



Diocese of Green Bay
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
June 8, 2023

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends John Girotti, Bill O'Brien and Luke Ferris, Reverends Joseph Dorner, Kennedy Gaspar, Bill Hoffman, James Lucas, Doug LeCaptain, Francis Nusi, Larry Seidl, Matthew Rapp, Carl Schmitt, Daniel Schuster, Mark Vander Steeg, and Barry Metzentine
N/A: Reverends James Baraniak, O. Praem. and Adam Bradley

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 10:06 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 the minutes March 30, 2023. Motion approved unanimously.

Bishop's Opening Comments

We have over 750 missionary disciples. We have 17 ordinations after the ordination in July. We have 3 for the Kairos year this next year. We are making good progress. We will continue to face this challenge unless we create a culture of vocations. We need to make an intentional decision in our diocese. I am hoping to have formation to the entire presbyterate. We need a culture of vocations. It takes faith, outreach, and talking to young men.

Update on Priests – Fr. Luke Ferris

Fr. Luke gave an update on priests who are ill.

Reception of the Precious Blood at Mass—Bishop Ricken and Fr. John Girotti

Bishop—I want this decision to be taken. Let's walk into this together. The way we explain it to our people. We can highlight the incredible gift of Heaven touching the altar. I do not want to rush in but give a bigger context. Gerard—Bishop Ricken provided a roadmap to us with his pastoral letter on how we can do this in the diocese. You cannot have Eucharist without Word. Using Lectio Divina as our guide. There is a need to do catechesis. There are specific times that parishes are allowed to offer both forms of communion, priesthood ordination, wedding, Easter. The plan keeps the focus on Worship Jesus. Is there a need for both forms of communion in the parishes. Only the priest or deacon can have the extra Precious Blood, not the extraordinary minister unless the bishop approves. The focus on the catechesis is the ecclesial nature of the Eucharist as the common possession of the whole Church; the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ's sacrifice, his death and resurrection, and as the sacred banquet; the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic. To come to Communion, you must be in a state of grace. The proper posture for the reception of Holy Communion is on the tongue. Extraordinary Ministers need to be commissioned by Bishop. That process will go through the Office of Divine Worship. I am proposing a fall day for priests to talk about the Eucharist. It would be an optional day. The deacons have a fall gathering that I will be at. I have scheduled fall training for lectors, and cantors. We will do a series of bulletin inserts. We will do lesson plans for schools. The group had a discussion.

Bishop—There should be more regulation on the distribution of holy communion. I am hearing that we need to take this to all of the priests. Do a five-hour meeting with priests.

Gerard—We will do the surveys to the priests and to the communities and we will have more information to share at Clergy Congress.

Fr. Nusi—Is there permission for Eucharistic Ministers to be able to open the tabernacle?

Gerard—They are not. Sacristans are not able to open the tabernacles. Eucharistic Ministers can only distribute Communion.

Bishop—This is going to take time; we need to form the Eucharistic Ministers. I want to bring together the whole presbyterate.

May 4th Joint meeting (Presbyteral Council, Vicars, EMT) follow up

Bishop—May 4 we had a joint meeting on parish reorganization discussion. We went through the Detroit Model, Madison Model and looked at our own diocese. I have been raised in a mission model caring for the church. We can continue to serve communities in a mission model. It is time for another look at our approach to caring for people in the parishes. Streamline, simplify, serve. Get people around you that know administration. We need your help with the next best steps moving into a mission model.

Barry—There are four things wanting feedback.

1. Vitality indicators, proposing a different way to use them.
2. Affirm some of the principles that we have been talking about for parish and for diocese.
3. We need to have a taskforce to get into the weeds to talk about local parishes (priests, deacons, people at parishes, Curia).
4. Status of the diocese.

Barry—Process and the how. We initially had the three-step process, we did that with the twenty parishes. I met with the priest, brought the information, validated the information, asked about the community and the nature of the community. Affirm principles. When we do engage with parish leadership and staff, they are able to have a missionary mind and missionary spirit and to pray about what are the needs of the community and look at options. Move the people from fear to looking at the needs of community. You cannot start with the facilities; you need to start with the people. Relationship that the priest has with the people.

Communication, open and transparent. Heartfelt prayer, liturgies, family centered evangelization. Establish a taskforce. Look at the role of the regional vicar, priests, deacons, curia members, and parish members.

Bishop—Would they do some prep work for the parish visits?

Barry—Yes. Having priests and deacons speak with this will be critical. The Madison Model had all their subcommittees led by priests. Who would go out to the meetings would be discerned by the group. Does a taskforce make sense? Then start a communication draft.

Barry shared with the group the five parishes needing a second meeting out of the first twenty parishes. There are 56 parishes in all 8 vicariates that are needing a first discussion.

Fr. Luke—Any discussion of a merger or linkage would go before the Presbyteral Council.

A motion was made and second to establish a taskforce to further examine the parish vitality indicators, prioritize the parishes warranting an exploratory meeting, and develop a communications plan/strategy. Motion carried unanimously.

Safe Environment Action Plan—Peter Murphy and Courtney Coopman

Peter—Every year the USCCB sends out a survey to make sure that our parishes are in compliance. After Covid, the surveys were not getting done. We put down everything that the Safe Environment does and some additional steps that the Presbyteral Council could give feedback on. If nothing is dealt with, then there would be a fine. We have been in consultation with Finance and Accounting. The fine would occur after the steps

trying to get the parish to be in compliance. The fine is \$2,500, but the goal is not to get there. We want the parishes to be in compliance.

Courtney—I have laid out what we do every day. Deb does train for all of the LoSec. Make sure everyone is up to speed. July and August get ready for the new year, expectations for religious education and schools. In February, we had Bishop send out an email supporting the charter. We found good feedback from that email. March and April we get ready for the survey. We do a webinar and send out emails sharing what to get prepared. We send a link for folks to fill out the survey. May 19 is around when things are due. Priests or pastoral leaders needs to sign before it is sent off. If there is noncompliance, there needs to be an explanation of why this is happening. Sometimes they do not have someone in the LoSec position, they forget. Document the situation and determine the due date. June work on survey and work with those who have not finished their survey. July meeting with Fr. Girotti and the pastor and/or LoSec of that position to talk about the issue and see how we can move forward. After that then a fine would be put into place. The fine will go directly through the Finance and Accounting office. Places that have been struggling, we sit down with the LoSec and the pastor to find out what we can do to help them be stronger.

A motion was made and seconded to fine \$2,500 to the parish not in compliance. Motion carried unanimously.

Fitness for Ministry—Peter Murphy and Courtney Coopman

Peter—Fitness for Ministry went to the Diaconate Council and they approved.

Fr. Girotti—This is clerical misbehavior that is not sexual abuse of minors.

Peter—This would replace the SCTF (Special Clergy Task Force) of Bishop, Fr. Girotti, Fr. Luke, Courtney and diocesan legal. This group would add non-diocesan people, offers more transparency. This includes both personal and professional interaction. Peter went through the document.

Peter—The advisory board gives a recommendation to Bishop. The Fitness for Ministry will meet three times per year, depending on the need.

Fr. Girotti—The idea behind this is having lay people from the outside on this board to give a sense of objectivity.

Peter—IRB is only about sexual abuse of a minor.

Fr. Dorner—Do we want to use the word allegation versus incident? It is until it is proven.

Peter—Remove incident and put allegation. These are not public meetings, and the minutes are not shared. It is only an advisory board. We will clarify to the members of the board. We can bring in curia staff if connected to a school.

Fr. Luke—Vicar for Priests and Pastoral Leaders and Diaconate Director would need to be included. And you would need to include the Diaconate Director when it involves a deacon.

Courtney—Even if the civil authorities are involved, we will still meet with the board depending on the investigation. Keep everyone in the loop as soon as the civil piece is done then it goes to the board. I call the civil authorities, or I can encourage the individual in the parish with the incident to call the police. If they do not, then I will call the police. If we have a report of something that is criminal or an allegation of criminal, I will report it and not investigate it.

Fr. Larry—Fitness for Ministry I think of physical fitness or mental fitness. Could there be a better title? You want the public to understand what this is.

Bishop—Suitability for Ministry

A motion was made and seconded for the Suitability for Ministry process. Motion carried unanimously.

What can be Shared from this Meeting/Discussion on Distribution of Notes—Bishop Ricken

Fr. Girotti—We had four topics, and all are confidential items. You can share about the Precious Blood that we are looking at a process.

Bishop—There are a lot of surrounding items, we need catechesis for Extraordinary Ministers. Priests need to be formed and then Extraordinary Ministers. We can give an update on where we are.

Fr. Girotti—Parishes discussion. We are beginning a process to discern how best to care for the people of God.

Fr. Mark—And proactively engage parishes.

Fr. Girotti—LoSec, we will be calling the priests in question. Suitability for Ministry, there is going to be an advisory board to address allegations. There will be a Code of Conduct that will come from the board.

Fr. Luke—I do think priests should know about this. And discuss what are canonical rights.

Fr. Girotti—Jami and Fr. Girotti can work on a summary of the minutes.

Closing Comments

Bishop— Thank you.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jami Duvall

Recording Secretary