



## E.C.C. Office of Presiding Bishop Meeting

February 20, 2019

**Present on call:** Bishop Francis Krebs, Fr. Henry Pruski, Fr. Michael Nicosia, Rev. Delores Kropf

**Excused:** Bishop Denise Donato, Jennifer Reyes Lay

No Agenda other than the following question:

1. +Francis: How do people in your region/diocese feel about the Communion and your place in it?
  - a. California feels like they are different from the others, in that they are very clear about their "Catholic" identity. Assumption that others are not. +Francis shared St. Matthew's letter re concerns, e.g.,
    - i. Gender-neutral liturgical language dilutes and diminishes Catholic identity, especially re Trinitarian formula.
    - ii. Real Presence in the Eucharist.
    - iii. Use of Nicene Creed.  
Clarification from Constitution: believe the Creed but are not restricted from deepening/broadening our understanding of the symbol of our faith. E.g., Immigrants' Creed may be appropriate for a particular focus, but not assuming all Christians hold it in common.
    - iv. Traditional format of the Catholic liturgy.
    - v. 7 Sacraments
    - vi. Ordination, who does and doesn't lay on of hands.
    - vii. Historic structure of diocese.
    - viii. [Hispanic "Catholic" tradition: parents blessing children when leaving the home.]
  - b. ECC parameters take lead from Old Catholics acceptance of 1st 7 Ecumenical Councils of the church.
  - c. Well-established "Catholic" norms, e.g., vestments for liturgy, are a public expectation, but may not essentials. Discussion open.
  - d. Other communities would be up in arms if told not to use gender-inclusive language.
  - e. People are used to their own understanding.
  - f. One could identify exclusion from the Communion table as "Catholic."
  - g. Many would say we're too Catholic.
  - h. No secret the Rocky Mountain Region likes being different.  
Michael shared about ECC/ ELCA participation at St. Paul and in the regional conversations about developing a process for calling a local bishop; their relationship is different from other ECC communities that are nested in Lutheran churches. Consensus agreed that St. Paul Lutherans, as equal members of the one community, have voice but no vote in the regional Holy Conversation.
  - i. +Francis impressed by Lutherans having a better appreciation of sometimes differing perspectives of local and national church and embrace the tensions.



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- j. Guardian Angels AZ considered by some as pushing the boundaries liturgically (their Synod closing Mass was the impetus for St. Matthew's letter); others in Southwest Region more traditional.
  - k. Need to find a way to dialogue about our differences; look to experiences of other large, liturgically-varied denominations.
  - l. ECC does have a Liturgical Advisory Board (+Francis to fill Michael in off-call).
  - m. Concern may be that some might be forced to do it one way or another. +Francis sees providing options as workable/valuable.
  - n. St. Matthew's letter seen by them as an exercise in self-identity exploration/articulation; Their perspective is to be affirmed but also challenged to more nuanced understanding that embraces other's Catholicity.
  - o. Identity two realities: unique/individual and communal/collaborative.
2. Regional Check Ins
- a. East Coast
    - i. March 30th will be the regional Chrism Mass celebrated by Bishop Denise Donato at Mary Magdalene in Rochester. Rotating location in subsequent years.
    - ii. Regional calls for the past year.
    - iii. Working on regional retreat.
    - iv. ....great job building community across large geographic region.
  - b. Rocky Mountain Region
    - i. Michael in communication with Episcopal Diocese, affirmed bishops of other denomination to be invited to upcoming consecration of Bishop-elect Kimberly Lucas in Denver.
    - ii. St. Paul Lutheran Co-pastor Barbara Berry-Bailey is a good friend of ECUSA Presiding Bishop Curry, and hopes to invite him to their church when in town for the consecration.

Next meeting: \*March 20<sup>th</sup>

\*(This was later cancelled. Next meeting was April 17<sup>th</sup>)



## E.C.C. Office of Presiding Bishop Meeting

April 17, 2019

**Present on call:** Bishop Rafe Adams, Jennifer Reyes Lay, Bishop Francis Krebs, Fr. Michael Nicosia, Fr. Henry Pruski, Bishop Denise Donato, Rev. Delores Kropf

### Agenda

- I. Nature of this (OPB) call
  - A. Bishop Francis presented the idea to the group that this particular monthly call could shift given the changing realities of ECC structure, particularly the formation of local diocese. Originally this call was put together by Bishop Peter when there was just one national church and various vicars to represent different areas of the country and this call helped to keep everyone in touch with one another and Bishop Peter as their local ordinary. However we now currently have 3 diocese and another region in the process of moving toward diocesan formation. These calls have still been functioning as if we are just one national diocese, but that is not the case. The proposal then is to make this monthly call just for those who are still within the “original” diocese of the ECC (i.e. not a part of another local diocese) in order to handle operations within that diocese. The Episcopal Council meeting would be the monthly meeting where diocesan bishops check in with one another about what is going on in each diocese.
  - B. There was an opportunity for all on the call to offer their opinions and feedback on shifting this call.
    - i. Fr. Michael shared he has appreciated these calls and getting to hear from each region/diocese about what is going on. It has been helpful for those forming a diocese to be in communication with the other bishops on this call. It may be premature to expect this communication to happen in just the bishops’ meeting.
    - ii. Rev. Delores also affirmed it is helpful to hear about what is going on in each region/diocese rather than shifting to only being the remaining areas without a diocese.
    - iii. Bishop Denise shared some of the history of ECC development with having retreats on the synod off years which were very meaningful. These national retreats have not happened for many years and people have expressed missing that kind of connection. How do we allow space for local communities to develop into diocese but also maintain a strong connection and communication with one another?
    - iv. Bishop Rafe clarified that there are four diocese (the original or proto-diocese in addition to Mid-America, Pacific NW, and California). So new diocese aren’t being created out of nothing, but rather dividing out of the proto-diocese. He reflected back hearing this desire to be connected, build community, and share



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with one another across the country. He affirmed the desire to have periodic national retreats.

- v. There was general discussion about finding ways for various different groups/constituencies to get together in different ways to build community, share ideas, and stay connected. This could be a retreat, it could be regional/diocesan gatherings, it could be phone or video calls, etc.
    - a. Fr. Henry shared about the value of getting together for the East Coast Chrism Mass and they are also planning a regional retreat which people are excited about. They have only been doing regular regional conference calls for a year now.
    - b. Rev. Delores share that technology makes a difference. In the region they use Zoom and so can see one another as well. Bishop Rafe echoed they use Zoom in the Mid-America Diocese as well and are discussing using that format for their diocesan synod so people don't have to travel.
  - vi. It would be beneficial to have other kinds of special interest meetings and calls such as for chaplains.
  - vii. Bishop Francis shared he would like to see parallel strength of development of dioceses and national Communion. It is not an either/or but both/and situation of developing local and national communion.
- C. Everyone was encouraged to keep thinking about how they would like to see this call shift (if at all) in the future. This topic will be revisited on the next call.

### II. Diaconate 101

- A. Candidates for the permanent diaconate must complete the diaconate 101 course overseen by Bishop Rafe. If you know of current candidates preparing for the permanent diaconate please connect them with Bishop Rafe to participate in this course.
- B. Bishop Rafe shared there is a new group in formation right now with candidates in California. They will be using Zoom to allow people in different areas to connect with one another.

### III. Regional Check Ins

- A. East Coast – had a wonderful Chrism Mass and Bishop Denise is hoping to find time to visit each of the communities this year.
- B. Rocky Mountain Region – has declared an episcopal vacancy and is waiting to continue the process of calling a local bishop. Fr. Michael shared he will be relocating to Nebraska with his husband but will continue at least for the time being as regional vicar for the RMR.

Next meeting: May 15<sup>th</sup>. Bishop Francis will be out of town but will ask someone else to facilitate.



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May 15, 2019

**Present on call:** Bishop Denise Donato, Fr. Henry Pruski, Fr. Michael Nicosia, Jennifer Reyes Lay, Rev. Delores Kropf

Agenda:

- I. Regional Updates
  - A. Rocky Mountain Region
    - i. Moving forward with calling a local bishop. There are two teams of volunteers: bishop call team and the polity team. The bishop call team is working on the job description and process for electing a bishop. The polity team is working on the groundwork for a diocesan constitution to show potential candidates, but the final version wouldn't be voted on until after there is a bishop in place to also offer their input.
    - ii. Fr. Michael is in the process of relocating to Omaha and will continue to serve as vicar remotely.
    - iii. Fr. Jim Demuth is retiring at the end of July and so the community of Mary Magdala is working on the process for applications and choosing a new pastor. They have been working with Bishop Francis on this.
    - iv. In the region there are two lay women in discernment for presbyteral ordination and Deacon Roseann is also considering a call to the priesthood. There may be another candidate for ordination from Rev. Sheila's church in Boulder which isn't ECC.
    - v. Fr. Michael and Bishop Denise will be attending the ordination of the new Episcopal Bishop for Denver representing the ECC.
  - B. East Coast Region
    - i. Had wonderful Easter celebrations throughout the region.
    - ii. They are planning a retreat Oct 18-20, 2019 for the region. They are discussing the theme "spread the word" but haven't decided yet. Everyone is very excited to meet in person and have some time to bond, learn more about one another, and support one another in the region.
  - C. Southwest Region
    - i. They didn't have the regional call this month. They have been discussing on previous calls what they want the Southwest region to look like, how to maintain cohesion and independence. There is one community that considers themselves ECC but doesn't want to join the ECC (St. Oscar Romero in Albuquerque). They have an ECC priest (Fr. Frank Quintana) but haven't done any of the paperwork to join as a community or as a mission.



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- ii. Mary Magdalene in Albuquerque is almost done with their paperwork to join but their pastor Fr. Mark Sutton just recently had another stroke so that is on hold.
- iii. St. Teresa and Guardian Angels have been busy. They did a number of activities for Holy Week and Easter including a foot clinic. St. Michael's gave clothing donations to a local school in need and paid off student lunch debt.
- iv. Guardian Angels is going through a discernment process to define who they are in order to know what kind of a pastor they want to call. The interim co-pastors are doing really well.

### **II. Monthly OPB Call**

- A. There was a review of how this call first started before there were diocese developed to have all the regional vicars and presiding bishop connect every week. Currently there are three diocese with at least one more in formation. The diocesan bishops already connect each month on the episcopal council call. The question is whether to shift this call to be just the regional vicars for the original diocese, or keep it as a mix of the vicars and diocesan bishops.
- B. One thing that might be missing if it was just the original diocese would be conversation about vocations, preparing and vetting ordination candidates, in coordination with the other diocese to make sure everyone is on the same page, could share best practices, etc. These discussions could be happening on the Episcopal Council, but it would be the presiding bishop who would have to bring those questions and report back to the other vicars.
- C. It was brought up that since the current vicars are relatively new, it would be interesting to hear from some of the previous vicars about their experience.
- D. Looking forward, the Rocky Mountain Region hopes to install their new bishop at the 2020 Synod and so from there it would only be two vicars, the presiding bishop, and the administrator. The East Coast is not close to forming a diocese or calling a bishop, and the Southwest is in conversation but also probably a ways off.
- E. There was an affirmation that it is good to have these conversations and acknowledge what would be lost if the diocese did not participate on the call.

### **III. Constitutional Revision**

- A. There was a question about what is going on with the revised Constitution as approved by the House of Laity. Is this going to the HOP for review?
- B. There was a concern that only a small number of lay delegates out of the total number of delegates actually voted on the revised constitution. No one had exact numbers on this but Jennifer affirmed that they did have a solid majority participating.
- C. Jennifer will send current stats of ECC communities and delegates to Michael.

### **IV. Closing prayer – offered by Bishop Denise      Next meeting: June 19<sup>th</sup>**