

*Following is a compilation of all submitted Reform-In-Action Reports (verbatim). These reports attempt to capture the substance of the “Open Space” gatherings that for the most part took place on Saturday evening at the American Catholic Council (June 11, 2011). Some submissions are more complete than others. Please recognize that these reports were submitted by volunteer “recorders” and they may or may not accurately capture the content, scope and discussion in each session. The proposed actions that are documented may not include all ideas that were presented. Recognizing these inadequacies, it is our intention to transpose the substance of these reports into thematically aligned discussion forums that integrate co-related action proposals that may have come out in other contexts of the American Catholic Council, particularly the Breakout Sessions. It is our hope that that through those forums, the ideas and proposed actions can be further explicated.*

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**Session Type and #:** RIA #1

**Priests: Talking with each other to find our voice and get support for reform**

**TITLE of the Session:**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:**

Since the Second Vatican Council, the priesthood has been an ever changing and evolving institution attempting to balance the demands of ministry as experienced by parish life and other apostolates with the demands of the magisterium and authority in the Catholic hierarchy. Nearly 50 years later, that gap between the two which Pope John XXIII tried so ardently to decrease appears to be widening at an ever increasing pace. Additionally, the sex abuse scandal has brought a black cloud over the institutional priesthood, branding many with the sins of the few. The theological and ecclesiological ideology of members of the clergy, which at one time appeared to be a healthy balance, is now tilted towards the right, with the young and newly ordained more rigid and righteous than those who have been ordained and faithfully serving the Church for years. This polarity in the clerical ranks and the emptying of the pews of our churches together with financial scandals and economic turmoil causing the closing and consolidation of many parishes, has caused a spirit of depression and low morale among many a presbyterate. In response to these above-mentioned issues, many clergy members have taken to isolation and ministerial immersion. The once celebrated brotherhood of priesthood fraternity seems abandoned. Trust between priests and trust between priests and bishops is low. Priests are afraid to speak out their true thoughts or feelings. Many have developed unhealthy coping skills. Some have abandoned their calling. We believe priests need a voice. There is strength in numbers. Priests need a forum to be able to speak their mind and discuss the issues. Further, there needs to be collaboration and support with the laity and religious. Priests can no longer be a caste unto themselves. They are human first, priest second.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

Gather interested clergy and laity to participate in local listening sessions sponsored by either Elephants in the Living Room or Voice of the Faithful. Organize a national congress of clergy. Network with existing clergy councils, i.e. National Federation of Priest Council, National Organization for the Continued Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, Council of Major Superiors of Religious Men. Use the social networking sites like Facebook to develop and foster groups of priests interested in dialoguing with one another concerning issues they face

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**CBRR Applications:** All of them! 1. Primacy of Conscience. Every Catholic has the right and responsibility to develop an informed conscience and to act in accord with it. - THAT INCLUDES PRIESTS 2. Community. Every Catholic has the right and responsibility to participate in a Eucharistic community and the right to responsible pastoral care. THE NEED TO EXPAND THE MINISTERIAL PRIESTHOOD 3. Universal Ministry. Every Catholic has the right and responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and to respond to the community's call to ministerial leadership. DITTO 4. Freedom of Expression. Every Catholic has the right to freedom of expression and the freedom to dissent. AND THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE 5. Sacraments. Every Catholic has the right and responsibility to participate in the fullness of the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. 6. Reputation. Every Catholic has the right to a good name and to due process. 7. Governance. Every Catholic and every Catholic community has the right to a meaningful participation in decision making, including the selection of leaders. 8. Participation. Every Catholic has the right and responsibility to share in the interpretation of the Gospel and Church tradition. 9. Councils. Every Catholic has the right to convene and speak in assemblies where diverse voices can be heard. 10. Social Justice. Every Catholic has the right and the responsibility to promote social justice in the world at large as well as within the structures of the Church.

**Tactical Steps:** It must begin locally and through relationships expand to other areas. Also, begin with just clergy and then open up to laity and religious. Use the paradigm of the Elephants in the Living Room from Detroit

**Best Practices or Models:** Elephants in the Living Room

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** Number of Clergy, number of Gatherings, Local and Regional Assemblies and ultimately a National Gathering

**Implementing Agent(s):** Elephants in the Living Room, Voice of the Faithful

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**Session Type and #:** RIA #2

**TITLE of the Session:** Reclaiming Eucharist as a meal

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** Last Supper as a charurah meal and overview of the components of this: Scripture first, breaking of bread, meal, cup of blessing at the end of meal. Lord's Supper as celebration of presence of the Risen Christ - with NO PRIESTHOOD YET DEVELOPED, AND HOST/HOSTESS AS PRESIDERS. Need to preserve an ordained priesthood and large-group Eucharist or Mass, as well as the institutional church, but concepts of nature or this priesthood and nature of sacrifice (praise vs. blood sacrifice) can and should change. Appeal of Eucharistic meal to young people and to disaffected Catholics because it offers opportunity for sharing and intimate community; opportunity to promote ecumenism through having Christians of various shades, as well as Jews and Buddhists, etc. share a meal. Three ways that these may view or participate: 1, action is only symbolic, 2.action is the Lord's Supper and He is present in the community and enters also into the bread and wine, 3. |Action takes place in the presence of the Divine, but there is no clear understanding of what it means like the Last Supper when Jesus offered His body to eat, which was cannibalism if taken literally, and wine as his blood to drink, which was completely contrary to Jewish Law. The disciples had to wait to find out what it all really meant.)

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Set up a blog so we can stay in touch and pursue having Eucharistic meals with friends and neighbors. Promote the website [www.reclaimingeucharistameal.com](http://www.reclaimingeucharistameal.com) as a source of information. Try to get an article with photo in local paper of an actual event, along with some of the theology behind it.

**CBRR Applications:** The Eucharistic meal is based on the priesthood of the baptized: we are baptized into Jesus and part of Jesus is his priesthood. This is a declaration in action that authority rests with the community, that both “apostolic succession” and ordination creating an ontological change to make a MAN another Christ are propaganda created by the power structure.

**Tactical Steps:** Best action would be to have NCR write about this and CTA adopt it as a cause in its publications and in the up-coming conference

**Best Practices or Models:** Use Facebook, Twitter, and emails, to spread the word.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** A benchmark could be the reaction of the clergy - how many would say at least privately that the theology is correct and the idea a good one.

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** Call to Action (I gave a workshop on this two years ago which was well received, but there has been no interest shown since then.) I sent an article to NCR last year but was politely declined.

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**Session Type and #:** RIA #4

**TITLE of the Session:** Re-Visioning the Vatican and Papacy

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** The poster that Dr. Heck provided as a basis for this discussion was the following: Re-Visioning the Vatican • as a gift from Roman Catholics (remember who paid for it!) to the world • as a UNESCO world heritage Museum and Research Library • as a Conference Center supporting peace and reconciliation efforts everywhere • as a pilgrimage site for all Christians Re-Visioning the Papacy • by restoring the Pope to his rightful place as Bishop of Rome (residing at the Cathedral of St. John Lateran) • by restoring collegial equality among all bishops and attributing infallibility to none • by eliminating the rank of cardinal and rethinking the papal selection process • by providing papal term appointments We discussed the long history of growth of the Papal States and the related self-aggrandizement of the papacy. It was agreed that the Pope needs to be understood anew as the Bishop of Rome, with his chair at the Cathedral of St John Lateran – not at the martyrrium (monument) of St. Peter. We were reminded by others that the Pope's title has to be corrected from the “Vicar of Christ” to the “Vicar of Peter,” even as his primacy among the Catholic bishops of the world is affirmed. We all liked the idea of letting the Vatican be what it has become – a large museum and research library complex, as well as a pilgrimage site.

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** We think that floating the issue on the ACC Web site, or on an equivalent site in Italian for Italians, could generate fruitful discussion and perhaps strong statements of support internationally. The site could gather suggestions for how to bring about these much needed re-visions in Catholic church self-awareness and self-governance.

**CBRR Applications:** Yes: #7 (governance) and #9 (councils) are directly related for obvious reasons.

**Tactical Steps:** There are several tactical steps that could be carried forward

- a. Float the issue on a Web site (possibly sponsored by the ACC) and in the Catholic media worldwide, to educate Catholics about the historical facts that led to the unfortunate localization of hierarchical power claiming statehood that we call the Vatican today.
- b. Air some fundamental questions in the Catholic and secular media: Is statehood appropriate for ANY religion? Does maintaining a Catholic state legitimize, by analogy, an Islamic republic? A Jewish state? Is this what the world needs in the 21st century?
- c. Exhort Italian Catholics (meaning all the baptized Catholics in Italy), to establish their own commission to review the Lateran Treaty of 1929, between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy (signed by Mussolini), which created the Stato della Citta' del Vaticano. Let them discuss the question: "What would be in the best interest of the world, the State of Italy, and the Catholic Church, in terms of the administration of this major patrimonio (museum, research library, and pilgrimage site)?" and "Should we Italians finally 'tear down the wall' that separates Vatican City from the rest of Italy and Europe?"

**Best Practices or Models:** Non-violence – it goes without saying – is the first and best practice for effecting any major change in outmoded ways of thinking. Some novel legal tactics could be explored, too, like a lawsuit on behalf of the Church (as the people of God) to reclaim ownership of the buildings and property on the territory of the Vatican, bought and paid for by the Church (the people of God). The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 provides an interesting precedent for how to envision and create a nation-state-free zone, whose status is widely understood and recognized by the community of nations, despite the prior and conflicting claims of territorial ownership. The United Nations has the administrative infrastructure and international credibility to become the custodian of a re-visioned Vatican City World Heritage Site and Museum Complex. All the present Catholic Church archives and library holdings could become part of that professionally maintained heritage.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** If the proposed action took the form of a blog or blogs, responses might indicate a level of interest. If the proposed action were to educate through publicity, media publications and coverage would reveal another kind of interest.

**Possible Implementing**

**Agent(s):** See item 12 above.

**Session Type and #:** RIA #5

**TITLE of the Session:** **A Return To the Nonviolent Gospel of Jesus**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:**

The entire group was interested in peace and the need to return the church to following the non-violent gospel of Jesus that was more prevalent prior to Constantine but largely ignored since. We felt it should be a significant part of any Catholic Church reform movement. It has been in need of reform for over 1700 years, much longer than most of the other reforms discussed which would bring us back to the great reforms of the second Vatican Council. But it has been part of many reform movements in the Church (Francis and Clare of Assisi, etc.). One of the themes of the ACC meeting was the increasing concentration of temporal power in the church in the hands of a few. Since the time of Constantine, most Christian churches have aligned themselves with governmental powers, with the church usually in a subordinate role as the blesser of their government's war efforts, which further places more power in the hands of a few. We believe that as God's sons and daughters, we should all share in the fruits of his Creation and should be served, and not dominated, by hierarchal secular or ecclesiastic power structures. We feel that nonviolent love is a central theme of the gospel of Jesus and for the Church to be embraced by more people, including our sons and daughters, grandchildren, nieces and nephews and others, it needs to embrace this nonviolent love of Jesus as a core teaching. So we encourage the ACC to give the nonviolent gospel of Jesus a much higher stature on the list of things that need to be reformed and embraced by the church. All Christians, especially Catholics, need to be catechized that nonviolence is a core part of the gospel and in a diverse world, it is a key element in helping us love our brothers and sisters of all religions, cultures and nationalities.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

(1) Encourage the ACC to give the non-violent gospel of Jesus more prominence in its listing of issues needing to be reformed in the church. Some of us remarked on the extremely high number of people we ran into at the ACC conference who were involved in Catholic peace groups. We need to better mobilize, and acknowledge, that population in this reform work. (2) Encourage the USCCB to take the great wealth of teaching on nonviolence and the movement from Just War to total nonviolence that has increasingly come from some sources within the Vatican, even from the current and former Pope, and make it a high priority in the catechesis of American Catholics. Have such teachings be part of the teaching from all Catholic pulpits and parishes in the U.S. (3) Encourage the institutional church to support such things as counter recruitment and withholding of taxes for war and support proposed laws that would make such undertakings more legally feasible in the U.S. (4) Make the teaching of non-violence a core element of all Catholic education including religious education classes and in Catholic elementary and high schools, as well as colleges, so that all catechized Catholic youth will know that this a core teaching of our church and not one of its best known secrets. As a beginning step, encourage the church to more forcefully educate on some of the evils of war for which the Church has a rich teaching tradition – e.g. the absolute prohibition against preemptive war; the need for Selective Conscientious Objection and Conscientious Objection in this country until war is abolished, etc. (5) Encourage Catholic peace groups to become more involved in the ACC reform movement.

**CBRR Applications:**

10. Social Issues - which must get much more prominence in the reform issues being advocated by the ACC, in our opinion.

**Tactical Steps:**

Not to a greater degree than noted in the action report above.

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**Best Practices or Models:** Just Faith modules are a good way of getting such teaching into Catholic parishes as well as getting more support (monetary and encouragement to the laity to join) for Pax Christi and other Catholic peace groups.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** Possibility of taking surveys of the wider U.S. Catholic Church on peace issues and repeat the survey every five years or so to see how much progress (or regression) has taken place.

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** Pax Christi USA - I will make further attempts to have PCUSA become more supportive officially as an organization to the goals of the ACC. I can unequivocally say that all of the leadership of PCUSA is behind the need for Church renewal and reform being advocated by the ACC but since it is supposed to be the official Catholic peace organization it struggles regarding the best way to interact with the U.S. Church hierarchy.

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**Session Type and #:** RIA #6 & #10

**TITLE of the Session:** Intentional Eucharistic Community (info sharing/networking)

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:**

About 2/3 of the participants are current members of an IEC; the remainder would like to find or start one. There was great diversity in the IECs form, structure, meetings and activities. Participants first shared basic information about their IEC, including:

- Origins and Alignment with Catholic Church structures: A few started within the diocese or parish; most were separate and independent. Several started as scripture study groups or spiritually oriented book clubs.
- Governance: Some had no written or formal decision-making structures; some have By-laws or written Operations. Most operate under consensus decision-making.
- The IECs ranged in size from under 20 to more than 200 members. Often, fewer members attended regular meetings/services.
- Meeting Location: The IECs met in parish facilities, in other facilities or in homes. Several had moved one or more times.
- Demographics of participants: Mostly older people, some IECs had families. One larger IEC is undergoing a shift from the original (older) members to newer, younger members.
- Frequency and days of meetings: Monthly, twice a month or weekly.
- Other activities (outside of meetings): Social Justice actions, Speakers • Eucharist: Most IECs celebrated the Eucharist. Presiders included priests in good RCC standing, priests not in good standing, women priests, and non-ordained laity.
- Funding: Few collected funding. One had dues. Funds were used for speakers and donations to social justice causes.

Strengths: Participants shared their greatest successes, which included continuity (some IECs were 30+ years old); spiritual growth and satisfaction of members (a common indicator of success); strong involvement in social justice activities; involvement of families; flexibility in retaining membership when being forced to leave a parish or other diocesan unit. Challenges: The participants who wished to start an IEC (as well as many of the existing IEC members) were interested in strategies to grow their membership. Effective growth strategies shared included: purchasing mailing lists from CTA, NCR, etc; personal invitation; neighborhood canvassing; announcements in local news paper (in the past, also in parish newsletters, but that is no longer generally an option). There was a great deal of interest in sharing written documents for initial formation of the IECs, newsletters, etc. There was also interest in sharing emails so members could contact each other for advice and in the ACC link described under Proposed Actions.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

Request ACC develop a link where the IECs (as well as persons interested in forming an IEC) could go for IEC websites, downloading documents, liturgy formats, recruitment ideas, social justice activities, visions for the future, projects to involve young adults, and other successful or best practices. Create a database (Excel or . . .??) of all IEC information for ongoing networking.

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**CBRR Applications:** 1. Primacy of Conscience: Some IECs not operating without a parishes/diocesan blessing or an ordained priest celebrating Eucharist. 2. Community: Most of the participants stated that their spiritual development needs were primarily met in their IEC. 3. Universal Ministry: Those IECs who chose persons to preside over their Eucharist who are non-ordained (or ordained but not in good standing) believed their presiders were enriching their liturgy with their ministry. Some IECs equally shared in the ministerial tasks/roles. 4. Freedom of Expression: Though many participants had some fear, or tried to operate 'under the radar' of the diocese, all believed in their right to create their liturgy and community in ways that best met their discipleship and spiritual development needs. 5. Sacraments: Many of the IECs stated that they had no limitations on who could receive the Eucharist at their table (or only required members be baptized Catholics). 6. Reputation: Less relevant, though related to the perceived need to operate 'below the radar' of the diocese. 7. Governance: The IECs not affiliated with diocesan structures/parishes created their own governance. All shared decision-making and selection of leaders. 8. Participation: The IEC members (and prospective members) exercised their right and responsibility to interpret the Gospel and forms of Church tradition in ways that met the needs of their communities. 9. Councils: Least relevant; the participants chose to be at the RIA session. 10. Social Justice: Many of the IECs have social justice activities within or related to their communities. Social Justice was frequently mentioned as a critical component of the IEC.

**Tactical Steps:** The convener agreed to contact ACC and IEC Federation about creating the link described above; to share the emails of the participants with others in the group; and to create a simple (proposed) Information Form for IECs to complete with their information. The latter may be developed into a database that would be included in the proposed ACC link or in some other method that would be easily accessible to existing and potential IECs.

**Best Practices or Models:** The data, experiences and best practices of each IEC should be placed on line, in a format that takes minimal time to update. The data, experiences and best practices of each IEC should be placed on line, in a format that takes minimal time to update. The information in this report has been shared with the RIA participants for their input and suggestions for implementing the proposed actions (and also to confirm spelling of E-mails and make sure I haven't left out anything they feel is important.) I will submit the report now but may need to make minor changes based on their feedback.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** Within 1 month, determine whether the IEC Federation or ACC is best equipped to handle the networking tasks (uploading and storing documents for IEC sharing, lists of IEC contact and community information, etc.). Create the appropriate means (through Federation or ACC link) to post/share information. Within 2 months, gather the information for the link or database. Within 3 months, create the link or database and input the information. Create simultaneously a means to continue updating information for new IECs.

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** There is a Federation of IECs with a website, [www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org](http://www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org). They might have the structure to meet the proposed action.

**Session Type and #:** RIA #9

**TITLE of the Session:** **Suicide as a pressing concern regarding LGBT Catholics**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** This session focused on the problem of suicide amongst LGBTQ persons especially concerning those who identify as Roman Catholic. The difficulties a Catholic faces in coming out, being included in parish communities, being accepted by religious family members or other relationships, and the American culture heavily influenced by Christianity in a heteronormative sense cannot be seen as negligible or not related to negative mental health outcomes. The creation of a new organization to address issues around suicide and self-harm in LGBTQ Catholics called 4,000 Places was discussed at length.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** 4,000 Places will seek out volunteers in the coming months to assist in building the organization. It is requesting 501(c)3 status from the IRS and will function as a charity of which its central concern will be with reducing suicide and self-harm in LGBTQ Catholics and helping to create communities and resources for both those at-risk and volunteers and professionals who come into contact with them.

**CBRR Applications:** Although the broad issue of LGBT inclusion in the church applies to many of the points in the CBRR, the issue of suicide and self-harm is most closely related to points one and ten related to conscience and social justice. The core of the LGBT question has to do with conscience based on evidence, experience, and discernment. With the vast consensus of opinion and overwhelming evidence of the healthy existence of a variety of sexual orientations and gender expressions, in the interest of those who are influenced to feel unhealthy or that they are inclined towards evil, it is in the interest of social justice to work on behalf of LGBTQ Catholics towards to more inclusive groups including within Roman Catholicism.

**Tactical Steps:** The discussion was about the founding and progress of 4,000 Places in addressing the issues surrounding suicide and self-harm in LGBTQ Catholics.

**Best Practices or Models:** 4,000 Places will create outreach models and best practice approaches for addressing the issue of suicide and self-harm in LGBTQ Catholics.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** N/A

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** 4,000 Places will work with other established Catholic and professional organizations to reduce better care for LGBTQ Catholics at-risk for suicide and self-harm.



**Session Type and #:** RIA #12

**TITLE of the Session:** Priest Work History project

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** We shared stories of clerical abuse, the need for factual data to pinpoint the pattern of abuse.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** We are going to extract the assignment histories of the abusive priests in major dioceses of the USA. Then analyze them for the similarity of their patterns.

**CBRR Applications:** #6 -- Reputation #10 -- Social justice

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:**

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:**

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):**

**Session Type and #:** RIA#13A

**TITLE of the Session:** How Can Call To Action work with the energy of ACC?

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** Excellent discussion regarding CTA and the energy of this weekend. Participants felt that this energy is very compatible. There was discussion of racial and age diversity. Participants felt ACC could really use the kind of commitment to Anti-Racism and to building up the leadership of younger Catholics that Call To Action has demonstrated. Discussion of the listening sessions recalled the initiation of Lay Synods by Lena Woltering of CTA working with FOSIL, Dallas-Ft Worth, Upstate New York, SW Florida, Minnesota, Chicago and elsewhere. Continuing these "Synods of the Baptized" made sense to CTA. Education on the priesthood and the role of rest of us was thought important. Finally, several participants had been inspired by Jason Berry's presentation; therefore they wanted resources from CTA staff along the lines of "what questions should we ask"? Both parishes and the diocese release spread sheet reports. It is difficult to isolate expenses. Also research is needed around the question, "What collections stay in the parish." Participants liked the emphasis on interactive sessions.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** a - Encourage COR (ACC) partners to get training in Anti-Racism and value the experience CTA has gained in this area. b- Demand a greater role for young adults in the assemblies. c - Continue the "synods" to take the listening sessions to the next level. d - Prepare materials "what questions should we ask" of diocesan and parish financial reports. e - Encourage more interactive sessions at CTA conference.

**CBRR Applications:** a - 2, 3, 8 & 9 b - 2, 3, 8 & 9 c - 9 d - 7 e - 9

**Tactical Steps:**

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**Best Practices or Models:** a -- CTA's Anti-Racism Team b - CTA 20/30 Leadership Team c - Minneapolis St Paul Coalition -- CCCR d -- look at the RoundTable materials e -- ask John Frank & Sheila Peiffer for assistance

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** a & b -- Will the other organizations be open enough to "sign up" for training within the next year? c - By the end of calendar year 2012, have there been 5 more synods. (look to the Minnesota experience?) d - have materials been developed by the time many reports are issued in August 2011? e - watch CTA conference; we've already begun a two year tradition of "action caucus" at noon on Saturday. Perhaps that could grow to encompass one or both of the "workshop" timeslots.

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** Obviously, a & b depend on our coalition partners being willing to engage in longer-term commitment to training and broadening their constituencies. c is up to Call To Action and its chapters d is CTA staff (though if someone else already has them, we'd be glad to disseminate) e is CTA staff, board and conference planning committees

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**Session Type & #:**

**TITLE of the Session: 13B: How Can Call To Action work with the energy of ACC?**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:**

The question title of this RIA gathering was brought up: is this to discuss just how CTA can use the energy or how ACC can benefit from CTA's experience? There was question about how CTA could be helpful in assisting with better Inclusivity, e.g., of people of color, LGBT, liturgical language, etc., participation, planning and execution of the goal of reform. Bob made the point about CTA, at the time of the organizing effort by ACC, being involved in major internal organizational efforts, e.g., interim director and new director. Their being part of planning was severely impeded to be of help on this level. To be fair, it important to note that it seemed that the Recorder Report Form was not distributed to this or any of the other table at the RIA

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

Take a note from the CTA model by encouraging local chapters and receiving input from them regarding themes and best practice from a regional point of view. This could be accomplished using the website the ACC's ACN and subscription to email newsletter, with contributions from and links to individual participating organizations. Financial action, like substitute reform dollars for the parish collection, was brought up. Advertise to get the word out on parish and diocesan level--like small groups did in preparation for the ACC with billboards in high traffic areas. There is a need for "activities of the heart" at all levels: how is the reform to address the call to social justice more effectively with both compassion and advocacy? One participant mentioned the need to have CTA website improved and more interactive like ACC.

**CBRR Applications:**

Yes, our discussions related to these Rights and Responsibilities: 2. Community 3. Universal Ministry 5. Sacraments 8. Participation

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:**

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:**

**Implementing Agent(s):**

**TITLE of the Session:** **RIA #14: Vatican Imposed New English Missal**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** There seemed to be a consensus that the Vatican imposed English translation of the 3rd Roman Missal should be rejected and the ICEL translation should be approved and used instead.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** (1) Communicate objections to pastor and priests and ask for their help in rejecting it. Since the major burden of the proposed changes falls on the priests, encourage them to unite in leading "creative resistance" and follow their lead. Seek ways to make it easier for priests to protest. Ask pastor and priests to discuss with parishioners their thoughts & feelings about the new translation. Encourage dialogue. (2) Communicate objections to bishop, declaring intention to withhold contributions until the Vatican missal is withdrawn and the new ICEL translation approved. Ask pastor to request that one of weekend Masses be in the current form, in response to parishioners, the way a Latin Mass would be allowed. (3) Communicate to parishioners the reasons for rejecting it: history of Vatican interference in work of English speaking synods of bishops through ICEL, as mandated by Pope Paul VI; poor quality of Vatican translation; violation of norms of Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, which called for "full active participation;" etc. Circulate the timeline of the process leading to new missal prepared by Bishop Maurice Taylor of Galloway, Scotland, working member of ICEL (summarized by Fr. Osbourne of Louisville, KY). (4) Take exit polls of parishioners. Survey the parish. (5) Simply don't comply, either saying the prayers in the current form or remaining silent. Resign from lecturing. (6) Or, go along with the changes to avoid confusion and chaos. Substitute Apostles Creed for Nicene Creed.

**CBRR Applications:** Supported by CBRR, numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:**

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** A new ICEL version is approved and promulgated

**Implementing Agent(s):** Priests---NFPC?

**TITLE of the Session:** **RIA#18 Re-Visioning Sacraments and Rituals**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** We discussed the possibility and necessity of the same couple receiving the sacrament of matrimony when there are crises or turning points within the marriage. Just as reconciliation, reception of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of the Sick can be received multiple times so too this should hold for Matrimony with the community taking part. Renewal of marriage vows is not seen as another way to receive or renew the grace of the sacrament. (NOTE: I DO NOT THINK THE WHOLE GROUP AGREED WITH THIS AND IT CERTAINLY SHOWS A NEED FOR CLEARER SACRAMENTAL UNDERSTANDING. PLEASE DO NOT PRINT THIS NOTE) We also discussed the possibility of combining Baptism with Confirmation or possibility of moving Confirmation at a more mature age. We felt there should be rituals for calling out the gifts of the individual and the community.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Parishes and communities introduce foot washing at the blessing of service groups.

**CBRR Applications:** #5 Sacraments

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:** More lay education on Sacraments using contemporary authors such as Martos, Muldoon, etc. so that pews people come to understand other ways of looking at sacraments and rituals.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:**

**Implementing Agent(s):** FUTURE CHURCH, WOC, CORPUS

Session Type and #: RIA #19

**TITLE of the Session: Sophia Inclusive Catholic (Eucharistic) Community**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** The fact of the existence of Eucharistic Communities over the past many years was acknowledged. Members of the discussion group ranged from some seeking ways to form a group, to those who were members of groups for varying numbers of years. Some had an ordained person presiding and some chose a presider as they needed one. The value of Intentional Communities was identified as an ability to serve the individual needs of its members and an opportunity to share a deeper spirituality than in the typical parish.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** The persons seeking ways to form a group realized that the groups, in a sense, “self-form.” The people who become the first “members” are people with whom we already have some working relationship. The Eucharistic Community adds a dimension to the group that it didn’t have up until the point of choosing to share Eucharist. After that, groups tend to grow as word of mouth draws more interested people. The people wanting to start Eucharistic Communities identified the people that they would start with.

**CBRR Applications:** EVERY Right and Responsibility can be found reflected in the existence and participation in Intentional Eucharistic Communities. The following are particularly evident: Right number 2 speaks of the right and responsibility to participate in a Eucharistic community. Obviously, when the official Church is not providing what a particular person or persons need, people can and should form their own groups – “Intentional Eucharistic Communities.” Right number 3 refers to the right and responsibility to proclaim the Gospel and respond to the community’s call to ministerial leadership. IECs choose their own presiders. Right number 5 deals with Sacraments. IECs provide sacraments – sometimes to those who would not otherwise have access to them (for a wide variety of reasons)

**Tactical Steps:** Begin with whatever group is already formed - formally or informally and suggest a Eucharistic Celebration. Plan it well, invite anyone to come who is interested, and go from there.

**Best Practices or Models:** As early as possible, have the group form a mission statement that clearly identifies the vision of the group - who it is, what it is, and why it is. Evaluate the group's reflection of that statement periodically, making adjustments as agreed by the community.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:**

**Implementing Agent(s):** <http://www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org/main.php?contact>

**Session Type and #:** RIA#22

**TITLE of the Session:** Governance Proposals

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:**

We were asked to consider 9 proposals which had been taken from the ACC web site – Discussion Forums by various people. We discussed each one then expressed our opinion on a survey form. The themes are constitutional convention, election of representatives for the constitutional convention, fundraising committee, constitutional models, autochthonous American Catholic church, autocephalous (self-governing) American Catholic church, house churches/intentional communities, uniting all reform groups, communicate regularly with USCCB.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

1. ACC organize a constitutional convention, 2012, Philadelphia, 2. ACC facilitates election of convention delegates, 3. ACC establishes fundraising committee, 4. Existing constitutional models be used to facilitate deliberations, 5. Committee investigates feasibility of autochthonous church, 6. Committee investigates feasibility of autocephalous church, 7. Committee established to support ACC members who are interested in Catholic house churches or intentional communities, 8. ACC works toward uniting all Catholic reform groups under one umbrella organization not necessarily the ACC, 9. ACC communicates regularly with the USCCB.

**CBRR Applications:**

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: 1, 4, & 9 GOVERNANCE: All PARTICIPATION: 5 & 6 COUNCILS: 1 & 9

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:**

4: Vatican II, ARCC, Baltimore “stealth” parish, etc. 5: There are 22 Eastern Catholic autochthonous churches in existence today. 6: United Catholic Church, Ecumenical Catholic Communion, Diocese of the One Spirit, Apostolic Catholic Church, Ecumenical Catholic Church of Christ. 7. [www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org](http://www.intentionaleucharisticcommunities.org)

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:**

NA

**Implementing Agent(s):**

ACC, ARCC, Voice of the Faithful, Call to Action, also see no. 13

Session Type and #: RIA #24  
TITLE of the Session: **That ACC "Speak Out" in support of 'Calls of the Spirit' when they are marginalized (ignored by the Institutional Church)**

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:** The full resolution proposed is that the American Catholic Council continue listening and speaking out, particularly for those calls of the Spirit that are marginalized within the Church, testing all things and holding fast to what is good. The idea behind this proposal is to leverage what the ACC has begun to build a Church that we can pass on to our grandchildren. What the ACC has done is to structure listening sessions, and in the same or similar ways this process can be used to discern the continuing presence of calls of the Spirit, particularly calls that are relegated to the margins in the present Church. **This is a ministry to the sensus fidelium. In the end what matters is not whether the magisterium listens to this ministry, but whether the ministry reaches the hearts and souls of the faithful.** What is required for this ministry is such listening as may discern, followed by such coherent articulation as may resonate with the people of God. Much of the discussion addressed the meaning of "marginalized". The convenor described briefly the calls of women to ordained ministry and the call to greater lay participation in the governance of the Church as examples of deeply rooted calls that have been rejected or marginalized. As the discussion proceeded, numbers of other specific examples arose that provided a more concrete context. For example, a woman had for a number of years been encouraged by her pastor to contribute reflections during the liturgy of the Word. The pastor had been able to divert inquiries so as to maintain this ministry, until someone who objected to the practice wrote a pointed letter to the bishop. The pastor was not able to divert the resulting inquiry from the bishop, and this woman's ministry ended. She and her family ceased contributions to the parish. In another example, a man whose gay son had tried to commit suicide was in church one Sunday when the pastor decided to read a statement from the bishop which castigated homosexuals. The man was a conservative Catholic, but was so incensed that he got up from his pew, walked to the front and told the pastor and the congregation "I can't stand this hate!" Then he walked out. Later he received a phone call from the pastor apologizing, and resolving never again to do something that would harm even a single member of the community. The new missal is also an example of a call of the Spirit that is being ignored. It is not an accident that ICEL went in a different direction; it is not an accident that there has been such consternation at the content of the new missal. These are signs that the authority of the Roman Curia is being applied, and that the voice of the Spirit from within the people of God is being suppressed by that authority. The ground is fertile for keeping alive the need for continued evaluation of the vibrancy of the language that we use in our ritual practice. These particular stories are examples of how the Catholic Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (such as 3, 5 and 6) are being violated. The gist of this part of the discussion was to address the goal of "speaking out" according to St. Paul's dictum from Thessalonians of "testing all things and holding fast to what is good." If the ACC is to develop a pattern of "speaking out" that builds credibility it is important to point out the positive, such as the support from the woman's pastor and the heartfelt apology of the man's pastor. It is also important to observe that these positive signs are themselves an indication of the Spirit's call, and are also examples of the CBRR (such as 2 and 3).

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** The discussion then addressed how these ideas could be implemented. The first task is to develop and staff the ministry. This means finding volunteers who are enthusiastic about keeping hope alive for calls of the Spirit that are being marginalized. It was suggested that the ACC web site be used to build a virtual community of volunteers, who could then take the initial steps to implement the listening and speaking out tasks. It appears that a number of calls are well known and persistent, and an agenda of these calls could be assembled and would remain from year to year. It would be a good idea to extend this agenda by seeking out specific stories that provide concrete examples of how calls of the Spirit are faring. Then the discussion turned to what could be done to keep the agenda in front of the people of God. We can send the agenda to the bishops, and a regular procedure for distribution could include review by the ACC governing board. It may be more difficult to reach parishioners, although modern technology through the ACC web site may provide some helpful mechanisms.

**CBRR Applications:** See #9

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:**

Benchmarks for Evaluating:  
Possible Implementing Agent(s):

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**Session Type and #:** RIA #27

**TITLE of the Session:** **Campaign to promote Election of Bishops**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** We predicate our action on the fact that we the people of God suffer under an ancient and outmoded, monarchic system of governance, under an absolute monarch, the pope, who rules absolutely as a maker of all the laws, executor of all the laws, and interpreter of all the laws. He is not only unaccountable to the people he supposedly serves, but also insists on appointing all our bishops who rule in our local churches as absolutely and as unaccountably as he does in the diocese of Rome and in the universal Church. Our solution to this state of affairs: to elect our own U.S. bishops. Reason: so they will be accountable to those they are vowed to serve. All of the ACC speakers this weekend, kept repeating the same message: this is OUR CHURCH. If it is, then we ought to have a voice in it, and a vote, and citizenship, full citizenship, not second class citizenship.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** How do we propose to do that: we take a cue from Mother Teresa. When asked how she proposed to convert the world, she said, "One soul at a time." We think we can launch a program to elect one bishop at a time. Electing one bishop will give new vitality to the diocese. It will bring back Catholics who have drifted away from the Church, prompt young Catholics to stick around (because, with a voice and a vote, they will own their Church in a new way), and provide a change model to 192 other dioceses in the nation. We base our intuition on the hybrid corn experiment launched in Iowa during the 1930s. When the Iowan named Henry A. Wallace invented a new strain of corn in 1926 that he claimed would be more resistant to disease and provide more bushels per acre, farmers were reluctant to change. They were reluctant, that is, until one farmer was persuaded to give the hybrid a try. Once he demonstrated that his fields were producing three times as much corn per acre as his neighbors, they all jumped on the bandwagon. Stats: Iowa corn production 1933: 33 bushels an acre. In 1997, number had risen to 127 bushels per acre.

**CBRR Applications:** Article 7

**REFORM IN ACTION (RIA) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (if applicable): (7/14/11)**

**Tactical Steps:** First, our group will do some networking and some research -- to see if we can find one courageous bishop who is two or three years short of retirement willing to ask the people in his diocese to elect his successor from a list of nominated local priests. After a campaign period that would follow the pattern of any campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives, for example, when the people will have a chance to size up the candidates in any number of way. the bishop would call an election (possibly to be done online with a password for registered voters (who would come from parish lists and from lists of other Catholics who may not belong to a parish but who want to register (which could also be done online). The bishop would then take the bishop-elect to visit the pope in Rome and present him as "the people's choice" for the new bishop of the diocese. At this point, we are counting on the Holy Spirit to challenge/inspire the pope to make the right choice.

**Best Practices or Models:** Three cantons in Switzerland elect their own bishops without any input from the Vatican. The Vatican confirms these elections by the people. In China today, perhaps half of the Catholic bishops are elected by the people of China, then later confirmed by the Holy See.

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** A number of factors will tell us whether we have succeeded in our attempt to help turn the hierarchical pyramic on its pointy little head: 1) positive stories in the media, 2) acceptance of a people's bishop by the pope, 3) adoption of this electoral process by other dioceses in the U.S. PS. We have a Plan B. If we cannot find one courageous bishop to lead this effort, we will find a default diocese where our organization would carry on its own election among the people of God. Then WE would present him to the pope for confirmation. If, in either Plan A or Plan B, the pope does not accept the people's choice, we can still count our effort as a success. We will have helped people think outside the box. We will have planted a seed. Sure, the seed may not see the flower. But future generations will.

**Possible Implementing Agent(s):** We will create a national organization for this purpose alone. [www.peoplesbishop.org](http://www.peoplesbishop.org). Depending on its ability to raise the funding, this org will: 1) help a single diocese with the technical support to carry out an election, 2) educate U.S. Catholics in the history of the episcopacy with the same kind of p.r. campaign that any candidate for president of the U.S. might employ.

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**TITLE of the Session:** RIA#? **Non-violent response to Injustice/Violence in the Church**

**SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION:** Bullying, coercion, manipulation, harrassment in the Church. Concern over a bishop (jerk) and upcoming retiring of pastor. How to stand up for right to get a like-minded pastor? One member tasked to write a letter to bishop or to newspaper re. ACC. How to deal with verbal violence to local parishioners and priests? Another priest, "sentenced" to ten years in a monastery, wants to return to active ministry, cleared by the Vatican, but local bishop refuses to let him become active. He'll lose all benefits if he disobeys the bishop.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Do workshop on nonviolent responses to violence in the Church. Use ARCC's rights of parishioners to state case to the bishop and public media. Need to develop a way to educate people whose rights are violated where to turn - useful info to get message out to Catholics. Critical need for education. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.

**CBRR Applications:** Rights #2, 4, and 8.

**Tactical Steps:**

**Best Practices or Models:** See Gene Sharp, From Dictatorship to Democracy

**Benchmarks for Evaluating:** Hits on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. Public service announcements.

**Implementing Agent(s):** ACC needs to develop a marketing plan to get the info out.

**END END END**