

November 12, 2021

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m. by the Chair, Adrian Dominguez. Fr. John Connell, VG, led the opening prayer.

In attendance: Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, Lloyd Cambre, Vice Chair, Fr. John Connell, VG, Adrian Dominguez, Chair, Dcn. Matt Glover, Dr. Karen Hollenbeck, Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, OSB, Roberto Martinez, Alma Stewart, Greg Wolfe, Sr. Mickey Espinoza, Paul James, and Amanda Pizzo.

Not in attendance: Dennis Lee, Jeff Hines, Dcn. Efrain Vargas.

Review and approval of previous meeting's minutes: The minutes of the April 23, 2021, meeting were accepted as written by acclamation.

Old Business

Finalizing Parish Emergency Plans – Follow up by Lloyd Cambre

Lloyd Cambre said their team has finalized plans for parishes after working on documents, plans and communicating with the Little Rock Police Department as well as a local school for examples and suggestions to help the diocese implement their emergency plans. We received feedback from the Little Rock PD and have produced an outline and a template for each parish to implement in a way that takes into consideration the security risks for each area. If parishes implement these plans, use the training, create teams, and review the process annually it will be successful. Questions touched on how to communicate between local parish teams, and those who are part of the security team. Bishop Taylor added that in all his years here the only issue that has come up has been a tornado. The importance of having a plan and keeping it simple and easy to use is critical.

Rotating terms and identifying new members for the Diocesan Pastoral Council – Adrian Dominguez and Bishop Taylor

Bishop Taylor explained the new process of staggered appointments, 3 years, 2 years and 1 year. Adrian Dominguez opened the floor for nominations of a new Chair and Vice-Chair. Nominations were made and approved for Paul James as the new Chair and Karen Hollenbeck as the new Vice-Chair. Their new appointment will begin January 1, 2022. Also beginning January 1, Bishop Taylor will send nomination letters to the following:

3 years: Mallett, Garcia, Halman, and Black Catholics Representative.

2 years: Bezner, Hollenbeck, Dominguez

1 year: Hines, James, Martinez

Deacon Steve Mallett - Deacon Representative

Anabel Garcia - Youth and Young Adults Representative

Alan Halman - Knights of Columbus Representative, effective July 2022

Alma Stewart- Black Catholics Representative, appointed after this meeting.

New Business

Update on Religious Life Program: Men and Women – Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, OSB

Sr. Mary Clare gave an update on her activities with the Religious Life Program. She has not travelled lately as much due to COVID-19 restrictions, she has had meetings virtually and is slowly seeing an easing of travel restrictions, she recently visited some under emergency situations but not many visits to religious communities. She has several trips scheduled in the near future. She did visit three areas recently to give talks, Jacksonville, Russellville, and Fayetteville. Sr. Mary Clare spoke about the numbers of new religious in formation. Carmelites have two new in formation, Subiaco has five total, four junior monks and one candidate, one junior monk will be taking final vows. Missionary Carmelites have only one postulant in the United States and fifteen in El Salvador. Sr. Mickey's order is doing okay. The Vietnamese and Nigerian communities have flourishing vocations, however, they are having trouble getting them here. Sr. Mary Clare also talked about the idea of a "discernment house" for women religious. Lloyd remarked he would bring this to the table at the next Knights of Columbus meeting to inquire about raising funds for the women religious community.

V Encuentro - Sr. Mickey Espinoza

Sr. Mickey gave an overview of the results of V Encuentro. Sr. Mickey met with groups in October. Each group is connected to a parish. Bishop Taylor spoke to participants about being part of the Body of Christ. Sr. Mickey said that information was gathered and put into a report. The report came out later and provided planning, information and how to work with parishes. The meetings were difficult early in the process due to COVID-19. There were workshops for leadership in parishes, and a new pastoral plan was presented to Bishop Taylor. The team will meet again in December and there is hope that the Synodal process will help.

Council of Catholic Women – Bishop Taylor

Bishop Taylor discussed the Council of Catholic Women. On a visit to Oklahoma he was told about the group, and the Oklahoma chapter was hopeful that the Arkansas chapter could be revived. Adrian Dominguez suggested other groups like the Legion of Mary could help in this process and be combined with the Council. We will continue to look at ways to make this happen, maybe electing someone to take on the project, or traveling to an Oklahoma chapter meeting and to learn about the Council.

Bishop Taylor's closing remarks

Bishop Taylor said he was grateful for the Diocesan Pastoral Council's hard work. He asked for everyone to participate in the Synod on Synodality and encouraged them to be good listeners.

Future Agenda Items

These can be sent to Bishop Taylor or Maria Velazquez.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Friday, January 28 at 11 a.m.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Bishop Taylor closed the meeting with the Synod prayer.
The meeting ended at 12:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Adrian Dominguez, Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council
Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs