

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, August 2, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Paul James, Chair. He mentioned that today was Bishop Taylor's 44th anniversary of his priesthood ordination and he led the group in prayer.

In attendance: Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, Fr. John Connell, VG, Dcn. Matt Glover, Mr. Dennis Lee, Mr. Greg Wolfe, Dcn. Steve Mallett, Ms. Anabel Garcia (Zoom), Ms. Alma Stewart, Mr. Adrián Dominguez (Zoom), Mr. Jeff Hines, Mr. Paul James, Mrs. Kristy Dunn, and Fr. Daniel Velasco.

Not in attendance: Mr. Alan Halman, Sr. Cecilia Nguyen, OSB, Sr. Mickey Espinoza, MCP, and Mr. Roberto Martinez.

Review and approval of previous meeting's minutes: The minutes of the January 12, 2024, meeting were approved by acclamation. The April 19 meeting was canceled because it conflicted with the Mass of Christian Burial for Fr. Thomas Keller.

Old Business

School of Spiritual Direction (Update) - Fr. Daniel Velasco

Fr. Daniel Velasco, Director of the School of Spiritual Direction and Pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church, provided an update that included the following:

- They finished year 1 with 12 people who will continue in year 2 and a new group of 12 people will start in July for their year 1.
- Both groups will have the same academics for 2024-2025, and there will be separate prayer experiences for the year 1 and 2 groups.
- Besides training people to be spiritual directors, they are also working with people who are already certified in spiritual direction.
- There will be a retreat in September at the diocese for certified spiritual directors and the year 2 group.
- There are approximately 30 certified spiritual directors in the diocese, most are in NW Arkansas due to a spiritual direction program offered in the past by the Benedictine sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith.
- Our diocese has a shortage of spiritual directors, especially for candidates in the Diaconate Formation Program.
- Anyone seeking a spiritual director should contact their pastor first for help with determining their need, whether it be spiritual direction, counseling, or something else.
- A clarification was made about the role of deacons: they cannot be appointed to be a "chaplain," which is a role for priests only. Deacons can be appointed "spiritual advisor" to a group without being certified as a spiritual director.
- Not every spiritual director functions as a supervisor. This is a role some take on to help other spiritual directors, for example, when something comes up in a session that they need to discuss with another spiritual director.

There was an engaging discussion with Fr. Daniel by the council members that concluded with them thanking him for his work with the School of Spiritual Direction.

“Decline to Sign” Campaign against the proposed Arkansas Abortion Amendment

(Update) - Dennis Lee

Dennis Lee, Chancellor for Administrative Affairs, reported that there is a legal challenge pending that questions whether signatures collected by paid canvassers are valid, and if successful, this will stop the Arkansas Abortion Amendment from being placed on the ballot for the November 5 election. **Update:** Since this meeting, the Arkansas Supreme Court invalidated enough of the signatures collected by paid canvasser to keep the Arkansas Abortion Amendment from qualifying to be on this year’s ballot.

New Business

Proposal for the Jubilee Year and the conclusion of the Eucharistic Revival – Fr. Juan Guido

Fr. Juan Guido, Director of the Office of Divine Worship and Pastor of Christ the King Catholic Church in Little Rock, was not able to be present, but he provided a handout with the tentative plan for how our diocese will celebrate “Jubilee 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope.” Bishop Taylor explained what was being planned and clarified that the Jubilee Year is not connected to the Synod.

Subject to any changes that might need to be made in the future, the opening of Jubilee 2025 will take place on December 29, 2024, the Feast of the Holy Family, beginning at 2:30 p.m. with a procession with the Blessed Sacrament from St. Edward Catholic Church in Little Rock to the Cathedral of St. Andrew where Mass will start at approximately 3:15 p.m. with the rite of opening the Holy Doors. A pilgrimage from all corners of the diocese for the opening of the Jubilee Year is also in the planning stages.

Additional Jubilee Celebrations in the diocese will take place in 2025 on June 14 at St. Raphael Catholic Church in Springdale and on June 28 at Christ the King Catholic Church in Little Rock. At a later date, Bishop Taylor expects to name additional Jubilee Churches that will feature a Holy Door.

The Jubilee Year will close on December 28, 2025, at the Cathedral of St. Andrew.

Update on the new translations (English and Spanish) of the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* and *Ritual de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos* – Jeff Hines

Jeff Hines, Director of the Faith Formation Office, presented a summary of the new English and Spanish translations of the *Order of Christian Initiation for Adults* that will be available for sale on November 1. The first date for their use is December 1, 2024, and March 5, 2025 (Ash Wednesday) is their mandatory use date. There is a Rite edition for liturgy and a Study edition for leaders. Links to order the publications were sent to the pastors and their leaders of Christian Initiation for Adults. These include national statutes on how to initiate which is where most of the changes can be found. He said there are few norms which are intended to simplify and clarify. He also shared that the Faith Formation Office will be offering training in English and Spanish at five (5) locations around the diocese.

There was considerable discussion between the council members and Mr. Hines that included clarification of terminology, such as, baptized persons are referred to as “candidates” and unbaptized persons are referred to as “catechumens.” Mr. Hines also stressed the importance of using the words “Initiation” and “Christian Initiation” instead of the anachronism “CIA” for Christian Initiation of Adults which calls for full parish involvement.

National Conference for Community and Justice in the DOLR – Paul James

Paul James brought up the topic of how the diocese is currently participating in ecumenical activities. The diocese's past involvement with the National Conference for Community and Justice was mentioned. There was some discussion among the council members, and this was left open as a topic for future discussion.

Meeting Wrap-up

Bishop Taylor's remarks

These were made as agenda items were presented and discussed.

Future Agenda Items

These can be submitted to Paul James, Chair, Bishop Taylor or María Velázquez in the Bishop's Office. Topics that are on the agenda for the Presbyteral Council will also be used for the Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Friday, October 18.

Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully recorded by:

Dennis Lee
Chancellor for Administrative Affairs