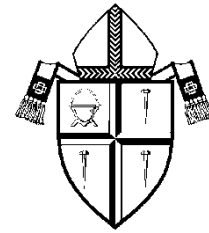


CWG IV: The Challenge to Provide Authentic Pastoral Support for Those Who are Divorced



Summary of Proposals Details

September 24, 2016

This CWG had three questions to focus on and the 30 in attendance were divided into three tables, each table being assigned one question.

The questions addressed are:

1. What are the elements necessary for a robust program of pastoral and spiritual support for those undergoing divorce, both during the process and afterward?
2. How can the diocese make the annulment process more accessible for our people
3. How should we bring an understanding of the internal forum and conscience to our people, not only regarding the topic of participation for those who are divorced and remarried, but for all Catholics in their moral and spiritual lives?

There were three discussion periods, each followed by general feedback from all delegates on the work of each of the three table's presentations. Feedback explored affirmation for what was presented, comments for fine-tuning and recommendations. In some cases other proposals were suggested to be explored by the table. During the last session delegates had time to reflect on the proposals and to prioritize them based on where their passion was and delegates had three preferences, 1-3 with one being the greatest. The below proposals are listed by priority of the working group. All proposals received priority and will remain for consideration by the Synod General Assembly. Actually, the top three priorities each were related to one of the three questions.

Five Proposals for Consideration

IV-A: (17) The Diocese provide formation in the areas of conscience formation and the Internal Forum, not only to implement the pathway to sacramental participation outlined in the *Joy of Love* but even more fundamentally to illuminate a core element of Christian discipleship itself.

(Q3)

(7#1, 3#2, 7#3=17 out of 30)

1. Provide forums for pastoral leadership including priests, deacons, religious and lay leaders.
2. Identify and develop resources including print, web-based, video and other media on conscience formation for all levels of parish and diocesan life.
3. Develop culturally relevant methods for integrating conscience formation into all levels of parish and diocesan formation.

IV-B: (16) Build a **culture of support** to those in **all stages of divorce** by: (Q, 1)

(5#1, 6#2, 5#3=16 out of 30)

- Welcoming divorced as members of the church;
- Considering the needs of the children;
- Passing no judgment;
- Incorporating the needs of the divorced into parish life;
- Acknowledging the value and contributions of the divorced in the community;
- Ministering to their pain and grief.

IV-C: (15) Provide **formation** for **all** in the **parish** on **divorce, the annulment process and remarriage**. (Q, 2) (6#1, 4#2, 5#3=15 out of 30)

- Build a welcoming environment for the divorced in the parish
- Reaching out requires cultural sensitivity
- Encourage special role for all on staff including the front office, often the first point of outreach by the divorced
- Recognize opportunities to invite divorced, remarried and those going through annulments to heal
- Find creative ways to reach out to divorced Catholics away from the church
- Identify advocacy teams of mentors and advocates for training, who can be of service to pastors, parish clusters and deaneries
- Integrate into all aspects of parish life current teachings on divorced, remarriage and the annulment process
- Use parish websites to promote outreach to Catholics experiencing all stages of divorce with a special pastoral emphasis

IV-D: (11) **Diocese** provide **formation** on the **annulment process and remarriage**. (Q, 2) (2#1, 4#2, 5#3=11 out of 30)

- Be pastorally sensitive and work to eliminate “stigma” of divorce in the church and the grieving process going on with the spouse and children
- Educate “all” clergy to eliminate inconsistency in application
- Explain current church teachings on divorce, remarriage, annulments and sacramental participation
- Develop pastorally sensitive websites, considering who is reading them, so that they are invitational
- Simplify forms and wording to engage the one considering an annulment
- Identify advocacy teams of mentors and advocates for training, who can be of service to pastors, parish clusters and deaneries

IV-E: (10) Reconfigure the Marriage and Family Office to include a Division for Divorced Catholics, focusing on all stages of divorce, remarriage and guidance to annulments including reaching out to Catholics away from the church. (Q, 2) (3#1, 6#2, 1#3=10 out of 30)