



Diocese of Green Bay
DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
October 3, 2015

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverend Daniel Felton, Pat Kosuth, Stuart Gruszynski, Julie Birr, Judi Gosenheimer, Steve Vanden Heuvel, John Reilly, Patrick Hart, Jan Clark, William Graf, Paula Freimuth, Deacon Randy Haak, Deacon Chuck Schumacher, Sister Natalie Binversie

Excused/Absent: Deborah Schmidt, Cindy Massey, Michael Witte, Debbie Griem, Steve Parent, Elizabeth Kostichka, Deacon Lincoln Wood, Very Reverend James Baraniak, O. Praem.

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 8:45 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the assembled in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Mission Statement was recited by Council members.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of April 18, 2015 as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented. Motion seconded and approved unanimously.
- Self-introductions were made by all present.

Bishop's Opening Comments

Bishop Ricken thanked members for their attendance and noted some members drive a long distance in order to attend the meeting. Bishop expressed his gratitude for their commitment.

Bishop also gave a report on his recent attendance at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia at which Pope Francis was present. Bishop experienced thousands of people on fire for the Lord. He noted the numerous good talks given and said that many of the topics of those talks coincide with what we are now doing in the Diocese. He said it was a beautiful experience of the Church filled with tremendous optimism, hope, and commitment. Pope Francis was phenomenal in Philadelphia – encouraging and challenging us to have a missionary heart, to reach out to those who are broken and away from Church, to encourage dialogue, to listen to people and encounter and accompany them to the truth. Pope Francis asked the bishops to be the leaders in all of this. He noted the truths of the Church will not change but how we present them will change. Pilgrims from the Diocese of Green Bay numbered 111, ranging in age from 6 to 90. (It was noted that all of Pope Francis' talks/homilies are on the USCCB website.)

Department Update: Living Justice

Catherine Orr, Director of Living Justice, and Father John Girotti, Vicar for Canonical Services and Associate Moderator of the Curia, provided an overview of the work of the Department of Living Justice. Catherine commented that Pope Francis, in his visit to the United States, addressed many areas of Catholic social teaching, a hidden gem of the Church. The Pope is providing us now with an opportunity to talk about the "hidden gem."

Eric Weydt, Catholic Social Justice Coordinator

Eric works with the parishes to promote awareness of social justice issues, including the growing issue of human trafficking, which affects men, women, and children and is not confined to the larger cities but

present in our very own Diocese. Catherine noted there are presently 16 communities of religious women working together to raise awareness in our area of this serious issue. Eric also promotes awareness of the availability of grants from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (the Catholic Church's anti-poverty program) and Operation Rice Bowl (a program of Catholic Relief Services).

Celia McKee: Dignity of Human Life Coordinator

Celia's area of expertise is any issue involving life: anti-abortion efforts, contraception, end-of-life issues (POLST), and Project Rachel (a post-abortion healing ministry).

Peg Vande Hey: Family & Married Life Coordinator

Peg's responsibilities include marriage enrichment, marriage preparation, infant baptism preparation, and Natural Family Planning (the Diocese is currently teaching five different natural family planning methods which also deal with the issue of infertility). NFP is part of our marriage preparation program for engaged couples and has grown in popularity over the last several years.

Catherine Orr, Director of Living Justice

Much of Catherine's work includes the areas of Catholic social teaching and legislative advocacy. She particularly mentioned the *Faithful Citizenship* document put out by the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) which addresses how we can be engaged in political issues. Catherine also serves as liaison to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (the state's legislative arm of the Catholic Church), Catholic Charities, and EnCourage Ministry (same-sex attraction). Catherine also noted the Synod on the Family will be taking place in Rome this month (October 2015). Many issues will be discussed, including divorce and same-sex attraction. This is an exciting but challenging time for our Church and the Synod ties in well with the Holy Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis.

Teach My People to Pray

The program is ongoing in the Diocese. Year II will focus on the household as a place of prayer and love. There will be an all-household mailing which will include a letter from Bishop Ricken, an image of the Holy Family, prayers, instructions on how to pray the rosary, information on *Lectio Divina*, and resources on how to foster prayer life in our homes, etc. Families will be asked to dedicate their homes to the Holy Family in December 2015 and consecrate their homes and families to the Sacred Heart in June 2016.

Laudato Si

Pope Francis also wants us to focus on the environment and recently released his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, in which he indicates there is an interconnectedness between the environment and human beings which crosses all faiths. We must be aware of how we relate to other human beings and to the environment.

Jubilee Year of Mercy

Father Girotti noted the Jubilee Year of Mercy will begin December 8 and conclude November 20, 2016. During the Year of Mercy, the Church will focus on the mercy God has for us and how we are called to be merciful to others. Spiritual and corporal works of mercy will be highlighted: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, burying the dead, etc. This Year of Mercy will provide for a rich re-investigation of these corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

In conclusion, Catherine offered the services of her department to the parishes and added that any of the Department's staff members are available for consultation and presentations. Bishop thanked Catherine and Father Girotti for their very informative presentation.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Bishop congratulated Paula Freimuth (DCCW representative) and the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for having recently been awarded the NCCW's Achievement Recognition Award for their *Let's Lick Family Violence Campaign*. The campaign supports the National Council of Catholic Women's "Women Healing The Wounds" program. The proceeds from the campaign support domestic violence centers in the area.

Relationship Between Diocese and Parishes

Bishop introduced the topic by commenting that there is concern we are asking our parishes and pastors/pastoral leaders to do too much in the way of promoting diocesan programs and that many of them are becoming overwhelmed. Part of the challenge is that we are channeling so many of these programs through the pastors/pastoral leaders who sometimes have a very limited staff or, in some cases, no staff at all. How do we manage to do it all or to set priorities. Bishop is in the process of meeting with priests/pastoral leaders for their input. Bishop's hope is to move from a corporate model to a mission model and be pro-active rather than reactive. We need to determine the best way for the Diocese to help the parishes and for the parishes to help the Diocese. Mass attendance is falling. If we lose our parishes and schools, we will die on the vine.

Member comment: We as a society are overwhelmed. Everyone is too busy, too much to do. Society in general is working more hours, not taking time off. When you have more to do than you can handle, all you can do is react.

Members were asked for input on the following question: what overwhelms you in covering the basics of family life and parish life.

Basics of Family Life:

time with one another (family relationships)
job security
raising kids
at-home needs (washing, groceries, etc.)
paying the bills/finances
addressing brokenness
extended family needs (children returning home, taking care of aging parents)
dealing with death and endings

Basics of Parish Life:

quality and sacredness of the Mass
care for school children
upkeep of buildings and property
volunteer and financial resources
familiarity with parishioners
social interaction
corporal works of mercy
sacraments
education/formation (including adults)
vibrant ministry to youth, young adults, young families

Father Felton indicated this is only the beginning of the discussion and thanked the Council members for their open and honest sharing.

Discipleship Year I

Bishop explained that many priests, pastoral leaders, deacons, and parish leadership feel they are asked to promote discipleship and the New Evangelization but do not really understand it themselves. The first couple of years will be spent working with priests, pastoral leaders, deacons, and parish leadership and will extend to the faithful in subsequent years. It is important to form our leaders first. This is not so much a program but a return to the basics of formation. The goal is to use the same language in talking about discipleship and the New Evangelization and help leaders to see how we can spread the Faith, increase prayer life, and improve parish liturgies to help all to know Christ, to live Christ, and to bring Christ to the world.

Q & A

A member commented that the parish finance software program mandated by the Diocese is still not working well and has been a source of frustration for many parishes. Bishop and Father Felton explained that the Diocese is well aware of the problems faced by the parishes in using this software program and are still working to solve the problem.

Closing Comments

Bishop thanked all present for sharing their gifts and wisdom and summed up the discussions saying we will work to “streamline, simplify, and serve.”

Meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Wickman
Recording Secretary