

November 8, 2019

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting began at 11 a.m. in the Biltz Room in Morris Hall at St. John Catholic Center with Bishop Anthony B. Taylor leading the council in a prayer.

In attendance: Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, Fr. John Connell, Dr. Karen Hollenbeck, Alma Stewart, Lloyd Cambre, Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, Cynthia Solis, Greg Wolfe, Dennis Lee, Sr. Mickey Espinoza, Adrian Dominguez, Roberto Martinez, Dcn. Efrain Vargas, and Jeff Hines, Chair.

Not in attendance: Msgr. Francis I. Malone, Dcn. Matt Glover, and Paul James.

Sr. Mickey Espinoza, Director of Hispanic Ministry, was introduced and welcomed. She follows Sr. Norma Munoz who was elected to a leadership position with their community, the Missionary Catechists of the Poor. This is her second time to be appointed the Director of Hispanic Ministry for our diocese. The first time she was here for five years. She has spent the previous 12 years serving in leadership positions for her community in Monterrey, Mexico, including as their Secretary and Mother Superior. Prior to that she served in the Diocese of Dallas. Sister Mickey said she is pleased to be here, and eager to help in all the new opportunities.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 2, 2019 meeting were accepted as written.

Old Business

Church Security: Lloyd Cambre reported on research of the sub-team that researched Church Security. Options were evaluated based on interviews of experts and people with experience in the area. The option the sub-team would like to recommend is to develop and provide a “template for a plan” that each parish could use to develop their own plan. Plan creation, communication, and content would be included in the template. Bishop Taylor said the plans he is most familiar with are for tornado and medical emergencies. The pastor should know what to tell people to do in an emergency, and people should know what to do based on the plan. Sr. Bezner shared her experience and meetings and involvement that the Jonesboro school, parish, and community have had with local law enforcement and hospitals; involvement of ushers and medical personnel and security professionals who are members of the parish and in attendance.

The council discussed the importance of having a plan and training. There was general agreement to proceed with an outline of a plan, and to reach out to parishes for contacts to participate in creating the template. Bishop Taylor said the team should work with Jim Driedric, Manager for Property Services, at the diocese. Fr. John Connell said his parish is working on a plan, and at the same time communicates to parishioners that we must not live in fear.

CASA Online Giving Option: Cynthia Solis reported that the diocese is missing out on those who want to contribute to the Catholic Arkansas Sharing Appeal (CASA), but prefer to do it online. The council recommended that the diocese do more to promote and communicate the online giving options that are available on dolr.org. There was discussion on technology, such as apps, QR codes, linking printed

documents to online resources where people can donate. It was acknowledged that online giving is preferred by some people, but not everyone. There are still many people and parishes that prefer to use envelopes. The council recommended that those who are responsible for the diocese's social media presence help with promoting CASA. Another suggestion was to provide progress reports, perhaps by using a "thermometer" that show progress towards the goal, something that provides feedback and tracks success.

Young Adult Ministry: Liz Tingquist, Director of Youth Ministry and Catholic Campus Ministry, reported on the status of many things going on around the diocese with young adult Catholics (age 19-39). Jeff Hines and Cynthia Solis are working with Mrs. Tingquist to explore how the diocese can be more involved with this group. Fr. Jon Miskin, Associate Pastor at St. Raphael, Springdale is working with them on an exploratory team of young adults. They have had an initial meeting and a follow-up one is being held tonight in Russellville. They will work toward a mission statement, identify resources, marketing-vision, etc. Ms. Solis reported that she is optimistic about the progress and encouraged by the involvement and work that is being done by young adults in our diocese, such as catechists, musicians, etc. Their group is working toward a mechanism that can be supported by the diocese because its scope is diocesan-wide. A retreat and mission opportunities for young adult Catholics are some of the options they are looking at. Another is to organize by deanery, instead of by parish. Bishop Taylor mentioned the large number of college age Catholics who do not attend college, and even a higher number of Hispanics, that are not reached by the diocese's campus ministry. Mrs. Tingquist said their group is focusing on how to reach those who are not in college, and she asked for prayer for their exploratory group.

Catholic Campus Ministry: Liz Tingquist also reported on progress and status of Catholic campus ministry in the diocese. She mentioned the growth, plans, opportunities and prayer requests at UCA, UA Fayetteville, Arkansas Tech, Arkansas State, UA Fort Smith, Harding, UA Pine Bluff, Lyon College in Batesville, SAU Magnolia, and the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville. Unfortunately the campus ministry at UA Little Rock was closed because of low attendance at on-campus activities and so many local parishes as options. Mrs. Tingquist said the diocese provides support through training and resources and hosts the annual Fall CCM Retreat and a domestic mission experience in May. She also mentioned that part of the funding for campus ministry comes from the Catholic Arkansas Sharing Appeal (CASA).

Free digital version of Arkansas Catholic: Malea Hargett, Editor of *Arkansas Catholic*, reported on the new free digital version of the *Arkansas Catholic* newspaper at digital.arkansas-catholic.org. The council thought that the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* going digital and giving out I pads could be helpful to Catholics who would like to receive the *Arkansas Catholic* the same way. All *Arkansas Catholic* newspapers dating back to 2002 are archived and available online. Bookmarking, saving, and other features are available. Mrs. Hargett said they are promoting the free digital version to their subscribers, and plans are in place to get the word out through parishes and online. Anyone who wants to keep getting the printed paper as a paid subscription, can continue to do that. To get to the new free online version, one simply needs to go to digital.arkansas-catholic.org. Mrs. Hargett also mentioned that there are approx. 5,000 subscribers receiving the printed newspaper. They also send bundles to our Catholic schools to use in the classrooms. At this time there are approx. 500 people actively using the online version out of about 3000 subscribers who have signed up for online access. The online distribution is

received two days earlier than the print version. There is not a goal to eliminate the hard-copy; the goal is to expand readership.

Bishop Taylor recommended a “quick start” promotion as early as next week with a letter from him and a bulletin insert. He said he views the *Arkansas Catholic* as a vehicle for evangelization, and he wants the free digital version to be as easy as possible for people to access and read.

Sr. Bezner raised the idea of an app. Mr. Hines asked if the current version could be posted as a PDF on the diocesan web site. Bishop Taylor thanked Malea for her work. She has been in Catholic journalism for over 25 years, and the council expressed their appreciation to her for all she does as Editor for *Arkansas Catholic*.

New Business

The Lumen Christi (Light of Christ) Award from Catholic Extension: Greg Wolfe spoke about this annual award made by Catholic Extension each year, and he asked the group for the names of anyone to be considered for a nomination. Bishop Taylor decides who is nominated, and the person nominated receives \$1,000. The ten finalists selected from across the country each receive \$10,000 for their ministry.

Parish Pastoral Councils: Roberto Martinez asked for “Parish Councils” to be a topic of the future meeting. Are parish councils working well together? How well are they doing? Perhaps we can have some recommendations. Fr. Connell said we have guidelines for that, and Dcn. Matt Glover has traveled to the parishes and done training. Mr. Hines will ask Dcn. Glover to talk about the status of Parish Councils in our next meeting.

National Vocations Week: Sr. Bezner asked if parishes had responded to national vocations week? There was feedback that it was included in prayers to the faithful and announcements.

New Missionary Priests: Bishop Taylor said we have five new missionary priests in our diocese. He said that at this time he does not anticipate receiving any additional missionary priests because we have several ordinations coming up and a few missionary priests will be leaving when their time with us is coming to an end. We have approx. 28 missionary priests and 67 active diocesan priests. Adrian Dominguez said it is great to have more priests since it makes the Eucharist accessible to more people.

Future Agenda Items: Please submit any suggestions for future agenda items to Bishop Taylor, Jeff Hines or Maria Velazquez.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be Friday, January 17, 2020, at 11 a.m. at St. John Catholic Center in Little Rock.

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

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jeff Hines, Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs