

Priest Council Minutes
Archdiocesan Pastoral Center
January 18, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl; Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell; Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Rev. Msgr. Charles A. Antonicelli; Rev. Msgr. Michael W. Fisher; Rev. Ismael N. Ayala Rev. Joseph A. Calis; 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. Msgr. Charles E. Pope; Rev. Raymond F. Schmidt; Rev. Moises Villalta, O.F.M. Cap.; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

Absent:; Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Kevin J. Regan; Rev. James M. Stack; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins

Opening Prayer and Comments

Cardinal Wuerl opened the meeting in prayer and proceeded immediately to the agenda.

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the November 30, 2017 meeting were approved without corrections.

Non-Traditional Parish Faith Formation Programs

Dr. Jem Sullivan, Secretary for Catholic Education, introduced the topic of non-traditional parish faith formation programs, which present both potentials and challenges in the endeavor of communicating the living mystery of God and helping people encounter the Lord Jesus in Word and Sacrament. Dr. Sullivan then invited Ms. Sara Blauvelt, Director for Catechesis, to give an overview of some of these programs and relevant catechetical issues.

Faith formation for missionary discipleship will look different at each parish. In light of how faith formation is the Church's right and duty, we should ask parishioners what they expect from the parish and then tell them what we can offer. One key issue to address is how we help children know and love God now and benefit from lifelong catechesis. Referencing Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, Ms. Blauvelt noted that in an indifferent world, Christians today must be formed to live in a world that largely ignores God (*CT*, 57). The most valuable gift that the Church can offer to the bewildered and restless world of our time is to form within it Christians who are confirmed in what is essential who are humbly joyful in their faith (*CT*, 61). We are called to give young people simple but solid certainties [of faith] that will help them to seek and know the Lord more and more (*CT*, 60). Catechesis of children must prepare them for the important Christian commitments of adult life (*CT*, 39).

In keeping with the spirit of the New Evangelization, renewed catechesis will be marked by ardor that stems from vibrant love of Christ, will employ methods that are varied to meet the particularities of a person's background, and will have an expression that retains a kerygmatic and personal character, reflects the integrated nature of the faith, makes

clear the relevance of faith to daily life, and fosters continued conversion. Catechetical expectations include annual Safe Environment training and reporting of students, use of the archdiocesan *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* Curriculum Guide and Faith Knowledge Assessment, and a minimum requirement of 30 hours of catechesis per program year for each grade level Pre-K through 8th grade.

One non-traditional model of faith formation is the Flipped (or Inverted) Classroom Model. “Flipping the classroom” means that students gain first exposure to new material outside of class (i.e. online), and then use class time to assimilate that knowledge. A challenge of this model involves how to make sure that learning outside of the classroom is happening. A second non-traditional model is the Family Formation Model, which aims to engage students and parents together through any number of forms (e.g. liturgical, seasonal, parent-catechist, topical, homeschool). A challenge of this model involves having intentional catechesis that is age-appropriate. A third non-traditional model is the Summer Intensive Program. This compressed-format program is characterized by intensified, gathered sessions (sometimes as little as three weeks) that often appeal to inflexible work schedules or family commitments. A challenge of this model involves the integration of children and parents into the parish. In planning our catechetical endeavors, we ask the question: “How are we to enable them to know the meaning, the import, the fundamental requirements, the law of love, the promises and hopes of this kingdom?” (CT, 35) all within the context of the particular community of faith at each parish.

In the discussion following the presentation, one pastor affirmed that the Family Formation Model seems to be working well at his parish. The question was also posed about the availability of a good textbook for “spiral education,” in which content is repeated every 2-3 years, but at a higher level each time. The classroom setting is useful for the dissemination of information, but the integration of faith and life is the creative piece. Thirteen parishes have reported that they are doing something outside the classroom model. Eight parishes have dropped classroom piece, and three parishes are using the Flipped Classroom Model. Whatever model is used, it should not hinder children and parents going to Mass together, and we need to ask how many children and youth are coming to Sunday Mass. These models will require full-time staffing, as well as not limiting faith formation to Sunday morning or not doing it then (although that would not work for the Hispanic community). One pastor noted that some adults simply do not want catechesis, noting an instance at a parish where a number of people left the practice of the faith when a pastor tried to implement a new formation program. For catechesis that integrates faith and life, the importance of the art of conversation, rather than just transmission of information, was affirmed.

Continuation of Ad-Hoc Task Force on Racism

Bishop Roy Campbell and Dr. Susan Timoney, Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, introduced the continuation of the Ad-Hoc Task Force on Racism before turning the presentation over to Ms. Sandra Coles-Bell, Program Director for the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach.

In the fall of 2017, an Ad-Hoc Racism Task Force was formed to assist in the creation and development of various catechetical components that would complement Cardinal

Wuerl's pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Racism Today*. These components include the catechetical toolkit for the pastoral letter, the creation of memorials honoring enslaved persons in Catholic cemeteries, a brochure for understanding the memorials, and a brief overview of the history of slavery in the archdiocese. Following the November 1, 2017 release of *The Challenge of Racism Today*, work continues on planning the Blessing of the Memorials Liturgy, to be celebrated by Cardinal Wuerl on Saturday, February 3, 2018 at the Basilica. Also continuing is the planning and coordination of the installation of the memorials within the archdiocesan cemeteries and certain parish locations. In addition, several members of the Ad-Hoc Task Force also serve on the Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) Statewide Task Force on Racism. *The Challenge of Racism Today* calls us to engage in ongoing dialogue about the sin of racism and to work towards its eradication.

It is recommended that the Ad-Hoc Racism Task Force continue its work as the recommendations from the Maryland Catholic Conference could have long-term goals and strategies that need to be reviewed within the archdiocese. For this purpose, the Task Force will ask Cardinal Wuerl to formalize its structure and make it a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from Pastoral Ministry & Social Concerns, Communications, and Catholic Schools; at least two priests; and layperson(s) with connections to the enslaved persons who lived in the archdiocese. It should have the ability to create sub-committees to address particular issues or initiatives as needed. The new Steering Committee would also be involved in developing discussion opportunities around the archdiocese. One example of such an opportunity that recently took place was the showing of the documentary *13th* in conjunction with the Martin Luther King Celebration. Another example is an upcoming discussion of the Cardinal's pastoral letter with elementary school principals.

Bearing in mind that racism is an issue with which we continue to grapple, the Council affirmed the recommendation that the Ad-Hoc Racism Task Force become an ongoing presence through transition into a Steering Committee. Ms. Coles-Bell affirmed that the Committee will have a proactive role and, when certain issues arise, a responsive role. With regard to the latter, it can provide helpful materials for our archdiocesan community.

Review of Covenant Eyes

Msgr. Michael Fisher, Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, introduced the topic of the Covenant Eyes internet accountability service that is available for priests to use, and he then invited Fr. Carter Griffin, Vice-Rector of Saint John Paul II Seminary, to give an overview of the service. There are many blessings of the digital "revolution," but it has left many people, including priests, vulnerable to the hazards of internet usage. These hazards include objectionable websites, excessive time on the internet or on certain sites, and using it at times of day that pose problems. The intent of using Covenant Eyes is to assist priests in using the internet in a virtuous way. Although filtering is an option with the service, Fr. Griffin expressed doubt about the effectiveness of filtering (given the capacity to get around it), stating that the service's accountability feature is more useful for the fostering of virtue.

Covenant Eyes can be installed on any computer or device, and it monitors internet activity and sends a weekly report to one's accountability partner. This report flags any objectionable websites and also indicates how long the monitored person used the internet and at what time of day. For a priest using the service, he would choose his accountability partner, who could be his spiritual director, a priest mentor, or a priest friend. Covenant Eyes has been used at Saint John Paul II Seminary since its founding. With the bargain price that Covenant Eyes offers to us, the monthly cost would be about \$7 per priest who opts to sign up for it, so if 50 priests sign up, the annual cost would be approximately \$4,200 a year. There is no charge for priests who do not sign up, and there are no long-term commitments. Because use of the service could grow over time, there would be a need for flexible budgeting.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, when the issue was raised about Covenant Eyes in comparison with similar services, Fr. Griffin stated that Covenant Eyes has the longest history in providing this kind of service, and he affirmed its benefit for Saint John Paul II Seminary, which has renewed the service each year it has been in use there. A concern was raised about who could potentially view the contents of the reports generated by the service, but Fr. Griffin did not believe this risk to warrant greater concern than other commonplace ways in which we use the internet. From a moral or legal standpoint, if an accountability partner receives troubling information through the service's reporting mechanism, it is no different than if he had been notified in some other way. The use of Covenant Eyes is also optional, so any priest who does not feel comfortable with it can simply choose not to use it. The offer presented by Fr. Griffin is only for priests, but the service can be commended for other contexts. The benefit of Covenant Eyes was recognized by the Council, who agreed that priests should be informed that it exists and that they can get it at a bargain price, but that it is optional.

Human Resources Benefits Update

Mr. Eric Simontis, Chief Financial Officer, and Mrs. Nanette Lowe, Executive Director of Human Resources, provided an update on benefits available to archdiocesan lay employees and clergy. The benefits strategy of the Office of Human Resources is to improve participant benefits and reduce overall costs.

There were a number of changes to employee benefits in 2017. We changed benefit provider access from a local (Maryland and DC-only) network (NCAS) to a more comprehensive nation-wide network (Care First Administrators), which increased access to in-network providers which reduces the amount of out-of-network charges and results in reduced participant and plan costs. Dental and vision benefits were unbundled from medical benefits, which allowed employees access to only those benefits needed. Previously, the dental and vision coverage was automatic if you selected medical coverage. This unbundling allows the employees to purchase only those benefits they want. A new lower-cost, high-deductible plan was added, allowing employees a greater range of health care choices to fit their needs. A pre-certification review was added to high-cost services such as physical therapy and vein therapy to ensure medical necessity, which will ultimately decrease plan costs. Finally, an increased vision benefit allows for new lenses and contacts each year should a participant have a change in prescription and a slightly increased frame plan allowance.

Mr. Simontis stated that, as a result of making these changes, our year-over-year calendar per employee, per month costs through October were down approximately 5% and, if this continues through December, we will save approximately \$1 million.

Effective January 1, 2018, flexible spending accounts (FSA's) were added to our portfolio of benefit offerings, allowing employees to set aside *pre-tax* dollars to pay for out-of-pocket medical and dependent care expenses. In short, the amounts the employee puts into the FSA will reduce their taxable income, so they will pay lower taxes than they otherwise would need to. Regarding medical FSA's, eligible expenses include out-of-pocket medical expenses, dental expenses, vision expenses, prescriptions, and even many non-medicated over-the-counter items. They also include out-of-pocket costs for one's spouse, children under the age of 26, and any tax dependents. Elections can be made up to the IRS maximum election of \$2,650 per employee. Regarding dependent FSA's, eligible expenses include day care expenses for tax dependents under the age of 13, which allow an employee, and his or her spouse, to be gainfully employed. Such expenses include before- and after-school care, pre-school, and summer day camps. Elections can be made up to the IRS maximum election of \$5,000 per family. FSA claims can be submitted by uploading them through the vendor website or by taking pictures of them through a smart phone app that is available for both iPhone and Android. They can also be mailed or faxed. The administrative fee to offer FSAs is \$4.95 per enrolled employee per month.

Also available in 2018 is a new feature called "TeleHealth". CareFirst Administrators partners with MDLIVE to provide TeleHealth options. MDLIVE would provide members the ability to schedule certain doctor visits remotely at their convenience, potentially limiting time out of the office. The employee cost of MDLIVE would be less than a visit to Urgent Care but would provide immediate care to our employees with acute conditions. Employees and clergy would be able to use MDLIVE for the non-life threatening issues conditions such as: allergies, asthma, bronchitis, cold & flu, fever, headache, infections, nausea & vomiting, pink eye, rashes, sinus infection, sore throat, sunburn, and urinary tract infection. MDLIVE can connect the employee to a doctor via telephone, its website, or smartphone. The administrative fee for MDLIVE will be \$.90 per employee enrolled in healthcare per month. In addition to providing more flexibility to the users, the plan will save money every time someone chooses to use TeleHealth rather than going to the emergency room or an urgent care facility.

In 2018 employees also have the benefit of BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 genetic testing. This refers to the testing of alterations in these two genes associated with an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer. The benefit allows for the testing of cancer-affected individuals meeting specific medically necessary circumstances. It also allows for the testing of cancer-unaffected individuals with a blood relative with a BRCA-1 or BRCA-2 mutation or with a cancer-affected blood relative meeting specific medically necessary circumstances. Early testing and detection will provide employees with early intervention and reduce overall plan costs. This benefit was reviewed and supported by the Catholic Identity Committee.

Delta Dental, currently offers three tiers for dental providers: Delta Dental PPO, which provides the greatest in-network discounts for both the employee and the plan; Delta Dental Premier, which provides some discounts, but with dentists that cost more for the employee and the plan. For an out-of-network dentist, no discounts are provided. To encourage use of the Delta Dental PPO option, only those dentists who participate in the PPO will be shown in any provider searches on Delta Dental's website, and the cost savings of using PPO dentists will be advertised to our employees. This will reduce costs for both employees and the plan.

Our prescription provider, Express Scripts (ESI), will undergo a free third-party review to ensure we are receiving both the best prescription drug pricing and all provider discounts to which the archdiocese may be entitled. It is anticipated that this will result in significant savings to our prescription costs.

Regarding possible benefit changes for the future, the cost savings of outsourcing the administration of Short-Term Disability (STD) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will be evaluated. The encouragement of employees taking advantage of free annual well visits will also be considered, and a review is underway to determine the feasibility and cost savings of transitioning the healthcare of retired priests to Medicare Part D. We are proceeding very cautiously with this possible transition to ensure that this will not impact in any way the healthcare that our retired priests are currently receiving. The feasibility of providing a maternity/paternity benefit will be considered, the eligibility dates for long-term disability will be reviewed, and the levels of life insurance offered through Hartford will be reviewed.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, Mr. Simontis informed the Council that meetings are held periodically with our with our benefits broker to ensure that the archdiocese is getting the best benefits at the best cost. Regarding the consideration of transitioning the healthcare of retired priests to Medicare Part D, it was affirmed that Medicare Part D would be primary and the archdiocesan plan would be secondary. The clergy benefit package is distinct from the lay employee benefit package, and a letter will be prepared for clergy explaining what applies to them and what the pros and cons are.

Closing Prayer and Comments

Cardinal Wuerl remarked that the discussion of the meeting's topics was enriching, and he thanked the Council members for their time. Before concluding, the Cardinal asked the members if there were any other items to come before the Council. Upon hearing none, the Cardinal invited members of the College of Consultors to stay for their meeting and concluded the meeting in prayer.

Next Meeting: February 15, 2018