



Diocese of
Green Bay

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DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 29, 2020

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverend Daniel Felton, Deacons Chuck Agnew and Tom Tomaszewski, Mary Poch, Jeff Taylor, James Fay, John Folk, Sister Natalie Binversie, OSF, Paula Freimuth, Wally Thomson, Steve Parent, David Wheeler, Dan Malcore, Javier Gomez and Betty Hove

Excused/Absent: Very Reverend Brad Vanden Branden, O. Praem., Reverend Nonito Barra, Deacon David Scheuer, Travis Vanden Heuvel and Mark Merkatoris

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 9:04 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the group in St. Joseph Litany
- Mission Statement was recited by Council members.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of April 13, 2019 as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Introductions from each individually.

Opening Comments—Bishop Ricken

Bishop —In the future we are intending to do an orientation for new members prior to attending the first meeting. The minutes from the last meeting connected on the Clergy Sex Abuse. All of our Catholic schools are fully engaged in safe environment. After we published our list, some people came forward. Dcn. Dan Wagnitz, Safe Environment Coordinator, will be retiring.

Bishop—What is the purpose of the Diocesan Pastoral Council? Just as each parish has a Pastoral Council, the diocese has a pastoral council. It is very valuable to me and we get your input. The new document you received from me from Rome, gives us more latitude for the laity to get involved. For now your job is to inform and also to share outward what Bishop is doing. In the church, we have consultative bodies which help the hierarchy to make decisions. I listen carefully to the priests, parishes and lay faithful. There is a lot of moving parts. For example, six years ago one of the parishioners was in the military and he talked about commander in tent methodology. I was able to use this information to help create a vision, mission and two goals. It helps me to structure where the organization is moving forward. With Covid, we are having to think very different and look at the needs right in our own backyards. We have had to learn to adjust and adapt with the virus.

Fr. Dan—We are working collaboratively with parishes so we can be proactive and reactive. We are tracking parish income, collections, cash reserve and cash on hand. We help parishes figure out a plan if a parish is struggling. Our occupancy was at 42% Pre-Covid. Overall current occupancy is about 17% with some parishes at 25% occupancy. Parish finances looking at July–February for a base, overall as a diocese we are down about 10.7%. We did receive money through the PPP for parishes. We are hoping the PPP offsets the money down for the parishes.

Bishop—We had to release nine people with the diocese for a shortfall of our budget. We also had 100 people placed on furlough July and August for different amounts of time.

Fr. Dan—The two primary streams of revenue for the diocese offices would be Bishop's Appeal and Cathedraticum. We are anticipating a shortfall of revenue from those two items. We also did some program and service cuts. We have a game plan in place to work with Bishop's Appeal and

Cathedraticum to come even by June 30, 2021. There is a plan in place to navigate. Bishop has been in contact with health officials and county officials to keep informed.

Bishop—We did tithing in Pueblo. Generosity and taking care of people helps to build a vibrant community. Stewardship is time, talent and treasure. Discipleship is time and talent. We have to change the culture on that. I really encourage any pastor who wants to do tithing to promote.

I am getting a lot of requests coming to my office to reestablish the television Mass. People have felt disconnected during this time. We are going to reinstitute the television Mass next Sunday, September 6. Most of the people that we have heard from are people in nursing homes, prisons, people who are sick. This is what Pope Francis is asking us to do to reach out to the marginalized. The Bishops of Wisconsin met last week. We have decided to withdraw the permission for those who are able to attend. If you are able to go to Mass, you should be able to go to Mass. Most parishes are about 17% capacity. Some parishes may need to add another Mass or have a room in the parish for overflow. There are ways to adapt to the social distancing. Look for ways to be welcoming. We have to be careful and come together safely. There will be a general statement that goes out from the Wisconsin Bishops. The obligation has never gone away I just lifted it with dispensation for a short time.

Fr. Dan—On average, 45,000 households per week viewed the television Mass when the television Mass was on Channel 5.

The feedback from the group was positive regarding the television Mass and many recommended that Bishop do a video.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend that Bishop take away the dispensation for those that can attend.

Check-in Round Robin: How are you, your parish and your vicariate doing at this time?

The members each gave a check-in.

A question was asked regarding the pause of the diaconate program.

Bishop—The diaconate program is put on hold. We have 160 deacons in our diocese. We had to cut. That is one of the programs most costly. We did not cut the care for the deacons that are already with us. It is more of a question of how we incorporate missionary discipleship into formation for deacons and lay formation. We have begun this with seminarians, doing a 1 year program with Kairo. We get to know the seminarians and their family gets to know us prior to them going into the seminary. We only have 85 active priests in ministry. By 2025, we need to have 30 seminarians. We have adapted and adjusted. We cannot depend on International Priests forever. We are going to be moving into a greater form of accountability. It may take 3-4 years. We will be doing it compassionately but clearly. We will be giving clear goals. We are one church. The diocese is 16 counties. We need to reach out to the neighborhoods. We need to be missionary. I need to work on coaching my staff better. And we need to work more with pastors and pastoral leaders to coach their teams. The laity brings expertise that we do not have. We have a mission to accomplish. The priest shortage is hurting us. Poor family life, there is suffering. We promote love, light, peace and joy. Priests come from families. We have to take ownership for raising new missionary leaders.

The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church

Bishop—With regard to this diocese, we are going to be making adjustments to move Fr. Dan out in the field. Fr. Dan will be checking in with pastors and help parishes connect together with their strengths. The goal is to get Fr. Dan out in the field to really find out what is going on. Then we can send out a team where the needs are. We need to break down some of the silos. We are seeing some of the culture change already within the diocesan offices. The collaboration of the lay faithful document from

1987 they talk about Regional Vicars. The pastoral conversion talks about the parish itself. We have parish boundaries and we also have virtual boundaries. Pope Francis is very familiar with missionary discipleship.

Fr. Dan—Part of today is a briefing, this will continue with more discussions in future meetings. This will be a big frame applied to our diocese. There are certain values that need to be changed and embraced to make that happen. The diocese values include: embrace people's hearts, explore potential, connect to inspire, empower to act and nurture abundant life and growth. We have gone through a process and discussion to see how we embrace this. We have turned the diocesan offices into mission teams. Our mission is our mission field in the communities in which we live. As we are moving out to the community, then the community will share what their needs are.

Bishop—We are trying to find ways to be really helpful to the parishes. Our culture has changed. We have four value streams: Discipleship & Leadership Development Mission Team, Families & Schools of Discipleship Mission Team, Parish Life & Evangelization Mission Team and Catholic Charities & Living Justice Mission Team. Resource & Support Mission Team with Catholic Foundation support the value streams. Bishop went over the offices included in each mission team. Catholic Charities will model where we can go and be of help. We want to move the mission out.

Question—When I leave the DPC, I feel energized. But as this group, I do not feel like I have a function with outward help to parishes. Could I play a better role to parishes?

Fr. Dan—We have three councils that could help. On the Presbyteral Council and Regional Vicar, we have a representative from each vicariate. And then we have two representatives per vicariate for the DPC. Our hope is to get the three councils to work together for each vicariate. Your role will be more of an ongoing role out in the field, like working with a parish mission field team. It goes back to how we create the relationships. This first conversation is to get us a foundation.

Closing Comments

Bishop—Please pray for us. I really want to take care of the parishes. We need to continue to grow and embrace this mission. Thank you for serving on this committee. I hope we can continue to grow with this. The lay consultation is extremely important.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jami Duvall
Recording Secretary