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AUSCP Charts a Path of Broad Fraternity, Adopts New Strategic Plan at 15th Annual Assembly

ST. LOUIS, MO — Closing its 15th Annual Assembly in June, the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) unveiled a bold new vision for the organization's future and adopted a fresh multi-year Strategic Plan. Both are aimed at deepening the association's synodal mission and broadening its reach among priests across the United States.

In his annual State of the Association Address, AUSCP Executive Director Fr. Steve Newton, CSC, reflected on the organization entering what he called its “mid-adolescence” at 15 years old, and proposed a paradigm shift in how the association understands its own membership.

“Instead of seeing ourselves as a membership-driven organization, let’s become what our name says we are—a true Association of U.S. Catholic Priests!” Fr. Newton said. “Let’s operate on the assumption that, by virtue of ordination rather than paid membership, all priests ministering in the United States are in association.”

Fr. Newton framed the wide-open door as an invitation to civil discourse across political, theological, and ecclesial spectra, expressing hope that a truly universal presbyteral fraternity would render moot the localized protests the association has drawn from right-leaning and traditionalist groups.

During the assembly's business sessions, members debated and adopted a 3-to-5-year Strategic Plan aimed at building a Church where ordained and lay people co-labor synodally. Among its priorities, the plan calls for:

- **Justice and Inclusion Frameworks:** Dedicated efforts on anti-racism, care for creation, safe dialogue spaces for women as intellectual thought partners, and advocacy for Gospel Nonviolence.
- **Intergenerational Dialogue:** Programming to address the aging of the presbyterate, including future assemblies focused on engaging younger priests across the theological spectrum.
- **Digital Fundraising Growth:** New fundraising initiatives targeting 25 percent annual donor growth to sustain the association's mission.

Member evaluations from the assembly highlighted the strength of the liturgical music and contemplative sharing processes, alongside colloquia on immigration, Catholic labor, LGBTQ+ outreach, and the role of women in the Church. The new Strategic Plan is designed to carry forward this breadth of pastoral concerns.

Next year's Assembly will be held in Orlando, Florida. It will focus on the extensive pastoral and societal implications of Pope Leo XIV’s landmark artificial intelligence encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*.

About the Assembly Programming

Keynotes came from Fr. Dan Groody, CSC, on migration theology, and Sr. Kathy Duffy, SSJ, on Teilhard de Chardin, following an opening retreat led by Dr. Damian Zynda. Cardinal Mario Grech sent a Vatican address centered on *Magnifica Humanitas*. Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski presided at the closing liturgy, which honored Fr. Gerry Kleba, Fr. John Heagle, and Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv.

About the AUSCP

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests (AUSCP) is the largest association of Roman Catholic priests in the United States. Founded to keep alive the pastoral vision of the Second Vatican Council, the AUSCP serves as a prophetic voice and a sanctuary of professional and spiritual support for clergy and lay friends working to build a synodal, missionary Church.

Contact

Rev. Steve Newton, CSC, Executive Director

Email: auscpexdir@gmail.com

Website: www.auscp.org