

Put Out Into the Deep

# A Church of Communion



Bishop DiMarzio

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Several weeks ago I presented a plan of what some would call a reorganization of the Diocese. In many ways it was just a snapshot of the present situation with some functional relationships I thought needed to be clarified. Since that presentation, I received several inquiries, some questions and even some criticisms regarding the approach I have taken to this organizational portrayal of the Diocese. First, it must be said that the Church is a unique organization. It is not a corporation, and although we must adapt some models of corporate governance, they are all inadequate to describe the Church that is the Body of Jesus Christ, founded by the Savior Himself and whose relationships of authority and responsibility must reflect the relationships that Jesus had with His apostles. He told them time and time again, I have come not to be served, but to serve.

That being said, the model I presented was a side-view pyramid. Some have called it a spaceship-like missile. Perhaps it is a bit visionary, but it was purposely done that way so as not to show a right-side-up pyramid that would imply an authority structure, top down, the Bishop being on top and the ultimate authority similar to corporate executive offices. Also, an upside-down pyramid would also imply an undue responsibility on the shoulders of one person, the Bishop, to make sure that everything in the Diocese works properly. Purposely so, the side-view pyramid was to emphasize the working relationships between the regional vicars and the functional vicars, whose main responsibility were the parishes, those blocks in the middle. The blocks represent not institutions, but people. Our relationships in the Church have to do

with our relationship to Jesus Christ to whom we all are brothers and sisters, through whom we all share one common baptism and a universal priesthood of the faithful.

There were other reporting relationships and institutional charts, more similar to organizational models, that were distributed to the individual departments and vicariates; however, the purpose in my article was to give an overview of how things might work moving into the future.

Most importantly, I was not able to give the theological background for such a view of the Church as "Comunio." The fact is, that word is most important. Comunio is our relationship between one another as members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. It mirrors, in fact, the relationship between the persons of the Trinity who live in perfect union so as to form the one Godhead, the Blessed Trinity. Our responsibility is no less than to mirror that intimate relationship between the persons of the Trinity with our own relationship with one another. No matter how difficult it may be, that certainly is our goal.

The new "Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops," published in March, the result of the 2001 Synod of Bishops, states this regarding the Bishop: "The Bishop is the visible principal of unity in his diocese, his call to build up the particular Church unceasingly in the communion of all its members and to ensure that their diverse gifts and ministries, in union with the universal Church, serve to build up all the faithful and to spread the gospel." The Bishop is the principal source of unity and communion. It is he who, as the new directory tells us, must engender hope in the life of the Church in the place of Jesus Christ the Savior. To organize the diverse gifts and

ministries is in particular the Bishop's responsibility. We must use all we know of management science since we too are human and need to mirror the best that is available to us in understanding how we can indeed manage many diverse responsibilities.

Just recently I read no fewer than 20 audit reports on all the various corporations and subsidiary groups for which I am responsible as Bishop. However, the responsibility of Bishop is not that of the corporate CEO, although many of the responsibilities are the same and the multitude of management and pastoral responsibility is never the same. The pastoral governance of the Bishop takes its spirit from what Jesus said in John's Gospel: "For I have given you an example that you should also do as I have done to you." Jesus spoke those words after he had washed the feet of His disciples, showing indeed His ultimate humility and authority that was exercised in service. The new directory goes on to say: "In the exercise of his ministry as father and pastor in the midst of his faithful, the Bishop should act as one who serves, always keeping before his eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served, but to serve and to lay down his life for his sheep." Indeed it is this responsibility of father and shepherd to which I aspire and for which I need your cooperation and most of all your prayerful support.

As we address the work of the Diocese for the future, and especially as we anticipate the responsibility of implementing the forthcoming pastoral letter on the New Evangelization, I count on all of you who work for the Diocese directly and those who are members to put out into the deep with me that we might indeed form a Church of communion among its members.



## Visits Catholic Charities

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio spent two days visiting various Catholic Charities sites in Brooklyn and Queens. Here he is shown at the Alhambra Day Treatment Center in Williamsburg. Pictured with Bishop DiMarzio are, from left, Alhambra member Charles Luzzi; MRDD Project Director Lisa Armband; Associate Executive Director of Catholic Charities Sister Ellen Patricia Finn, O.P.; and Executive Director/CEO of Catholic Charities Robert Siebel.

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## Diocesan Sex Abuse Hotline

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio has announced that the Diocese of Brooklyn has established a 24-hour toll-free telephone number for persons to call if they wish to report as children they were sexually abused by a member of the diocesan clergy. The phone line - (888) 634-4499 - became operational Aug. 6.

Calls will be received by an attorney in private practice whom the Bishop has invited to be the initial contact for persons seeking to report incidents of inappropriate behavior. Until now, a diocesan official received the allegation.

If John M. Kurkemelis, the attorney, is not immediately available to take the call, he will respond to a voicemail message as soon as he is able, said Bishop DiMarzio, in outlining the new procedure.

The Bishop said Kurkemelis will report the clergy abuse of a minor to the District Attorney of Kings or Queens, depending on where it took place, and will advise the caller to do the same. For the past two years, this has been the procedure followed by the Diocese.

The attorney will also inform Bishop DiMarzio or Msgr. Otto L. Garcia, the Vicar General, whom the Bishop has chosen to represent him in his absence, as well as the diocesan Victims Assistance Coordinator, Sister Ellen Patricia Finn, O.P.

"Making a call on a painful subject such as this can be extremely stressful and emotionally difficult," said Msgr. Garcia. "It is the Bishop's hope that setting up an around-the-clock toll-free number and having a lay person not employed by the Diocese as the first contact will help to ease the anxiety of the person placing the call."

The Vicar General said he was confident that callers would feel comfortable speaking with Kurkemelis due to "his personal sensitivity and his experience in dealing with people on a human level" in matters pertaining to social service and family law.

Msgr. Garcia said a 2003 revision of diocesan procedures on reporting clergy sexual abuse, originally written in 1987, will be amended to reflect the new initiative.



## Bishop DiMarzio's Calendar

Sunday, Aug. 8 - 9:30 a.m., Mass, Good Shepherd Church, Marine Park.

- 11 a.m., Mass, St. Margaret Mary Church, Manhattan Beach.

Thursday, Aug. 12 - 5:30 p.m., The Tablet's tenth annual Golf Classic