at the Convocation, Mr. Appleby will highlight the Catholic position on immigration and immigration reform. He will discuss the immigration policy initiatives of the Trump Administration and how they may impact immigrant communities across the nation. He will outline steps needed to defeat these proposals and to offer an alternative vision, based on Catholic teaching, for our immigration system. He will talk about tools that can be used in this effort, including public messaging, community organizing, and advocacy. He also will explain the law regarding immigration enforcement and parishes and Catholic agencies which serve immigrants.
Father Ken Simpson

Father Ken Simpson was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1978. He was assigned as associate pastor to St. Michael Parish in Orland Park until being asked to join the faculty at Niles College Seminary of Loyola University. At Niles he taught Theology and served as Dean of Formation and Vice Rector. Expecting to return to a parish he was surprised to be asked to move into campus ministry as Director/Chaplain of the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University and served there from 1992 until 2007. In that year Fr. Ken was named pastor of St. Clement Parish in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago where in addition he served as dean in his Vicariate. Fr. Ken holds a Masters of Divinity degree from Mundelein Seminary and a Masters in Spirituality from the University of San Francisco.


Father Luke Ballman is a priest of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, ordained in 2001. He currently serves at the USCCB in the Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations. His previous assignments include serving as a parochial vicar, pastor, Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Atlanta, and as the Director of Apostolic Formation at the North American College. Fr. Ballman was a member of the Priest Council and Priest Personnel Board for Atlanta. He is originally from Dayton, Ohio, where he graduated from the University of Dayton with a degree in Business Administration. Prior to entering the seminary, Fr. Ballman worked for seven years as a management consultant in Atlanta. He attended seminary at the North American College, and received a STL in Spiritual Theology in 2001. His personal interests include running, reading (especially history), cooking, and traveling.
Bishop Jose Arturo Cepeda Escobedo

Episcopal Liaison to the NFPC
• Born: May 15, 1969 (San Luis Potosí, Mexico)
• Ordained Priest (San Antonio) June 1, 1996
• Appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit and Titular Bishop of Tagase: April 18, 2011
  Ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit: May 5, 2011

Bishop Jose Arturo Cepeda Escobedo, STL, STD, 41, was born in San Luis Potosí, SLP, Mexico on May 15, 1969, to Jose Cepeda and Maria del Socorro Escobedo. He received his elementary and high school education in Catholic schools in San Luis Potosí under the direction of Hermandas and Hermanos Josefinos. Bishop Cepeda then completed a year of spiritual formation, followed by philosophy studies at Seminario Arquidiocesano Guadalupano Josefino in San Luis Potosí. After moving with his family to San Antonio, Texas, Bishop Cepeda continued his seminary studies at Our Lady of the Lake University, later earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious studies with a minor in psychology from the College Seminary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Returning to San Antonio’s Assumption Seminary, Bishop Cepeda received a Masters of Divinity degree and was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Patricio Flores on June 1, 1996, at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in San Antonio, Texas.

After earning a Master of Arts degree in Biblical theology from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio while assigned as parochial vicar of San Antonio’s San Fernando Cathedral, Bishop Cepeda was asked to study at St. Thomas Aquinas “Angelicum,” Pontifical University in Rome, where he was awarded a Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) and Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD) degrees, defending his dissertation in Spiritual Theology in 2005.

Since his return to San Antonio, he has fulfilled teaching and formation duties at Assumption Seminary and Oblate School of Theology, has served as Vocation Director and Faculty Member for the Transitional Ministry Formation Program for the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and has been a member of the Formation Faculty of St. Peter upon the Water: A Center for Spiritual Direction and Formation for the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Bishop Cepeda was made Vice Rector of Assumption Seminary in San Antonio in 2009. In 2010, he was installed as the seminary’s Rector, where he has served until 2011.
In April 2011, Pope Benedict XVI named the Most Rev. Arturo Cepeda, a priest from San Antonio, as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit. One month later he was ordained by Archbishop Allen Vigneron, becoming the youngest bishop in the United States at age 41.
Mark Gray is the Director of CARA Catholic Polls (CCP) and a Senior Research Associate at CARA. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science and a M.A. in Social Sciences from the University of California, Irvine.
He has taught courses on Introduction to the Social Sciences, Catholicism in the United States, American Popular Culture, History of the Future, and The History and Politics of Food. In Spring 2014 he received the Outstanding Faculty Award from Georgetown University’s Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies program.
As a graduate student he worked as a journalist for The Orange County Register. He is the editor of CARA’s research blog: 1964.
NFPC PRESIDENTS

2. Frank Bonnike 1970-1973
14. Anthony Cutcher 2012-Present

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NOTE: The HOUSE OF DELEGATES will vote on the 2017-2018 Operating Budget

WHEREAS: the NFPC by-laws provide for the raising of annual funds through the preparation of a budget and the assessment of member councils; and

WHEREAS: the NFPC Executive Board has fulfilled its obligation of preparing an operating budget for the fiscal year 2017-2018; and

WHEREAS: Councils are fully aware that "...a council which is affiliated as of May 15th remains morally obligated to fulfill its fiscal assessment, whether or not it remains affiliated..." (NFPC-FC-IM-71); and

WHEREAS: the NFPC By-Laws state that the "...annual assessments of the member councils shall be set on or before June 1st for the succeeding year..." (VI,F), and that "Assessments shall be pro-rated to the annual budget..." (VI,E);

THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the attached shall be the operating budget for the National Federation of Priests Councils for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, and that at no time shall expenditures exceed real income.

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CONVOCATION PACKET MATERIALS

2017 NFPC Convocation

A partial list of the various organizations/publishers that supplied materials for the NFPC Convocation

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<th>Arch/diocese</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Andrew Windschitl</td>
<td>Des Moines</td>
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<td>Newest</td>
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<td>Fr. Joseph (Taun) Le</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
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<td>Fr. Manuel Campos Garcia</td>
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<td>Fr. Fabian Moncada</td>
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<td>Fr. Sean Weeks</td>
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<td>Fr. Bob Chorey</td>
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<td>Fr. Antonio Lopez-Flores</td>
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<td>Fr. Ross Tozzi</td>
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<td>St. Paul &amp; Minneapolis</td>
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<td>Fr. Oby Zunmas</td>
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<td>Fr. John Conway</td>
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<td>Fr. Marc Gawronski</td>
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<td>Fr. Dave Holloway</td>
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<td>Fr. Tony McGuire</td>
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<td>Fr. Les Schmidt</td>
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Our Mission Statement:

The National Federation of Priests’ Councils serves the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of bishops, presbyterates and priests.

Our Vision Statement:

Flowing from our mission statement we can discern these vision statements:

- We gather bishops, presbyterates and priests for communion, brotherhood and solidarity.
- We build bridges.
- We provide models for communion, brotherhood and solidarity.
- We affirm each other in the shared priesthood of Jesus Christ.
- We are solution-focused.

A Little History:

NFPC was established in 1968 as the first national organization dealing with the lives and ministry of priests. A group of priests who were active in their arch/diocesan priests’ councils sought a way to strengthen the U.S. Catholic presbyterate and be a unified voice for priests to the Bishops Conference. They proposed and developed the National Federation of Priests’ Councils. All U.S. arch/diocesan priests’ councils are members, with the ultimate goal of supporting all U.S. priests.

The Vatican II document *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1568, state, “All priests, who are constituted in the order of priesthood by the sacrament of Order, are bound together by an intimate sacramental brotherhood, but in a special way they form one priestly body in the diocese to which they are attached under their own bishop…”

NFPC works through priests’ councils to promote and ensure the intimate sacramental brotherhood of priests throughout the entire U.S. presbyterate, supporting bishops and priests to serve in communion, brotherhood and solidarity.

NFPC has been at work making a positive difference since its establishment. Many of the services in place today that affect bishops and priests in their lives and work are present because of the prompting, sharing of resources, and advocacy of NFPC, including: due process, priest personnel assignment, a code of professional ministerial accountability, research on priestly life and ministry, multicultural issues, collaboration with lay ministry, continuing education, salary compensation, leadership training, morale issues, tax and retirement information, publications for the recently ordained, and spiritual renewal of the priesthood, plus much more.
Several organizations have come into being as off-shoots of the National Federation of Priests’ Councils, the two most prominent being the National Association for Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA) and the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC).

NFPC as it is today:

Through the years, NFPC has evolved and grown in service to priests’ councils. Our current emphasis is on a re-commitment to our original mission: communion, brotherhood, and solidarity among all the presbyterate.

In June 2009, Cardinal O’Malley spoke at Boston’s Presbyteral Convocation about the importance of a “return to the ancient theology of a presbyterate – an intimate sacramental brotherhood, which has been replaced by a strong notion of individual ministry.” He stated: “We must develop a corporate sense of priestly identity and mission. We must become men of communion.” Today, NFPC works to support that sense of brotherhood and communion across the entire U.S. presbyterate.

The late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin continued this thought: “While the priests of a local church relate in a special way to their bishop, it is good for them to have a broader forum in which they can exchange ideas. Such an exchange helps to enrich their experience and broaden their perspective. The NFPC provides such a forum. Over the years, NFPC has been instrumental in assisting and motivating priests to face the challenges of priestly ministry in today’s church in a creative and effective way.”

Today priests often face pastoring multiple parishes and a priest shortage resulting in a sense of isolation especially from brother priests. NFPC works to break that isolation. Our research, communications, publications, and programs are all just a means to an end – to connect priests to each other and to bishops in the shared priesthood of Jesus Christ.

NFPC is a collector and distributor of pastoral resources, and an advocate on both the national and local levels on behalf of priests. NFPC promotes communication between brother priests, priests and bishops, and between councils. We partner with many national Catholic organizations, and offer advocacy for priests with the USCCB as a contributing organization to the Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations Committee.

In addition, NFPC works to encourage and support strong priests’ councils who can truly serve the priests of their dioceses. We especially reach out to those councils that struggle with a lack of enthusiasm for meeting and addressing problems or issues, mainly because of a feeling that there is nothing they can do about them. NFPC programs and publications offer research and best practices, giving priests avenues and resources so they can make a positive difference in the life of the church.

NFPC is on a Mission: the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of bishops and priests as they serve the U.S. Catholic Church. Whether through our historical assistance or current support, our entire goal is to promote a strong presbyterate that unites and serves each other, and can celebrate and more fully live their shared priesthood.
How The Finances (Assessments) Work:

According to the NFPC Constitution, all arch/diocesan priests’ councils representing the priests of the local church are members of NFPC. A council which submits to the NFPC its intent to participate along with a copy of its statutes (Canon 496) and pays the assessment fee is considered an active member council. A council which does not submit a letter of intent to participate or pay the assessment fee is considered an inactive member council.

NFPC serves all arch/diocesan priests’ councils. Active members support all priests’ councils and therefore the entire U.S. presbyterate. Choosing to be an active member of NFPC is a choice to support all U.S. priests.

Just as in our local parishes and dioceses, a proportionately small number of dedicated members contribute financially to the upkeep of the church budget, so does NFPC rely on financial support from its active members to be able to continue to serve the entire U.S. presbyterate. At present, the NFPC national office consists of three full-time and one part-time staff: Priest-President, Managing Director, Financial Director, and Communication Director. Our Board, provincial Consultors, diocesan Delegates and supporting priests are vital to our Mission, as is the financial support of our active members.

Active member arch/dioceses and associations have chosen to support the NFPC with an annual assessment, the amount of which is determined by the NFPC Board of Directors. This assessment covers much of the NFPC annual budget, and is reviewed each year by the Board of Directors, and voted upon by the arch/diocesan active member representatives or delegates (see Organizational Structure below) at the House of Delegates meeting.

Currently, the annual assessment reflects $35 per priest (diocesan priests, including retired, plus any religious priests serving in a parish) as reported by each arch/diocese to the Official Catholic Directory. In the majority of arch/dioceses around the country, the assessment is covered as a professional service by the arch/diocese. Individual memberships are available.

Once again, the assessment is used to promote and continue all the services offered by NFPC for all the priests and bishops in the United States. It does not reflect a ‘goods or services’ mentality. It allows the vital work of the NFPC to continue for all. To understand the extent of the benefits, each active member arch/diocese is encouraged to take full advantage of all that NFPC offers.

To put the assessment into perspective, consider the following. It has been suggested that the complete cost today for college and seminary to educate a priest is approximately $250,000. The cost of a treatment facility for any priest who is struggling is approximately $17,000 per month. Yet, for the price per priest of a once a month Starbucks coffee, the body of priests in the United States is afforded a national organization to speak their concerns, to represent their interests in multiple forums, to develop resources for their pastoral use, to link their ministry with other key ministries in the church and to maintain a crosscurrent of communication essential to the life and work of bishops and priests today.

Most importantly, by the deliberate cultivation of the unity of the priests with their brother priests and with their bishop, priests become better priests, brothers with one another in Christ, supported and cherished, and can better model for the people the Kingdom of God in our midst.
How the Organizational Structure works:

All active member councils/associations are called upon to elect one or more delegate(s), depending on the number of priests that the arch/diocese reports to the Official Catholic Directory, to participate in the NFPC House of Delegates. Active member councils/associations are entitled to send these priest delegates to the annual meeting, held in conjunction with the NFPC National Convocation of Priests. These delegates have the right to participate fully at the Parliamentary Session of the annual meeting, including all discussion as well as all voting privileges, which includes approving the annual budget.

One delegate from each U.S. Catholic Province is appointed as a consultor for the NFPC Council of Consultants, who are responsible for the ongoing dialogue that gives input and priority for raising issues and concerns to the NFPC Board of Directors. Nine of these consultors are elected to the NFPC Board of Directors, who guide the course of NFPC.

Keeping communication strong among all priests across the nation relies on a strong group of delegates, coming from all active member arch/dioceses. These delegates and those chosen as consultors or board members will have significant influence on the direction of NFPC's work, and therefore on strengthening the priesthood in the United States.

Specific Assistance:

To reach our overall goal of the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of all U.S. bishops and priests, NFPC provides this specific assistance:

1. We provide a weekly e-letter, NFPC This Week, distributed via our website (nfpc.org) or email sign up. The e-letter includes the latest Catholic news summaries and links, useful websites, council notes, book reviews, upcoming conventions/workshops/webinars, and more. We do the work, you stay informed, delivered to your inbox weekly.

2. We publish the Touchstone periodical, mailed to every U.S. priest at least twice a year. It contains quality articles written by top Catholic clergy and lay professionals. In this way, we especially attempt to serve priests who do not regularly access the Internet. It also allows us to provide information useful to all the presbyterate on various topics of current interest to priests.

3. We have an active website (nfpc.org) as well as Facebook and Twitter sites. Our website offers: consistently updated Catholic news and events; convocation information and post-convocation summaries, pictures, text and when available video recordings of presentations; online bookstore emphasizing NFPC/CARA research as well as categories covering church management, council development, parish leadership, retirement and tax issues; a home base for the U.S. Catholic Priest-Labor Initiative; and much more. The social media sites include information about NFPC plus news, items of interest and blog posts from across the Catholic social media world.
4. We offer four quality programs for growth in personal and pastoral ministry (full details on our website, or by telephone):

*Programs for Group Development*
1. Priests and Bishops in Council (Customized, interactive, best practices and model development for your council)
2. Priest Personnel Board Review (Customized, interactive, best practices and policies to match the gifts and talents of priests with parish requirements for optimal assignments)

*Programs for Individual Development*
3. Catholic Leadership 360° (Comprehensive, individualized, in-depth research and assessment for priests and/or lay leadership teams to identify and develop pastoral leadership competencies)
4. Tax and Retirement (Practical one-day workshop in tax reporting and retirement planning)

5. NFPC is an invaluable national clearinghouse for arch/dioceses and priests. Our staff is available for research assistance, personalized for your situation, covering any topic, including excellent speaker recommendations. We are a clearinghouse for questions on what is being done and where help can be found across the United States. NFPC has a significant list of contacts throughout arch/dioceses, the USCCB, and in many other U.S. Catholic organizations (listed as resources on our website); we are a trusted source for dioceses exploring and pursuing new avenues of growth.

6. NFPC connects priests’ councils and dioceses across the nation by collecting priests’ councils’ minutes from all participating arch/dioceses. The minutes are edited and condensed into our Council Notes, removing all personal or private information. The Council Notes are made available to all other councils via our weekly e-letter and our website, allowing all dioceses to connect for ideas, resources, and solutions to common concerns. Significantly, after more than 18 years of publishing these Council Notes, there has never been a complaint about content from those who share their minutes. It is a vital part of the function and purpose of NFPC, allowing bishops and priests nationwide to bring collective wisdom to bear on the collective challenges they face, contributing to the continued communication and growth of all councils, an invaluable resource for all.

7. NFPC offers advocacy for priests’ issues and needs to the USCCB as the only national organization for priests with a voice on the Committee for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. Because our organizational structure allows active member diocesan delegates to contribute and thus have a significant influence on the direction and scope of the NFPC, active member dioceses can make a positive difference for the entire U.S. presbyterate.
8. Since 1970, we have provided self-published research on the presbyterate for the presbyterate:

   a. *Same Call, Different Men*: featuring longitudinal research by CARA, covering the lives and ministries of priests, completed every 7-9 years

   b. *The Laborer is Worthy of His Hire*: offering a profile of priests' compensation statistics including retirement benefits, most recently based on figures collected in 2012-2013, completed every 5 years

   c. *Income Tax Guide for Clergy*: updated IRS guidelines, tips for completing forms, and tax planning advice, completed yearly with most recent tax year information

9. Our most powerful way of implementing our Mission to connect the U.S. presbyterate is realized through our annual national convocation, open to all bishops, priests, and seminarians from all arch/dioceses of the United States. At this gathering, we provide top level speakers and opportunities for Eucharist, prayer, learning, idea exchange, networking, and fraternity. Excellent food, local area tours and open relaxation time for rejuvenation, plus the opportunity for interactions with priests from across the U.S., all make this time invaluable for all who attend. Our House of Delegates and Council of Consultants meet during this Convocation which allows input and guidance from active member diocesan priests as to the governance and activities of the NFPC. Active member dioceses receive reduced rates for registration, and some scholarships are available for priests who wish to attend but are financially unable. This is truly a time when, through the Holy Spirit, the 'intimate sacramental brotherhood' is strengthened.

10. The Priest-Labor Initiative is an association of bishops, priests, scholars and supporters committed to standing with and advocating for workers, especially immigrant workers, who often are the most vulnerable. NFPC assists with the formation and training, and coordinates and encourages this online community of priests from across the United States, who minister according to the principles of Catholic social teaching.

**Active Member Priests' Councils/Associations**

As previously stated, NFPC active membership is not a 'goods or services for financial reimbursement' approach. Active membership in NFPC supports the overall mission of the organization: the communion, brotherhood and solidarity of bishops, priests, and presbyterates.

A key benefit for active members lies in their ability to affect the direction of NFPC. As stated, active member councils/associations are invited to send priest delegates to the annual House of Delegates’ meeting coinciding with the national convocation, with the right to vote at the Parliamentary Session. In addition, each province with active members appoints a consultant to the NFPC Council of Consultants, and these may be further elected to the NFPC Board of
Directors. These positions of leadership allow the delegates and consultors to have a significant influence on the direction and scope of NFPC and its impact on the priesthood in the United States. This collaboration is mutually beneficial as the delegates and consultors provide the NFPC with input on the activities and state of the priesthood in their dioceses and provinces, and provide personal and invaluable input as to the future direction of the NFPC as we seek to serve all priests.

In a sign of appreciation to all active member dioceses for their participation, NFPC offers reduced rates on all programs, as well as a discount on rates for the annual national convocation for any priest from the active member diocese.

Most importantly, active members stand as invaluable contributors to keeping all services offered by NFPC alive and effective, thereby sharing in service to all brother priests and bishops throughout the United States in affirmation of their shared priesthood in Jesus Christ. Active membership in NFPC is an investment in the strengthening of the Catholic priesthood in the United States. Financially and spiritually, it is a wise investment.

The National Federation of Priests' Councils

Website nfpc.org

Phone 312-442-9700
       888-271-6372 (toll free)

Email nfpc@nfpc.org

National Offices 333 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1114
                 Chicago, IL 60601-4002
Help Promote NFPC

1. Website: nfpc.org
   Use it and tell others about it

2. Social Media
   a. Like our Facebook Page (Type NFPC in your Facebook Search box)
      SHARE, Comment, Like posts, especially NFPC website links
   b. Follow our Twitter Page (@natfedpriests) and Retweet,
      especially NFPC website links
   c. Tell others (friends, family, priests) to do the same

3. NFPC This Week e-letter
   a. Sign up for our weekly e-letter, NFPC This Week, in website footer
   b. Forward it to as many as you can; PC Chairmen, forward to ALL priests
      in your diocese
   c. Tell people how to sign up to get it directly from NFPC to their inbox

4. Priests’ Council Minutes
   a. Encourage your Council to send minutes to nfpc@nfpc.org
      Alan (for 19 years) edits so no personal information, only general
      information; goal is to connect all councils to help find solutions to
      common problems
   b. YOU send us the minutes you get

5. Comment on your experience with NFPC
   a. In the nfpc.org footer, on the left side, no name is required
   b. Fill this in with why you believe in NFPC, so it can be used promotionally or
      share thoughts on how NFPC can better serve you or your diocese
6. Shop smile.amazon.com
   a. Go to Amazon.com and type Amazon Smile in the search engine, or go to smile.amazon.com
      Under charity, select National Federation of Priests' Councils
      We get .05 of your total amount spent
   b. Spread the word!

7. Become an Individual Member or make a Donation
   a. Go to nfpc.org and click on Membership or Donate button at top of page
   b. Either can be one time, or recurring
   c. Spread the word!

8. NFPC envelope in your parish OSV envelope packet
   We are exploring this possibility for a second collection; watch for updates.

9. Talk about us!
   a. Our best promotion is Word of Mouth. Tell everyone you know about NFPC.
      *NFPC Today* is an excellent summary of who we are and what we do. Share!
   b. Especially share with your bishop why funding for NFPC is money well spent:
      connecting dioceses, connecting priests, connecting bishops and priests
      in communion, brotherhood, solidarity

10. Pray!
    a. That NFPC would have God’s wisdom in all their work
    b. That God’s will would be done in and through NFPC as they support
       and serve the US presbyterate
2017 EXHIBITORS

APOSTOLATUS MARIS AOS USA

APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA OF THE U.S.A.
1500 Jefferson Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642
409-985-4545
www.aos-usa.org
AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN RECRUTING
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Randolph, TX 78150-4527
210-565-0335
www.airforce.com/chaplain

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OPEN TO TRANSFORMATION

CATHOLIC COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH
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www.pauline.org

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www.sisterrosemarietulacz.com
SAINT JOHN VIANNEY CENTER
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www.sjvcenter.org

SAINT LUKE INSTITUTE
8901 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20903
301-422-5593
www.sli.org
SHALOM CENTER

13516 Morgan Dr., Splendora, TX 77372
281-399-0520
www.shalomcenterinc.org

STROKE SCAN PLUS

817 Avenue A, Sugar Land, TX 77478
832-437-7355
www.strokescanplus.com
President’s message

Dear brothers and friends,

Welcome to Volume 25 Issue Two of Touchstone.

This edition of Touchstone contains two presentations from NFPC’s April 2016 Convocation in Indianapolis, Indiana. The first is an adapted version of Father Thomas Rosica, CSB’s talk on Mercy: the Cornerstone of Francis’ Petrine Ministry. His insights flow from Pope Francis’ words and life. Mercy is the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

The second are remarks by Jesuit Father Thomas Gaunt, who received NFPC’s Mandatum Award for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. His insights focus on the changes and challenges that priests encounter as we enter the third decade of the 21st century – the Church’s geography, mobility, and diversity.

It’s not too early to place NFPC’s 2017 Convocation on your calendar. We’ve already chosen a theme: “Forging a Future with Pope Francis.” The annual gathering will take place April 24-27 at the Majestic Garden Hotel in Anaheim, California. The Diocese of Orange in California will be our host. We are grateful to Father Jack Sewell who is representing the Orange Presbyteral Council in planning events related to the Convocation.

We have already confirmed two of our main speakers. Joining us will be San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy and J. Kevin Appleby. Kevin is Senior Director of International Migration Policy for the Center for Migration Policy and the Scalabrini International Migration Network.

Why should you consider traveling to California for the NFPC Convocation? NFPC’s mission serves the communion, brotherhood, and solidarity of bishops, presbyterates, and priests. On a national level there aren’t many priests’ organizations that provide a time and space for priests from across the US to rest, share common concerns, renew friendships, make new friends, hear good speakers, and pray together.

As I travel across the country one of the main themes I hear over and over is that many priests feel isolated, overworked, and at times disconnected from the larger presbyterate. So take us up on our invitation to join NFPC in Anaheim next April.

As I have said before, there is really no substitute for getting together to really talk and share experiences and encourage each other’s ministries. Watch our website – nfpc.org – as more information becomes available.

As always, your brother, in Christ,

Fr. Tony Cutchera, President

No time to keep up with the latest Catholic news? Let us do it for you – Absolutely free!

NFPC This Week
Delivered to your inbox each Sunday - We do the research - You stay informed
Sign up in the footer at nfpc.org
TOUCHSTONE – National Federation of Priests’ Councils – 2

Mercy: The Cornerstone of Francis’ Petrine Ministry

Rev. Thomas Rosica, CSB

Thank you for your introduction and your warm welcome. I am delighted to part of this conference that has as its overall theme: Mercy, Compassion, Accompaniment: Key to Bringing Pope Francis’ Message to Parish Life. What is the story within the story of mercy? What does it mean for us priests? What does it mean for our people?

What is the historical backdrop against which this Jubilee Year of Mercy has been called? Pope Francis has told us that there is only one antidote to the darkness, suffering, evil and pain of the world in which we live and that antidote is mercy.

For Pope Francis, mercy is not just a pastoral attitude; it’s not a project. It’s not another thing on the agenda; it’s the substance of the Gospel. Scripture presents God as infinite mercy, but also as perfect justice. How can these two be reconciled? This of course is the big question with the release his apostolic exhortation, Amoris Laetitia: how do we reconcile these two points? How can the Church put this mercy into practice in the midst of so many challenges and crises assaulting us each day? In the Pope’s own words, “In order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out. To go out from the churches and the parishes. To go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer, and where they hope. Mercy is the fundamental law that dwells inside the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy is the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to a hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

If we proclaim to be followers of Christ and to be his priests and ministers, we have to go where Jesus went. We have to take upon ourselves, like the good Samaritan, the man we encounter along the road, the one we encounter in seeking the lost sheep. To be like Jesus we have to be close to people. Francis invites us to eat with tax collectors and with sinners. He wants us to forgive the woman caught in adultery, while admonishing her at the same time to sin no more. He wants us to welcome and respect foreigners and refugees, even those who are enemies or potential threats. The Pope has spoken simply, powerfully, and beautifully about returning to a lost unity, a desire to achieve a missing fullness, a desire to witness to the beauty and the love of Christ.

Pope Francis has invited all of us this year to take seriously those lessons of the corporal works of mercy that many of us memorized as children. We know them and may have memorized them during our school years. to feed the hungry, visit the imprisoned, clothe the naked, heal the sick, shelter the homeless, give drink to the thirsty, bury the dead, and welcome in the stranger. What do they mean practically for us today? How do we activate them? Feeding the hungry: see to the proper nutrition of loved ones; support and volunteer in food pantries, soup kitchens, and agencies in our parish communities and cities that feed the hungry.

What does it mean to shelter the homeless? Help neighbors care for their homes and do repairs, especially when there are elderly people whose home might not be cared for as we would wish. Support or volunteer at homeless shelters. Advocate for public policies and legislation that provide housing for low-income people. What does it mean to visit the sick? Spend quality time with those that are sick and homebound. Take time to call or send a card or email people that are sick, or text them. Volunteer to drive people to doctor’s appointments. Volunteer at hospitals or nursing homes.

What does it mean to visit the imprisoned? Support and participate in ministries to the incarcerated. Support agencies that advocate on behalf of those that are unjustly imprisoned. Support efforts, such as Sr. Helen Prejean’s heroic efforts to abolish the death penalty, work with victims, and take a stand for those who are falsely accused and imprisoned.
What does it mean to give to the poor? Take small bills or lose change with you wherever you go and be ready to give it out and not judge that person who’s incapable of having a job. Make regular monetary donations to legitimate charities.

Bury the dead. Be faithful to attending wakes and visitations, especially of those people who are not going to have a big crowd or loved ones at their funeral. Volunteer at hospices for the dying. Spend time with widows and widowers and let them grieve aloud after the funeral is over.

We see mercy in action in *Amoris Laetitia*—a very clear snapshot of the two-year synodal process that we have just experienced. It reflects the questionnaires, the discussions, and the heated debates and most especially the consensus that has emerged from two important Synods of Bishops for the Universal Church. The exhortation states, “General rules set forth a good, which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation, they cannot provide absolutely for every particular situation. At the same time, it must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment, in particular circumstances, cannot be elevated to the level of a rule.” These are wise reflections. Some people are alarmed that Francis’ suggestions mean that even the best rules have exceptions, while others are very disappointed with his refusal to turn the exception into the basis for new rules. But rigor or laxity of the rules themselves was never, and is never the purpose of the Pope to call these Synods because rules were never the main concern of the Synod. Right at the beginning of *Amoris Laetitia*, the Pope rebukes those who reduce the Gospel message to a set of rigid disciplines. He said they’re nothing but stones to be hurled at people. And he wants to remind us that what Christ said of the Sabbath is also true of the sacraments and the rules surrounding them: they were made for us, not we for them. The rules exist not to protect the sacraments from being soiled by contact from sinners, but to protect us, the children of God, for whom the sacraments were instituted in the first place.

*Amoris Laetitia* draws on the long history of Church teaching and reflects a very intense Synodal experience that extended over two and a half years. It draws from both the new and the old. What’s new about it is the idea of accompaniment; we must never deprive anyone of our accompaniment along the way. Francis, like his predecessors, recognizes the complexity of modern family life. We can no longer speak of the ideal family or the perfect family. The exhortation puts an added emphasis on the Church and her ministers to be close to people no matter what their situations may be and in no way is this exhortation a theoretical text with no connection to real problems. It addresses just about everything. The very title suggests the positive thrust that despite all of these challenges, despite the failures, there is a joy of love, and a beauty of marriage. If we want to talk about a future for humanity, we must talk about families. And the question of vocations is directly related to that.

A word that runs throughout the exhortation and one very common in Francis’ mind and heart is the word discernment. We want a quick response, a quick solution to every problem. We must acknowledge, first of all, that people coming to us to seek our advice and counsel are searching. We must presume goodness and enter into the stories, experiences and hearts of those seekers who come to us in need. We detect the infirmity and weakness. From what are they suffering at present? Is not our role to teach the truth in charity and to remind people that God loves them as they are but doesn’t want them to remain there. God always leads them and us to something greater. The Lord invites us to change our lives in order to live a healthier, holier life.

Discernment is a constant effort to be open to the Word of God that can illuminate the concrete reality of everyday life. One of the issues that emerged at the 2015 Synod is the proper formation of conscience. A very important paragraph of *Amoris Laetitia* speaks to the Synod’s great respect for the consciences of the faithful as well as the necessity of formation of consciences:
“We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life. We find it difficult to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfillment than as a lifelong burden. We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.”
(AL #37)

The Church does not exist to take over people’s conscience but to stand in humility and before faithful men and who have discerned prayerfully and often painfully before God the reality of their lives and situations. Discernment can never be separated from the Gospel demands of truth and the search for charity and truth, and the tradition of the Church. The fifth point in the minds of many regards the many Catholics who are divorced and civily remarried who are struggling to do things right in bringing up their children in the Church. What does *Amoris Laetitia* offer to them? It offers them the guarantee that the Church and its ministers care about them and their concrete situations. It wants them to feel and to know that they’re part of the Church. They’re not excommunicated. They’re not thrown out. What is the mission of the Church? It is one of reaching out to reinsert people. The key concept of the exhortation is integration. Do everything possible to help people, to be included in the life of the community.

The Church makes her own the attitude of Jesus, who offers boundless mercy to all, and the exhortation offers this mercy to every person without exception. *Amoris Laetitia* also speaks to countless people who are not married; this includes single parents, widows and widowers, celibate men and woman, every one of who has family ties.

One of the biggest concerns of couples in our day and age is the spacing of births. Yet this is not a major subject in *Amoris Laetitia*. Some may wrongly ask why the Pope is not following the same direction of his predecessors in this regard. The topic of contraception and spacing of births and responsible parenthood is addressed in numbers 42, 68, 82, and 222. While noting that greater emphasis has to be given to the fact that children are truly a gift from God, *Humanae Vitae* is referenced several times. But there’s an important stress on that the fact that spouses be aware of obligations concerning responsible parenthood. The exhortation encourages natural methods of regulating births since they respect bodies and the whole person. It lays out new pastoral proposals and strategies for the Church, and invites us to change our focus regarding the family: to accompany, to integrate, to remain close to anyone who has suffered the effects of wounded love.

Father Thomas Rosica, CSB, a Basilian priest since 1986, is the founding CEO of Canada’s Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation. He also serves as English language attaché to the Holy See Press Office.
The Challenge of the Church’s Geography, Mobility, and Diversity

Rev. Thomas P. Gaunt, SJ

As the Executive Director of CARA [Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate] I am delighted to be here to accept the Mandatum Award on behalf of the Center’s research team.

Over the years CARA has collaborated with the National Federation of Priests’ Councils on a number of projects focused on the life and ministry of priests serving the people of God in the United States.

About eight years ago CARA collaborated with NFPC on a national study of priests that was the continuation of a series of studies begun by Father Andrew Greeley in 1970. That was the fifth in a series and it resulted in the book Same Call, Different Men: The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II published in 2012. CARA is looking forward to continuing the collaboration with NFPC in the near future for a sixth survey of priests.

And what might we expect to be the major changes and challenges for priests in this second decade of the second millennium? Two things in particular come to mind...

First, the continuing challenge of geography and mobility for the Catholic population in the United States. We often think of dioceses and parishes as stable entities providing enduring structures and institutions to support and serve Catholics. Yet the past few decades have been a time of great mobility as younger Catholics pursue jobs and opportunities moving from ethnic neighborhood parishes of the Northeast and Midwest to booming, more suburban, mega-parishes in the South and West. It is the challenge that people move but the buildings and infrastructure stay put. Depending on your geography, as a pastor you may be confronted with rows of empty pews and mounting maintenance costs, or managing the logistics of each Sunday Mass having 1,000 plus worshipers and buying land for ever expanding parking lots.

Second, the Catholic community of the United States is increasing in its cultural diversity and is constantly being enriched by an immigrant population unmatched in over a century. The majority of Catholic families today are Hispanic, Asian, or African-American in contrast to the Catholic community of our youth. In 1980 about one in ten Catholic adults were immigrants, by 2015 over one-quarter of all Catholic adults were immigrants. Cultural diversity and immigration bring new devotions and religious practices into our parishes to enliven them, but they can also confound us and frustrate us as we try to minister in new languages so as to animate and lead such a universal Church. All of this is further accentuated as the priesthood itself becomes more culturally diverse and more priests are themselves immigrants and missionaries.

If we take a longer historical view, we see that the present cultural diversity and immigration in the US Catholic Church is only matched by the waves of European immigrants that came to the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time, the Church in the US was pulled apart, experiencing serious divisions and in some cases, schism. A century ago the waves of immigrants (primarily from Europe) found a US Church often polarized by its differences. The untold and unrecognized story of our own day is how successful the US Church is in welcoming and accepting the recent waves of immigrants who are coming from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. There are still many problems and tensions, but these are like night and day compared to 100 years ago. Pastors, parish leaders, and bishops have risen to the challenge of cultural diversity in recent years in a manner that often goes unrecognized.

The CARA research team, in collaboration with Chuck Zech at the Villanova University Center for Church Management and Business Ethics, has just finished writing a book on the Catholic parish of the 21st
Century. It should be published by the end of the year. In writing the book we documented the extent and variety of changes that have occurred in American parishes over the past 25 years. The NFPC, individual presbyteral councils, and the thousands of pastors across the country should take great pride in how they have creatively and successfully engaged and managed the change, the diversity, and increasing complexity of parish life today.

CARA is grateful for the repeated invitations from NFPC to collaborate in efforts to better understand American priests and parish life in America. We are honored to assist you in being a voice and resource for the Church in the United States as you engage these changes, proclaim God’s Word, and build up the Body of Christ.

On behalf of the CARA research team, thank you for this award.

*Jesuit Father Thomas P. Gaunt* is Executive Director of the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University
Dear brothers and friends,

NFPC’s 49th annual Convocation of Priests will take place from April 24-27 at the Majestic Garden Hotel in Anaheim, Calif. We say it every year and it bears repeating - the annual NFPC Convocation is one of the only venues where our nation’s priests gather in one place for a specific purpose: to pray together, learn, refresh, and rejuvenate – to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. I know you have a busy schedule with many administrative and sacramental duties – because I do too. But take time out for yourself. It’s really worth it. We look forward to welcoming you to Anaheim. There is still time to register.

The theme for the 2017 NFPC Convocation is “Forging a Future with Pope Francis.” With the theme in mind, we will unpack it from three perspectives that are close to the heart and mind of Pope Francis: immigration/migration; young people and millennials, and the pope’s vision for priests.

This year we are pleased to report that Fr. Luke Ballman, associate director of the US bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations will report on activities of the CCLV and stay with us for a discussion on the State of the Presbytery, which will take place Wednesday morning, April 26.

To address the three different aspects of the theme our confirmed speakers include, Dr. Kevin Appleby, Senior Director of International Migration Policy for the Center for Migration Studies and the Scalabrini International Migration Network; Fr. Ken Simpson, who for 15 years was director/chaplain of the Sheil Center at Northwestern University, pastor of St. Clement Parish in Chicago, and on Jan. I was appointed by Cardinal Blase Cupich to the new ministry of Vicar for the Professional and Pastoral Development of Priests. We round out our list of eminent speakers with San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy who will speak on “The Pastoral Theology of Pope Francis.”

This year we are pleased that NFPC’s episcopal liaison to the CCLV, Bishop Arturo Cepeda, Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit will be the principal celebrant and homilist at the main Convocation Mass on Tuesday on the campus of Christ Cathedral. Prior to the Mass our hosts, the Diocese of Orange will take our Convocation participants on a tour of the Cathedral property.

In this edition of Touchstone we present an essay by Franciscan Father Christian Reuter, Prison Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. He shares his insights about the current state of Catholic prison ministry in the US and offers ways in which priests and presbyteral councils can help bolster this often-neglected ministry. The title of his essay is “Catholic Prison Ministry in the United States: A Long-overdue Course Correction.”

Secondly, we’re presenting an essay on “The Challenge of Pastoring Multiple Parishes.” We are grateful to following individuals and groups in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati that gave us permission to publish findings from a series of interviews conducted from December 2015 through April 2016 with priests serving as pastor in more than one parish in the Archdiocese. Those who oversaw the project include: Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Binzer; Dr. John Gutting, associate professor of Pastoral Studies at the Athenaeum of Ohio/Mount St. Mary’s Seminary; Jane Myers, pastoral associate, St. Robert Bellarmine Chapel; Father Jan K. Schmidt, director of the Department of Pastoral Services; and Father Leonard Wenke, pastor of Holy Family and Our Lady of Lourdes Parishes.

As always, your brother, in Christ,

Fr. Tony Cutcher, President
Catholic Prison Ministry in the United States: A Long-overdue Course Correction

Christian N. Reuter, OFM

The prison visit has become an obligatory stop on the Pope’s visit to any country. Francis, both in word and in action, has made care for the incarcerated a signature mark of his papacy—one that he stressed often during the recently concluded Year of Mercy. Our challenge, of course, is to add creative actions and sustainability to Francis’ symbolic gestures.

Frankly, I was a bit embarrassed when the Holy Father visited the Philadelphia prison last year; and I hoped he wouldn’t ask too many questions. We put on a grand show for the media: All the dignitaries were present; the inmates wore fresh jumpsuits; and the program unfolded precisely on schedule. Did Francis understand, when he boarded his plane back to Rome, that these are not typical conditions in which we do prison ministry? Does he appreciate the number and size of the issues we face daily?

I got my first clue when a letter arrived from his Apostolic Nuncio. Acting on a request from the Congregation for Clergy, Archbishop Christophe Pierre requested “information about the state of prison ministry in the United States”. He asked for a report to help “prepare specific initiatives in the future that would truly meet the needs of those in prison and jails, their families, and those who minister to them”. Both the hierarchy and the priests who minister with them, I concluded, need to hear the truth.

Mass Incarceration: A Very Broken and Failed System

The statistics of US incarceration are well known. We have 5% of the world’s population and 25% of its prisoners. We’ve constructed more than a thousand penitentiaries in recent years to “warehouse” the more than two million whom we detain. Well over half of those released will recidivate in three years. The financial costs to taxpayers, fueled by the insatiable greed of the Prison-Industrial Complex, are almost impossible to estimate. One of our bishops several years ago called it an “addiction” and “a public health crisis”. Already in the year 2000 all the bishops of our country spoke of our “broken system” of criminal justice.

It is not just the numbers. Just as we are making some progress on eliminating capital punishment, along come new issues to be faced—solitary confinement, mandatory sentencing, immigrant detention, privatized prisons, physical and mental health care, racial and ethnic inequality. To all of these you can add the problems we’ve always encountered from some anti-Catholic officials.

Prisons have always combined punishment and correction under one roof, and history shows that one or the other will be emphasized at a given time. Although the latest Department of Justice statistics show the first prison population decrease in many years, the election of 2016 seems to predict a greater use of incarceration. Conditions have always been widely varied and challenging in the world of corrections, but the Church of the past was able to respond creatively. We have now arrived, I submit, at a crucial moment of decision. What used to work well is no longer working.

The Catholic Response: Professional Priest Chaplains

Fifty years ago we had enough clergy to fill all our slots—mainstream parishes and many specialized ministries. Imprisoned Catholics were served by ordained priests who were CPE credentialed and salaried by the state. Those chaplains, who served the Church so well, have become a nearly extinct species; and our prison and jail ministries are increasingly relying on deacons and lay ministers. It is telling that the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association, once the “official” home of Catholic prison
chaplains under the USCCB, was dissolved last year and is searching for a way to reinvent itself. What remains at the national level is a loose collection of individuals and groups who do these kinds of ministries, but nothing close to a coordinated strategy.

We are beginning to realize the need for a comprehensive criminal justice ministry at all levels. We cannot focus just on serving incarcerated individuals; but, as Restorative Justice is teaching us, we must reach out to all those impacted—families and children, victims of crime, system employees, and entire communities. Special skills are required to bring pastoral care and justice advocacy into this troubled environment, which means that they must be included in all of our Church’s ministry formation curricula. Celebrating the sacraments and imparting catechesis are very different behind bars.

When preparing my report to the Apostolic Nuncio, I decided to take a quick tour of the websites of all our dioceses just to see how they described and delivered prison ministry. What I discovered was a “checkered field” of endless variety. They use different vocabularies. Some have stand-alone offices, and others place it under bigger umbrellas (like Catholic Charities or St. Vincent de Paul). Some have well developed prison and jail ministry programs, and others sadly don’t even mention them. In a few places dioceses have banded together under the auspices of their state Catholic Conferences to coordinate their criminal justice work. In general, however, isolation is the name of the game; and there is little sharing of resources and best practices. What is clearly needed is better networking, which is what we theologically proclaim as the Body of Christ—one Church with many kinds of members.

In my own Belleville diocese we have worked hard to recruit and organize our chaplains and volunteers, and we are actively preparing to establish a prisoner reentry house in our area. At the state level we now have a very proactive criminal justice network that includes all six Illinois dioceses. We are now able to represent the Church to our government and corrections officials, and we provide continuous pastoral care when prisoners are transferred across diocesan boundaries. We have partnered with one of our Catholic universities to provide formation for prison ministry leadership positions and present them to our bishops for endorsement. I shamelessly borrow all the good ideas I learn from colleagues, and I try to share what we have learned with others.

Priests and Their Councils Have Unique Gifts to Offer

I know better than to ask already overburdened priests to take on additional jobs. In a sacramental Church, however, we are the only ones who can bring Eucharist and Reconciliation to its members who are unable to come to our houses of worship. So please, in the name of the Christ who was himself a prisoner, tend to the incarcerated with the same care that you give to the homebound and those in health care facilities. Say “yes” when you are asked to join a rotation for ministry in the prisons and jails within your parish boundaries. It’s a burden made easier when shared, and you will be pleasantly surprised how rewarding it is to dispense God’s mercy to those who’ve experienced so little of it from others.

American Catholics excel at performing the works of mercy, and we are unmatched when it comes to collecting and distributing mountains of food and clothing. But visiting the imprisoned, the last item on Jesus’ Matthew 25 checklist, is easily overlooked. Before I close, allow me to suggest several ways that the NFPC and its members might help correct this imbalance:

- See to it that criminal justice has a clearly defined place in your diocese’s administrative structure of offices and ministries. This can be done in many ways, but present conditions suggest that it should not be just one item in a larger list of social justice concerns. There should be one person who is clearly designated by the bishop to coordinate internal communication and external networking with state and national agencies. It will be clear to all, including inmates and their families, that prison ministry is not an extra-curricular activity or an afterthought.
Priests are also in a position to increase prison ministry’s visibility. First educate yourselves, and don’t be shy about including criminal justice issues—including the controversial ones—in your preaching and catechesis. Also see that these are regularly addressed in the context of Catholic social justice teaching in your diocesan and parish publications. Take advantage of opportunities to have both religious and secular experts speak to church organizations. Catholics are just as prone as everyone else to the misinformation and fear-mongering about crime and punishment that are served up by politicians and the media.

A creative and useful way for pastors to help the total effort is to get their parishes sensitized and prepared for prisoner reentry. We who minister to prisoners still serving their sentences work hard at faith development, but we often worry what will become of our efforts after their release. Parolees have many problems to confront during their transition back into society, and the Church does not need to be one of them. Catholic “returning citizens” must be integrated into faith communities that are warm and welcoming, supportive and non-judgmental. This is a grace-filled opportunity for a new lay ministry, especially by men trained to serve as mentors.

As the Year of Mercy was drawing to a close, Pope Francis asked every diocese in the world to create something new—an institution, a ministry, a movement—so that the Church’s outreach to the dispossessed and marginalized would continue and grow. I am suggesting to my brother priests around the country that criminal justice is a fertile field in which to do exactly that.

*Franciscan Father Christian Reuter* is Prison Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. He can be reached at 618-482-5570 or cvreuter@yahoo.com. The website of its developing prisoner reentry house, Our Brothers’ Keepers of Southern Illinois, is [www.obkministry.org](http://www.obkministry.org).

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**The Challenge of Pastoring Multiple Parishes**

From December 2015 through April 2016, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati conducted a series of interviews with pastors that are pastoring more than one parish in certain regions of the archdiocese. The interviews were organized by the archdioceses’ Department of Pastoral Life and Evangelization and centered on pastors of multi-parish regions.

A summary of the interviews found common themes that exist in pastoring multiple parishes. Pastoring one large parish is a challenge in itself, but the reality that a pastor must divide his time between parishes that have differing ecclesiologies, cultures, and histories, including geographical distances can pose stresses even for the most experienced pastor.

The time involved in getting to know parishioners, preparing more than one homily, celebrating weekend Masses at different parishes points to the idea of “changing channels” as pastors travel from parish to parish within their region.

In order to cope more effectively, pastors of multiple parishes are recognizing the importance and need of shared ministry which include well-trained deacons and lay leadership. However the collaborative model of leadership is a mixture of successes and more challenges as the summary of the report notes when it states, “In all cases, even if all are committed to ultimate collaboration, it is a long uphill struggle.” One issue that stood out is that is pastoring a parish without a school is much less stressful.
There is an inherent conflict between the goal of collaboration and the goal of maintaining the autonomy of each parish. In the case of combining the staffs of two parishes, it is easier said than done. The summary report notes that the goal of collaboration can only be brought about by a series of small steps and may take years to accomplish.

The effect on the emotional, physical, and spiritual life of a multi-parish pastor is not insignificant. Even though during their formation some priests were introduced to the idea of “Emerging Models of Church,” there is insufficient time to implement this paradigm. Factors causing considerable stress include helping parishioners with the pain of losing their own pastor, in some cases the closing of a school, and particularly in small parishes the dynamic of a small influential group parishioners influencing considerable control of a parish. This happens especially when a parish has less contact with a pastor and misunderstand the limits of pastoring multiple parishes. Pastors are reminded not to take criticism and judgments personally.

The elevated stress that comes about as a result of pastoring multiple parishes also includes less time for socializing with other priests and even family members, the summary report notes. In addition finding time for prayer often takes a “one day at a time” approach while some pastors do not find time to take an annual retreat. Some pastors admit to a “Messiah complex” of not asking for help: “It’s too much trouble to find a priest-substitute so I don’t take time off.” Building trust with multi parish parishioners is challenge in itself, notwithstanding when it compounded by a previous pastor who was longstanding or “problematic,” the report notes.

One of the major findings from the interviews was that more preparation needs to be accomplished in order for priests to be prepared for the overwhelming responsibilities of pastoring multiple parishes. This is a two-way street in that not only does the priest need to be equipped with the skills for the increased responsibilities, but also for the parishes involved in the multiple parish pastoring schema.

Some suggestions for the Dept. of Pastoral Life going forward include:

- Forming “learning groups” for pastors of multiple parishes to act as mentors for new pastors.
- Facilitating social gatherings for priests involved in multiple parish ministry.
- Continue the “Emmaus journey” image to guide ongoing pastoral region work.
- Leadership to visit parishes in advance of multiple parish formation to prepare and inform them of anticipated changes.
- Make “best practices” information available.
- Listen to parishioners.
- The interviews were encouraging. Pastors felt acknowledged and hopeful that they were heard.
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**Example:**
A diocesan official sent an email to NFPC asking about a job description for a new ministry they were developing. NFPC Managing Director, Alan Szafraniec, starting making phone calls. Within a couple of hours, he had connected with a diocese who had the exact ministry and a job description they gladly shared.

**Example:**
Another diocese's Chancellor emailed NFPC asking about written policies and procedures in the case of the unexpected death of a priest. We sent an email out to contacts in dioceses across the US and within days had several helpful emails to forward to the Chancellor, who was very pleased with the clear and helpful information.

Do you have a question? Let us help!

**NFPC is a national clearinghouse** for information concerning arch/dioceses, speaker recommendations, research, and other topics. Keep us in mind next time you are looking for answers.

Please also talk to us with input on the major issues affecting your ability to minister in the United States today. In the past, we've tackled the heavy lifting for such concerns as salary compensation, personnel boards, and due process. Today's issues need defining, and your input is our best resource. **Tell us how we can help, and we'll get started!**

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