

Roman Catholic Community of Western Broome Country
Pastoral Care Area Newsletter 05/22/2022

In February 2022 our local Pastoral Care Area (PCA) teams presented their initial recommendations to our parish communities through a series of three Town Hall meetings. In addition to the presentations, each meeting allotted time for Questions and Answers (Q&As) with Fr. Ken Kirkman. Each meeting was recorded and posted to our parish websites. What follows in this newsletter are some of the questions that Fr. Ken answered in regards to our **PCA** and **Priests**. Additional Town Hall Q&A newsletters will be published in the coming weeks.

PCA

A1) What does PCA mean?

PCA means Pastoral Care Area (PCA). In 2005 the Dioceses of Syracuse began to address the impending priest shortage by identifying clusters of churches, known as PCAs, which would work together as the loss of a priest would directly impact individual parishes. The 6 parishes in our PCA are Most Holy Rosary, Our Lady of Good Council, St. Ambrose, St. Anthonys, St. Joes and Church of the Holy Family.

A17) How will the PCA process address making the church more relevant?

We seem to live in a less connected world, an angrier world and a world where bad stuff happens with depressing regularity. So now more than ever there is a need for a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ, who believe in his dying and rising and in his message of love and care for one's neighbor. The PCA process gives us a way to look at how we are doing things now, and how we can continue to do things in the future with a recognition that things can change as we continue to focus on our mission of evangelization.

Priests

A4) Is there a concerted effort to get other priests from areas abroad like Africa, Poland, Italy, etc?

We do have a seminarian from Poland in the Syracuse Dioceses, his name is Pawel Zmija and he will be ordained in about two years. We also have five priests from Africa. But there are some difficulties bringing priests from other areas including United States immigration restrictions and the seminarian's home dioceses may restrict the number of years the seminarian can be in the United States. At the same time we must focus on increasing home-grown vocations. While Africa and India are experiencing a rise in vocations, many foreign dioceses, including those in Europe, have fewer vocations than we do and they also have a great need for priests. So although we have had other priests assigned to us from different dioceses, we can't always rely on this to fill our needs.

B10) What is the goal of our PCA? Is it 8 more priests in 2028? Or should it be 20 more priests by 2028?

The simplest answer is as many as you can and this is where the individual parishes come in and the role they play in vocation promotion. A lot of times it comes down to a personal invitation. If you see a young man in your parish you think would make a good priest, the rule of thumb is: "if you see something, say something". Tell him right up front, I think you would make a good priest. ... That makes a world of difference. Most of us priests have memories just like

that of someone coming up to us and saying they thought we would make a good priest. And at our ordination they come up and tell us "I told you so!" If you see something in a young man or woman, say something. If you think they have a vocation, say something, let them know. That personal invitation is how we create a culture of vocations. And how we might get to, Praise God, 20 by 2028!

C15) You appear to want to grow your base with all these community ministries however we don't have increased priests.

It's important to note that the ministries we are proposing in a lot of ways can be taken over by lay people; by lay men and women. Everyone is encouraged to do so. If you have an interest in one of these ministries, please join, please volunteer, please ask how you can help. Priests are good at certain things, and we are empowered sacramentally to celebrate Mass, to celebrate the sacrament, to hand on the Word of God, these are really our core competencies. But every baptized catholic is also called to the work of evangelization. They are called to help heal the hurts of the world, to assist the poor and the needy in some way, shape or form. So, in that sense we should not be discouraged by a lack of priests. If there is something you are interested in, in some way you feel you can be of service to the church in the world, please do so. We have to recognize now that there aren't enough priests where you can say "Well father will do it."

B22) What about married priests or women priests?

There are married priests in the Eastern Rite but not in the Latin Rite. That is ultimately the determination of the Pope. As to the question of women priests that had been definitively ruled out by Pope John Paul II.

C7) Why are priests burdened with parish administration and duties that lay people could handle?

This is actually an interesting theological question too because priests are empowered with a certain amount of governance as part of our priestly role. It is important that priests have oversight and some administrative duty within our parish to show that the role of the shepherd is not just to say Mass and celebrate the sacraments and go back and pray all day. It's that we do actually have a vested interest in the maintenance and running of that parish. Certainly there are a lot of functions that priests do that could be handed over to lay people and we will be looking at ways to do that. There will always be things that only a priest can do, but things that can be effectively handed over to lay men and women are worth pursuing.

C1, B24) How many deacons are there in our PCA?

By May 2022 we will have seven total deacons in our PCA including Paul Highland and Michael Carroll who will be ordained in May. We continue to need deacons in the church, all men should consider answering a call to this vocation.

May God Bless us as we move into the future

*Fr. Clarence Rumble, Fr. Ken Kirkman, Fr. John Donovan
and the PCA Leadership Council of the Roman Catholic
Community of Western Broome.*