

Presbyteral Council Meeting Notes, Diocese of Scranton— March 9th 2021

Call to Order. Fr. Lopera called the virtual meeting to order at 3:04 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, McCreary, Michelini, Polednak, Polmounter, Quinnan, Ricciardi, Tudgay, and Wasnock.

Excused: Frs. Beck and McGlone.

Absent: Fr. Kaminski

Prayer Intentions were offered for all priests and people especially those who are sick in the Diocese. Prayer was offered for the repose of the soul of Fr. Pisaneschi's Mother who was buried this week. Pray was also offered for Bishop Martino who celebrated 25 years as a bishop this month. Fr. Lopera offered the prayer.

The minutes from the November 24, 2020 meeting were approved.

I. Permission to Marry Outside Church Building:

- Fr. Jeffery Tudgay, Judicial Vicar, lead a presentation and information was given about some marriages that have been given permission to be celebrated outside of a sacred place because of the Pandemic. Permission from the Bishop is required to celebrate outside of a sacred place. Fr. Tudgay and the Bishop consult on a case by case basis about granting the permission. It has been granted in the circumstances where there has been someone gravely ill in the family or wedding party that Covid could seriously effect. The permission as of right now can be given for wedding up until June 30, 2021. This date may be extended but does not have to be. The wedding, if the permission is given must take place in a suitable place. Bishop stated we are standing with most diocese through the country not having outdoor weddings. Fr. Tudgay is the contact person about these permissions and all questions and concerns should be directed to him.

II. Welcoming People back to Church Post COVID:

- Fr. Cirba lead a open discussion on welcoming people back to church after Covid. There was an article read by the members from the Catholic News Service by Mark Pattison entitled "Parishes should plan now how to welcome back parishioners to Church". There was discussion about the article and how we will incorporate this reopening and planning process in our Diocese and Parishes. Fr. Cirba commented how we need to move from maintenance to mission. How do we connect the people to the church. Currently we are using technology and live streaming along with other small group activities in many of the parishes. The worst thing we can do is nothing. We must push on and find new ways in how we connect to the people. How will we continue to reach out to the sick and homebound and keep them connected through the live stream at that parish mass. We must look to plan now not when the Pandemic ends. How will we be creative to welcome people back? How will we change the

mindset of sitting at home for mass and coming back to the Church Building? Many comments were shared about giving people time and gradually welcoming them back to in person Mass. We need to assure the people there will be room for them when they come back. For the time being we need to continue to wear masks, sanitize, and social distant but can still use different ways to continue to open the churches on a parish by parish basis staying within the guidelines. A positive take away from the Bishop was a comment on some parishes having outdoor masses in the Summer and Fall to help people attend mass.

III. Remark by Bishop Bambara

- The Bishop opened with a brief overview of parish cemeteries and the blueprint process. Further discussion will happen in the future.
- Bishop talked about the directives that were sent out for Holy Week and Easter. He stressed the importance of not washing feet on Holy Thursday and no touching of the Cross on Good Friday. Reminds the priests of the importance of wearing a mask, sanitizing the church and keeping social distancing.
- Bishop spoke on the reopening processes and how we will need to manage them on a parish by parish basis whether its using the hall for mass with a live stream or adding a mass or having an outdoor mass. Lifting the dispensation for the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday was brought forward. Bishop did not know when that would be lifted but stated he would move in that direction with the other dioceses in the state when it is appropriate.
- Bishop thanked all of the priest and parish leaders for keeping the parishes running the best that can in this very challenging time. He looks forward to seeing the priests at the Chrism Mass.

Bishop Bambara gave the closing prayer and the meeting was concluded at 4:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fr. Seth D. Wasnock, Secretary