

**DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
February 22, 2014**

**Members Present:** Bishop David Ricken, Deacon Timothy Reilly

**Vicariate Representatives:** Pat Kosuth (I), Julie Birr (II), Michael Witte (II) , Steve Vanden Heuvel (III), Patrick Hart (IV), Debbie Griem (V), Jan Clark (VI), Michael Donart (VI), William Graf (VII), Cindy Massey (VII).

**Appointed Representatives:** Terry Olivas (DCCW Rep.), Deacon Charles (Chuck) Schumacher (Peshtigo), and Elizabeth Kostichka (Green Bay).

**Appointed Religious Representatives:** Sister Donna Koch, OSF (Green Bay), Sister Natalie Binversie, OSF (Manitowoc).

**Members Absent/Excused:** Stuart Gruszynski (I), Judi Gosenheimer (III), John Reilly (IV), Deborah Schmidt (V), Deacon Randy Haak (Kaukauna), Abbot Gary J. Neville, O. Praem (DePere), Deacon Lincoln Wood (Clintonville), Reverend Patrick Gawrylewski, OFM.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Bishop Ricken called the meeting to order at 8:45 A.M. and Morning Prayer was prayed. The Mission Statement was read by all.

**MINUTES:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2013 meeting as amended. Terry Olivas had attended the May 11, 2013 meeting but was marked as absent. Motion carried.

**AGENDA:** The agenda was reviewed and accepted as presented.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Everyone introduced himself or herself and was welcomed and thanked by Bishop Ricken for their participation in the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

**OPENING COMMENTS:** Bishop Ricken gave a brief overview of the purpose of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Presbyteral Council, and Vicars. He said that he relies on people in these committees to provide him with feedback. He takes their comments and ideas seriously. He also said implementation of the pastoral letter continues in the parishes throughout the diocese.

Bishop Ricken gave members of the council the book *The Joy of the Gospel, by Holy Father Francis*. He would like each member to read Chapters 1 and 2 before the next meeting on May 17, 2014. We will review the two chapters at that time.

**DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW** – Catholic Charities Director - Ted Phernetton. Ted provided an organizational overview of Catholic Charities including its staff, service array, financial support, ongoing challenges, and short-term focus. He said one of the primary functions of Catholic Charities is to help people to engage in life, especially those who are most vulnerable. Catholic Charities provides services to people of all faiths. Catholic Charities is a regional organization and one of its goals is to build a greater presence in the parishes throughout the Diocese.

Ted Phernetton spoke about the adoption process, its complexities, and the courage of the mothers who make the decision to give up their child. The process is tough on the birth mother and Catholic Charities has recognized the need to provide ongoing support before and after the adoption.

The Affordable Care Act will have an impact on mental health services, especially on how the services are reimbursed. Catholic Charities is watching the legislation carefully to assess the financial impact.

Bishop Ricken recognized the good work that Catholic Charities is doing within our community and thanked Ted and his staff for their hard work and effort, especially towards the poor.

**REPORT ON PASTORAL LETTER IMPLEMENTATION:** Mark Mogilka provided an update on parish implementation of Bishop Ricken's Pastoral Letter. 154 of 157 parishes have returned their pastoral letter report. The primary areas that parishes have focused on are evangelization, young adults, and the Eucharist. The vision is for each parish, over a 5-year time period, to focus and strengthen all six areas highlighted in the pastoral letter.

To support the parishes in their pastoral letter implementation, the diocese has provided programs and services including its first webinar. The good news is that it saved people time and money because they did not need to drive to the Diocese of Green Bay in order to listen to Bishop Ricken's remarks. At the last Leadership Convocation, Cardinal Wuerl was the keynote speaker. The meeting had a large turnout, about 600 people attended. Breakout session topics were on the areas of pastoral focus. The Diocesan website has been "beefed-up" since the last meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Statistics show an increase in hits on the website, especially from first time visitors.

Stewardship & Pastoral Services will launch a primary service project in the near future. The objective is to review parish boundaries, identify the makeup/demographics of the people within the parish, and then present the information to the leaders of the parish. This will help them to identify a strategy to use for parish outreach.

65% of all parishes have responded positively to the question, *has the pastoral letter made a difference at your parish.*

**CATHOLIC SCHOOL INITIATIVE (CSI)** – Department of Education, Dr. Joseph Bound. Dr. Joe Bound gave an update on CSI and its impact on the Board of Education. He began by reviewing the background of CSI. Now that it has been in place for a period of time, they have identified some issues related to the structure of the boards. Dr. Bound said the Board of Education is trying to handle too many issues at once and some items are not getting the attention they need.

A potential solution, and a recommendation of Dr. Bound, is to reorganize the boards and separate them into 3 councils with distinct areas of focus- Religious Education, Youth Ministry and Diocesan Schools. The Diocesan Board of Education would also reorganize and change. Its focus would be on policies (review final draft before being submitted to the chancery), collaborative projects, study overall trends in schools, religious education and youth ministry in the Diocese. Deacon Tim Reilly clarified and said the councils would be stand-alone. The

Board of Education would focus on policy; it would not oversee the councils. It will be a clearinghouse without oversight responsibility.

Several questions were asked about the potential board reorganization, which Dr. Joe Bound answered. Of note, the Diocesan Pastoral Council is the first council to hear about this proposal.

Bishop Ricken asked the Diocesan Pastoral Council for a vote on this proposal. A motion was made to approve the direction proposed by Dr. Joe Bound for restructuring the Board of Education and separating it into 3 advisory councils. The motion was made and seconded; it passed unanimously.

**COMMON CORE-** Dr. Joseph Bound, Director of Education

Dr. Joe Bound reviewed the history of standards in our Catholic schools. He said that 10-12 years ago, Fr. Kroll, who was the Superintendent of Catholic Schools at that time, recognized the need to establish standards in our schools. Over a 5 year time period, he worked with the teachers and administrators to establish and implement standards. Our standards continue to be reviewed and refined to ensure our students receive the best education possible.

Prior to the controversy over Common Core standards, the diocese had reviewed the Common Core standards for math and English Language Arts (ELA). In their analysis, they found that some of the standards were better than ours, and some were not as good. About the same time, some of the Catholic schools in our diocese needed new textbooks. During their evaluation process, they reviewed textbooks that are labeled *aligned with Common Core*, as well as textbooks that do not have this label. Some of our schools purchased textbooks that have the label and are currently using them in the schools. Note: Dr. Joe made a point to explain the label *Common Core aligned*. He spoke with the publishers and found that it means that the publisher reviewed the last edition of the textbook, changed the sequence on how the material was being presented and, in some situations, put a label on it that read *aligned with Common Core*.

When the controversy arose about Common Core, Bishop Ricken looked into the issue closely with Dr. Joe Bound, with other Bishops and many educators and resource people in the community. Bishop Ricken decided that our diocese will continue to use our own standards but we will continue to look for ways to improve our standards so we can improve the education level of our students. This means we will reference a vast array of standards including Common Core.

In the meantime, Jane Schueller, Director of Curriculum for the diocese, is in the process of forming a committee that includes teacher, administrators, principals, and parents to help identify and develop standards for all subjects taught in our schools.

Dr. Joe Bound also mentioned that in talking with parents and teachers about this issue, there is a significant misunderstanding about standards. This issue has become much politicized, and misinformation is being circulated. People are not getting the facts. He presented a plan to the council on how to handle this issue moving forward.

**MISSION MAP OF NEW EVANGELIZATION:** Bishop Ricken

Bishop Ricken presented his preliminary roadmap on how to form Catholics in the diocese on the New Evangelization. He is concerned that Catholics do not know how to express and

communicate their relationship with Christ so he has developed a plan that may help to teach this skill and help all of us to move towards evangelization. These plans will dove-tail with the work that is currently going on in our parishes to implement the pastoral letter.

At the end of his presentation and discussion with the council, Bishop Ricken asked the council for affirmation to move forward with his new plan. The council responded with the words, “You have our blessing.”

### **BISHOP’S CLOSING COMMENTS AND PRAYER**

Bishop Ricken thanked the Diocesan Pastoral Council for their participation in the discussions and their input. He reiterated how important it is for him to hear from them so he can consider their opinions and ideas. The meeting closed with a final prayer and blessing.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 11:50 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat VonHaden  
Recording Secretary

### **NEXT MEETINGS:**

- Saturday, May 11, 2014 in Bona Hall
- Saturday, October 11, 2014 in St. Francis Xavier Conference Room