



**Diocese of Green Bay**  
**PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 14, 2016**

**Attendees:** Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends Daniel Felton and Thomas Long, Monsignor James Dillenburg, Reverends Richard Allen, Jason Blahnik, Robert Kabat, Robert Kollath, James Leary, OFM Cap., Rev. Thomas Reynebeau, Joel Sember, Matthew Settle, Timothy Shillcox, O. Praem.

**Excused:** Reverend Ronald Colombo

**Opening Activities**

- Meeting opened at 10:00 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the Council members in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Father Matt Settle solicited changes or additions to the agenda. Motion was made to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the January 27, 2016 meeting as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

**Bishop's Opening Comments**

Bishop began by commenting on the data sent out ahead of time. We need to set the table for a reality check for where we are and what we can do about it. We need to be realistic about where we are. We need to look at what we need to do to move the church forward. We also should think about the other priests within the diocese, think about where they are at.

**Update on Ill Priests**

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

**Support and Benefits for Priests and Pastoral Leaders**

Overall, no major changes with the guidelines for the Support and Benefits for Priests and Pastoral Leaders. The cellphone plan no longer specifically states voicemail and text plan. A member recommended the internet amount be increased.

Father Tom Long posed a question if there should only be one health plan for priests. It will affect a handful of priests. Father Tom Long said they are looking at ways to streamline things, as it is not a cost

savings. A member suggested going to the individuals affected by the change to see what the individual response is versus just explaining through the diocese. Father Tom Long reiterated that we have a bunch of plans, even though most priests are in one main plan. A member asked the difference between the priest coverage plan and the diocesan employees plan. Father Tom Long explained that the priests pool costs more so the diocesan employees would have to pay more if the priests joined in the same group plan. A member stated they chose their plan due to it saving the parish money, not that it saved themselves money picking a plan not too many are in. Father Tom stated streamlining the plan would benefit the priests.

Bishop added that he can talk from experience that preventive health is good, and is willing to speak about his personal situation. Father Tom mentioned the Humana Vitality program is available for a diocese employee, but priests do not have that option. So, Father Tom mentioned they are looking into options for the priests.

After some discussion, a motion was made to accept the Priest and Pastoral Leaders documents. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

#### **Discussion on Diocesan Vision, Mission & Focus—Bishop Ricken**

Bishop gave background information for why we are looking at the Vision and Mission statements. The listening session responses came back to discipleship. In order to move the Diocese in one direction with a common purpose towards Christ, we need to take a deeper look at what we do. We need to highlight what we are good at and look at some things that we need to change. The overall goal is for the mission to capture the direction and vision of the Diocese.

Father Dan introduced Bridget O'Connor, who will be helping develop the Mission, Vision and Focus for the Diocese. A discussion was opened up to the group to give feedback on the rough draft.

Some ideas from the discussion:

- Be aware of double meaning with words
- Use strong verb(s) in right place
- Set a high bar for all seven items for the focus statement

#### **Discussion on Discipleship I—Father Dan Felton**

The discussion geared around a calendar chart showing the focus for the priests, pastoral leaders, and curia. The first couple of years will look at internal and external leadership. Part of the time will include a seminar and small group discussion where there can be common language and a common understanding for discipleship. The groups formed can be from the same Vicariate. Reverend Jason Blahnik has experienced this program and recommended that this program be worked into the work day and not worked onto a day off. All present unanimously agreed that this is a response in the direction of discipleship.

### **Discussion on Age of Confirmation—Maria Schuette**

Maria Schuette, Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry started her presentation with a power point presentation handout to go over numbers from the past ten years of where the Diocese is in comparison to the national average with confirmation. Maria, along with Sister Jacqueline Spaniola, did a study to look at Confirmation.

The study looked at Confirmation at three age groups:

- Restored order (before First Communion)
- Middle school
- Junior year

Maria's findings concluded that no model fits all in the dioceses consulted. Whatever the age may be, you have to have a good solid plan. Relook at confirmation to see what we can do better.

Bishop added we want to be in a position where we are confirming real disciples. The quality of the letters from confirmation students have improved tremendously over the past five years. They are starting to use the language itself and have connected from the retreats and programs.

The discussion also looked at what criteria should the church be looking at to determine how effective confirmation is. Some of the variables include: Sunday mass attendance, the letter to the Bishop, and programs they have been a part of.

Father Dan stated today was a way to introduce the data and have a discussion. This would be a good discussion to have for several more meetings. Father Dan referred to Mark Mogilka's two charts to talk more about the data. We are close to the place where the diocese will have more funerals than baptisms. This conversation will continue in June.

### **Presentation on Neocatechumenal Way—Eugene Hettich**

Bishop began by saying that a Pastor can present this to their parish if they want to. The Neocatechumenal Way looks at ways to reach not only the person going to church, but also the person who has stopped going to church. Eugene went onto say they assist with what the church already has. We have places to bring people to Jesus Christ, but the problem is that it requires a certain amount of faith of the individual to go to Jesus Christ at the church. So, how do we reach the man who is outside or who stopped coming to church. In a sense it is Jesus Christ, signs of faith. The Neocatechumenal Way puts Christian life at the top of the tripod with Word, Liturgy and Community as the legs. The group helps form small communities within a parish. One of things the group does is recognize a way to help people rediscover their baptism, to experience it in a different way. The small group's response to the program drives other small groups to form.

Father Dan mentioned that this was an opportunity to hear about this program. The group is good at evangelization. Eugene will leave his contact information, and Eugene may be coming throughout the diocese to further discussions. Eugene Hettich can be reached at 201-301-5657.

## **Reduction of St. Aloysius church in Kaukauna to Secular use—Father Jerry Pastors and Barb Wiegand**

Father Jerry Pastors explained there are three parish sites, and currently St. Aloysius does not have any Masses. The building was used for faith formation this past year. The expense of its upkeep would be burdensome to the parish, and so the Parish Council and Finance Council asked parishioners to respond to a survey. The general population is very positive and supportive of the closing of the Church site. John Johnson, business manager, added that responses from the survey of parishioners recommended the parish downsize to better utilize the resources and be more efficient. Father Jerry Pastors said that they have potential buyers for the site.

Father Girotti has prepared the resolution if the council and Bishop decide to move forward. Father Dan read canonical information.

After a discussion, a motion was made for resolution for the Reduction to Profane but not Sordid use of St. Aloysius Church in Kaukauna by St. Katharine Drexel Parish. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Q & A**

- 18-month process of simplifying things and also asking the parishes to do the same. Father Dan showed the colored chart to talk about mission, and vision statement. Focus is discipleship. Have a conversation about priority. So, streamline and simplify. This comes from information we had from the listening sessions.
- Talk about numbers overall with numbers going down. Bishop says our statistics are probably higher than most but there are still problems we need to face. Look at the data and start to think about what is going on. Some information we know from the Bishop's conference. There will also be a big gathering in 2017 that is going to explore some of these questions.
- When the direction becomes more focused, this will free up some of your time where the parish needs to be focused towards discipleship.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jami Rogne

Recording Secretary