

**PASTORAL INSTITUTE
DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN**

7200 Douglaston Parkway, Douglaston, NY 11362 • (718) 229-9001, ext. 350 • Fax: (718) 281-4290 • Email: pastoralinstitute@iccdob.org

PRESS RELEASE

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New Director, Associate for Diocesan Pastoral Institute

Recently, the Pastoral Institute of the Diocese of Brooklyn experienced a change in leadership after being led for over nine years by Sister Angela Gannon, C.S.J.



Gerald J. Tortorella is the new Director of the Pastoral Institute. Mr. Tortorella joined the Pastoral Institute in August 2007 as the Associate Director, following a career in the business field. He received his M.A. Degree in Theology from St. John's University through the Pastoral Institute's M.A. Scholarship Program. Prior to joining the Pastoral Institute, he served as Director of Religious Education at the parish of St. Mel. Mr. Tortorella and his wife, Maria, are long-time members of St. Andrew Avellino parish and were participants in one of the first groups that entered the lay formation program, having been commissioned as lay pastoral leaders in May 2003. During his time with the Pastoral Institute he has been and Instructor, retreat director and involved in the administration of the various programs of the Pastoral Institute.



Nelsa I. Elías has joined the Pastoral Institute staff as the new Associate Director. Ms. Elías was a participant in the early lay formation program and was commissioned as a lay pastoral leader in 2003. Through the M.A. Scholarship Program, she then went to St. John's University and received her M.A. Degree in Theology. Motivated by her volunteer ministries in her home parish, Our Lady of the Angelus, she left a career as a paralegal nine years ago to minister as a Pastoral Associate in our Diocese, first in St. Michael-St. Edward, Fort Greene, and then in St. Anthony of Padua, South Ozone Park. Ms. Elías, who is bilingual (English-Spanish) and lived in Latin America for many years brings a personal understanding of the Hispanic culture to the Pastoral Institute, in addition to her theological preparation and pastoral skills.

The Pastoral Institute is the agency in the Diocese of Brooklyn that is responsible for the theological and pastoral formation of the laity for various leadership roles in the parishes and agencies of Brooklyn and Queens.

Sister Angela Gannon, C.S.J., the new diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education and Formation, said, "As I move on to a new ministry, I am confident that I am leaving the leadership of the Pastoral Institute in the capable hands of two talented persons. Both of them are fine examples of the fruits that the programs of the Institute are bearing for the people of the diocese."

Four new members were added to the Pastoral Institute's Advisory Committee taking the place of members whose terms expired. These new members are: Rev. Donelson Thevenin, Parochial Vicar for Holy Cross Parish in Brooklyn and Director of the Haitian Apostolate; Mr. Rudy Vargas, Executive Director, Northeast Hispanic Catholic Center and Pastoral Institute Instructor; Ms. Regina Moreno, Director of Religious Education for Our Lady of Snows parish and Pastoral Institute Ministry Supervisor and Mr. Patrick Turner, Vicariate Representative for Brooklyn. The Pastoral Institute Advisory Committee is composed of representatives of the local community as well as members of the diocesan agencies. They are responsible for identifying and expressing the goals and objectives of the agency and formulating the policies they deem necessary as suitable to achieve these objectives and goals.

For further information:
Gerald J. Tortorella
Pastoral Institute
718-229-8001, ext. 350
gtortorella@rcdob.org