



**Diocese of Green Bay**  
**PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 24, 2022**

**Attendees:** Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends John Girotti, Bill O'Brien and Luke Ferris, Reverends Bill Hoffman, Adam Bradley, James Lucas, Bill Swichtenberg, Carl Schmitt, Daniel Schuster, Larry Seidl, Tom Long, Joel Sember, James Baraniak, O. Praem. and Barry Metzentine  
N/A: Fr. Doug LeCaptain

**Opening Activities**

- Meeting opened at 10:03 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the opening prayer
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. Motion approved unanimously.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the December 2, 2021 meeting as written. Motion approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

**Bishop Opening Comments**

We recently had a parish webinar, where we talked about the data. Mass attendance decline by 3.5% over 10 years. Contributing members decline by 2.25% over ten years. Mass attendance averaging 30% than since 2019.

Bishop—We are already over \$40M of the \$70M and half-way through the parishes for the one by One campaign. There are some parishes that are thriving.

Barry—Thirty parishes thriving. There are four consistent themes where parishes are thriving:

1. Heartfelt Prayer to Jesus and Mary
2. Genuine Love of the People
3. Personal Accountability on Mission
4. Local Leadership

Bishop—We need to become more of a diocese on mission and a parish on mission. An institutional conversion to mission. Vocations is looking better. The campaign is going very well. The main thing is the life in the parishes. It should be a collaborative effort with the diocese and parishes, reach out to the neighborhoods. See why people are not coming back to church, reach out to them. Develop teams to go out to them, go out to the neighborhoods and connect with people. The two areas I can think of greatest need are leadership development and studying our parishes and see if we need to do better configurations.

Barry—There are around forty parishes that have historically and currently are in a state of decline. Would need to talk to those parishes and maybe look for a different model as a target group. Some parishes have 30 or less contributing members or less than 50 registered families.

Bishop—We need to have some in depth conversations. We are going to look at the Regional Vicars more robust. Maybe coordinating some pastoral efforts. Another area, when we go into the Worship Years and Eucharistic Revival look at what that looks like for us and for the parish. In 2024, there will be a huge gathering in Indianapolis where people will go through a week of

formation, be missionary disciples and take that back to their parishes. Is the most pressing the organization of parishes or leadership, looking for feedback from you.

- Fr. Bill—Priests are having difficulty getting volunteers to serve on committees and hiring staff that practice the Catholic faith. Good strategy to look at the forty parishes.
- Fr. Schuster—The parish is vibrant, but don't want to volunteer. The things you are talking about are needed right now.
- When a parish is merged, bring the people along with us.
- Recommend parish mentor one another, have a sister parish where parish councils get together and learn from one another.
- Focus on best practices from the thirty parishes that are thriving. Develop some best practices and look at the community. Look at best practices and then have leadership move towards best practices. Configure parishes in a way that leads to growth. Help pastors focus on what matters.

Bishop—The laity need to get involved. We need to look at what the problems and the opportunities are and look at how we configure for the next five years.

**Vicariate Changes: The establishment of an additional vicariate and new names for all vicariates**—Bishop Ricken and Fr. John Girotti

Bishop Ricken and Fr. Girotti talked to the group about adding an additional vicariate to the diocesan structure and changing the vicariate numbers to locations.

Fr. Girotti—The Regional Vicar needs to visit each parish in the vicariate once every three years. The thought is that we need to look at the structure of the vicariates and look at how we can assist the vicars to do their job. Vicariate I is everything north of Hwy 29. It is a very large vicariate. The recommendation is to divide Vicariate I into two vicariates, east and west. The second part is that the numbering of the vicariates is hard to recognize. So, we also recommend dividing the vicariates into names instead of numbers. We would like to look at adding vicariate coordinators, folks from the curia to help assist with the coordination of the visits and assist with at least two vicariate meetings per year. The hopeful outcome is that we have a regular schedule of visits every three years and regular schedule of vicariate meetings a couple of times per year per vicariate.

Barry—The new configuration works with the roads, parish boundaries and wanting parishes that are linked/merged to be in the same vicariate.

Bishop—The regional vicar would rotate parish visits every three years. Meet at least twice per year for vicariate meetings, once with priests and pastoral leaders and once with parish leadership and maybe councils. The purpose of the Regional Vicar is to facilitate the life of a vicariate.

**A motion was made and seconded to move to eight vicariates. Motion carried unanimously.**

**A motion was made and seconded to move from a numerical description to a name description.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Confirmation—Proposal for Future Reception within the Diocese**—Tania LeFevre

Tania—We have 54 Confirmations, and Bishop has 45-46 of the Confirmations.

Fr. Girotti—There have been two bishops in the past to help with Confirmation, a bishop and an auxiliary bishop.

Bishop—I need to be realistic with how many Confirmations I can do per year.

Tania—We put together a task force to see what we can do with the number of Confirmations. We would like to have a celebration of 50 Confirmation students per celebration. In Fall, Bishop celebrated all 17.

1. Look to reduce the number to 10 Confirmations each of the three seasons. We could have a parish that has 50 students do their own and then have the other parishes come together. There would be more work on the larger parishes with helping organize the events. If we do regional vicariates, Bishop can celebrate each year.  
Bishop—The holy oil can be delegated with the priests that are at the vicariate celebration.
2. Go to every other year model. Bishop would go every other year. And then the Regional Vicar or Vicars from here would be given faculties to celebrate the other year. By reducing, we could look at pastoral visits that Bishop could be with the parish. Year 1, Bishop would go to the even vicariates. Year 2, Bishop would go to odd vicariates.

Discussion on best option:

- Glad that you are keeping in mind pastoral visits.
- Look at a combination of both options.
- Option 1 Bishop visits every year.
- Space constraints and Mass schedule constraints.

The group would like feedback from the people in the parishes connected to Religious Education.

#### **Update on Priests/Report on Priests who are Ill—Fr. Luke Ferris**

Fr. Luke reported on priests who are ill.

Support and Benefits for Priests and Pastoral Leader Salary Increase: The consideration this year is for a 3.5% increase for priest and pastoral leaders with an addition \$504 to cover basic costs that are not covered by a percentage increase.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve an average of 3.5% increase for priests and pastoral leaders and in addition \$504 to cover basic costs that are not covered by a percentage increase. Motion passed with one no.**

#### **Discussion regarding the Latin Mass within the Diocese—Bishop Ricken and Fr. Girotti**

Bishop—I have decided that we will have St. Patrick Oratory, Canon Boucheron, one place for Latin Mass in the Diocese of Green Bay.

Fr. Girotti—The Latin Mass community at St. Patrick has continued to grow with 400 families. 95% of the Latin Masses in the diocese are at St. Patrick's. St. Patrick has two Masses on Sunday, and they are filled with families. The Latin Masses outside of St. Patrick Oratory needs to end by March 1, 2022. The Ad Orientem policy for the Diocese of Green Bay, the priest can have a conversation with Bishop, there is a trial period, and it needs to be in English.

#### **Discussion of the future of St. Patrick Parish and Oratory – Fr. Girotti and Barry Metzentine**

Bishop—We are accompanying St. Patrick Parish and Oratory.

Barry—Last summer, we were looking to transition St. Patrick Oratory to transition with St. Patrick Parish. Canon will be the Administrator of St. Patrick Parish and stay as rector of St. Patrick Oratory. We are in transition with this. There will be a Parish Council, Finance Council, and limited staff.

#### **Bishop Closing Comments**

Bishop—Eucharistic Revival will begin on Corpus Christi. There will be a procession from St. Francis Xavier Cathedral to St. Mary of the Angels Parish. And then the following year the parishes will be asked to do a procession on the feast day. I just prepared a Pastoral Letter. In the pastoral letter, talked about the importance of teaching our people Lectio Divina. Mother Mary Catherine does

parish missions on teaching Lectio Divina. Eucharistic Adoration, begin to do an hour of adoration. Be generous to be offering Adoration for your parish. Pray the Mass, pay attention to the words, be intentional. Be careful about the little things. Look at sacred music. Help to pray about who do you call to lector. Call forth those who have strong prayer life. Pray the Mass, lead by example. This is an opportunity for me to teach through you to others. I hope to do a more practical approach, praying the Mass.

**Q & A**

Bishop closed with prayer. Meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jami Duvall".

Jami Duvall  
Recording Secretary