

Joliet Diocesan Presbyteral Council Minutes

November 2, 2011

I. Call to Order --Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Fr. Ernie Norbeck (*Chairman, Presbyteral Council*).

Roll Call:

Present: Bishop Conlon, Bishop Siegel, Fr. Dewan, Fr. Bondi, Fr. Conway, Fr. Cote, Fr. Davy, MIC, Fr. Doyle, Fr. Gabel, Fr. Groh, Fr. Heidecke, Fr. Hornicak, Fr. Jendrysik, Fr. Klein, Fr. Lennon, Fr. Norbeck, Fr. Podwysoki, Fr. Riva, Fr. Baltes, OSB, Fr. Comerford, O. Carm.

Absent: None

Excused: Fr. Antiporek

Guests: Doug Delaney

II. Opening Prayer

Fr. Groh led mid-morning prayer.

III. Presentation of Agenda: Fr. Norbeck presented the agenda.

Motion to accept the Agenda without change: Fr. Jendrysik;

Second: Not Needed;

Motion carried unanimously

IV. Approval of the Minutes

Correction to the minutes of the last meeting: None

Motion to approve of the minutes of the October 3rd meeting: Fr. Klein

Second: Fr. Conway

Motion carried unanimously

V. Reports

Chairman's Report: Fr. Norbeck welcomed the new members to the Presbyteral Council. He noted that we still do not have a Cluster 6 Representative and asked Fr. Bondi (*Vice-Chairman, Presbyteral Council*) to notify Cluster 6 (*Ford and Iroquois counties*) that they need to elect a representative prior to the Council's next meeting. There was no correspondence or actions to report.

Vice-Chairman/Treasurer's Report: None

Cluster Reports:

Cluster 1, Fr. Klein — The priests of the cluster discussed the proposal to have a mass at every parish once per year to honor the deceased priests who served at the parish. Those in attendance were unanimously in favor of the proposal and were willing to have the mass on whatever day was set by in the guidelines the Presbyteral Council approved.

Cluster 2, Fr. Antiporek — No Report

Cluster 3, Fr. Conway — The priests of the cluster discussed the recent convocation. The comments were generally favorable. In particular, the group found Cardinal George's presentation to be very interesting and very good. The group also found Fr. Knott's presentations helpful but there was some disappointment that he did not share the practical hints on presbyteral unity as he had promised at the beginning of his first presentation. The group also enjoyed Bishop Conlon's presentation and thought it was very good as well. There was a real positive attitude and reaction to the convocation. On another topic, the group discussed whether the cluster should sit down with principals, DRE's, business managers, etc. in addition to meeting with the deacons. In the end, the cluster decided to sit down with the deacons of the cluster to discuss formation and other issues.

Cluster 4, Fr. Jendrysik — The priests of the cluster discussed the various activities that are on-going on in cluster. Three parishes are doing capital campaigns. They discussed the convocation. The priests of the cluster had a real positive attitude and reaction to the convocation.

Cluster 5, Fr. Heidecke — The priests of the cluster did not meet in October. Mike Bava (Chief Financial Officer, Diocese of Joliet) joined them for their September meeting. A good, informative discussion took place.

Cluster 6, Open— No report

Cluster 7, Fr. Davy, MIC — Fr. Davy was unable to attend the October cluster meeting. Fr. Podwysocki reported on his behalf that Mike Bava met with the priests of the cluster. An informative discussion about financial situation of the diocese, insurance plans and financial future of the diocese took place. They too discussed the convocation. The priests of the cluster had a real positive attitude and reaction to the convocation.

Cluster 8, Fr. Gabel — The priests of the cluster discussed the proposal to have a mass at every parish once per year to honor the deceased priests who served at the parish. Those in attendance were unanimously in favor of the proposal.

Cluster 9, Fr. Bondi — There was no meeting in October and, therefore, no report.

Cluster 10, Fr. Doyle — The priests of the cluster discussed the recent convocation and reported that they were very satisfied with the convocation. There was a general feeling that they really liked the fact that younger and older priests sat at tables together, talked with each other and got to know each other better. Fr. Pete Jankowski has joined the team of Priest Chaplains at Statesville Prison. He began his ministry last week. This is particularly significant because Fr. Jankowski is fluent in Spanish and is able to hear confessions in Spanish. St. Anne's parish is looking forward to Bishop Conlon's presence at the parish on November 5th.

Religious Order Reports:

Carmelites, Fr. Comerford, O. Carm. — At our triennial Provincial Chapter at Darien in June we had election of leadership for the next three years. Very Reverend Carl Markelz, O. Carm. was elected Prior Provincial. Fr. Carl grew up in Joliet in St. Paul the Apostle Parish. He graduated from Joliet Catholic High School in 1980. IN 1984, he earned a degree in Business Administration at Loyola University, Chicago. In graduate studies, Fr. Carl has a Masters in Moral Theology from the Washington Theological Union and a Masters in Educational Administration from the University of San

Francisco. Fr. Carl taught religion at Crespi Carmelite High School Encino, California. For the last 15 years, Fr. Carl has been President/Principal of Mt. Carmel High School, Chicago.

In summer, Fr. Jose Luis Torres was assigned as Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Joliet. Fr. Jose Luis is a native of Mexico. In recent years, he has been Pastor of our Carmelite Parish in Torreon, Mexico. Bishop Conlon confirmed Fr. Jose Luis as Pastor. His formal installation will take place at a later date. Fr. Enrique Varela continues to assist part-time at Mt. Carmel. Transitional Deacon, Brother Alfredo Guillen is also working at the parish. He will be ordained priest next spring in his native El Salvador.

Fr. Herman Kinzler has been confirmed as Pastor of St. Matthew Parish, Glendale Heights by Bishop Conlon. Fr. Kevin Lafey is parochial vicar.

In the area of Secondary Education, Fr. Jeff Smialek, O. Carm. and Sr. Barb Kwiatkowski, OSF are the new Campus Ministers at JCA. Fr. Jeff is a graduate of Mt. Carmel, Chicago, was ordained at St. Matthew's and has most recently taught at Salpointe Catholic High school in Tucson. He is doing weekend assistance at St. Jude's, Joliet. He is filling a need created by the sudden death of Fr. Ray Foster, O. Carm. in June. His loss is keenly felt by our community. Brother Dominic Saganich, O. Carm. is teaching religion at Immaculate Conception High School, Elmhurst. He is a native of Ohio, who taught Religious Studies for many years at Carmel Mundelein.

Fr. Joseph Atcher was elected the new Midwest Commissary Provincial at our Chapter. He is also our new provincial treasurer and director of the National Shrine of St. Therese, Darien. Fr. Joe also has joined the Board of Members of JCA. A native of Louisville, Fr. Joe has served as Principal of Crespi Carmelite High School, Encino, California; Principal of Mt. Carmel High School, Chicago; Pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Louisville and was Diocesan Director of Educational Ministries in Louisville.

Brother Matt Gummess, O. Carm. was admitted to the Carmelite Novitiate, Middletown, NY in June. He grew up in St. Pat's Parish, Joliet. Matt graduated from JCA, where he was a Kairos Retreat Leader, and Yale. Matt was a Fullbright Scholar teaching in Brazil.

Benedictines, Fr. Baltes, OSB — The Abbot and the Vocation Director are focusing time on vocations. They have been traveling to universities and colleges to foster vocations to their community.

Standing Committee Reports:

Committee for Life and Formation of Priests and Deacons, Bishop Siegel — The first meeting should take place later this month or in early December. Most of the members of the committee have been contacted. Bishop Siegel would appreciate any input from the cluster on issues relevant to the Life and Formation of Priests and Deacons.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

Committee on the Pastoral Policy Manual — There are a number of items that still need to be resolved before the Manual can be issued. Number 0308 concerns priests who are in residence at a treatment center receiving \$500 per month from the disability fund. Fr. Dewan stated that all disability

payments come from the pension fund. A change needs to be made to accurately reflect this in the Manual. Number 04-18 concerns a diocesan policy on releasing sacramental records that are dated after 1920. If someone is conducting a genealogical search and request sacramental records, the records are not to be released if they are dated after 1920. There is a lack of clarity on what the diocesan guidelines on needy parishes are. This should be resolved with the guidelines being accurately reflected in the Manual. There is a booklet for retired priests that needs to be updated. Fr. Norbeck mentioned that this is an agenda item for our December meeting. In the past, the diocesan policy was that there would only be one national second collection per month and this should be reflected in the Manual if it is still the policy. Fr. Graziano has asked that the Summer Missionary Cooperative Plan be incorporated into the Manual to encourage parishes to participate. The committee would like to publish the manual online on the diocesan website with a hyperlink where updates will be published. Bishop Conlon reiterated that he believes there should be a clear delineation between law, policy/directives and guidelines in the Manual. He suggested that Fr. Tapella could help with this delineation.

Fr. Conway commented that he liked the “*Brown Book*” (which contained guidelines on parish councils and commissions) that used to be published because it was concise and easy to use. There needs to be a clarification on the Office of New Evangelization and its role in formation of catechists. It seems that there is some confusion about the responsibilities the Office of New Evangelization as opposed to the responsibilities of the Religion Education Office particularly in terms of the Newman Project and the training of catechists. Bishop Conlon stated that he believed that the Newman Project is in place to handle the training of catechists and the Religion Education Office is in place to support the Religion Education programs in the parishes.

Bishop’s Report:

Committee for Selection of Seminaries, Bishop Conlon —

Bishop Conlon considers his relationship with seminaries to be very important because ultimately the Diocesan Bishop calls men to the priesthood. Bishop Conlon and Fr. Masters recently visited St. Meinrad Seminary and will be visiting Immaculate Conception Seminary in Missouri later this month. They will be visiting the other four seminaries where we currently have seminarians enrolled after the first of the year. Fr. Masters will not be joining Bishop Conlon during his visit to the North American College in Rome.

Bishop Conlon made the point that the choice of seminary is very important to the life of the diocese both in short term and in the long term. He has established this committee to examine which seminaries the diocese should utilize for the formation of our seminarians. He does not have any forgone conclusions but he does think we should look at the question. We should look at the fact that we are currently using six seminaries. It makes it difficult to build fraternity when the seminarians are so dispersed. It also makes it difficult for Bishop Conlon to visit and interact with the seminarians as well as making it more difficult for Fr. Masters in his role as their superior. We used to seminarians that are unique. We use St. Cyril & Methodius (Orchard Lake, Michigan) for our seminarians from Poland who intend to incardinate in a U.S. diocese. The second unique seminary that we use it is the North American College in Rome as well. We have also use two college seminaries and two theologates. Bishop Conlon has asked Fr. Masters to put a committee of priests together to study this question. The committee will be chaired Fr. Masters. The goal is to have one mainline college and one mainline theologate plus the two unique seminaries.

Fr. Podwysocki made the point that studying at a distant seminarian makes it more difficult to enter into the Presbyterate upon ordination. Fr. Lennon made a point of how priestly fraternity and brotherhood really develops when the men study together. He sees five issues that priests face regardless of age. They are isolation, loneliness, the need for appreciation for their priestly ministry, depression and living a celibate life in healthy ways.

The Question of Closing St. George Mission in Melvin, Bishop Conlon —

St. George parish is located in Ford County and is a mission of Gibson City. The people of the parish of St. George have asked that the parish be closed. They currently have nine families. The church building is in a poor state and needs many repairs. They have the money for the repairs but the people do not think it's prudent to spend the money to repair the building.

There are two motions concerning their request to close the parish that needed to be considered. Fr. Groh made the following motion. It was seconded by Fr. Jendersyk. The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion: To close St. George Mission in Melvyn and determine that the people would be free to become members of Immaculate Conception in Roberts and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Gibson City. The assets would be divided proportionally between the Immaculate Conception in Roberts and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Gibson City depending on which parish the people joined.

Following, a second motion was made by Fr. Jendersyk and seconded by Fr. Groh. The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion: To Secularize the Church building and demolish it.

VI. New Business

Fr. John Belmonte , SJ, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Teacher salaries —

Fr. Belmonte, SJ, asked to meet with the Presbyteral Council concerning teacher salaries because he felt that it was important that he receive input from the Pastors who have Catholic schools as early on in the process of setting teacher salaries as possible. The following is his proposal.

“Basically freeze existing Salary Scale for one more year while implementing an appropriate reasonable range allowance for special stipends and extra incentives. This recommendation may change depending on possible 2012-13 Health Insurance Benefit changes.

Rationale:

1. Parish Financial Pressure Overview (provided by Finance Office)
 - a. Income:
 - i. 2010-11 Collections at many Parishes with Schools showed significant declines from 09-10
 - ii. 2011-12 Collections at Parishes with Schools budgeted mostly flat
 - iii. 2012-13 No known reason to project major overall increases to current status
 - b. Expense:

- i. Expense pressure continues to come from salaries & wages at both Parish & School levels
 - ii. Enrollment trend continues to put pressure on school income levels
 - iii. 2011-12 Budgeted Subsidies possibly increased in some schools to offset anticipated expense increases
 - iv. Given State of Illinois finances, no reason to assume any reinstated or new state funding
2. Early Thinking for Parish Salary Budget Recommendation from Business Office
- a. Based on conversations with Pastors & Business Managers, the Finance Office has reason to recommend 1 – 2% Parish wide Salary increases.
3. Total Compensation Package Overview
- a. Health Insurance Benefits are unknown for 2012-13, pending future Diocesan review
 - i. Employee portion expense increase projected for 2012-13 or 2013-14 when parishes may have to adjust compensation to offset employee portion
 - b. Pension Benefits are not anticipated to change in 2012-13
 - i. Given the current state of the Fund, the Finance Office has indicated it is looking for ways to improve the health of the Fund which may change the employee benefit in the future.”

There was discussion about the fact that some schools offer stipends above and beyond teacher and principal salaries. The question of justice was raised in light of the situation where wealthy parishes and schools of the diocese are able to offer significant stipends but poorer parishes and schools of the diocese are not able to offer any stipends at all. Fr. Belmonte, SJ, wants to begin to get his arms around this situation by setting a range for the stipends that are currently offered. Fr. Jendersyk stated that the diocesan school board is looking at this issue because more schools are in the “have not category rather than in the have category”.

VII. Old Business

None

VIII. Episcopal Remarks

Bishop Conlon —

Bishop Conlon attended his first meeting with the diocesan pastoral council and will be meeting with the executive committee in the evening of November 2nd. There was a great deal of discussion about the council’s relationship with the clusters. Bishop suggested to the diocesan pastoral council that it might be fruitful if the representatives from the clusters on the diocesan council meet with the chairs of the parish pastoral councils in the clusters periodically.

Bishop Conlon stated that planning is an issue that needs to be looked at within the diocese. There is no agency in the curia that has the responsibility for coordinating the short-term and long-term planning for the diocese. He has asked Doug Delaney to be the staff person to coordinate future planning and the overall planning process for the diocese. The Presbyteral Council and the Pastoral Council will need to be involved.

Bishop Conlon will assume the chair of the Bishops' Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People later this month. It will take some of his time here in the diocese because of the details he will have to attend to in his role as chair of the committee and it will also entail travel to Washington D.C. as well. Bishop Conlon asked for our patience over the next three years as he chairs this committee. He will try to limit how much he is away from the diocese. But, this is one way an individual Bishop gives of himself to the larger church.

Bishop Conlon stated that he has been very gratified by the welcome he has received throughout the diocese. He has had opportunities to celebrate mass at some of the parishes, schools, etc. and he has been warmly welcomed throughout the diocese.

The *Ad Limina* visit is February 9th to 17th in Rome. It coincides with two conferences Bishop Conlon already had to attend in Rome. He mentioned that the *Ad Limina* is a great experience and that he is looking forward to visiting our three seminarians while in Rome.

Bishop Siegel — No remarks.

IX. Next Meeting: December 7, 2011 at 10:30 am at the Pastoral Center.

X. Closing Prayer — Fr. Groh led the closing prayer.

XI. Adjourn — the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm

Motion to adjourn: Fr. Conway.

Second: Fr. Jendersyk.

Rev. John Klein, Secretary