



**Diocese of Green Bay**  
**DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**August 28, 2021**

**Attendees:** Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends John Girotti and Bill O'Brien, Reverend Tony De los Santos, Deacon Chuck Agnew, Mary Poch, Barb Kimme, Dan Malcore, Jeff Taylor, John Folk, Sister Natalie Binversie, OSF, David Wheeler, Jenn Wood, Javier Gomez and Travis Vanden Heuvel

**Excused/Absent:** Very Reverend Brad Vanden Branden, O. Praem., Deacons Dave Scheuer and Tom Tomaszewski, James Fay, Wally Thomson, Betty Hove and Mark Merkatoris

**Opening Activities**

- Meeting opened at 9:00 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the group in opening prayer
- Mission Statement was recited by Council members.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of March 20, 2021 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 by the group.

**Vocations—Fr. Mark Mleziva**

Thank you for this invitation. I have been the Vocations Director for three years. The Lord is calling. Help the young people to hear the call with learning silence and prayer. We will have 17 men in formation for the priesthood. We have seven new applicants. Starting last year, we have been able to implement a proepeduc year, a year for the guys to learn how to pray. We call it the Kairos year. Fr. Adam Bradley is the Director for the Kairos Year. There is a media fast which allows guys to deepen the discernment in the beginning year. We had 5 guys last year and 7 new guys this year. We are trying to build this culture of vocations in the office. Vocations is something that all of us do. We do a survey with the guys. One of the questions asked how many people have asked you about the priesthood. The average answer is six. From the survey, the three big things that have helped them include: silent retreat, Eucharistic Adoration and another Priest other than their pastor talking with them. This helps us to focus. If we do not have the priesthood, we do not have the Eucharist. If we do not have the Eucharist, we do not have the church.

We had a planning group and now we have a Vocations Steering Committee. The two prongs are promotion and accompaniment. We walk with them. We created a new website: [gbvocations.org](http://gbvocations.org). We created a podcast Quo Vadis? – meaning “where you are going”. Taylor Geiger, Vocation Coordinator and I do the podcast with guests. We created a Fiat Prayer Society and once a month we give the group an update. We are going to do a family video series and we are partnering with Families and Schools of Discipleship Formation Mission Team. We are doing a Chalice program. The family at a parish takes the Chalice home to pray for Vocations for one week and then another family takes the Chalice. The Vocations Steering Committee helps with the promotion and the Vocations Office helps with the accompaniment. We have been highlighting our new applicants for the Kairos year. We go and meet the family and we add photos of the Kairos guys to the website.

Bishop—The media fast. You really cannot hear the Lord if you are busy with life.

Fr. Mark—The Kairos guys have 1-hour per week for email. It is very freeing.

Bishop—I would like to commend Fr. Mark and Fr. Adam. The Kairos year helps the families. I am really grateful to St. Joseph. Since we have been praying to him, we have 12 men sent to us. The Chalice program and others ways we can promote prayer for Vocations. The more we can get the parishes involved. Our goal is to have 30 qualified men in the seminary. The goals are for every parish to own. This is going to benefit the whole diocese.

Mary—I think Fr. Mark and Fr. Adam presence at the high schools are important, and seeing them at games is huge.

Fr. Mark— We did a retreat for the staff at St. Mary's High School and Carol Ricken spoke at the event. We took them to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. Within the Diocese of Green Bay, we have six Catholic high schools. We have the priest presence at four of them. It is important to be able to show them that we can bring the faith into their life. In September, we have the St. Andrew Dinner for guys interested in the priesthood. Most of our candidates are from here. We are working on Hispanic priesthood. Our two big areas that we need to focus on are Hispanic Ministry and Young Adult Ministry. We have two international guys.

Sister Natalie—Consecrated life is also important. We have three women in the process of application and postulant. These women are from across the country, no one from our diocese. Jesus is inviting.

### **Worship Years—Dcn. Shaun Johnson**

Bishop—Would like to introduce a new deacon and graduate of St. Norbert College. Dcn. Shaun Johnson is the Director of Worship. Dcn. Shaun will talk about the rollout with Worship Jesus. The Worship Years line up with the Bishops Conference initiative. We are going to emphasize the renewal of the Mass. Dcn. Shaun is working hard to find a way to rollout Worship Jesus to the vicariates. We will be walking for three years with the Formation of the Mass.

Dcn. Shaun—The objective is to help people Discover Jesus Christ. Discover and follow. Now we are at Worship Jesus. If we can help people fully understand what is happening in the Mass, how wonderful of an understanding is that. To take someone who is in the pew and help them to understand the Mass. It is helpful to take it in pieces. We will walk with people incrementally. The first step is to help our form makers, to start on the same page. How is the Word active and alive? We will look at scripture. The Word is the first 1 ½ years. The form makers are the people who are leaders in our parishes and schools. Work with them first. The key points: pastors, deacons, pastoral leaders, key parish staff, musicians, parish leaders, principals, DRE and Hispanic ministry. These key points are important to parish and school life. The second tier will be vicariate rollout and working with the people in the pews. To help us understand what those key rollouts are, we have curia members who will serve as a lead: Fr. Luke Ferris, Justine Lodl, Dcn. Shaun Johnson, Maximus Cabey, Todd Blahnik, Barry Metzentine, Sr. Martha Escobar and with key parish staff. Each one of the key lead has one or two smart goals that they will work on in the next 1 ½ years. They already have some of the smart goals. For parish musicians, many of them are volunteers. It can be hard to get people to get out of a routine, so what we have tried to do is get musicians from the field to let us know what the greatest challenge is for musicians. One of the key challenges is to understand the Mass and how the music picked is important. Teach the role of the psalm in the Mass to musicians. We would like to have three sessions, some regional to help fully understand the psalm.

Barb—The musicians are getting older and no young people coming forward to sing. There needs to be some kind of formation and encouragement.

Dcn. Shaun—Musicians are an important ministry. For parish leaders, we want to host a series of sessions on the role of the lector. This is a ministry, to proclaim the word of God. The purpose is to help us celebrate the Mass well. The more fully we can actively participate when people understand the Mass fully. The first half of the year is working with form makers. The second part of the year is working with the parishes. The first tier is the curia leads. The second tier is the vicariate

implementation team. The vicariate implementation team is primarily going to be folks from the field. We do not want to overwhelm parishes with another program. We would like parishes to pick one or two things to help move the needle forward. Work with formation that is already happening. With the vicariate implementation, we already have parish groups already meeting. We can introduce this process of prayer with scripture with Lectio Divina in groups that are already meeting. More fully understanding the Word helps people understand the Eucharist. The word becomes flesh.

Bishop—I am writing a Pastoral Letter that will be a steady document for the three years. I want to provide a document that is synched and thorough. Look at how we communicate these very rich and beautiful ideas in very simple ways that catch them. Know Jesus as your very best friend. Missionary Discipleship is to know Jesus, loving Jesus and disciple others. As a diocesan community, we may take up to three steps and then parishes will need to discern. Look at parishes within a vicariate to help one another.

Dan—How will this letter be communicated. Think about the people who are not in the pews. People who do not go to church read the parish bulletins.

Bishop—We need some bite sized tools. The Mass is an incredible gift and treasure. With the pastoral letter, I hope to write a good tool.

Barb—Everybody can relate to a family meal. The Mass is our family meal, build the connections from there. I wonder if the homilies can tie the word, have the pastors to help make the connection.

Fr. Tony—Have the letter be the guidelines to share with the parishes and schools.

Bishop—We are hoping to start no later than June 2022.

Dcn. Shaun—There will be lead-ins to this. Hospitality is the soft start of this in October. Look at how parishes can be more hospitable. Hospitality is part of a greater conversation of how to reach people.

Jenn—For parishes, there is a lot of things coming from the diocese. It is important that parishes hear the connection between missionary discipleship and Worship Jesus. How do we help people encounter Jesus in the Mass? How through this process is this going to happen?

Dcn. Shaun—As a disciple, you need to understand who Jesus is and Follow Jesus. To be a missionary disciple, there is a cycle with Discover, Follow, Worship and Share Jesus. We are always continuing to learn.

David—Start with church history to the present.

Bishop—Thank you very much. This is very helpful. We have 157 parishes. We are going to offer this to the whole and then parishes will discern on what part they do for their discipleship. Help all of our parishes to grow in their own way. We want to make choices that are headed in the same direction.

We have a lot to offer, there is a lot of great potential.

Travis—Joy is going to be a part of this and help everything.

Mary—Mother Mary Catherine simply says Let Jesus Love You.

**Vicar for External Matters—Fr. O'Brien**

Fr. O'Brien—I am out visiting parishes. I would say the international priests may have a better support system, there are many priests lonely. Some of our priests are concerned about Covid. The one by One campaign has restarted. The group was given brochures to hand out for the Fiat Prayer Society.

Bishop—The Sacrament of Confession is important.

Mary—Fr. Matt Settle has a book mark with the confession times and he does adoration.

Dan—Social media bullying is very real.

David—A lot of disinformation keeping some people away. David—Recommend the international priests to share some of their personal stories with the parishes.

Jenn—Offer more confession times. Parishes should partner more and offer different times.

Fr. O'Brien—Confront the issues of the times.

Fr. Girotti—Fr. O'Brien has a real gift to the priests and pastoral leaders.

### **Closing Comments**

Bishop—We are doing the soft relaunch of the one by One campaign. There will be a meeting at St. Pius Church. The one by One campaign is another way to talk about discipleship. The overall goal is \$70M and my part is \$15M. Overall, we already have \$25M committed. The parishes will get fifty percent and the other fifty percent will come to the diocese to focus on missionary discipleship for the parishes and schools. We have two new hires, a new Young Adult Director and a new Missionary Discipleship Director. The Holy See is asking us to do a synodality. We are already doing a lot of it. Thank you very much for the good, honest conversation. I want a document to help the people love the Mass. Let the Holy Spirit work. Little actions make a huge difference. I will be helping to have the Presbyteral Council and Regional Vicars to do these practices of listening. Love your people and know your people to serve God. The Diocesan Pastoral Council is the counterpart to the Presbyteral Council. Listen to the faithful, you represent your vicariate. Part of this change process will promote more active work with the DPC out in the field. We strive to meet the needs of the people. We really have to help one another.

Closing Prayer – St. Joseph Prayer

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jami Duvall  
Recording Secretary