



**Diocese of Green Bay**  
**PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 8, 2016**

**Attendees:** Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends Daniel Felton and Thomas Long, Monsignor James Dillenburg, Reverends Robert Kabat, Richard Allen, Timothy Shillcox, O. Praem., James P. Leary, OFM Cap, Jason Blahnik and Philip Dinh-Van-Thiep

**Excused:** Reverends Thomas Reynebeau, Joel Sember, Robert Kollath and Ron Colombo

**Opening Activities**

- Meeting opened at 10:12 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the Council members in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- A motion was made to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Accepted minutes.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the August 16, 2016 meeting as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

**Bishop's Opening Comments**

Meitler is from Milwaukee and will be in the diocese. Meitler is doing a study and reaching out to the Catholic schools. They have been to one-third of the schools already. There will be a planning process after the visits. We will share information as soon as we have that.

**Update on Priests/Report on Priests who are Ill—Fr. Tom Long**

Fr. Tom Long reported on priests and deacons who are ill or recovering from surgery.

**Review of Discipleship I and Discipleship II Planning—Fr. Tom Long**

Fr. Tom handed out feedback received from an evaluation regarding Discipleship I at Clergy Congress. Right now we are in our Alpha Groups. This will be monthly through May. One of the sessions will take place during a retreat day on February 10<sup>th</sup>, along with the diocesan curia groups at Rock Garden. Next fall we will move into the second year, focused on what does this mean to our parish ministry. How do we intentionally invite others to have a relationship with Jesus? Deacons, parish staff leaders, and principals will do Year I next year. You could incorporate this into your staff meeting. By the time it gets to the parish, the pastor will not be involved in the individual alpha groups.

Fr. Dan—By the end of the second year, all of parish leadership, staff and curia will have gone through the same experience. And then the third year it will be rolled out to the parishes. By the year 2020, there will be a larger launch of discipleship. There are some parishes that are piloting the Alpha program.

Fr. Jason—As a pastor, my life got a lot easier with the tools. Train people to be disciple makers with Alpha as a tool.

**Review of Mission and Vision Roll-out to Curia & Parishes—Fr. Dan**

Rollout to the curia, working on replacing the signage at the curia. The parish survey was sent out. In November and December, BAC will start to look at the data coming in from the survey. By January, would

like to have five or six principles. The curia may look at tailoring what they offer the parishes based on the needs.

Bishop—The whole purpose of the survey is to get real input so we are not having false expectations of what is expected. What should be the relationship between the parish and the diocese? Want best leadership and service to the parishes. Once we have the information, we are going to start implementing and everything else will revolve around it. Our role has more to do with enabling and helping train the leadership. We will start to do our strategic mission and vision planning.

Fr. Dan—There is the potential to better serve the parishes. Remember while this is going on, your leadership will have gone through Alpha and have a better understanding. July 1, 2017 have a mission and vision planning—focus to be on mission. Some parishes may be working on their own strategic planning. Want to put the focus on mission. The Bishops of the United States will also have a plan in place. Want the plans to become mission driven. We will take a whole year to do that. By July 1, 2018 –have a mission plan in place and that is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The roll-out plan draft was handed out.

Bishop—Is it a realistic timeline to prepare parishes for a parish mission planning process March 2017-June 30, 2017? Is this too soon? They will not be through discipleship seminar until fall 2017. Recommend a year later. Parish planning will continue. Plant the vision and the seeds. Give the tools to get behind this.

Fr. Dan— So, if we move the time table, then the curia has mission and vision in 2017 and parishes will have mission and vision in place by 2019.

**Discussion on the Sacrament of Confirmation**—Bishop Ricken, Maria Schuette and Tania LeFevre

Bishop—Had this discussion with the Regional Vicars. We have a bit of a challenge. There are 72 confirmations in the diocese. Bishop Banks is scheduled for 8 and Bishop Morneau has 14. Abbott Neville has 5. Bishop Ricken has 52. The age of confirmation is part of the discussion. Young people are leaving the church at the age of 10. The opportunity is there to look at restore order of the sacraments. The staff recommends keeping it the age that it is and focus on helping them become real disciples. I want to confirm people who are real disciples. The sacrament should be initiating them into their faith.

Maria Schuette—We called a number of diocese and asked if they were restored order. The unanimous opinion of most moving the age did not change the way they did discipleship. Ask how they did confirmation prep, benefits and drawbacks. Recommend keep it in high school, bringing it down in age would perhaps bring the attendance down after that. Keep it junior year but look at better ways we can support discipleship formation. We have decreased 56% in the past four years with high school students.

Thoughts shared during discussion:

- Like it where it is. Discipleship I and II is focused on adults. To go to a lower age seems opposite of the paradigm shift we are moving towards. It goes back to the parents. The paradigm shift we are doing with adults will affect confirmation down the road. Focus on the ones coming to catechism.
- Look at the preparation. With the marriage prep, we freely have to decide to accept or do not accept. Too much too soon, teaching kids versus engaging adults. There are many opportunities for individuals to do sacrament of confirmation separate from the time scheduled at their parish.
- You should be able to opt out and still be connected.
- We are not working with perfect people. We cannot set goals we cannot attain. Grandparents support the child.

- See the sacrament in junior/senior like they graduated and are done. Challenge to get them to come to church.
- How about an invitation where they can get sacrament of confirmation within the high school timeframe? Have some flexibility. Have the piece that they continue catechesis. Have the parish community have a more active role. Have smaller groups and maybe less confirmations.
- In view of discipleship is this discussion too early? But if the discipleship program works, then we will find conversion in the adults and they will see it as their job to educate the children. It could be 15 years out before we see.

Bishop—Thank you. This is helpful. We had a similar response with the vicars.

Maria—We are doing parish visits. We are hearing the same. It is going to be a slow process. Parishes are starting to think about the age. We are trying to not make this a one size fits all. With the new initiatives happening with the adults, they would like to see the results of that first.

Bishop—A possible resolution was to have an Auxiliary Bishop. We were declined to have an Auxiliary Bishop. When there is a crowd of about 40-50 kids, there is something beautiful. When we get down to 10-12 kids, the parish does not see it as a priority if it is separate from a Sunday mass. We looked at the numbers. If you divide 50 into 167 the amount for Vicariate I, then you would get about 3 confirmations. You need a church large enough for that size of a group to attend. I had this discussion with the vicars last week. I asked them to start having this discussion with the priests within their vicariate in order to move towards the number of confirmations shown on the sheet handed out. Diocesan-wide confirmation is well attended. So, we would like to go from 70 down to 45 over time.

Fr. Dan—Want to look at what is the anticipated number of confirmations, need to look at natural groupings with parishes and look at seating capacity. This begins a discussion within each vicariate. Some parishes do confirmation in the spring and some in the fall. It may take a couple of years to get through the transition.

Tania—The form will be put in Parish Pages in January. We will start scheduling confirmations in March and April.

Bishop—Thank you that was very helpful.

**Bishop's Appeal Request**—Josh Diedrich and Paul Kolbach

### **Cathedraticum and Bishop's Appeal**

1. **2017-2018 Cathedraticum** (sheet handed out)—Paul

USCCB is changing their formula, that won't take effect until the following year. Recommend a 2% increase level and take effect next year.

Fr. Dan—We have worked hard to put together an incentive program for a parish that is in the rears. We have ten parishes right now that we try to work aggressively with to get the rears out of the way. It puts the parish in a better position to move forward in a more positive way.

## 2. **Bishop's Appeal** (sheet handed out)—Josh Diedrich

Start with an update on 2016 Bishop's Appeal. We had just over 30,000 families and the appeal raised \$5,758,972. The average gift was \$188 up from \$181 in 2015. The Crozier Society had an increase in new members. They contributed 50% of the Bishop's Appeal raised. Worksheet handed out shows the breakdown of parishes. We have 157 parishes and 115 have exceeded their goal. The shortage is \$185,270 from 42 parishes. The second chart shows number of parishes and how many are receiving refunds versus being invoiced. The third chart gives a sense of the refunds in dollars versus invoiced. There are many different ways to promote the Bishop's Appeal. When the parish has success, the people see the goal easier to achieve in the future. The Focus on 2017 campaign is Inspiring Disciples. When we look at 2017 Bishop's Appeal goal, I would like to suggest a goal of \$5,300,000. That is an increase of \$200,000 from the 2016 goal.

A motion was made to approve the Bishop's Appeal goal. The motion was seconded and unanimous approval.

A motion was made to invoice 42 parishes that are short of their Bishop's Appeal goal. The motion was seconded and unanimous approval.

A motion was made for a 2% increase to Cathedraticum. The motion was seconded and unanimous approval.

### **Presentation on the Reduction of St. William, Eland to Secular Use**—Barb Wiegand, Mark Mogilka and Deb Brandt-Pastoral Coordinator for parish

Barb—Back in October, we received a letter from Fr. Jose requesting St. William of Eland be reduced to secular but not profane use. The building could be razed. The church is linked with Holy Family in Wittenberg. Holy Family-St. William was created through the merger. The Norrbom family has been the caretaker for the church. The family has had mass twice a year which has been attended by 50-75 family members and friends. Fr. Jose started looking into the site and condition. At that time, the Norrbom family was the only one who had a key for the building. Barb Wiegand and Fr. Jose were let in to take photos both inside and outside. Based on a safety inspection report provided by our insurance broker Aon, the parish council determined it would be cost prohibited to put any more money into that site. That brought Mark into the conversation in late March of 2016. In June, Fr. Jose and Mark Mogilka talked to the family about what was discussed at the parish meetings and the Aon findings. The family resigned to the fact that further investigation was not needed and gave their blessing to close the church. They requested a final mass. Mike Gerrits went out to the site to see what it would take to have that final mass. With the insurance concerns and what to do with caring for the families. Father, parishioners and council members voted unanimously to do minimum amount to update the church in preparation for final mass January 8<sup>th</sup> with Bishop Ricken. They would like the building to move to secular use without profane use. They said the building could be razed if needed in order to sell the property.

Mark and Deb have been at many of the meetings. Mark—This building is not in good shape. We discussed in the meeting that the possibility might be to tear it down. The family would prefer that a sale be attempted including the building versus demolition. We can put stipulations in the sale.

Deb Brandt—From my perspective this has been 30 years that they have just held one or two masses per year. The Finance Council and the Norrbom family involved were not opposed to tearing it down. They know how much more involved it is to deal with asbestos. The metal ceilings and the stained glass windows might help cover the expense to tear it down. There is a neighbor that is interested in purchasing the property without the building.

Barb—There is no cemetery.

Mark—Typically, there is a decree made by the Bishop and it will be noted at the parish that was merged.

Deb—They have already talked about moving the statues to the parish.

A motion was made to give consent to Bishop that since the church of St. William in Eland, already part of Holy Family-St. William Parish in Wittenberg, is no longer able to be safely used for divine worship and since the care of souls has been well provided for, the Presbyteral Council recommends that the church be relegated to profane but not sordid use and the property be sold. The motion was seconded and unanimous approval.

**Presentation on St. Augustine, Kossuth**—Barb Wiegand, Fr. John Becker, and Mark Mogilka

Fr. Dan—Last time this was presented before the group there was a concern for care of souls and other things that came to light at the meeting.

Barb—March of 2016 parish had consensus. In July, the parish asked for reduction to secular use but not profane use. The Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors gave consent for reduction to secular use at August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. On August 30<sup>th</sup> Mark, Barb and Fr. Becker met with parishioners of St. Augustine parish to discuss needing a clear plan. Through that meeting, they all agreed that they wanted to have reduction. Someone at the meeting wanted to purchase. They requested a final mass. They also wanted to merge with St. Anne. Both the councils and Fr. Becker unanimously voted to merge. They would like the final mass sooner than later. We would need authorization for the parcel to be smaller.

Bishop—Pastoral care of the people connects the merger. The care of souls is so important. The provision is that they are merged into St. Anne's.

Fr. Becker—We have composed a letter for the 33 families letting them know we are merging with St. Anne's. It let them know they did not need to do anything if they want to be part of St. Anne's, but communicate with us if they are looking to go to another parish. We will have a census form. The two statues will go to St. Anne's. All the religious education was already done at St. Anne's.

Mark—With the meeting 9/29/16 with 12 parishioners and St. Anne's Pastoral Council and Finance Council, there was support to merge and take on the care of the cemetery and the people. Those present voted unanimously in support of merger.

Barb—The cemetery name will stay the same. The cemetery surrounds two sides of the church.

Fr. Becker—You are able to put a boundary between the two. No talk about demolishing the church. Someone is interested in purchasing it for an office or storage.

A motion was made to give consent to Bishop that since the church of St. Augustine in Kossuth has already been relegated to profane but not sordid use, and since the care of souls has been well provided for, the

Presbyteral Council recommends that the parish of St. Augustine be merged with St. Anne Parish in Francis Creek and church property excluding cemetery be sold. Motion was seconded and unanimous consent for approval.

**Q & A—Bishop Ricken**

Fr. Allen—Pope Francis effect? We should accompany people in situations. Has simplified process for annulments.

Fr. Blahnik—Any difference with Tribunal? We can have Fr. Brian come in next time to make a report. At the present time he explains what the costs are and they can do a free will offering.

Fr. Tom Long has done a fantastic job and will need to be recognized.

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Jami Rogne

Recording Secretary