

Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes August 2, 2019

The meeting began at 11 a.m. in the Biltz Room in Morris Hall at St. John Catholic Center.

Gathering / Prayer: Jeff Hines, Chair for the Council, opened the meeting and led the group in prayer.

In Attendance: Bishop Anthony Taylor, Fr. John Connell, Dennis Lee, Greg Wolfe, Cynthia Solis, Roberto Martinez, Adrian Dominguez, Lloyd Cambre, Alma Stewart, Jeff Hines, Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, OSB, Dcn. Efrain Vargas, Paul James and Fr. Tony Robbins.

Not in attendance: Dr. Karen Hollenbeck, Dcn. Matt Glover, and Msgr. Francis I. Malone.

The group acknowledged that today is the 39th anniversary of Bishop Taylor's ordination to the priesthood and congratulated him. Bishop Taylor said today is also Dennis and Theresa Lee's 33rd wedding anniversary.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the April 12, 2019, meeting were reviewed and approved.

Old Business

One Church Report: Given by Patrick Gallaher, Executive Director for Catholic Charities of Arkansas, and Malea Hargett, Editor of *Arkansas Catholic*.

Mr. Gallaher reported on the first year of the One Church campaign that was for the benefit of St. Luke in Warren. The year began September 1, 2018 and will end August 30, 2019.

From September - November 2018 \$15,853 was donated to help the parish renovate an old co-op building to serve as their new church and facilities. In early December, 2018 Catholic Extension offered a challenge grant to match \$2 for every \$1 collected up to \$65,000. In June, 2019 they increased the amount they would match up to \$70,000, and to date \$77,258 has been donated which exceeds the match requirement.

In addition, Christ the King Parish in Little Rock has donated \$53,422 to One Church for St. Luke with \$25,000 coming from their 10% tithe and \$28,422 in donations from an appeal made by their pastor, Msgr. Francis Malone. Some of their parishioners have also made pledges that will be paid over the coming months. The total donated to One Church so far is \$146,533.

St. Luke is undertaking their own capital campaign for donations and pledges that is separate from One Church. Construction on the \$1.4 million project is ongoing. While the whole building is under a new roof, the back part of it is not being renovated at this time. Eventually that space could be improved for a family life center or parish hall. A dedication Mass is scheduled for November 23, 2019 at 5 p.m.

Malea Hargett reported that Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Hamburg will be the focus of the One Church's second year campaign that begins September 1st. Fr. Stephen Hart is the pastor, and he also serves Our Lady of the Lake Church in Lake Village and Holy Cross Church in Crossett. The "new" Holy Spirit Church is an old Firestone tire store that was renovated and dedicated in 2013 to serve the needs of the small, but growing Catholic community in Hamburg. Their church has seating for 120 people and they average 136 people for their only Sunday Mass that is in the afternoon. They also have a parish

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hall, classrooms, kitchen, storage, etc., in their “new” facility. Everything is under one roof. Mrs. Hargett and Catholic Charities staff have visited, attended Mass and they have taken photos at a parish event.

According to Mr. Gallaher, Fr. Hart said they are five (5) years into a mortgage to pay for their building. They have about \$175,000 left that they are trying to pay down. Many parishioners work in the timber industry and farming, and the economic situation in the area for them is difficult. Besides paying off their mortgage, the parish has a couple of projects they would like to do if funds were available: a playground for the kids and interior improvements for a youth group area. Plus, their building is metal with roofing materials bolted on, and the roof leaks and needs to be repaired. They have a proposal to remove the old bolts and reinstall bolts with new insulating material. This is an urgent project for them. Mr. Gallaher said they are also an outreach-minded parish, and once they have taken care of their building commitments, they plan to work on their community outreach projects.

Mrs. Hargett reported on the One Church tool kit that is on the diocesan web site at www.dolr.org/one-church. Items that can be downloaded include promotional materials and videos, social media content, announcements, etc., for parishes to use to promote the One Church program. She said they will update the tool kit over the next month to emphasize the needs and ways to help Holy Spirit Catholic Church, and a new video is being developed for the diocesan web site and others to use. New this year will be posters and envelopes for all parishes to use, and all One Church materials will be available in Spanish and English.

Mrs. Hargett asked for input on how to better communicate the One Church project among our parishes and how to increase the involvement. Mr. Gallaher mentioned that several youth groups in the state had held fund raisers and contributed thousands of dollars.

Bishop Taylor explained that One Church is intended to give a parish a boost for one year, though some parishes will establish an ongoing supportive relationship, and this will be good for everyone. Mr. Gallaher commented on the benefits of parishes getting to know the other parishes.

Sr. Mary Clare said that we need to have conversations with the parishes about mobile medical units as a way to do more to meet the needs of their people.

Mr. Cambre said the Knights of Columbus conducted a special campaign for St. Luke in Warren, and these funds were submitted to the diocese. It was also mentioned that on-line giving was an option that can be found at www.dolr.org/one-church.

Update on the Spiritual Health of Young Adults: Jeff Hines provided this report.

Mr. Hines said he and Liz Tingquist, Diocesan Director for Catholic Youth Ministry and Catholic Campus Ministry, are exploring ways to engage and support young adult Catholics in the diocese. Using the Cursillo Movement as a ministry with them is under consideration. They plan to send a survey to the young adult Catholic groups they know about. A possibility for the future is having a diocesan event with a national speaker. *Arkansas Catholic's* inclusion of young adult content was noted.

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New Business

CASA Goals: This report was made by Fr. John Connell.

Fr. Connell shared two handouts with the group: a parish-by-parish breakdown showing their five (5) year history with new proposed goals and a summary of the West Ozark Deanery's discussion about CASA. Background: CASA is not doing as well this year as in past years. The five (5) year trend shows CASA giving is falling off. At an earlier Presbyteral Council meeting, they spent time talking about why this is happening. This led Bishop Taylor to ask each deanery to get input on CASA. The increased giving in 2015 was the exception, perhaps due to Pope Francis' election. That was the only year for CASA to exceed its goal of \$2 million. It was also a year the diocese had a large number of seminarians.

Fr. Connell stated that the new CASA parish goals are calculated differently than the old goals which had remained constant for about 10 years. The new goals are determined by averaging the 3 best years out of the last 5 years actuals (Some parishes had the best year dropped due to known circumstances causing that increase). Based on this new calculation, some parishes will see an increase in their goal, others will experience a decrease. The overall CASA goal, however, will remain about \$2 million.

Fr. Connell also reported on the CASA discussion at an earlier Western Ozark Deanery meeting.

Mr. Hines asked about what the diocese offered for people who preferred to give on-line? He also asked if it would help to come up with a consistent method for the diocese, parishes and schools?

Ad Hoc Committee to study and make recommendations on on-line giving: Bishop Taylor approved the formation of this group, and Mr. Dominguez and Ms. Solis volunteered to serve on it with Mr. Hines.

Fr. Connell shared some additional thoughts: His experience as a pastor is there are many reasons, not one single reason, for why people give or don't give to CASA. There are many opportunities for improvement. Bishop Taylor asked if parishes have an e-mail list of their members? If so, they could send a CASA e-mail with the video attached to everyone. Adrian Dominguez said e-mail communication will not be effective with Hispanics, and there was a discussion about why. The bottom line is we must be able to adapt to the times and the preferred way of giving.

Mr. Dominguez said we need to be able to do a better job of interacting with people on their phones because everyone has one. He suggested reaching out to people on their phones to tell them about CASA and as a way for them to give. There was also some discussion about coming up with a CASA envelope that can be used from year to year so extra envelopes are not wasted. The suggestion was made to actually say the words "Catholic Arkansas Sharing Appeal" when speaking about CASA. Another suggestion was for every parish to share its CASA goals and results with everyone.

Catholic Schools in Fort Smith: Jeff Hines gave this report.

A written report prepared by Dr. Karen Hollenbeck was handed out. All the Catholic schools in Fort Smith have been involved together in a year long planning process. They engaged the services of the Institute for School and Parish Development (ISPD), a consulting firm out of New Orleans, to help them create a strategic plan. In early July ISPD issued a report that led to deliberations about whether St. Boniface Catholic School could remain open another year. After consulting with the different boards

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and councils connected with the parish and school, Fr. Mario Jacobo, the pastor, and Bishop Taylor concurred that the school should not reopen due to its financial situation and low enrollment. The remaining three (3) elementary schools in Fort Smith are doing what they can to accommodate the students from St. Boniface, and efforts are being made to help the school staff who lost their jobs.

Maria Goretti Network: This report was made by Fr. Tony Robbins, Pastor of St. Joseph, Conway.

A few months ago Fr. Robbins briefed the Presbyteral Council on the Maria Goretti Network (MGN). He passed out a multiple page handout on the MGN that explained its mission as a ministry for healing of victims and survivors of abuse of all kinds, guiding principles, ground rules for meetings, etc. He said his parish at St. Joseph is interested in getting a chapter going. This would be the first MGN chapter in Arkansas. MGN meetings are similar to AA meetings in the way they are structured. Leaders facilitate the discussions which are focused on healing and forgiveness. Meetings can be all men, all women, or mixed, but they are not for children. Leaders are trained to encourage sharing and keep things on track. Fr. Gavin Vaverek, JCL and Miguel Prats with the Diocese of Tyler, TX where the MGN was started, will provide an open informational meeting at St. Joseph on Friday evening, September 27. This meeting will be for the whole diocese... anybody who wants to come. Fr. Robbins said he hopes the MGN will take hold in the entire diocese. Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs, committed the resources of the diocese to help spread the word about the MGN meeting at St. Joseph. More information can be found on their website: www.mgoretti.org.

Blessed Stanley Rother Museum and Pilgrimage Center: Bishop Anthony Taylor gave this report.

Archbishop Coakley of Oklahoma City invited the dioceses in our province to participate in helping raise funds for a new Blessed Stanley Rother Museum and Pilgrimage Center in Oklahoma City. Bishop Taylor consulted with the Presbyteral Council who agreed with participating so he mailed a personal solicitation letter and donation envelope to a large number of Catholics in Arkansas. Next weekend there will be a pulpit announcement that invites people in the parishes to participate. Gifts and pledges will go directly to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, and they will handle the acknowledgments for tax purposes. Catholic Extension has pledged a matching grant of \$300,000 and any funds donated from the Diocese of Little Rock will be accepted towards the match requirement. Blessed Stanley Rother is an inspiring person for our church. He is the only American martyr, and the first martyr for Guatemala. Asked about the church to be constructed at the pilgrimage site, Bishop Taylor said the current fundraising campaign is only for the museum and pilgrimage center. These donations will not go towards a church. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is doing a capital campaign for the shrine and other things.

Church Security: Jeff Hines introduced this topic.

Some questions about church security came up at the last meeting. There were some questions about what our parishes should be doing to maintain security. Mr. Hines offered to lead an Ad Hoc Committee on Church Security to do some research on this issue and report back at the next meeting. Bishop Taylor gave his approval, and Lloyd Cambre and Paul James volunteered to serve on this committee with Mr. Hines.

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\$750,000 Settlement with Five (5) Victims of Sexual Abuse: Dennis Lee gave this report.

In May the Diocese of Little Rock reached a settlement with five (5) sexual abuse victims of Fr. John McDaniel through a mediation process for a total of \$790,000. The abuse occurred in the 70's when Fr. McDaniel was assigned to Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church in Little Rock. The settlement did not put any restrictions on confidentiality, and the victims were free to disclose whatever they would like. On June 27 their attorneys circulated a press release to the news media that led to coverage the next day. The information in this report was released publicly at that time. Bishop Taylor and our diocese continue to urge all victims of clergy sexual abuse or abuse by anyone acting in the name of the church to come forward for a chance to be helped. The Victim Assistance Coordinators for our diocese are available to respond to any victims - survivors.

Change in Director for Diocesan Hispanic Ministry Office: Bishop Taylor made this announcement.

In June Sr. Norma Muñoz, MCP was reassigned by her order in Mexico, the Missionary Catechists of the Poor, to serve as their Director of Finance. She had been the Director of the Hispanic Ministry Office in our diocese. On August 14 Sr. Mickey Espinoza, MCP will take her place. Sister Mickey has held this position in our diocese before, and she is ending her term as the superior for her religious community.

Closing Remarks: Bishop Taylor

Bishop Taylor thanked everyone for their input, especially their discussion about CASA. Asked if anyone had any questions, Mr. Dominguez asked about the CMG Safe Environment requirements. Mr. Lee offered to take him to the Safe Environment Office in the Chancery to introduce him to its Coordinator, Susan David, to have his questions addressed.

Future Agenda Items

Please submit future agenda items to Bishop Taylor, Jeff Hines or Maria Velázquez.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Bishop Taylor closed the meeting with everyone praying the Lord's Prayer together and a blessing.

Next Meeting

Bishop Taylor asked to reschedule the next meeting from October 25, 2019.

New date: The next meeting will be November 8, 2019 at 11 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Jeff Hines, Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council

Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs