

### **A Report on Reports**

When Msgr. Rudolph Daz was Spiritual Advisor of the Salt Lake Deanery, he would always advise his new deanery presidents – and chide the other board members as necessary – that our board meetings should not last more than an hour. His rationale was that written reports only needed to be briefly summarized and that our time and attention should be focused on resolving business from previous meetings and addressing new items of business. Besides, we were all busy people, and we need to value and respect each other's time.

When I was president of our DCCW, Msgr. Daz's sage advice stayed with me but was adapted to suit the needs of a diocesan board meeting. I strove to keep our meetings at two hours or less, as have my successors, but to do this, we need the help of our officers, deanery presidents, commission and committee chairs (29 reports in all!) to make our meetings efficient, informative, and engaging.

In the spirit of Glamour Magazine's Fashion Dos and Don'ts, here some suggestions from your MDR Committee Chair who has "been there and done that" with almost every type of a role on the DCCW Board.

DO Prepare and submit a written report for every meeting. Not everyone can attend our meetings, and your report is how your valuable information is relayed to all. Plus, your report makes our secretary's job easier when she has written reports to refer to when she is drafting the meeting minutes.

DON'T read your written report at the meeting. Reading a long report wastes valuable meeting time and you quickly lose the attention of your audience. Instead, summarize your report or point out one or two highlights from it.

DO be organized when making your oral report. Being able to speak "off the cuff" is a valuable skill, but you should be taking the time and effort to think about what you are going to say. Your message will be clearer, and you won't cause the meeting to run late with a long and rambling report.

DON'T forget the clock. We have almost 30 reports to get through at our meetings. Except for our president and spiritual advisor, oral reports should not exceed two minutes. Time yourself at home to see how long your remarks are. You'll be amazed how fast two minutes flies by.

DON'T be afraid to ask our president for time in the agenda if you need it. The unfinished business and new business sections are designed to give extra time to matters that need special attention. DON'T wait until the last minute to make your request.

DO be creative with your report. Props and handouts are two of many ways to make your report – and message - memorable.

And last, DON'T hesitate to contact the MDR committee with ideas or questions about making your oral reports the best they can be.