



Diocese of Green Bay
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
November 9, 2023

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends John Girotti, Mark Vander Steeg, and Bill O'Brien, Reverends Joseph Dorner, Kennedy Gaspar, Bill Hoffman, James Lucas, Doug LeCaptain, Francis Nusi, Carl Schmitt, Michael Thiel, James Baraniak, O. Praem. and Adam Bradley, and Barry Metzentine

N/A: Reverends Larry Seidl and Daniel Schuster

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 10:05 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 June 8, 2023. Motion approved unanimously.

Bishop's Opening Comments

Thank you for your prayers. My surgery went very well. Our priority is to call forth and form leaders who love Jesus and live his mission especially young adults and families. When it comes to priorities, that is where we are going to be putting most of our money. What is the one thing such that by doing that, everything else will become unimportant and unnecessary. Keep going back to that statement. I just looked over my calendar for 2024, I am going to be out more in the field with you. I have four years and we need to be on mission. Get to the one priority. The report on the goals is a huge success.

- Discipleship Goal, we have almost 1,000 people who have been through the Entrust Retreat. You need to be a disciple and make a disciple.
- Vocations Goal, right now we are at 19, we have two academic years to make the goal.

Worry is spending your mental energy thinking about things you do not want to happen. We are going to send Barry and a team out to those parishes struggling, ask the parishes what is going on and help them. The mission model is meant for the 25 parishes needing help. With our shortage of priests, for the next ten years we are needing to let go of some things. The Ohio initiatives are coming to Wisconsin with aggressive abortion laws. I will and you will need to devote time to that. Don't be in competition with another priest, learn from them and ask them their best practices. The diocese is only as strong as each one of the parishes. You are doing a good job. Spend more time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Pray more, are you doing a holy hour every day. Do the fundamentals well and the rest will come.

Update on Priests, Thursday Vicariate Visits, Sacramental Help-Out Fees, Deacon Pastoral Leader Salaries –

Fr. Mark Vander Steeg

Fr. Vander Steeg gave an update on priests who are ill.

Fr. Vander Steeg—Every month, Gloria and I go out and visit senior priests. Gloria and I will be working on a newsletter, it will be a two-page sent out monthly. It will include anniversaries, birthdays, and major fraternal events. For funerals, priests are buried in our white vestments. If you do not have your will updated, please do that, and send it to my office. We are updating the funeral procedures and will share with the vicars and priests.

Bishop—Fr. Vander Steeg will be at the funeral home going forward to make sure the priest is dressed properly. The intention behind it is to give the priest the proper dignity.

Fr. Vander Steeg—Bishop has worked very hard to get Bishop Andrew Cozzens to come for the Advent Priest Penance Service.

Bishop—He is the Bishop's Chair for the National Eucharistic Revival. The Penance Service is a day of renewal. These are spiritual retreat day sessions.

Fr. Vander Steeg—I am looking for priests to assist with future Clergy Congress ideas. We are grateful for the Office of Divine Worship helping with Clergy Congress. Mass Anointing of the Sick, Gerard Hall and Bishop Ricken's presentations were the high points. The low points were the meals and the Holiday Inn. I am going to be looking at alternative accommodations next year. My Thursday vicariate visits are paving the way for Bishop's vision to visit with us. Bishop has encouraged me to meet in the field with priests.

Bishop—Beginning in February, I will be going out to all vicariates. There will be a fraternal visit with priests and seek feedback. Fr. Mark is going out on Thursdays to meet with priests in vicariates.

Fr. Vander Steeg—We would like to discuss a \$5,000 increase for pastoral leaders who are deacons. We are looking for an attractive salary for them. Many of them have a master's degree.

Fr. Girotti—The reality is that we are having deacons fill this role. It also could be from a lay person. The group discussed increasing the pastoral leader and pastoral coordinator salary.

Fr. Girotti—What we are hearing is that you think the proposed number is good.

Fr. Doug—The number is low, but it is good for today. And then you need to look at this yearly.

Barry—There is a salary survey that will be done in the next three months. Is there consideration of clergy pay with taxes and housing allowance?

Fr. Vander Steeg—The numbers would be filtered through the full document. I would propose that the new number be filtered through the established document. Sacramental help-out fees. This has been looked at about every five years. An increase in Confessions has taken off in our diocese. The Wisconsin Catholic Conference sets the Mass Intentions, Funeral, Baptism and Wedding stipends. When Confessions go on for two-three hours, there is no extra compensation. The proposal is that the weekend Mass stipend to increase by \$10 for each Mass. The weekday Mass would increase by \$5. Confessions are the big thing. The proposal is \$20 per half-hour plus mileage.

Fr. Girotti—With Confessions, sometimes they are done quickly and sometimes they are longer.

Fr. Doug—This is primarily for retired priests.

The group had a discussion on increasing Confession and Mass help-out stipends.

Fr. Vander Steeg—This will take effect July 1, 2024.

A motion is made and seconded that we will do \$20 per half-hour for Confessions. Motion carried unanimously. A motion is made and seconded that we increase Masses by \$10 on weekend and \$5 increase for weekday Masses. Motion carried unanimously.

Clerical Attire for Deacon Discussion—Deacon Shaun Johnson

Dcn. Shaun—Speaking about the option for deacons to wear clerics. There were four men that approached me that might they have the option to wear clerics. They see it as a need to have physical representation of the order of clerics when they go into a hospital. Bishop and I had an initial conversation. I polled both the deacons and the priests. The deacons would prefer the clerics no matter what color. 83 priests responded to the survey, the majority of priests in the survey recommended grey and they majority said that they would recommend that the deacons be able to wear clerics. The deacon survey had 78 responded and agreed that deacons should have the option. Contacted the National Diaconate group, 30 responded that they do allow the option and none of them have said they have had any problems. Looked at the surrounding dioceses. All four allow the option for deacons to wear collars. Diocese of Superior just opened the option. They have all said that this has been a positive. There is a draft policy for this. If deacons were to wear the collar, they would wear grey and they would need to wear a name tag provided by the Diocese. There should probably be

parameters of when the deacons should wear the collar and that is in the draft. If we are issuing nametags, then I would know who is wanting to wear clerics and makes an awareness. Bishop Ricken has the decision to decide on this.

Bishop—This is the direction that we are going. I want your feedback or pushback. The safeguard is that they would only wear the clerics in public when they need it.

The group had a discussion and some of the responses include:

- When someone wants someone to pray for them, they go to holy people.
- The distinguish between grey is important. I am fine with them wearing it in the parish office. I think it should say our parish on the nametag but say the approval of the Diocese. I am in favor of it.
- This is for permanent deacons?

Dcn. Shaun—Yes, we can update that.

Fr. Girotti—I am wondering how this promotes vocations to the priesthood?

Bishop—Because the deacons need to know that is one of their focuses as a deacon. Chance for catechesis. We are not asking for a vote, thank you for the feedback. We will review and do a decree.

Dcn. Shaun—There needs to be catechesis around what these orders are.

Liturgical Recap from Clergy Congress Discussion—Bishop Ricken, Fr. Girotti, Gerard Hall

Gerard—Briefly go over high level where we are with the comments that came through. We have put the feedback into a report. Concerns of Eucharist in the diocese:

1. Proper dispensation for the Eucharist—How are the faithful properly coming up for Communion.
2. Proper care of the Eucharist. What is the proper care for the Eucharist. How are people taking Communion to the sick.
3. Holy Communion to the home bound.

In the comments, there is an overwhelmingly that we need to continue our catechesis on the Eucharist. We have reached over 2,000 Eucharistic Ministers after tonight's training. We have to look at proper care, proper disposition, and Communion to the homebound. The Bishop's Conference has added the lay ritual for lay people bringing Communion to the homebound. There is a lay ritual in the new book, will be out in January. This ritual is how Holy Communion is celebrated outside of Mass, Communion to the home bound, nursing home. It will address Communion services. The most interesting change centers on the Word. There has to be a celebration of the Word in order to bring Holy Communion to the home bound. It talks about reservation of reserved Eucharist. Reserved Eucharist in the tabernacle is ordinarily for the sick. We should not be going to the tabernacle for hosts for Mass. It also clarifies that priests and deacons go to the tabernacle. If it is a lay person, it must be designated by Bishop. There can only be one lay person per parish. The advantage of doing this training early on has given some pastoral insight as we move forward.

The church has a ritual for sending people forth in Mass. Our next direction is proper catechesis. We are scheduling 8 more sessions for Eucharistic Ministers in the spring. This training gives us the field report. How do we move forward. We will look at the first three documents to come out for our diocese:

1. Norms and Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministry
2. Our practice for ad orientum in our diocese.
3. Proper care of the Eucharist.

Gerard—Because of the new document coming out in January, we will be able to accelerate our document on Communion for the homebound. We will have a webinar in January to continue this. There are three other sets of guidelines. It will be a slow and methodical process. The lay ministers coming are hungry for formation.

Bishop—We need to thank these priests who have sent the people for the training. People love this training. You must be praying the Mass, to see this change. They see your deep love for Jesus Christ and the Eucharist.

One thing can be done to change the climate, pray the Mass. Use the silences, let the Holy Spirit work. The Holy Spirit invites and convicts. The more they know the more they will want to know.

Fr. Lucas—I attended one of the trainings. There is a set formation. With the question-and-answer time, no two sessions are the same. The lay folks come back to the pastor saying what they have learned, and the pastors are not there at the training session. It may create some confusion.

Gerard—The question and answers will help form the documents that the clergy will discuss on the webinars before the documents are finalized.

Fr. Lucas—it would be good to state that there will be webinars.

Fr. Dorner—I attended. I think it would be good for clergy to also attend.

Bishop Appeal Report/2023 Billing/2024 Goal—Josh Diedrich, Tammy Danz, Paul Kolbach

The Bishop's Appeal 2023 currently has raised \$6,338,127 from 24,683 donors. The Crozier Society members represent 59% of the amount raised for the Bishop's Appeal goal.

We have 115 parishes that have exceeded their goal and are due refunds totaling \$340,193. The current number of parishes short of goal, and subject to being invoiced is forty-two.

Fr. Thiel asked why we would bill parishes with shortages if the overall goal has already been reached. Paul responded that he works with these parishes to help them reach their goal not only for this year but also in future years. The Diocese has an account at the Catholic Foundation that was created as a safety net should we have a catastrophic year where we do not reach the Bishop's Appeal goal. One way I try to help is if three or four parishes are behind, I try to offer a matching funds arrangement with them to assist them in reaching their current goal in hopes that they could reach future goals by not having the burden of unmet past goals. Also, in the past, the Diocese has also helped parishes with international priests (priests without green cards are employees of the Diocese due to their immigration Visa status). During Covid the Diocese received funds from the Paycheck Protection Program and shared this with those parishes by not invoicing those parishes for the international priests for nine months over a three-year period.

A motion was made and seconded to approve St. Therese of Little Flower on behalf of the Catholic Diocese of Green Bay, Inc. to invoice no more than forty-two parishes that are short of their 2023 Bishop's Appeal goal not to exceed \$186,666. The motion was approved with eight in favor, one opposed and one abstention.

The group then discussed whether to raise the Bishop's Appeal goal by \$100K.

Fr. LeCaptain asked how the \$100K increase in Bishop's Appeal would be used and what are the parishes getting for this increase. Fr. Girotti responded that parishes are increasingly asking for more assistance from the Curia, and not just in the areas of ministry but from Finance, Human Resources, and Facilities and Properties. Paul reiterated that the parishes are not charged for any of the services received from these three areas. Recent examples of assistance from Finance are the applications for Paycheck Protection Program loans and subsequent forgiveness, as well as the Employee Retention Credit. The primary use of Bishop's Appeal is to cover wages and benefits, including medical costs, of employees not covered by Cathedraticum. In clarification to a question by Fr. Theil, Paul said that St. Therese, St. Luke, and St. Joseph corporations receive only indirect funding from Bishop's Appeal and Cathedraticum as opposed to other Curia corporations. We have a document giving brief descriptions of each corporation that can be distributed. Bishop added that parishes need to be reminded of how much assistance they receive for diocesan corporations for which they are not charged.

A motion was made and seconded to request the Presbyteral Council make a recommendation to Bishop David Ricken to set the 2024 Bishop's Appeal goal at \$5,700,000. The motion passed with eight in approval and one opposed.

Cathedraticum—Paul Kolbach

Paul—Cathedraticum uses funds for Canonical Office, Chancellor's office, Tribunal, and unassigned international priests. I am recommending a 5% increase. The primary reasons for the increases are wages, medical, and safe environment software update.

Fr. Girotti—Part of this is legal fees, for diocese and attorney fees to help parishes with services.

Paul—This is a true tax. If there are smaller parishes who are struggling, I work with them.

Bishop—The Bishop's Appeal is a goal we need to meet to provide services to the parishes. The people here help in the parishes.

A motion was made and seconded to increase Cathedraticum for 2024-2025 by 5% increase and the parishes to be billed \$2,583,303. The motion had 7 approved, 2 opposed and 1 abstained.

Silver Cliff Chapel Reduction Request—Russ Gray, Fr. Girotti

Barry—It has been a chapel, it used to be consistently used. We adjusted Mass times. Lakewood has Crooked Lake and Silver Cliff chapels. Through the process, it was discerned that the Mass would be discontinued about a year ago. The local leadership is giving a recommendation.

Fr. Girotti—It does not need to come before the Presbyteral Council because it is a chapel. Bishop is wanting to consult with the council. Russ from Facilities, and Kendra and Fr. Praveen from Lakewood parish are in attendance for this discussion.

Kendra—We request that it be reduced, and we plan to sell it. The number of Masses were condensed. We eliminated one of our locations.

Fr. Praveen—We had five Masses before we took away the Silver Cliff Mass. We now have four Masses.

Kendra—About 40 people attended Mass and it has been vacated since August 2022.

Russ—Nice building, very rural. The building has good bones, it should sell quickly. The structure is good.

Fr. Baraniak—The property value, would it be greater with or without the building?

Russ—With the building.

Fr. Dorner—What are the possible uses for this building?

Kendra—The Town of Silver Cliff was hit by a tornado last year. We reached out to them right away to see if they would be interested. They are very interested in using it for the town office. They will be taking it to the town board. They also have another investor interested in buying for vacation rentals.

Russ—Barb and I helped with the process.

Bishop—If you use it for the town, we would still be helping the community. Do we offer holy communion to those during the week?

Fr. Praveen—We take holy communion to the sick and homebound.

Barry—There were many meetings. We looked at Mass trends and seasonal trends. We had to go out to twenty parishes with Mass schedules. With this case, the Mass schedule adjustment Silver Cliff was discerned that the Mass no longer could continue.

Fr. Lucas—Selling it with the building maximizes their income.

Fr. Girotti—There are always restrictive elements that go with selling the place. The protocol is that you take away all the sacred items.

A motion was made and seconded that since Silver Cliff chapel in Silver Cliff, already part of St. Mary of the Lake Parish in Lakewood will no longer be used for divine worship, and since the care of souls has been well

provided for, the Presbyteral Council recommends that the chapel be relegated to profane but not sordid use. Motion carried unanimously.

What can be Shared from this Meeting/Discussion on Distribution of Notes—Bishop Ricken
Fr. Girotti— Discern what you share with your people, but all good items.

Closing Comments

Bishop— Thank you. You all did very good, hard work. We cannot keep everything going all the time.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jami Duvall, Recording Secretary