

## Presbyteral Council Meeting Notes, Diocese of Scranton— September 29, 2020

**Call to Order.** Fr. Lopera called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm.

**Roll Call. Present:** Bishop Bambara, Msgr. Muldowney; Fr. Shantillo; Monsignors Van Loon, Delaney, & Bendik; Frs. Albert, Burke, Cirba, Czachor, Doris, Edwards, Evanko, Fox, Hvozdovic, Langan, Lopera, Loughney, Michelini, Polednak, Polmounter, Quinnan, Ricciardi Tudgay, and Wasnock.

**Excused:** Frs. McCreay, Beck, and McGlone.

Prayer Intentions were offered for all priests especially those who are sick in the Diocese.

The minutes from the May 21, 2020 meeting were approved.

### **I. Canonical Consultation :**

- A presentation was made by Fr. Ricciardi to close St. Lawrence O’Toole Church in Old Forge which is currently a worship site of St. Mary’s Church Old Forge. St. Lawrence Church was slated to close in Call to Holiness by July of 2013. Attendance had greatly decreased at St. Lawrence over the years prior to the closure for the pandemic (parishes in the Diocese of Scranton were closed for approximately three months given the virus) in March to about 100 people per mass. The faithful are currently being cared for at St. Mary’s Church. The Prince of Peach Parish and Finance Councils recommend that St. Lawrence not reopen but be closed as called for in Call for Holiness.
  - Discussion was had among the members and the Bishop called for a vote from the members in attendance on the question to close St. Lawrence O’Toole church.
    - Vote was passed unanimously to close the church.
- Fr. Jack Lambert also made a presentation on the suppression of St. Benedict Parish (St. Dominic Church) into Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Plains. The parish was not engaged in this topic of suppression (homilies and bulletin announcements) because of the pandemic. The pandemic caused the parishes in the Diocese of Scranton to be closed for three months. Fr. Lambert wanted to seek advice from the council as how to best engage his community during this pandemic about the topic and understand what suppression means for the parish.
  - Discussion was had and Fr. Lambert had questions on how to convey the message of suppression to the people of St. Benedict Parish without there being upheaval and misunderstanding that there would still be Mass said in the church and it would be used as a social outreach building to the area.
  - No vote was taken but several options were suggested to Fr. Lambert on how to proceed to explain to the parish the process that will be continued. Fr. Lambert will engage his community, listen to their feedback, and return to this council to present a plan for the suppression of St. Benedict Parish (St. Dominic Church) into Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in the future.

## **II. COVID 19 Updates in Parishes and with Priests :**

- Fr. Lopera posed three questions as to how the Priest himself is doing during the Pandemic? How the Parish and Parish life is going? What are some short term outlooks especially in regard to Advent and Christmas do we have?
  - Discussion was had and the priests talked about what they were facing right now.
  - Discussion about the Parishes lead to hearing from priests that boarder other diocese and the struggle they face when the other diocese have different rules for mass.
    - Consensus was to keep vigilant and hold with the procedures we have in place as the winter is coming.
  - Other discussion was had about allowing marriages to take place outside with the priest as the witness to the marriage. There were several opinions heard and the Bishop agreed to revisit the topic as we move forward on the other side of COVID.
  - Bishop began the conversation about Christmas Mass and his support to the priest to look at venues to possibly have Mass along with the idea for this year to have a 2pm Vigil for Christmas Eve. More will be coming out about these options in the future.

## **III. Election of a new Secretary**

- Fr. Shantillo opened the floor for anyone to volunteer for the position. No one volunteered.
- First Ballot was cast narrowing the field to Frs. Fox, Tudgay, & Wasnock.
  - Second Ballot was cast and Fr. Wasnock was elected.

Evening pray was said and the meeting was concluded at 5:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Fr. Seth D. Wasnock, Secretary