



# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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## **Priest Council Minutes Archdiocesan Pastoral Center June 29, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl; Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout; Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell; Rev. Msgr. Michael W. Fisher; Rev. Frederick J. Close; Rev. Alain M. Colliou; Rev. Charles A. Cortinovis; Rev. Msgr. Donald S. Essex; Rev. David M. Fitz-Patrick; Rev. William E. Foley; Rev. Scott R. Hahn; Rev. Mark D. Knestout; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Msgr. Eddie L. Tolentino; Rev. Tam X. Tran; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins

**Absent:** Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Kevin J. Regan; Rev. Raymond F. Schmidt; Rev. Lawrence C. Swink; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Moises Villalta, O.F.M. Cap.; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

### **Opening Prayer and Comments**

For the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Cardinal Wuerl recalled the role of St. Peter as the rock and St. Paul as the great voice of the Gospel to the Gentiles, noting how these two callings continue very much in the work of the Church today. We in the Church today have the comfort of knowing our unity with Peter, who today bears the name Francis.

Noting how their terms on the Priest Council are concluding this summer, Cardinal Wuerl thanked Msgr. Eddie Tolentino, Fr. Fred Close, and Fr. Tam Tran.

### **Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the May 4, 2017 meeting were approved without corrections.

### **Location of Youth Rally and Mass for Life**

Dr. Susan Timoney, Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, introduced the topic of the D.C. Armory as the second venue in recent years for the Youth Rally and Mass for Life, which has supplemented the primary venue of the Verizon Center. However, in light of issues that arose at the March for Life this past January, it has become evident that the D.C. Armory is no longer a logistically workable second venue. Ms. Mary Forr, Director of the Department of Life Issues, proceeded to give an overview of the circumstances and provide a recommendation for the 2018 event.

For the Youth Rally and Mass for Life this past January, the Verizon Center, with a capacity for 18,000 people, hosted approximately 14,000 people at a total cost of

approximately \$200,000. The D.C. Armory, with a capacity for 10,000 people, hosted approximately 5,000 people for a total cost of approximately \$130,000. The logistical challenge at this year's event arose from the last minute announcement that Vice President Pence would attend the March for Life Rally, which led to increased security that forced both of our events to end early, so that participants could arrive to the National March for Life in time. The March for Life staff believes a "high-ranking" White House official will attend annually over the next three years, and the resulting security will affect the timing of our Rally and Mass and the movement of people to the Mall.

The advantages of the D.C. Armory as a second venue include its 10,000-person capacity, available bus parking, and our knowledge of how to run the event there. The disadvantages now include an earlier start time needed to accommodate the security requirements for access to the Mall. Additionally, a \$10 SmartTrip card is required to ride the Metro, which adds another expense for groups, and some school policies do not allow some groups to ride the Metro. The Armory is considered "second-best," and many groups, if assigned there, choose to not use their tickets. There is also a new deposit amount of \$5,000 for use of the Armory, and the contract must be signed within 30 days of the deposit.

For consideration of a new second venue, a number of locations were contacted and visited, and the two possible locations that best fit the need are The George Washington University Smith Center and the Washington Convention Center. The advantages of the Smith Center include an arena-like setting, limited set-up, efficiency for the estimated cost of \$115,000, and a location one mile from the start of the March for Life. Its disadvantages include a capacity for just 5,000 people and the inability to book for certain until the basketball schedules are released in September/October 2017. The advantages of the Washington Convention Center include an immediate availability for booking, a capacity for over 5,000 people, and a location 1.7 miles from the start of the March for Life. Its disadvantages include the requirements for major set-up and bleacher/chair rental, only one entry to the exhibit level with one set of narrow escalators, and an estimated cost of \$230,000 with a deposit of \$8,125 and 30 days to decide.

In light of this information, the Archdiocese has four options. The first option would be to keep the two locations of the Verizon Center and the D.C. Armory. The second option would be to wait and see if the Smith Center is available (the likelihood of which is good as basketball games are not played on Friday nights, but it cannot be guaranteed until schedules come out). We could hold the second event at the Smith Center if it is available, and if it is not, check the availability of the Armory. If the Armory is not available, we could have one main event at the Verizon Center with additional events at surrounding parishes. The third option would be to hold the event at the Verizon Center and the Convention Center; however, this option does not seem feasible because of the cost and the difficulty of effectively moving students through the Convention Center's narrow entrance. The fourth option would be to plan for one event at the Verizon Center and direct the overflow of participants to surrounding parishes.

Ms. Forr concluded with a recommendation to hold one event at the Verizon Center (which has 2,000 additional seats available on average) and to encourage all downtown parishes to welcome groups for morning Mass.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, Ms. Forr affirmed that people from this archdiocese have first priority for attendance at the Verizon Center, but that certain parishes can be used as “satellite” Mass locations for out-of-town groups. She also noted that the Verizon Center offers a stable financial frame of reference; the event is funded primarily by the Archdiocese, although some funding comes from free-will offerings and foundation grants. Considering what we can do at a reasonable cost and do well, the Council supported Ms. Forr’s recommendation to plan for a single event at the Verizon Center, and the idea of parishes hosting satellite Masses was well-received. Logistically, perhaps we can increase the number of satellite parishes in 2018. Planning should include inquiring into the capacity of certain parishes, and any bishop from another diocese desiring to celebrate Mass with his diocesan contingent should be instructed to communicate with the pastor of a satellite parish.

### **Report on Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment**

Dr. Timoney next introduced the topic of the information gained through soliciting feedback for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. She thanked pastors for hosting listening sessions and making sure people had the online address for the questionnaire. Mr. Jonathan Lewis, Director of Evangelization and Young Adult Initiatives, proceeded to present the Executive Summary of the findings to the Council. The Council was also provided with copies of a more detailed 16-page report. He clarified that, in this context, “young people” encompasses young adults in addition to teenage youth, and “vocation” refers to the universal vocation to love rather than to simply marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life.

The archdiocese launched the *Share with Francis* initiative, lasting from March 15-May 15, to gather feedback from Catholic and non-Catholic young people as well as parents and leaders across the archdiocese. This process included consultation with appropriate archdiocesan offices (Ministerial Leadership, Priestly Vocations, Communications, Youth Ministry, Campus Ministry, etc.); development of age-specific questions adapted from the questions in the Preparatory Document from the Vatican; creation of [www.SharewithFrancis.org](http://www.SharewithFrancis.org) and online questionnaires; development of a Listening Session Toolkit for parishes and ministry groups; dissemination of resources to pastors, clergy, and other parish leaders; and digital promotion through Facebook advertising, Twitter, and Guadalupe Radio, as well as archdiocesan print and digital media. In total, 35 parishes and 13 archdiocesan/regional groups hosted in-person listening sessions, and a total of 661 young people participated in-person. Total online submissions came to 934, including 285 Catholic young adults, 117 non-Catholic young adults, 274 Catholic youth, 128 non-Catholic youth, 41 clergy/religious, and 89 parents/staff/adults.

The average young adult participant is single, aged 19-30, and works full time. Those who identify as Catholic tend to be registered members of their parish (59%) and attend Mass at least weekly (49%) and frequently more than once a week (29%). The average youth participant is around ages 16-18 and lives in Maryland. Those that identify as

Catholic attend Mass weekly (50%) or at least more than once a month (16%). As the demographic data illustrates, the survey process was not as effective at reaching out to the large population of irregularly practicing Catholics. This fact reiterates much of what was heard from survey participants: the importance of the Church increasing its outreach beyond the parish to the peripheries, the formation of young people who are engaged in the Church to go out as personal evangelizers. There are of course differences among married and single young adults. Single young adults completed most surveys, but young adult ministry is no longer just “the singles club,” (e.g. the “Date Night” program for married couples). The key findings of the *Share with Francis* initiative are as follows:

- ***Young people are asking for peer Catholic community in the face of heightened secularization.*** However, the vast majority of our parishes do not have a peer community for youth or young adults to support them in their faith journey. Only 52% of youth and 55% of young adults say that they have a close friend at their parish. Greater institutional investment and multi-parish collaboration is needed to develop and sustain peer communities.
- ***Young people are asking for personal relationships with clergy, religious, and lay mentors.*** However, 50% of young adults responded that they do not have an older adult at their parish who is a mentor to them. Young people would benefit from access to spiritual direction as well as intentional one-on-one and small group relationships with inter-generational mentors.
- ***Young people are asking for an invitation to leadership.*** Parishes need to invite young people into leadership, challenging them to rise to the commitment and mentoring them to effectively do so. In some cases, this will require setting aside current parish ministries or structures for those that resonate with a new generation.
- ***Young people are asking for an authentic message that applies to their daily life.*** Young people desire to grow in their relationship with the Person of Jesus and expect to find in the Church a coherent worldview and counter-cultural message of truth that is not watered down. They desire to be challenged to live out a great mission worthy of their lives, yet accepted and forgiven when they fall short. More formation opportunities (e.g. small groups) are needed to help young people learn and discuss their faith alongside a supportive community.
- ***Young people are asking for a Church that exists in the peripheries of life.*** They expressed a desire for the Church to go out from the parish to meet young people where they are in the world and to serve those in need on the peripheries. They do not see as much of a sacred/secular divide that is perhaps more characteristic of older generations. The Synod listening process was a helpful test-case for this reality, as the vast majority of Catholic participants were those who attend Mass weekly or more, not those Catholics on the near-peripheries of faith.
- ***Young people are seeking meaningful spiritual experiences.*** Retreats/conferences as well as pilgrimages and mission trips provide young people with unique and meaningful spiritual experiences that can last a lifetime. Unfortunately, most Catholic young people have not had these meaningful experiences of faith. Catholic young people also reported that beautiful Liturgies and popular devotions, including Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacraments of Initiation, Wedding Mass, Holy Week Liturgies, etc. were the most meaningful Catholic moments in their life.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the question of ecclesial movements arose, but Mr. Lewis reported that not many of those groups participated in the survey process, but he affirmed them as an essential part of a ministry plan. Bishop Dorsonville cited the importance of music, and perhaps evening Masses, with young people leading worship. The importance of continuing this discussion within deanery and parish council settings was emphasized. Mr. Lewis is willing to talk to pastors and provide a 1-page infographic on resources. The number of retreats offered for young people has doubled this year, and we are hosting two small-group trainings a year. The Council agreed that it would be helpful for Mr. Lewis to compile reflections on best practices and helpful pastoral hints and attend deanery meetings, with the goal of shaping a pastoral initiative for the fall.

### **Archdiocese of Washington Schools Branding and Marketing Initiative**

Msgr. Kevin Hart, Interim Secretary for Education, introduced the archdiocesan Schools Branding and Marketing Initiative by noting that in February 2016, the archdiocese started looking at different companies to help market our schools and selected a company called Edelman. Based on their research, marketing for the next school year will begin as early as October 2017. Mr. Bill Ryan, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, proceeded to present the Executive Summary of Edelman’s recommendations and supporting research to the Council, who were also provided with copies of a more detailed 4-page report from Edelman.

The goal of Edelman’s research was to help the archdiocese develop a Catholic schools brand identity and campaign concept for the implementation of a three-year marketing plan to support our schools’ efforts to recruit and retain students per the enrollment goals outlined in the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Five-Year Strategic Plan. From October 2016 to April 2017, Edelman conducted extensive research through in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders; focus groups with current and prospective parents; an online survey of current and prospective parents, faculty, and staff; the 2017 Principal’s Workshop; and a competitive analysis of area schools and systems. To obtain feedback on recommendations and brand narrative, the CSO consulted with the Secretariat for Communications, the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, the Archdiocese Board of Education, and pastor groups via Pastor Collaboration Days. The final recommendations were for a brand identity of “Faith, Family and Lifelong Learning” and a campaign concept of “The Right Catholic School for You.”

The rationale for the campaign concept “The Right Catholic School for You” is to offer a creative platform that will enable the archdiocese to encourage families to consider all of our schools, with a particular focus on their parish school when applicable. The goal is to equip all families, Catholic and non-Catholic, with information to match their child to the archdiocesan school(s) that is right for them. It embraces the importance of finding the right “fit” between child and school, and it should support ongoing retention as well as enrollment. The concept is built upon three data-driven factors:

- Parents tell us they want to “hear more” from their parish about their parish school.

- Parents tell us they “shop around” before choosing a school for their children – and we know they have many good options to consider that are not Catholic schools.
- While there is a consistent educational foundation across all ADW schools, rooted in rigorous, engaging curricula based on the highest academic standards, Catholic schools are not completely monolithic.

Parents and school principals responded extremely well to the “Right Catholic School for You” concept. The next steps are to confirm approval of brand identity, confirm approval of the campaign concept, finalize a three-year marketing plan, and implement the three-year marketing plan on July 1, 2017.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, Mr. Ryan affirmed that this initiative is inclusive of all archdiocesan Catholic schools (parish, regional, consortium), but that independent Catholic schools are not included. The concept is to have some online tools to help parents, allowing each individual school to make their case. The competition that parishes face from independent Catholic schools, in terms of both student enrollment and Sunday activities, was noted. With regard to these schools, Cardinal Wuerl noted that preparation for First Communion and Confirmation is how we keep a focus on the parish. Certain parishes face more challenges in maintaining a student body and parishioners, but it was noted that competition should make us better, with the result of the best being done for the greatest number. Mr. Ryan noted that there are three types of families: those who are “Catholic all the way,” Catholics who think our schools are good but want to know more about specific offerings, and non-Catholics. It was agreed that while there is no single way of stating things that will satisfy everyone, the brand development initiative was done well enough that we can urge them to continue on.

### **Catholic Schools Office Five-Year Strategic Plan**

Mr. Ryan next gave a presentation on the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Five-Year Strategic Plan. This plan is based on the four pillars of Catholic education – Catholic identity, academic excellence, affordability, and governance – and it is the fruit of such developments in recent years as the Convocation on Catholic Education (2007), Cardinal Wuerl’s Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education (2008), *Policies for Catholic Schools* (2009), the transition to AdvancED comprehensive accreditation (2011), and the national accreditation visit (2013).

Concerning Catholic identity, the goal is for every Catholic school to embody Catholic identity that is authenticated by its mission. All school communities should fully teach and promote the tenets of the Catholic faith and efforts of evangelization in safe, faith-filled learning environments permeated with Gospel values and virtues. They should also exemplify strong measures of mission and Catholic identity, as determined by students’ understanding and knowledge of the Catholic faith. Strategies to achieve this goal include a Catholic Identity Committee, enhanced growth of the whole child for archdiocesan schools, staff faith formation for all schools, discipleship and family formation for all schools, a growth model assessment for all schools, Catholic identity measures and resources for all schools, and Catholic identity visits for all schools.

Concerning academic excellence, the goal is for all archdiocesan students to experience learner-centered instruction that engages them in learning and prepares them for the 21st century. Archdiocesan schools should offer a rigorous curriculum aligned with our standards and inclusive of Gospel values. Archdiocesan students should be engaged in quality instruction from effective faculty who are adept at using instructional and assessment practices that promote academic growth for all learners. Students should also meet individual targets in math and reading, and schools should have the capacity to provide faith formation and academically excellent education to a diverse population of students. Strategies to achieve this goal include a teacher evaluation tool together with archdiocesan and school-level data-driven professional development, an academic standards revision process, assessment resources and coaches, special education capacity, and Catholic identity instructional integration.

Concerning affordability and enrollment, the goal is for our schools to achieve aggregate enrollment targets through improved operational vitality. All archdiocesan schools should develop and achieve annual enrollment targets to improve financial viability. The archdiocese will annually brand and market Catholic education to support local schools' student recruitment and retention efforts. Our schools will annually utilize the school budgeting processes provided by the CSO in accordance with archdiocesan budgeting policies and procedures. The archdiocese will seek to increase public and private sources of funding to support CSO programs and tuition assistance, and our schools will annually implement an advancement program for meeting fundraising goals. Strategies to achieve this goal include elementary school growth, budget workgroup recommendations, the three-year marketing plan for the archdiocese and local schools, the Latino enrollment initiative, the enrollment forecaster project, development program training, and the Catholic alumni donor program.

Concerning governance, the goal is for all archdiocesan schools to have effective spiritual, instructional, and managerial leadership. All archdiocesan school principals should be strong spiritual, instructional, and managerial leaders. The Superintendent for Catholic Schools and pastors/administrators will regularly collaborate on the oversight of Catholic school operations and evaluations. As per the directives of the Archdiocesan Synod, all policies in *The Policies for Catholic Schools* will be reviewed and revised, as needed, every five years. The CSO will collaborate with pastor and principal teams to strengthen the connections between parishes and Catholic schools, and it will research, identify, and assess the effectiveness of various governance models to advance the mission effectiveness and operational vitality of every archdiocesan Catholic school. Archdiocesan school advisory boards and home school associations, in partnership with school leadership, should help to advance the mission of Catholic schools in the archdiocese. Catholic schools and the CSO staff will regularly communicate planning processes and the effectiveness of plans related to Catholic identity, academic performance, finances, technology, and facilities. Strategies to achieve this goal include the accreditation process, the principal evaluation tool, policies and procedures for Catholic schools, and Pastor and Principal Institute, governance models, SAB and HSA effectiveness, and data transparency.

Finally, concerning strategic planning, the goal is for all strategic planning and related decision-making that impact Catholic schools to be informed by the use of data and a

commonly agreed-upon improvement protocol. The CSO Strategic Plan will be fully implemented by 2022. Annual accreditation continuous improvement plans for schools should be of increasingly high quality, and should include detailed action items that are aligned with strategies in the archdiocesan and local schools' strategic plans. Archdiocesan and local school leadership should use varied data systems for annual analysis, decision making, and strategic planning. Strategies to achieve this goal include annual implementation of the archdiocesan Strategic Plan, the Annual Data Summit with progress monitoring, progress reporting on the archdiocesan plan, school cohorts for local strategic planning, progress monitoring for local schools, progress reporting on local schools, and resources for local data access and communication.

Following approval of the Five-Year Strategic Plan, the next steps consist of recommending Edelman assume the work of drafting the strategic planning narrative as a part of the marketing plan for public distribution; collaborating with the Communications Office for final review of publication; determining the communication plan and media announcements with the Communications Office; and determining the technology solution with the Information Technology Office to create an online resource for local school strategic planning.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the question arose of how we find good principals. Mr. Ryan stated that we try to identify and prepare teachers for advancement and to look outside the archdiocese for additional competent principal candidates. Every new principal is assisted with a mentor and a coach, and the pastor-principal relationship is key. Cardinal Wuerl observed that finances remain one the great challenges, with tuition assistance representing just 17% of the actual need across the archdiocese. The Council approved the plan as a way of helping to position our Catholic schools for the future.

### **Closing Remarks and Prayer**

**Next Meeting:** September 28, 2017