

Presbyteral Council Meeting Notes, Diocese of Scranton— April 6th 2021

Call to Order. Fr. Lapera called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

Roll Call. Present: Bishop Bambera, Fr. Shantillo; Monsignors Van Loon, Delaney, & Bendik; Frs. Albert, Cirba, Edwards, Evanko, Fox, Hvozdovic, Kaminski, Langan, Lapera, Loughney, McCreary, Michelini, Polmounter, Quinnan, Ricciardi, Tudgay, and Wasnock.

Excused: Msgr. Muldowney, Frs. Beck, Czachor, Doris, Langan, McCreary, McGlone, and Polednak.

Absent: Fr. Burke

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

The minutes from the March 6, 2021 meeting were approved.

I. Suppression of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Weston:

- Dr. Butel spoke on behalf of Fr. McDowell current pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish about the suppression of the parish in Weston. Some of the reasons for the suppression are; there is no longer need of a personal German Parish in the area along with lack of parishioners and finances, and with the retirement of the long time pastor. There is to be a grace period of no more than one year after the retirement of Fr. McDowell to work with a transition team to tend to the final needs of the parish before the complete suppression. The grace period is due to the Covid pandemic. There will continue to be funeral masses and one weekend mass at the worship site over the next year. The parish will be suppressed into St. John Bosco Parish in Conyngham and the pastor is Fr. Polmounter. Fr. Polmounter gave a presentation on how St. John Bosco will be welcoming the members of Sacred Heart into the parish and reaching out to the people and helping them become members of the parish. The suppression and year grace period will coincide with Fr. McDowell's retirement in June of 2021. A vote was taken on the suppression with 19 "yes" votes and zero "no" votes to suppress the parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Weston into St. John Bosco Conyngham.

II. Update Vicar for Clergy web page

- Fr. Shantillo gave a web presentation on the updated website for the office for the Vicar for Clergy. He showed different information on the website and the new features that it will offer to the priests and people of the Diocese. The website will help the Office for Clergy communicate to the priests about assignments and the staffing needs in the diocese along with term limits and priests who are not under term limits. This new website will be the hub for all of the information priests will need and forms that would be needed by priests and deacons. The new site will be live in about a month.

III. Welcoming People back to Church Post COVID:

- Dr. Butel gave a power point presentation about welcoming people back. The book *The Post Quarantine Church* by Thom Rainer was used as a springboard for conversation. We need to look forward to the future. We need to evaluate what we have learned and will continue to learn. Communication is key for moving forward. Six challenges were presented in the book, 1) Gathering Differently 2) Digital World 3) Reconnect with community near the church 4) Prayer to a New Level 5) Rethink Facilities 6) Makes lasting changes that will make a lasting difference. The council was broken in to small groups for further discussion on these topics.
- Fr. Hvozdovic's group spoke about his parish in Sayre; they did the first livestream last year for Palm Sunday. It was on iPhone. They have updated the system to a professional set up and will be adding a third camera soon. There was outreach to the homebound. Simple things to make a large difference. Digital media was a main topic of conversation moving forward and how to engage in new and exciting ways. Live-streaming funerals

has increased with more requests to reach people who cannot get there. How do we strike the balance between the digital and bringing people back? How do we keep looking forward and moving forward. The council was talking about people coming back to church before the pandemic... Evangelization has been and will be an ongoing topic.

- Msgr. Quinn's group talked about challenging times and new beginnings. Connection to community whether its digital or in person is key. Our Lady of the Snows parish looked at the summer picnic and how to use the raffle to continue to fund raise without the picnic. "Kindness calls"...Calling people when correspondence is received and to have outreach to those who are homebound. How to continue the digital media and use it for the help of the people. Mailing the bulletin to more and more people was discussed. Another idea was to build up an email list to continue to connect to people. Encourage people at home to be prayer ministers from home for other people.
- Fr. Kuhar's group talked about Hispanic ministry in South Side Scranton and the outreach they did. They have added a second weekend mass in Spanish and there is a larger population that needs to continue to be addressed. Conversation about continuing to livestream was had in the group along with moving forward to returning to the new normal.

IV. Remarks by Bishop Bambara

- Bishop spoke about our continued conversation about moving forward in opening the parishes during this pandemic. Bishop thanked Msgr. Quinn, Fr. Hvozdovic and Fr. Kuhar for coming in to talk about what is going on in their parishes. People are coming back more because they see what we are doing to keep them safe in the church building. We need to keep vigilant,
- The Bishop spoke on the blueprint process and how it is continuing now throughout the diocese. The blue print process has brought some linkages to the forefront. There will be four meetings for priests to come together and talk about personal and blueprint issues in the coming future. The Diocese is also looking at bringing in more international priests to help serve the needs of the diocese.

The Bishop gave the closing prayer and the meeting was concluded at 5:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Fr. Seth D. Wasnock, Secretary