

MISSIONS & PARISH DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Fr Thomas Mueller, Chair

REORGANIZATION

This department has been dormant for at least two years, stretching back to the previous administration of the Diocese and into the past year as well. I was appointed to take up this departmental chairmanship last year, and I must admit that I have not been able to focus on this until now. In order to restart the work of this department, I want to meet with all representatives from missions on Monday evening, October 6th, on the eve of the Diocesan Assembly. The time and location will be on the Assembly schedule.

The purpose of this meeting is to seek input from mission clergy and workers and from the deans. I hope that we can move to a more collaborative and less top-down model, and that we can be reinvigorated by fresh thoughts and approaches, even as we are guided by the wisdom that long experience brings.

There are several things that I see as issues to consider:

- 1) A statement of principle regarding the way in which mission efforts should be initiated and seek authorization. We need to be clear and consistent in the way we do this in order to avoid the blowback of faltering or failing missions which perhaps should not have been authorized or planted in unlikely soil. The role of the deans in this regard is crucial.**
- 2) The Parish Health Grants, which were a popular project of Joe Kormos, might be reinstated. The money is available in the budget and should be used. These grants would be available to missions and older parishes for new and creative projects. Should they also be available for critical one-time needs? The process of application could take place this fall, with awards made by the end of the year.**
- 3) A new urban parish conference next summer.**

We might also consider drawing up a document to acquaint new missions and chapels with the responsibilities and expectations of the respective status of each.

I look forward to working with mission representatives, with the other deans, the chancellor, and eventually our new bishop in regard to our common mission and parish development challenges.

I am very grateful to Fr. Dan Rentel, Ann-Marie Mecera, and Joe Kormos for putting on the Small Parishes conference this past summer, something which will have its own report. I regret that parish responsibilities prevented me for taking part in this event.