



**Diocese of Green Bay
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
September 3, 2020**

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends Daniel Felton, John Girotti and Luke Ferris, Reverends Bill Hoffman, Adam Bradley, Tom Long, Bill Swichtenberg, Carl Schmitt, Daniel Schuster, Larry Seidl, Doug LeCaptain, Joel Sember, James Lucas and Timothy Shillcox, O. Praem.

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 11:03 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the opening prayer with Litany of St. Joseph
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda with one addition, to discuss the Sunday dispensation draft. Motion approved unanimously.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the June 17, 2020 meeting as written. Motion approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

Bishop Opening Comments

Bishop talked about his mentor Fr. Clifford, he passed away. Please share any miracles that have happened during this year of St. Joseph.

Update on Priests/Report on Priests who are Ill—Fr. Luke Ferris

Fr. Luke reported on priests who are ill.

Check-in: How are you, your parish and the priests you represent doing at this time—PC Members
The members each gave a check in.

As of this meeting, Fr. Dan went over pre-Covid and Covid mass counts and offertory with a parish overview. Offertory is down about 8.5%, it will vary from parish to parish. Mass attendance is about 15.2%. PPP brought money to parishes to help keep them fairly stable with budget. Current cash flow will make a difference. The diocese has been proactive to address possible cash flow shortfalls. The diocese office collaboratively is looking at the data from the parishes. The diocese helped set up some parishes with online giving. We are also working with parishes to help them get a line of credit. Credit Unions are not set up for PPP funds.

A question was asked regarding the pause of the diaconate program.

Fr. Luke—An announcement was made June 23 regarding the diaconate program. A letter was sent out to priests. The Compass will be coming out with an insert. We had to make difficult decisions. We looked at where we needed to cut. We have 59 active diocesan priests. We were doing diaconate classes for college credit. There are roughly 18 deacon candidates when the pause happened.

Bishop—We have 160 active deacons. Deacons sign up for service anywhere in the diocese.

Feedback—Could the candidate and/or parish help with funding? It would help to continue with the deacon formation.

Fr. Girotti—The diaconate program has been paused in the past. We need to discern how best to train them and look at what type of deacon do we need. It is not necessarily what it was in the past. Start a conversation to discuss what kind of deacons you need in your parish. It is an opportunity to think about the future.

Fr. Dan—Holy Family College closed and that was the primary agent for diaconate formation.

Bishop—We have to be more careful about planning our budget around the goal. We have to find a director to form the current deacons. We have a good curriculum, but we want to infuse that with missionary discipleship. We need to do more reflection. We do need to do a better explanation of the decision. Offices across the curia have been affected. Accountability hurts. We have to take mutual accountability for the future of the diocese.

Sunday Dispensation

Bishop—The Wisconsin Bishops have decided to rescind the Sunday dispensation in September. The date of implementation will vary. We are looking at September 20 or 27. Many of you are at social distancing capacity. We do need to explain the decision we are taking in the Diocese of Green Bay and why. We need to approach this pastorally. Be a friend of Jesus, make a new friend and introduce your new friend to Jesus. Do a three engagement preaching, teaching and catechizing about the real presence of God. People are asking for the television Mass to return. The marginalized today are the seniors, poor, people in nursing homes, men and women in prison. This Sunday will be a full hour and then a 15-minute television Mass after that.

Feedback—Can a pastor dispense his parish from obligation depending on Covid outbreak?

Fr. Girotti—You can dispense individually but not as a group. Individual circumstances vary.

Fr. Dan—We continue to listen to health officials. Masks will be strongly encouraged. We would like to set a date.

Feedback—Recommend starting on September 20.

Fr. Dan—The proposal on the table is to do away with percentages and work with social distancing.

Bishop—We will keep revisiting this. Take the next step and help your people to be flexible. Be sensible, protect your people. Be flexible and adapt.

Fr. Girotti—Will add wording based on capacity and social distancing.

Fr. Dan—The recommendation is for September 20. There are no longer restrictions as long as the social distancing is upheld.

There was a consensus to lift the dispensation on September 20.

Discussion of *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church* and the role of the Vicar General—Bishop Ricken

Bishop—I recommend that you read the document, it is an instruction. This is a whole new way of looking at things from the point of view of missionary discipleship. This is the whole dialogue on encounter and accompaniment. This is a great opportunity. Help form disciples. When we come together next time, we will talk about Fr. Dan's responsibilities. Fr. Dan has been the Moderator of the Curia for six years now. We have talked about moving some of his responsibilities so that he can move out into the parishes. We would begin by Fr. Dan working in the field one day a week and increase over time. We want to help partnering parishes to work with one another and share services. We want to find out more about how we can be of assistance to you.

Fr. Dan—The shift would be for a Vicar General out in the field. The Moderator of the Curia role would be a sharing of the responsibilities. I would spend most of my time in the field, would be more missionary and local. The document also talks about a restructuring of the diocese such as with the Regional Vicars. This is a preliminary conversation.

Fall Clergy Congress – Fr. Luke

We will do social distancing with Clergy Congress.

Q & A

Bishop closed with St. Joseph Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Jami Duvall
Recording Secretary