

Priest Council Minutes
Archdiocesan Pastoral Center
April 19, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl; Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell; Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Rev. Msgr. Charles V. Antonicelli; Rev. Msgr. Michael W. Fisher; Rev. Ismael N. Ayala; Rev. Joseph A. Calis; Rev. Charles A. Cortinovis; Rev. Msgr. Donald S. Essex; Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; Rev. David M. Fitz-Patrick; Rev. William E. Foley; Rev. Scott R. Hahn; Rev. Mark D. Knestout; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Msgr. Charles E. Pope; Rev. Kevin J. Regan; Rev. Raymond F. Schmidt; Rev. James M. Stack; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Moises Villalta, O.F.M. Cap.

Absent: Rev. Alain M. Colliou; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

Opening Prayer and Comments

After welcoming the Council members and opening the meeting in prayer, Cardinal Wuerl proceeded directly to the agenda items. In the course of the meeting, he noted the presence of Ms. Chieko Noguchi, Director of Media Relations, who will be attending Council meetings going forward so that she can keep abreast of the perspective of pastors regarding issues affecting the Archdiocese.

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the February 15, 2018 meeting were approved without corrections.

Framework for Pastoral Accompaniment in Response to Catholic Identity Issues

Dr. Jem Sullivan, Secretary for Catholic Education, presented an overview of the proposed “Framework for Pastoral Accompaniment of Students and Families in Response to Catholic Identity Questions in Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Washington.” Council members were provided with the framework document as well as an abbreviated summary with references to resources.

The Archdiocesan Synod affirms that parish/regional schools should “have strong Catholic identity, teach the Catholic faith, be academically excellent and be integrated with the life of the parish(es)” (Education Recommendation, 5). Both archdiocesan and independent Catholic schools are responding to Catholic identity questions amidst changing legal requirements in D.C. and Maryland. The variety and complexity of questions call for case-by-case, situation-specific responses and preclude a single set of guidelines or statements from the Archdiocese of Washington.

Pope Francis’s call to prioritize the practice of pastoral accompaniment is the lens through which responses to Catholic identity questions are discerned and implemented in archdiocesan schools:

The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious, and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment ...the pace of this accompaniment must be

steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze, which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life. - *The Joy of the Gospel*, 169

Pastoral accompaniment unfolds within Catholic identity, rooted in the Church's beliefs and teachings on creation and the human person. Pope Francis states that "biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 56). As he also affirms, "Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different" (*Laudato Si*, 155).

The proposed framework for pastoral accompaniment will be presented to Catholic school administrators – pastors, presidents, and principals. The application of the proposed framework is rooted in a school's Catholic identity and shaped by Catholic beliefs and teachings on creation and the human person. The framework recognizes the God-given dignity of all students and the respect and care that we must accordingly show them, as well as the obligation of a student to respect the mission and right of a Catholic school to profess and teach its beliefs. It also takes into account the requirements of civil law and their application to faith-based educational institutions, variance in oversight between archdiocesan and independent schools, and the diversity of school charisms inspired by various religious communities. Independent schools are encouraged to form a pastoral support team composed of key stakeholders and experts. A pastoral support team would include representation from the school's religious community, school board and governance committees, legal counsel, communications, parents, and teachers. In archdiocesan schools, the canonical administrator will consult with school administrators and key stakeholders on responses to Catholic identity issues. Pastors and school administrators should contact the Catholic Schools Office to request pastoral support as they become aware of Catholic identity questions that require pastoral accompaniment.

Expressions of Catholic identity in schools are rooted in and reflect the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church. A Catholic school's response to requests from students and their families for specific accommodations will be informed by the requirements of civil law and the pastoral discernment of school leadership, governing boards, and school and religious communities. With careful consideration of specific questions, and guided by broad consultation within and outside the school community, school administrators may need to consider pastoral responses to student requests to opt out of select classes. Requests from students and families for various accommodations requires case-by-case, situation-specific pastoral responses. Within the diversity of Catholic school environments, each educational institution in the Archdiocese of Washington is an integral witness to the truth of the human person, who has the high calling to answer a vocation to love and holiness of life. This service to truth and love is needed today, more than ever, in a secular culture marked by a relativistic moral outlook.

During the discussion that followed the presentation, examples that surfaced were an indicator of how the conflict between Catholic teaching and contemporary beliefs regarding human sexuality have been and will continue to be a focal point for the topic at

hand. Cardinal Wuerl said that independent Catholic schools should inform the Archdiocese before any case is publicized and, in response to a question about the framework pertaining to teachers as distinct from students, he noted that the Archdiocese already has more say over teachers given their role as employees. Pastoral accompaniment involves telling parents what their child can expect to learn from Catholic teaching in a Catholic school, and based on that knowledge, helping them to decide if a Catholic school is the best learning environment for the child. The Council affirmed that this framework was a beneficial resource for sharing with pastors, canonical administrators of archdiocesan schools, and presidents of independent schools.

Recommended Update to Family (Parental) Leave Policy

Mr. Eric Simontis, Chief Financial Officer, and Ms. Nanette Lowe, Executive Director of Human Resources, gave a presentation on updating the archdiocesan Family (Parental) Leave Policy.

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) mandates that employers provide job-protected leave to employees who become parents, but it does not mandate that employers pay their employees during such leave. The Archdiocese has a short-term disability policy that provides up to 13 weeks of leave at 60-95% of regular pay depending on length of service. Generally, the leave established under short-term disability for mothers who are giving birth is 6-8 weeks, to the extent that the medical care provider certifies their status. However, short-term disability does not apply to adoptive situations or to fathers. Regarding other dioceses, Richmond and Baltimore have parental leave programs offering six weeks of paid time off, and Arlington is considering adding a paid parental leave policy. More and more private and public institutions are adding this benefit, and the District of Columbia provides paid leave.

The benefits of parental leave include how it reflects Catholic teaching on the importance of the family, serves as an important recruitment and retention tool for employees, and provides financial stability for employees and their families. Of course, there is a cost to implementing this benefit, especially in parishes and schools. For example, in 2016, 33 employees from 15 locations used short-term disability leave in connection to having a child. For schools, this generally entailed an additional cost of hiring a substitute teacher for the time that the teacher was absent. That same year, the Archdiocese spent \$183,000 in short-term disability costs for employees who took leave for having a child. If, however, we provided the incremental benefit of eight weeks paid at 100% of an employee's salary, the incremental cost would have been approximately \$40,000. However, we understand that more people will take advantage of the benefit including more husbands, who previously did not qualify under short-term disability. To understand what the total incremental cost would be, we reviewed usage rates in Baltimore and Richmond and compared them to our existing short-term disability rate and determined that providing parental leave could increase the incremental cost to the Archdiocese as a whole by upwards of \$200,000.

If paid parental leave is implemented, eligible employees would be required to apply for FMLA through Human Resources, which would provide approval or denial in writing to the employee and his/her supervisor. For a parish employee, the benefit would be paid out by the parish similar to short-term disability, however at 100%. Should the parish

experience a financial hardship in providing eight weeks of fully paid leave, the pastor may contact the Executive Director of Human Resources for assistance. If it is decided that the parish does indeed have a hardship, the Archdiocese could assist with amounts from our insurance funds.

The proposed parental leave policy would offer a maximum of 8 weeks of fully paid leave for parents (male or female) in a situation of birth, adoption, or foster/guardianship placement. An eligible employee would be required to take this leave in a continuous period beginning at the time of birth or placement of the child; intermittent leave for the same event would not be permitted. The leave would run concurrently with FMLA (or DCFMLA), and employees must provide 30 days' prior notice. To comply with FMLA, the policy would allow for multiple qualifying events per year up to a total 12 weeks (DCFMLA = maximum of 16 weeks). To comply with DC law, the policy would apply to all DC resident employees regardless of employment classification, but for Maryland resident employees, it would apply only to full-time, benefits-eligible employees (working at-least 30 hours/week or otherwise grandfathered employees). Employees would be eligible for parental leave after one year of employment consistent with our other benefits, such as short-term disability and long-term disability.

In conclusion, Mr. Simontis and Ms. Lowe recommended that the Archdiocese offer the proposed parental leave for employees. They affirmed their belief that the benefits of this program far outweigh the costs and that we would have flexibility in when we could initiate the plan if adopted. Implementing parental leave would bring us more in line with our peers and would be consistent with the Church's pro-life, pro-family message. In response to a question regarding the summer vacation of teachers, Mr. Simontis affirmed that the lump sum requirement would still apply (i.e. a teacher could not divide parental leave time so as to have time both before and after summer vacation). In 2018 thus far, the Archdiocese has had twelve employees apply the short-term disability benefit to maternity leave; seven have already returned to work and five are currently out. Additionally, five employees are pending. Mr. Simontis stated that although benefits were normally introduced at the beginning of each calendar year, we were recommending that the recommendation take effect on May 1 and would also cover employees currently on maternity leave. The Council affirmed the implementation of parental leave, with one pastor noting that he had believed the Archdiocese already provided it.

The Nature Conservancy Collaboration with Mount Olivet Cemetery

Ms. Chieko Noguchi, Director of Media Relations, gave a presentation concerning the collaboration between the Archdiocese and The Nature Conservancy (www.nature.org) to alleviate polluted stormwater runoff at Mount Olivet Cemetery. This effort is in accord with the affirmation of Pope Francis that “. . . human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the earth itself” (*Laudato Si'*, 66).

When rainwater hits impervious surfaces, it collects pollutants before flowing into sewers and eventually the larger waterways. Such “stormwater runoff” is the primary source of water pollution, especially in urban areas. To reduce its polluted stormwater runoff, the District of Columbia implemented the “Clean Rivers Project” to help pay for infrastructure improvements that will alleviate the burden on its aging sewers. It also

implemented the “Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge” (CRIAC), which imposes fees on a property owner based on the square footage of impervious surfaces on their property. Additionally, all new construction and renovation projects in D.C. over 5,000 square feet are required to add green infrastructure.

The collaboration between the Archdiocese and The Nature Conservancy at Mount Olivet Cemetery is a first-of-its-kind conservation effort, financed by District Stormwater, LLC, a local company founded by The Nature Conservancy’s investing unit and Encourage Capital, an asset management firm. Mount Olivet Cemetery previously had 435,000 square feet of impervious surfaces, which has been reduced by 18,000 square feet and replaced with water-retaining green infrastructure that filters the polluted stormwater runoff. The benefits of this collaboration for the Archdiocese include the enhancement of our reputation, which in turn helps our engagement with governments and other organizations that may be helpful to us in other areas. Additionally, new opportunities are opened for job training with Catholic Charities, educational opportunities for our schools and parishes, and for our relationship with the secular media. The Nature Conservancy has also asked us about doing projects a smaller level in parishes and schools.

In response to photographs showing the change at Mount Olivet Cemetery, the issue of aesthetics was raised, and Ms. Noguchi conveyed that the aesthetics would be improved as the greenery settles and flourishes. She also assured the Council that we are remaining true to the mission of our cemeteries to provide a sacred burial ground and not turning them into public parks. In response to a question about initiatives concerning alternative energy like solar energy, Ms. Noguchi responded that our collaboration with The Nature Conservancy has been to address stormwater, but it could open up opportunities for future initiatives related to alternative energy. The Council affirmed the benefit of this collaboration.

Proposal for Archdiocesan Self-Evaluation Working Group

Msgr. Charles Antonicelli, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, provided an overview of a proposal for an Archdiocesan Self-Evaluation Working Group that would be charged with the task of performing a constructive analysis of the work being done in the various fields of ministry within the Archdiocese. This is being done in the context of the First Synod of the Archdiocese of Washington, completed in 2014, and its follow-up in the Synod Implementation Committee and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.

The goal of this group is to have a bird’s eye view of the ministry and programs within the Archdiocese, both at the Central Pastoral Administration and in our parishes and schools. It would conduct its analysis in light of three fundamental criteria: the ongoing implementation of the Archdiocesan Synod, the task of carrying out the New Evangelization, and the ministry of accompaniment as proposed and exemplified by Pope Francis. It is essential to the work of an institution as large and complex as the Archdiocese of Washington to have a mechanism of review and a standardized evaluation that can produce useful feedback on the various implemented activities and programs. Without such a tool, it is difficult to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and to enact correcting measures when necessary. This tool is also essential for channeling energies and resources toward those ministries and initiatives that work well and that address real

pastoral needs. It would also be useful to help all those involved not to lose sight of the larger picture while focusing on a particular program.

There are today new and insidious challenges to the work of the Church, and one could divide them into two types according to their origin. *Ad intra* challenges refer mostly to the danger of stagnancy, especially at the level of the Central Pastoral Administration. Being a step removed from the direct field of ministry and tasked with the more bureaucratic and administrative aspect of ministry, the staff of the various secretariats run the risk of falling into routine work. This requires a body that would highlight priorities and encourage a more pro-active engagement in ministry. *Ad extra* challenges originate mostly from the highly secularized society in which we live today. These challenges require that all those involved in the field of ministry strive to find new ways to reach out to those who are not coming to Church anymore, but also to safeguard intact the deposit of faith from the various attacks of our secular environment.

The proposed Self-Evaluation Working Group would consist of three pastors, the Secretary for Catholic Education, the Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, and the Executive Director of the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach. Three pastors who could possibly serve on the working group are Fr. William Byrne, Fr. Pawel Sass, and Fr. Anthony Lickteig. Fr. Byrne would chair the group, and they would meet on a regular basis and select one particular area of ministry at a time for evaluation and study. They would consider the various activities and programs in place within that area and evaluate their effectiveness. The criteria for judgment are:

- How is the implementation of the recommendations of the Archdiocesan Synod being carried out in this particular field?
- Is this particular ministry/program geared to and well-equipped for the New Evangelization?
- Has the ministry of accompaniment been put into practice in this specific program?

The goals of the working group would be to identify what works well and where there are margins for improvement.

Regarding a question about opening the working group to laity who are not staff members, Cardinal Wuerl responded that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council already provides the forum for such input. It is the intent that The Self-Evaluation Working Group work with the Synod Implementation Committee in carrying out its task of evaluation, and the Council affirmed moving forward with its creation.

Proposal for Archdiocesan Parish Security Committee

In response to a request from pastors for more guidance on parish security, Msgr. Antonicelli presented a proposal for the formation of Parish Security Committee. It is recommended that the committee members be comprised of pastors, local law enforcement and security professionals, and archdiocesan staff. Meetings would be held by teleconference in order to enhance the attendance of committee members, and such meetings could begin soon. The following candidates are recommended to serve on the committee:

Pastors:

Rev. Cornelius Ejiogu, S.S.J.– St. Luke Parish
Rev. Thomas Frank, S.S.J. – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish
Rev. Msgr. Salvatore Criscuolo – St. Patrick Parish (DC)
Rev. Robert Buchmeier – Holy Cross Parish
Rev. Jose DeLeon – St. Bernardine of Siena Parish
Rev. Kenneth Gill – St. Catherine of Alexandria & St. Ignatius Loyola Parishes

Law Enforcement:

Mr. Patrick Burke – Former Asst. Chief, D.C. Metropolitan Police
Chief J. Thomas Manger – Chief, Montgomery County Police
Ms. Valencia Camp – Department of Homeland Security

Archdiocesan Staff/Other:

Rev. Msgr. Charles Antonicelli – Moderator of the Curia
Ms. Chieko Noguchi – Director of Media Relations
Mr. William Ryan – Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Mr. Eric Simontis – Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Michelle Shelton – Director of Real Estate
Ms. Emily Colangelo – Catholic Mutual Insurance
Parish Usher(s)
Parish Facilities Managers (s)

Upon inviting the pastors, it is recommended to ask them for other potential members of the committee.

This proposal for a Parish Security Committee grew out of what pastors have requested at deanery meetings, and it is intended that committee members who have experience in a particular area offer best practices for consideration. Anyone who wants to be on the committee is free to volunteer. Our Catholic schools have a different mechanism for security, so this committee is proposed for filling a need that exists for our church buildings. It was observed that synagogues can provide helpful input on this topic, and the Council affirmed moving forward with the creation of the committee.

Closing Prayer and Comments

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: May 10, 2018