NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Phoenix diocese cuts 17 staff positions

Robert DeFrancesco Catholic News Service | Mar. 13, 2009

PHOENIX -- Phoenix Catholic officials announced a major realignment of the staff structure at the central administrative offices of the diocese.

The recent changes at the Diocesan Pastoral Center have come on the heels of a projected decrease in revenue and resulted in 17 positions being eliminated and two full-time positions being converted to part time. Six of the 19 jobs were vacant.

Diocesan leaders cited a weak economy as a factor behind the changes, pointing to fewer donations and a greater demand for charitable services.

Nearly half of the diocese's operational budget is sustained through what is called "plate collections," referring to the money given by parishioners during the offertory at Masses.

In 2008, a midyear review of the diocese's parishes revealed an average drop of 3 percent in what Catholics were giving each week, and pastors have reported a continued and, in many cases, increased drop in plate collections since the beginning of this year.

"There were many good people who were affected by these (staff) changes, but we have an obligation to continue to provide prudent and responsible management of the funds that are entrusted to us, especially in challenging economic times," said Fr. Fred Adamson, vicar general and moderator of the curia.

"These changes, while difficult, will help us meet our budget and be more efficient with our resources," he said.

In addition to eliminating certain staff positions, church officials adopted other cost-saving measures at the pastoral center.

For example, the diocese has implemented a work-furlough program for the next fiscal year.

Beginning July 1, all employees at the pastoral center will be required to take three unpaid weeks off from work. The first furlough week follows the July 4 weekend, the second furlough week follows the celebration of Christmas, and the final week follows Holy Week and Easter Sunday in 2010.

During those furlough weeks, the downtown pastoral center will be closed, and all employees will be prohibited from working in any capacity, including taking phone calls or checking work e-mail.

The diocese also has stated that there will be no salary increases for staff during the next fiscal year, and there is a freeze on travel outside the diocese.

Adamson said the realignment and the other cost-saving measures, first announced in mid-February, should allow the church to continue its grant-giving programs to the diocese's parishes, schools, charities and other programs, without interruption.

The Kino Institute, the diocese's program for theological studies and ministry formation, appeared to be the most affected by the realignment, losing five positions. Others affected include the offices of Catholic Schools, catechesis, ethnic ministries, communications, legal, and worship and liturgy.

In light of the staffing cuts, there have been some inquiries as to what will become of Kino. According to Adamson, Kino classes will continue. This spring will allow for a transition as to how Kino will be administered in the future.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/23/2014 - 02:33*): http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/phoenix-diocese-cuts-17-staff-positions