

REGISTRATION BROCHURE

Please join us for the fifty-fifth
**National Meeting of
Diocesan Liturgical Commissions**



BRIDGES OF HOPE
Merging Parishes

October 1-3, 2024

**Omni William Penn Hotel
Pittsburgh, PA**

Hosted by FDLC Region III



Sponsored by the
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions
and the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship



May 2024



Dear Colleagues,

Since its founding in 1969, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions has been dedicated to liturgical formation. We ensure the authentic celebration of the rites; we promote best pastoral practices; we cite historic precedents; and we form clergy and other liturgical ministers. We raise issues of concern facing the “grass roots” and seek to address them.

In our annual spring meetings, the issues surrounding the closing and merging of parishes were raised by nearly every one of our fourteen regions in the USA. We recognized a need to provide information, support, and resources for this very real pastoral situation.

This year’s national meeting offers yet another opportunity to network among our members and to learn at the feet of some of our nation’s most influential experts. I encourage you to participate in this meeting and to bring diocesan and parish colleagues who will benefit from these discussions. On October 1-3, we will gather at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA – the location of the Federation’s very first meeting in 1969.

The meeting is aptly titled, “**Bridges of Hope: Merging Parishes.**” The title nods to the many bridges of Pittsburgh, the “City of Bridges.” But more importantly, it recognizes that the restructuring of parishes can be a very positive response to shifting populations, priest shortages, and limited resources. Indeed, the merging of parishes can be a hopeful and healthy sign for future parish life.

Our **plenary sessions** will address the pastoral, canonical, and liturgical issues involved in such restructuring. Each plenary speaker will be followed by responders who will offer insights from their own experiences. On the afternoon of the Study Day (October 2), we will feature **focus sessions** on merging multi-cultural communities; the essential role of preaching; creative reuse of parish buildings; and effectively merging parish music programs.

We are very grateful for the kind invitation of Bishop David Zubik and for the hard work of the good folks of Region III. They have been tending to countless details and assure us a warm welcome!

Please join us for this fifty-fifth national meeting of diocesan liturgical commissions! As always, we will benefit from networking among colleagues, sharing ideas, examining pastoral practice, and studying the Liturgy. Essential to our gathering will be liturgies in which we invoke the Spirit’s guidance, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus, and offer God due praise!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita".

Rita A. Thiron
Executive Director, FDLC

7:30 ***Registration Opens***

9:00 ***Morning Prayer***

10:00 ***Panel Presentation***

The panel will discuss several newly revised liturgical texts and its implications for parish practice.

11:00 ***Lunch (on own)***

12:30 ***New Member Orientation***

1:00 ***Opening Rite***

Welcome Addresses

Dr. Thomas Octave, Local Chair

Dr. James Starke, Board Chair

Mrs. Rita Thiron, Executive Director

2:15 ***Break with Exhibits***

3:00 ***Regional Caucuses***

4:45 ***Buses to Cathedral***

5:15 ***Opening Eucharistic Liturgy***

at Saint Paul's Cathedral

Bishop David Zubik, DD, Bishop of Pittsburgh

Principal Celebrant

7:00 ***"Taste of the Region" reception***

follows Mass



STUDY DAY – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

8:00 Study Day Registration opens

8:30 Morning Prayer

PLENARY ONE: Building Bridges – A Pastoral Foundation

Synopsis: The goal of merging communities is to create and maintain vibrant parishes with effective ministries. By merging parishes, human and financial resources are aligned to fortify efforts which support the real work -- bringing people closer to Jesus.

Communication is always key. Feedback is crucial. Collaboration is vital. Clergy and laity have to engage all stakeholders in collecting ideas and proposing creative solutions. How is this done? What best practices assure an effective future reality?



Presenter: Linda Lee Ritzer, DMin, is Secretary for Parish Services for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. She coordinated the Diocese of Pittsburgh's strategic planning initiative, *On Mission for The Church Alive!* This included the development of the strategic plan, the creation of resources consisting of handbooks and procedural guides, the development of a comprehensive communication plan, and a synchronized accompaniment program with pastors and parishioners. The Secretariat's work now includes comprehensive pastoral planning with parishes, mentoring and coaching of clergy for successful leadership in ministerial development and operations, and team building formation with parish staffs. Prior to her diocesan work, Dr. Ritzer served in parish ministry from 1986-2014.

She has served as an adjunct faculty member at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, PA, a Master Catechist for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and currently serves on the Board of Regents for St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, PA. Most recently Linda was accepted in the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute's Compelling Preaching Program.

Dr. Ritzer received her doctorate in preaching from the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, MO in 2011. She also has a Master's degree in Religious Education from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and an undergraduate degree in Religious Studies from Seton Hill University, Greensburg, PA.

Responders: Mr. Jeremy Helmes, Archdiocese of Cincinnati;
Msgr. Gary Smetanka, Archdiocese of Detroit

PLENARY TWO: Title: Canonical Processes in the Closing and Merging of Parishes

Synopsis: What does the law of the Church require for a parish to be modified (e.g. merged) or a church building to be "relegated to profane but not sordid uses" (closed) and alienated (sold)? Who is involved in these canonical processes? What is their purpose? How can they be carried out in a helpful way? This session will offer a clear overview of the canonical processes for the modification of parishes and the relegation and alienation of churches based on the Code of Canon Law 1983, guidance from the Dicastery for Clergy and the Apostolic Signatura, and practical experience



Presenter -- Father Christopher R. Seibt, Ph.L., S.T. L., J.C.L. is a priest of the Diocese of Syracuse. He was ordained on June 1, 2013. He serves as the Vice Chancellor of the diocese and serves on the Tribunal. He is pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, Sacred Heart Parish, and the Mission of St. Bernadette. He is the former Director of the Office of Liturgy and the RCIA, but still functions as Master of Ceremonies. Father Seibt holds licentiate degrees in Philosophy, Liturgical and Sacramental Theology, and Canon Law -- all from the Catholic University of America.

Responder: Msgr. Larry DiNardo, JCL, Vicar General, Diocese of Pittsburgh

LUNCH (included in registration)

FOCUS SESSIONS A

2:00 TO 3:15

A-1 Considerations in Merging Multi-Cultural Parishes

Frequently, populations shift, ministry allocations change, and parishes merge. Communities bring with them various cultural norms, liturgical traditions, devotional practices, familiar repertoire, special festivals, and even food choices. How can we help forge bonds within the newly-merged community? How can we respectfully listen to everyone's needs and identify common goals? How can we identify gifts and raise up parish leaders? How can strangers who share a common baptism become a vibrant worshipping assembly that shares a common home?



Presenter: Hosffman Ospino, PhD is Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College, School of Theology and Ministry where he is also Chair of the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. He has served as the principal investigator for several national studies on Hispanic Catholics. His research explores how faith and culture regularly enter in dialogue in the world of Catholic education as well as in the process of building faith communities in multicultural contexts. He is the author/editor of 20 books and more than 250 articles, academic and general. Hosffman is a Past-President of the Academy of Catholic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS) and currently serves as an officer of the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA).

A-2 HARMONY: MERGING PARISH MUSIC PROGRAMS

Synopsis: When parishes merge, questions inevitably arise. Who will be “in charge of music? Who might be let go? Which worship sites will remain? How do we merge choirs and instrumental groups or develop new ones? What “style” of music will prevail? What language will we use? How do we respect the history of each parish’s assembly, yet enlarge our musical repertoire? In general, how do we bring the gifts of all musicians to serve the liturgy and our parish assemblies?



Preston Dibble is the Diocesan Director of Music for the Diocese of Paterson, NJ. He conducts the forty-voice diocesan choir and coordinates music for episcopal liturgies. Concurrently he serves as Organist and Director of Music for the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Montclair. He earned a BA in music and music education from Westminster College (New Wilmington) and a Masters in Sacred Music and Organ from Duquesne University (Pittsburgh). He is a member of NPM, AGO, and FDLC.

FOCUS SESSIONS B

3:45 TO 5:00

B- 1 THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING IN THE PASTORAL PLANNING PROCESS

The process of closing, clustering or merging parishes will often be riddled with a sense of loss, fear, defensiveness, or anger. What role can liturgy and prayer play in calming voices, building communities, and furthering the mission? What role will preaching play in keeping all our decisions rooted in Christ – before, during, and after a merger?



Presenter: **The Most Reverend David J. Bonnar** is the Bishop of the Diocese of Youngstown. Born in Pittsburgh, he graduated from Seton-LaSalle High School. He received a bachelor's degree in social communications from Duquesne University. He received graduate degrees from the Pontifical North American College and the Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Pittsburgh on July 23, 1988.

After ordination, he served in various parish assignments and was chaplain of Catholic Central High School. At the diocesan level, he served as the Diocesan Director of Vocations, the Director of Deacon Formation, and the Secretary for Parish Life and Leadership. He served as rector of St. Paul Seminary until 2002. On November 17, 2020, Pope Francis named him as the sixth Bishop of Youngstown. He was installed on January 21, 2021.

Since 2014, Bishop Bonnar has been the editor of *The Priest* magazine and in 2020 was appointed a member of the National Advisory Board for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For twelve years Bishop Bonnar was also chaplain to the NFL's Pittsburgh Steelers.

B-2 CHURCH BUILDINGS – CONSIDERATIONS AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

When parishes are closed or merged, what happens to the churches, halls, schools, and other buildings? How can we offer proactive visions, rather than talk about liquidating assets? How can we repurpose real estate in a prophetic way? This session will offer case studies and creative examples.



Presenter: Madeline (Maddy) Johnson is program manager for the Church Properties Initiative at the Fitzgerald Institute for Real Estate (FIRE) at the University of Notre Dame. Before joining the FIRE team in 2022, she was a research analyst at the commercial real estate firm CBRE, supporting a team of office and industrial investment sales brokers. A native of Minneapolis, Johnson graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in philosophy from Hillsdale College in 2017 and earned a Master of Urban Planning degree in 2020 from McGill University in Montreal, where her research focused on adaptive shared use of space in historic urban Catholic parishes.

5:30 Eucharistic Liturgy

Free Night in Pittsburgh

8:30 *Morning Prayer*

9:00 ***Morning with the BCDW***

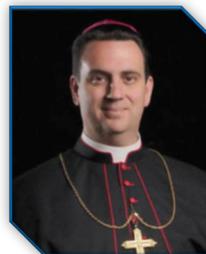
An update on the liturgical texts and the activities of the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship

Most Reverend Steven Lopes

Chair, Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship

Rev. Dustin Dought

Executive Director, Secretariat for Divine Worship



10:30 *Break with Exhibits*

11:00 **MERGING PARISHES -- A LITURGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

As with any journey of faith, it is vital to ritualize change and progress. What role will liturgy play? How can we best help our communities pray as they are closing worship spaces, merging communities, and blending long-held traditions and treasures? In what practical ways can we utilize the gifts of parish musicians, liturgical ministers, and worship commissions?

PRESENTER: Matthew Reichert has served the church in a variety of capacities. As an educator, Matt has been an administrator, board member, middle and high school teacher, and undergraduate professor. As a pastoral musician and liturgist, Matt has served in parishes, schools, and campus ministry. Matt is a frequent workshop leader and has presented at parishes, dioceses, and major conferences across the country.

He currently serves as the Director of the Center for Learning for OCP and as a Leadership Consultant for the Catholic Leadership Institute. In addition to his work with CLI, Matt co-directs the One Call Institute for young musicians and their advocates. He co-hosts the "Open Your Hymnal" podcast and has co-authored several publications with Twenty-Third Publications.

Matt holds a BA in History and English from Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and two Masters degrees from the University of Notre Dame in Education and Leadership.

Responders: Father Joseph McCaffrey, Pastor of Holy Spirit/St. Vitus/St. Mary/St. Camillus Parish; Mr. D. Todd Williamson, Archdiocese of Chicago, on merging initiation processes

Noon *A Liturgy of Remembrance*

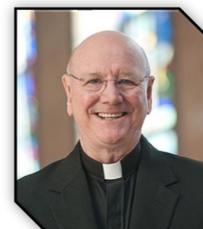
12:15 *Lunch*

1:30 *Business Sessions and Committee Work*

5:30 *Eucharistic Liturgy*

6:45 *Cocktails, Banquet and Awards*

The 2024 Frederick R. McManus Award will be presented to Rev. John Baldwin, SJ Professor of Historical and Liturgical Theology, Boston College



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Omni William Penn Hotel
530 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Reserve your rooms now at the Omni William Penn Hotel. This beautiful, historic hotel is located in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh, near attractions, restaurants, and public transportation.

You may already reserve your room directly with the hotel using our special passkey link: <https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/pittsburgh-william-penn/meetings/2024-national-meeting-of-diocesan-liturgical-commissions-09262024> or by calling 1-800-THE-OMNI (800-843-6664).

Our FDLC meeting room rate is only \$189 per night (reg. \$280 to \$330). This rate will also be honored three days prior to and three days after the meeting (subject to hotel availability).

Reserve soon! The cut-off date for this room block and rate is September 4, 2024.



THE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church

- 9:00 Committee Set-up
- 1:00 Board Meeting until 9:00 PM
- 5:00 Evening Prayer
- Varies Early Arrivals

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1

*St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus,
Virgin and Doctor of the Church*

- 7:30 Registration Opens
- 8:30 Exhibit set up until 11:00
- 9:00 Morning Prayer
- 10:00 Panel Discussion
- 11:30 Lunch (on own)
- 12:30 New Member Orientation
- 1:00 Opening Rite and Welcome
- 2:15 Break with Exhibits
- 3:00 Regional Caucuses
- 4:15 Break
- 4:30 Buses to Cathedral
- 5:30 Mass at St. Paul Cathedral
(with Bishop David Zubik)
- 7:00 "Taste of the Region"
- 9:30 Buses back to hotel

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

The Holy Guardian Angels
STUDY DAY

- 8:00 Study Day registration opens
- 8:30 Morning Prayer
- 9:00 Welcome
- 9:05 Plenary I (Ritzer)
- 10:00 Responders
- 10:30 Coffee break; Exhibits Open
- 11:00 Plenary II (Seibt)
- Noon Responders
- 12:15 Luncheon Served
- 2:00 Focus Sessions A (Ospino, Dibble)
- 3:15 Break with Exhibits
- 3:45 Focus Sessions B (Bonnar, Johnson)
- 5:00 Break
- 5:30 Mass
- 6:30 Free Night in Pittsburgh

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Thursday of the 26th Week in Ordinary Time

- 8:30 Morning Prayer
- 9:00 Morning with BCDW
- 10:30 Break with Exhibits
- 11:00 Plenary III (Reichert)
- Noon Liturgy of Remembrance
- 12:10 Lunch and Exhibits
- 1:30 Business Session
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 Business Session (Committee Work)
- 4:30 Summary: Fruits of the Meeting
- 5:00 Break
- 5:30 Mass at Hotel
- 7:00 Cocktails
- 7:30 Banquet and Awards

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

Check out for most participants
More time in Pittsburgh

" Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic, or social order: the purpose he assigned to it was religious. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction, and vigor to establish and consolidate the human community according to the law of God. In fact, the Church is able, indeed it is obliged, if times and circumstances require it, to initiate action for the benefit of everyone, especially of those in need.... The Church, moreover, acknowledges the good to be found in the social dynamism of today, especially in progress towards unity, healthy socialization, and civil and economic cooperations. The encouragement toward unity is in harmony with the deepest nature of the Church's mission, for it is a "sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of the unity of the whole human race." It shows to the world that social and exterior union come from a union of hearts and minds, from the faith and love by which its own unity has been founded in the Holy Spirit..."

~ Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council, December 7, 1965, no. 45.



**NATIONAL MEETING OF DIOCESAN
LITURGICAL COMMISSIONS**

October 1-3, 2024

Omni William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA

**MEETING REGISTRATION OPTIONS:
MEMBERS AND VISITORS**

REGISTER TODAY ONLINE AT: www.fdlc.org/2024meeting

REGISTRATION FEES	Registered before 9/1/24	Registered after 9/1/24	Registration Online at: www.fdlc.org/2024meeting Mark your choice of payment options: Check (Preferred) <i>or</i> Credit Card
Member: Full Conference	\$425	\$450	
Non-Member: Full Conference	\$445	\$470	
Member: Virtual (Recordings only)	\$75	\$85	
Study Day Only (Non-Member)	\$95	\$145	
Study Day Only Virtual (Recordings)	\$75	\$85	
Extra Reception Ticket (Tuesday)	\$50	\$50	
Extra Lunch Ticket (Wednesday)	\$65	\$65	
Extra Banquet Ticket (Thursday)	\$100	\$100	
Donation to the Tabat Scholarship Fund*	\$5 or more	\$5 or more	
Donation to the Miguel Arias Scholarship**	\$5 or more	\$5 or more	

*Grants from the Tabat Scholarship Fund annually support graduate students in Liturgical Studies.

**The Miguel Arias Scholarship supports the formation of Spanish-speaking leaders.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTRATION

- ◆ The reception, banquet, and one lunch are included in your full meeting registration. Extra tickets for your guests are available as noted above.
- ◆ Recording-only registrants will receive information to view the recordings in September via email.
- ◆ Requests for refunds, less \$35 processing fee, must be submitted in writing to the National Office by September 7. If ever the entire meeting is cancelled due to a nationwide health emergency, all monies will be refunded.
- ◆ For further information, contact the FDLC National Office at 202-635-6990 or nationaloffice@fdlc.org. Thanks!

ACCESS TO RECORDINGS

We understand if you are unable to join us in-person for the 2024 FDLC National Meeting. We are pleased to offer the option to receive all recordings for a fee of \$75 (early bird price) following the National Meeting in October. This will include recorded versions of the plenary sessions, some liturgies, speeches and award presentations. *Information to view recordings will be sent to registrants via email in September.*