

Presbyteral Council Meeting Notes, Diocese of Scranton— October 27, 2020

Call to Order. Fr. Laperera called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm.

Roll Call. Present: Bishop Bambera, Fr. Shantillo; Monsignors Van Loon, Delaney, & Bendik; Frs. Albert, Burke, Cirba, Czachor, Doris, Edwards, Evanko, Fox, Hvozdovic, Langan, Laperera, Michelini, Polednak, Polmounter, Ricciardi, Tudgay, and Wasnock.

Excused: Msgr Muldowney, Frs. McCreay, Beck, McGlone and Quinnan.

Absent: Fr. Loughney

Daytime Pray was prayed at 3:08. Prayer Intentions were offered for all priests especially those who are sick in the Diocese.

The minutes from the September 29, 2020 meeting were approved.

I. Canonical Consultation :

- Fr. Jack Lambert once again made a presentation on the suppression of St. Benedict Parish(St. Dominic Church) into Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Plains. Fr. Lambert stressed that these parish communities are continuing the mission which has been worked on with the combined councils. A letter written by Fr. Lambert was read two weeks in a row at mass along with being sent to each parishioner. He is asking that the parish of St. Benedict be suppressed, while the church of St. Dominic will remain as a worship site of Ss. Peter and Paul. There was a meeting after the mass where the letter was read and around 12 people stayed to ask questions which all seemed to go well.
- Discussion was had among the priests about the letter which was sent by Fr. Lambert. In the letter he wrote about the number of priests being a reason for suppressing the parish. The Bishop spoke to the law and how there are other needs not just the lack of priests that need to be in place for the suppression of a parish. Fives reason were listed in the previous meeting as to why Fr. Lambert is asking to have the parish suppressed. Dr. Butel spoke about the consultation with the parish leadership and parish as a whole about the reasons for suppressing the parish, which was more in-depth than just having to do with the number of priests as a reason for the suppression. Fr. Tudgay spoke on the decree of suppression and how it works.
 - A vote was taken, 22 in the affirmative (0) zero in the negative to the question as to suppress the parish of St. Benedict into Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Plains but to keep the Church of St. Dominic as a worship site of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish.

II. Items for Future Council Meetings:

- Fr. Laperera asked the council to bring forth ideas and topics for future council meetings. Catholic schools, diversity in our diocese, blueprint process for the diocese, how to deal with cremations and help families to deal with this process going forward during and after the pandemic, and looking at our church after Covid were all brought forth at the meeting. Fr. Laperera said that the priests can contact him offline to bring up more topics.

III. Newly Ordained Orientation Program

- Fr. Shantillo spoke on the new program set up by his office to help the newly ordained transition from seminary to parish life. He also went through the broad schedule of the program for this year. The current program is one year with a possible second year to be determined. Meeting with international priests that are in our diocese and their transition was also brought up. We have 11 international priest currently. This program will be addressed in the future.

IV. Selecting Spiritual Directors & Retreat Venues

- Fr. Shantillo and his office will be putting a list of Spiritual Directors to help the priests find one in the diocese whether a diocesan or religious priest. He will also put resource out to list some different retreat house for the priests to take their retreat at. Bishop spoke on possibly sending men to get degrees/certifications for spiritual direction and asked the priests to consider if they would go to a brother priest for direction. Looking to neighboring diocese to add priests for spiritual direction was also addressed along with the benefit to the parishes of having some of our own priests trained in spiritual direction.

V. Remark by Bishop Bambara

- Covid update: Bishop spoken on the school system during this pandemic. If the virus continues they may need to go to an all virtual system for schools. Looking at the parishes, great care has been taken within the parish keeping the church as safe as possible during Covid. 1/4 of the pastors on the council have restored communion to its regular place in mass. Discussion was had about this restoration of the communion rite to take the care that social distancing is maintained during and after mass. The Christmas Eve mass is able to be celebrated as early as 2 pm this year to help with the number of people coming to mass this Christmas and to help maintain social distancing.
- Ritual of Sunday Service in the Absence of the Priest: It is not the normal and is used in exceptional circumstance. The bishop would like the priests to have this available to them to use in an extreme situations.
 - Discussion was had and the priests thought it was a good idea to have this available for pastors to have as a security in an exceptional circumstance. There should not be an abuse of this rite.
- Independent Survivors Compensation Program was discussed. The program is by and large completed. There will be an announcement made later in the week about the claims and the payouts totaling around 24 million dollars. We do not have to file for bankruptcy like other diocese. There will be eight other names released that have been brought forward because of this program and deemed credible in the Diocese of Scranton.

Evening pray was said and the meeting was concluded at 4:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fr. Seth D. Wasnock, Secretary