



Diocese of Green Bay
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
November 10, 2015

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends Daniel Felton and Thomas Long, Monsignor James Dillenburg, Reverends Robert Kabat, Richard Allen, Ron Colombo, Joel Sember, Timothy Shillcox, O. Praem., Robert Kollath, Thomas Reynebeau, and Deacon Timothy Reilly

Excused: Reverends Matthew Settle, Arul Joseph Irudamoney, James P. Leary, OFM Cap.

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 10:05 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the Council members in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Father Tom Reynebeau solicited changes or additions to the agenda. Father Richard Allen requested one addition referencing the upcoming United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting in November. Motion was made to approve the agenda with the additional agenda item. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the August 6, 2015 meeting as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

Bishop's Opening Comments

Bishop Ricken stated he is very interested in receiving feedback in today's meeting from the Council members on his recent listening sessions held with the priests and pastoral leaders of the Diocese.

He also gave a short report on the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia and said it was one of the most exciting meetings he has ever attended. Pilgrims from the Diocese of Green Bay numbered 111 and were on fire with excitement for the Lord and the Church. The Pope's talks were challenging and encouraging. Great graces came through the Pope's presence. The bishops should receive a report on the Synod on the Family at the upcoming November USCCB meeting.

Father Brian Belongia and Father John Girotti are formulating a diocesan response to the changes in the annulment process.

Update on Ill Priests

Father Tom Long gave updates on the health of ill priests and those in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. He said all are doing OK at this time.

Report on Bishop's Appeal & Approval for Billings

Josh Diedrich, Director of Bishop's Appeal, gave a report on the 2015 Bishop's Appeal indicating the campaign was very successful and raised \$5,674,637. The amount of money collected is a slight increase over the 2014 campaign but there were slightly fewer donors. The Crozier Society membership increased by 291 members to 3,124. 105 parishes exceeded their goal and 54 parishes fell short of their goal. Those parishes who did not meet their goal will be invoiced for the difference. A motion was made to invoice the parishes for their outstanding amounts. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Goal for the 2016 Bishop's Appeal: The Bishop's Appeal goal over the last seven years has only increased 2%. Both Josh and Paul Kolbach, Chief Financial Officer, recommended the goal for 2016 stay the same as 2015. A motion was made to set the 2016 Bishop's Appeal goal at \$5.1 million. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

In response to a Council member's question about the overall picture of the Bishop's Appeal, Josh reported there is some concern that there are fewer donors with 60% of donations coming from persons over the age of 60. Persons 40-59 years of age are the next largest group of givers. He is very encouraged with the growth in the Crozier Society. He also said the Bishop's Appeal office is creating new ways for donors to give (e.g., on-line and texting) but those processes are not yet implemented.

Bishop expressed gratitude to Josh for always finding ways to improve the Appeal and for its continuing success each year.

Overview of *Teach My People to Pray: Year II/Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy*

We are well into our second year of *Teach My People to Pray*. Father Dan Felton reported there is a quarterly newsletter of ideas, programs, and resources in *Parish Pages* and hopes each parish will try to implement one or two of the suggestions. The next component is the all-household mailing which will include a dedication of households on the Feast of the Holy Family along with resources on how to pray the rosary, meal prayers, etc. Mailing is scheduled for early-mid December.

The Jubilee Year of Mercy will begin on December 8, 2015. Some of what is planned during the year includes:

- *Compass* column on Year of Mercy and monthly reflections on corporal and spiritual works of mercy by Bishop Ricken
- designated "Holy Doors" at the Cathedral, Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, and the National Shrine of St. Joseph (located at the church on the campus of St. Norbert College)
- monthly Holy Hours
- emphasis on reconciliation
- emphasis on corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- homily suggestions on corporal and spiritual works of mercy provided by Office of Divine Worship

It was also requested by Council members that the Diocese provide homily suggestions regarding the Jubilee Year of Mercy (e.g., what does it mean, why is it "extraordinary").

Father Tom Long indicated in the Papal bull on the Jubilee Year of Mercy, Pope Francis requested each diocese celebrate *"24 Hours for the Lord"* on the Friday and Saturday preceding the 4th week of Lent. There was discussion on different ways we could implement this in our Diocese. Our Lady of Lourdes in De Pere offered continual confessions for 24 hours last year. Father Shillcox said there were 159 penitents, many of them coming in throughout the night. He thought it was worth doing again. Bishop would not want to impose this on the parishes but would certainly encourage and support any parish or group of parishes wanting to offer this opportunity to the faithful. In the past, the Diocese has offered *"The Light Is On For You"* by asking parishes to provide and publicize more opportunities for reconciliation. 80% of our parishes have requested we repeat the program.

Father Dan and Father Tom will put together some suggestions and ideas to be sent out to parish leadership.

Conversation Regarding Listening Sessions

Bishop Ricken held three listening sessions in the past two months, two with pastors/pastoral leaders and one with senior priests. He sensed an overall good feeling in the Diocese but took note of "constellations of worries." Bishop takes these listening sessions very seriously and noted that he, Father Dan Felton, and Father Tom Long have read each comment submitted in writing. Follow-up listening sessions are scheduled for January 2016 to continue the conversation.

Discussion on Basics of Parish Life

Council members engaged in a lengthy discussion and sharing about the basics of parish life. We need to discern what is important and what is needed to make our parishes more welcoming and alive. Discussion points centered on:

- parishes need to tie into the lives of the laity
- drawing people to "church" depends on their love for the Lord and their lives of prayer
- how do we grow into discipleship
- how we used to "do Church" is not how it works today
- it's not about programs, it's about relationships; flowing from relationship is a desire to embrace the Church and participate in its life
- need to meet people where they are at (Two Rivers parish has implemented a "weekend coordinator" position)
- administrative duties get in the way of ministry

Discussion of Discipleship: Year I/Mission-Vision Statement

The focus of years 2014-16 was prayer. The focus in 2016-18 was meant to be discipleship formation for parish leadership and the laity. Bishop wonders if maybe we are moving too fast and that it might be better to focus on parish leadership only. It is important we all have a clear understanding of "discipleship" – what it means, what is evangelization, what is the New Evangelization, how do you define discipleship, what does it mean to be a "missionary disciple." Hopefully, in that formation process, we can better understand discipleship both intellectually and spiritually: mind, body, and spirit. We would then be better prepared to take that same formation to the laity.

Bishop asked the Council members to consider all that was discussed at today's meeting regarding the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the input from the listening sessions, parish life, and discipleship and come prepared to continue this conversation at the next meeting on January 27th.

There was no discussion on the Mission-Vision Statement agenda item.

Review of Social Communications Policy

Jayne Stefanic (Diocesan Assistance Coordinator) and Matthew Livingstone (Social Communications Director) presented and explained the revisions made to the proposed Social Communications Policy which was introduced at the August 6, 2015 Presbyteral Council meeting. After some discussion and clarifications, a motion was made to approve the Policy as amended. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Process for Addressing Issues Raised by Supreme Court Ruling

Father Dan Felton will be meeting with the Vicars General/Moderators of the Curia for the other four dioceses of Wisconsin to discuss the implications of the Supreme Court ruling regarding same-sex marriages for our dioceses, parishes, schools, and institutions.

Added Agenda Item

Father Dick Allen asked if Bishop could share with the Council the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop indicated the Conference will be looking at establishing priorities for 2016-2017 and assumes there will be reports on the Synod on the Family and the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriages.

Concluding Comments

Bishop Ricken said he will focus his attention over the next few years on:

- Catholic education/schools/catechesis
- parish vitality
- vocations to priesthood and religious life
- Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help

Bishop mentioned this meeting is the last for Deacon Tim Reilly as he will be retiring in January 2016. He thanked Deacon Tim for the terrific job he has done in leading the Diocese at a very critical time and for the gifts he has shared with us.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Wickman
Recording Secretary