

May 1, 2020

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m. via video conference by Jeff Hines, Chair. Bishop Taylor led a special Coronavirus prayer for all.

In attendance: Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, Fr. John Connell, VG, Dcn. Matt Glover, Dennis Lee, Sr. Mickey Espinoza, Greg Wolfe, Cynthia Solis, Lloyd Cambre, Alma Stewart, Sr. Mary Clare Bezner, Dr. Karen Hollenbeck, Adrian Dominguez, Jeff Hines, Chair and Paul James.

Not in attendance: Dcn. Efrain Vargas, Roberto Martinez.

Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January 17, 2020 meeting were accepted as written.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Youth based on V Encuentro results (Cynthia Solis)

Update regarding Young Adults (Cynthia Solis)

Cynthia Solis referred to two handouts

- Talked about how youth are the priority of the present and future of the Church.
- Problem of disconnected youth. The “nones,” the disaffiliated youth.
 - Mentioned Bishop Barron video on this.
- Embrace pastoral conversion.
- Cynthia closed with a quote from the handout *V Encuentro*. “At this moment of grace, it is of the utmost importance to champion the ongoing formation and leadership development of Hispanic/Latino Catholics. The *V Encuentro* is a privileged opportunity to prepare them as missionary disciples ready to serve the entire Church, and for the Church to better recognize and receive the gifts that Hispanics/Latinos bring to the Church and society in the United States.”

Sr. Mickey Espinoza talked about parishes the sisters have gone into to work with the leadership of youth groups and their pastors.

NEW BUSINESS

The resumption of the public celebration of Mass and the other sacraments

Bishop Taylor consulted with the Diocesan Pastoral Council on whether to resume public Mass in the diocese. He had consulted with the Presbyteral Council the day before, and he said both discussions were similar. He took everyone’s comments under advisement, and said he would wait until May 4 to

make a decision after hearing what Governor Hutchinson had to say about guidance for churches and places of worship having public services.

After the May 1 Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting the following occurred:

On May 4 the Arkansas Department of Health issued Covid-19 Guidance for Places of Worship <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-guidance-for-faith-based-organizations> that were updated on July 12. They also posted Supporting Information for the Guidance of Places of Worship https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/Places_of_Worship_Supporting_Information_final.pdf.

Also on May 4 Bishop Taylor issued a letter to Catholics in the diocese authorizing the resumption of the public celebration of Mass <https://www.dolr.org/article/restricted-public-masses-resume-may> starting the weekend of May 16-17 or earlier for parishes capable of meeting the diocesan restrictions.

Along with his letter, Bishop Taylor issued a more extensive document, Restrictions and Options for Worship Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic <https://www.dolr.org/restrictions-and-options-worship>, that lists additional requirements a parish must meet for public Mass and some additional options (not required) for consideration.

The website for the Diocese of Little Rock has a page dedicated exclusively to Catholic Coronavirus Resources <https://www.dolr.org/covid> that is updated regularly and includes all of Bishop Taylor's statements on resuming public Mass.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Paul mentioned the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and wondered about our parishes.

Greg Wolfe explained what was done by the diocese and its parishes and schools.

Future Agenda Items: Please submit any suggestions for future agenda items to Bishop Taylor, Jeff Hines or Maria Velázquez.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for August 14.

Bishop Taylor closed the meeting with all praying the Lord's Prayer together followed by his blessing.

He then asked how the video conference worked for all - in person meetings or this? Most liked the video meeting. Bishop Taylor said the next meeting will be by video conference too.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jeff Hines, Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs
Meeting ended at 12:20 p.m.