

Summary of all Deanery Rep Meeting Minutes – April 2019



United in Faith, Hope and Love

What are the three positive things going on in your deanery?

Small groups to address needs, outreach (ministerial growth), active lay members and good priests that are well prepared and dynamic.

Strong sense of community at most parishes, great positive response to new priest at St. Rose and Corpus Christi, healing ceremony at St. Thomas very positive and well received.

Liturgy and music, adherence to Catholic doctrine, Mass and confessional times, lecture series, bible studies, many learning opportunities.

Commitment to Catholic education, celebration of liturgies and sacraments, welcoming attitude of parishioners toward people from various cultures and backgrounds, parishioners who have stayed through the rough times.

Growing active parishes, positive feedback on the priests who serve our parishes, financially strong.

Enthusiasm among parishioners and ministry recruitment is up, outreach/lots of opportunities for involvement/Faith Formation/RCIA involvement are all up, increase in young adults/kids and young families living our faith i.e. natural family planning.

Engagement and participation, focus is on parish ministries and not on Archdiocesan issues, working on developing a positive and collaborative relationship with the school, focus on our mission, strategic initiatives, financial stability, healing, and accountability.

Strong, faithful Catholics, good parish programs have started and finances are healthy.

Commitment to service and justice, diverse congregations and strong lay leadership.

Welcoming and open, community is energized and wants to be involved in the parishes/communities and within the greater community, community feels good and positive that Archbishop Hebda has decided to convene the LAB and is hoping that it will have a voice.

Robust involvement of lay leadership and engaged ministry volunteers, welcoming communities, vibrant liturgies.

What are the three most pressing things that need to be healed in your deanery?

Trust/transparency, hierarchy/structure/governance, bringing back the fallen away (victims, young people), how to evangelize in the face of scandal, healing and understanding of issue, awareness of all involved, safe place to talk about the issues, culpability of the laity.

Priest shortage and fear of unknown due to priest shortage, fear of priest burnout due to work load, rebuilding trust and greater transparency, more positive press and stronger call for evangelization.

Publish evidence of progress within the church regarding scandals, provide prayer services and more frequent administration of the sacraments, provide a vision for parishes for all as an Archdiocese for truly making a difference in our communities, better Archdiocesan communication, more frequent Archbishop visits to show his care and concern.

Restore trust in the leadership in the Archdiocese, improve communication, be transparent and honest, be present, listen to the needs of the parishes, more lay participation, bishop and priest need to live as true shepherds and servants of their parishes, communities and dioceses, better prepare priests in seminary to understand what it means to serve, provide resources to help parishes in need to continue to exist and to grow, be more inclusive and welcoming.

There is a type of “scandal fatigue” has set in over parishes. People are tired and need to have a reason for hope in the church and in the future.

There is a lack of trust with the Archdioceses that has caused weekly Mass attendance to fall.

Closure and consolidation of parishes within the deanery.

Sexual abuse incidences in multiple parishes, priest mistreating members (not sexual abuse), support of parish schools which is challenging and is polarizing in some parishes, free will donations to help sexual abuse victims has caused frustration and anger among many parishioners.

Parishes want to move forward but here is a perception of being stuck and issues not being dealt with i.e. transparency issues/vagueness, loss of church membership, which leads to financial issues as there are fewer bodies in church for collection, more communication regarding where money is going.

There needs to be more historical information provided to be well informed, Church needs to be completely transparent, there is a general feeling of not wanting to tithe, not wanting the money to go to bankruptcy issues, church needs to own its problems and make an apology.

Parishioners have wandered away in recent years due to previous pastors or church scandals, reaching out to those not here and understanding the why, lack of spiritual connection, youth programming needs to be expanded and improved, division between those prioritizing the school versus the church and vice versa, need more collaboration across and monist parishes, most Catholics are aware that we are losing membership and want to do something to change that reality like working together as parishes to market, offer programming, develop best practices.

Trust in church leadership, commitment to change and evolve, specific roles and power of the laity in church governance.

The dwindling number of participants at Mass and receiving the sacraments, the campaign against same sex marriage by the archdiocese damaged communities and preaching against same sex marriage violated the separation of church and state, communities want assurance that people are being protected and understand that thrust can only be restored over time and with actions and transparency.

Lack of information, communication on what is being done to address abuse scandal at archdiocesan level and how to address accountability and deficit of trust in parish communities, addressing the sin and repairing the damage caused by the power structure resulting from clericalism, conflict between our Catholic faith and secular culture (such as social media) that minimized the importance of faith, keeping youth involved, being embarrassed to say “Yes, I’m Catholic”.

What three things could be done to help with healing in your deanery?

Parish connecting, sharing resources and communication, listening and healing sessions, professional quality therapists and or trained parish/church leaders, healing services continually made available and advertised across the diocese, communication is consistent across the diocese, preparing and supporting priests.

Talk about the priest shortage more and what is being done about it, how are priests and parishes being supported, discuss the process for closing a parish so people are aware and helps to ease the fear, continue to publicly state what happened was wrong, apologize for the behavior and ensure those that were involved in the past are not in the spotlight in the future, take more time to discuss with parishes when a claim is made against a priest, once the claim is unfounded, apologize to the priest and parish, better publicize the positive, address the fact that people have left the church due to the past scandal and talk about why it's a positive thing to be a Catholic today.

Declining numbers and lack of robustness in our churches, betrayal by church leadership with abuse scandals, debt and rising facility maintenance costs, trust in clergy, more community outreach. Trust in clergy following numerous lawsuits over child abuse, lack of cooperation between parishes, declining enrollment in Catholic schools.

Restore trust in the leadership in the Archdiocese, improve communication, be transparent and honest, be present and listen to the needs of the parishes, explain how the archdiocese will prevent and respond to allegations of misconduct, more lay participation, and bishops and priests need to live as true shepherds and servants of their parishes, communities and dioceses. Resources for small parishes that share limited resources, improve communication, education at the local parish level to gain a better understanding of our faith, sharing of information within the deanery to ensure all is aware of available resources.

Have examples of successes so other parishes can implement those changes, procedures/avenues for parishes to interact with each other (details or road maps for other parishes to follow), focus on the positive/reclaim our faith, have the archdiocese take public responsibility, give information clearly and timely to priests, have priests give all information and be open, have local town hall meetings to give information or a place to vent.

Problems continually get swept under the rug and overlooked by members that do not want to face the issues, zero tolerance needs to be enforced, predators need to be removed from positions of authority, needs to be rules and accountability, archdiocese needs to be consistent in their message with better communication, healing cannot start until there has been a confession and apology.

Invest in resources in promoting all the great things happening throughout the archdiocese, be Catholic and move forward being true to the teachings of the Catholic Church, collaboration and engagement such as sharing ideas within deaneries, involve lay people in real decision making, our mission needs to focus on the message of Christ's love and a solid plan to get that out to all, transparency with communication locally and with archdiocese, have open and honest conversation about issues and how to work together to resolve them, trust building in all areas. Prepare priests to work collaboratively with the laity, clear expectations of churches for inclusion and commitment to Vatican II changes, explicit actions as response to abuse scandal.

Call attention to the ways we have recovered from the abuse crisis and promote how we have recovered and implemented systems and controls, remind people why we are Catholic, and emphasize the voice of the people and the desire to be heard.

More transparency and communication on how the archdiocese is addressing justice for victims and preventing of clergy abuse, publicize the good things going on in the diocese, encourage the church to be relevant to people's lives and provide support for living our faith, empower laity to celebrate their baptism and live out their discipleship in the church.

Three to five areas of priority for the local church

Public and open outreach to those within the church and outside of the church in our communities, bring back inter-parish networking and break the silos of communication from top down to collaboration and learning across organizations and within communities of interest or geographic areas, restore and encourage a sense of community among all the faithful, make a deliberate effort to invest in, educate and evangelize to youth and teens, faithfully consider how the church should allow for our differences and still allow the church to flourish, dedicate energy to encourage people to return and get people back to the sacraments.

Openness to all, practice the gospel of welcome, true roles for laity, universal commitment to the values of Vatican II so pastors cannot make unilateral decisions such as turning the altar around, only boy altar servers, no women lectors, etc.

Encourage people to have personal relationships with Jesus and not just go through the motions, build ministries that create a sense of belonging and caring, provide meaning and purpose, bold outreach to those on the margins, take ownership of the message, bring new vibrancy, energy, move to strategic vs reactive approach, be diverse and inclusive, provide meaningful ways to serve, belong and own their faith, liturgy and sacramental services that are of high quality, inform, relate and speak to our uniqueness, identify as Catholics.

Engage new volunteers to teach religious education and host bible studies for adults, consistent communication is provided to all parishes, identify available resources, engage youth and young families to sustain the future of the parish.

Rebuild trust, improve communication and transparency, grow the church (bring people back to the Catholic Church) evangelize to those of other religions, make the church relevant today, elevate priests to a higher level of joy and commitment to the service of God.

Being more welcome to the LGBTQ community, perception of authenticity (how to see us as relevant and authentic), communication, healing and building trust, unity with living into Vatican II, lay people living out their callings, all are welcome, why the church does what it does, prayer for vocations.

Social justice and outreach to the poor and struggling, increase engagement in faith and community which includes volunteerism and lay leadership, keep a vibrant and growing church by building relevance for youth, embrace diversity of our various cultures, increase evangelizations in it many forms, get parishes working together, heal damage from clergy abuse scandal, drive accountability, trust and robust prevention.