

Priest Council Minutes
Archdiocesan Pastoral Center
February 15, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell; 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. 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., Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins

Absent: Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

Opening Prayer and Comments

Since Cardinal Wuerl was unable to be present, Bishop Campbell opened the meeting in prayer and invited Msgr. Antonicelli to proceed with the agenda.

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the January 18, 2018 meeting were approved without corrections.

Review of the Pastoral Plan for Implementation of *Amoris Laetitia*

Msgr. Antonicelli brought to the Council's attention the documents comprising the toolkit for the Pastoral Plan for the Implementation of *Amoris Laetitia*. These included a draft of the full text and the Executive Summary of *Sharing in the Joy of Love in Marriage and Family* by Cardinal Wuerl, bulletin announcements (English and Spanish), bulletin inserts (English and Spanish), general intercessions (English and Spanish), and homily prompts. The plan is for the toolkit to be sent electronically to pastors on Tuesday, February 20.

Msgr. Antonicelli stated that Cardinal Wuerl wanted to have the Pastoral Plan in place in preparation for the 2018 World Meeting of Families, taking place in Dublin, Ireland from August 17-27. The Cardinal will introduce the Pastoral Plan at the 11:30am Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral on March 4, the Third Sunday of Lent. The inserts within the toolkit are intended for use after that date. For the Mass at the Cathedral on March 4, it is the goal for one family to represent each parish of the archdiocese, and Msgr. Antonicelli asked the Council members to think about what family should fill this role for their respective parishes.

In the discussion concerning the Pastoral Plan, the issues of irregular unions, annulments, and the formation of conscience were raised. In keeping with the content of the Pastoral Plan, it was affirmed that Church teaching has not changed and that respect for conscience does not mean telling people "whatever you want to do is okay." It was noted that persons in irregular unions are often afraid to apply for an annulment, but that the annulment process is part of the work of pastoral accompaniment. The idea surfaced of

having videos produced that feature persons, preferably racially diverse, discussing how the experience of the annulment process was beneficial. It was observed that the Pastoral Plan is a helpful plan, and it has relevance in preparing hearts and minds for the Synod on Young People in October.

Guarding the Mission: Parish Operations Assessment Plan

Mr. Eric Simontis, Chief Financial Officer, introduced how an initiative was begun two years ago at the Central Pastoral Administration (CPA) to be proactive in looking at issues, threats, and activities that may oppose our mission. Mrs. Adrienne Willich, in the Office of Parish and School Financial Operations, developed a process for identifying these adverse activities, assessing them and formulating plans for mitigating. These issues are considered initially in connection with the budget, and individuals are assigned to be responsible for them. After two years in operations, we believe that this process has been successful and are exploring a means by which this process could be brought to the parishes, and Mr. Simontis invited Mrs. Willich to explain more of what a Parish Operations Assessment would entail. She began by prompting the Council members to think about what they would do if they knew that:

- An offertory counter will take money next Monday when left alone with the collection
- Your parish secretary/bookkeeper with 10 years of parish operations knowledge (and no written procedures documented) will leave the job this Friday
- A volunteer will be reimbursed on Thursday for items purchased for the parish that were not anticipated in the budget

Mrs. Willich stated that none of us can know the future with certainty, but by assessing operations, we can anticipate the likelihood of certain problems and manage avoidable obstacles. Various types of these obstacles include:

- **Process Risks:** undesignated process owner, undefined/unclear employee roles and responsibilities, misunderstanding of requirements, undocumented processes, knowledge in only one individual, insufficient recordkeeping, insufficient monitoring of vendors.
- **Systems Risks:** inadequate workplace safety or emergency preparedness, failure of third-party services, hardware or software failures, unauthorized access to facilities or systems, data corruption, exposure of private data
- **People Risks:** inadequate resources, experience, skill set, human error, fraudulent or dishonest practices, lack of awareness of policies, key person risk, inadequate cross-training, unsupervised volunteers

A Parish Operations Assessment can be built around various business practices that are then reviewed in three areas:

- 1) Selecting a business practice that may be vulnerable
- 2) Determining the extent of this vulnerability based on potential impact and probability of occurrence
- 3) Determining ways to mitigate this vulnerability

For example:

1) Business practice that may be vulnerable: Planning and Budgeting

- *Objective: What has to work effectively in this process to enable our Mission?*

- Parish staff understands their authority and accountability for the annual plan and budget.
- *Risk: What could prevent the objective from being achieved?*
 - Staff do not monitor monthly financial reports of their actual expenses vs. budget.

2) Determining the extent of the vulnerability

- Is the probability of the threat very high (almost 100%), high (more than 50%), moderate (more than likely, less than probably), low (less than 10%), or very low (less than 5%)?
- What is the frequency of occurrence likely to be?
- How would the five rating factors be applied to the impact of the vulnerability with regard to the level of archdiocesan involvement, stakeholder trust, compliance with regulations, media attention, continuity of operations, and the amount of financial loss?

3) Determining ways to mitigate the threat

- Are preventive and detective controls in place? Are these controls efficient and operating effectively? Are they documented with evidence of performance, and does management monitor their effectiveness?
- Would you rate the controls as strong, moderate, weak, or negligible?
- Bearing in mind costs and benefits of this type of assessment, should the threat simply be accepted as part of the parish's mission? Should a plan be developed to mitigate the threat or share it (i.e. insurance), or to terminate the activity that creates the risk? Should more research be done before a decision is made to accept or mitigate the risk?

In our example, mitigation of this threat could involve:

- The bookkeeper producing monthly budget reporting to each staff member who directly reports to the pastor
- The pastor including budget monitoring as part of annual employee goals and communicating the expectation that anticipated budget overruns of >5% must be approved in advance
- The staff ensuring that purchases by volunteers are infrequent and < \$250

The operations assessment process would then be repeated for other areas of the parish's operation, such as paying bills, collecting and processing offertory, and payroll.

Benefits to assessing parish operations before a potential breakdown occurs enhances stewardship. Thoughtful use of resources results in reduced time, effort, and costs associated with inefficiencies, breakdowns, re-work, fines, penalties, etc. It fosters strategic application of financial resources, such as insurance, toward the mitigation of the most significant risks. There is increased engagement among employees who participate in operations assessment of their areas of responsibility, who are designated as accountable for managing certain vulnerabilities, and who are encouraged to monitor and communicate these issues throughout the year. Finally, this assessment allows a pastor to have greater confidence in the continuity of parish operations regardless of staff changes,

to have more timely and candid information from staff on changes in parish condition, and to have a new perspective to match limited resources with parish priorities.

With regard to parishes, the next steps to undertake will be the building of a Parish Operations Assessment Workbook, identifying a pilot parish for operations assessment, evaluating the results, and, if appropriate, planning for implementation in the parishes. Once we have completed working with parishes to develop a toolkit to help implement this process, we would look to do the same with the affiliated archdiocesan corporations..

For a Parish Operations Assessment, Mr. Simontis advocates looking at 6-8 areas of significance, which are particularly important when there is a transition of pastors. Parish volunteers should be accountable to a staff person, and risks and thresholds can be “personalized” for each parish. The assessment can be improved and increased as parish ministries grow, and it was noted that it would be good to have something for school principals to use. Additionally, the audit process (generally every three years for parishes) would be made easier by this kind of assessment. If there is less risk, then less time and money will be spent on auditing, and it was observed that this process would be helpful with regard to parish pastor-sharing or mergers. Although there was consensus concerning the benefits of this kind of assessment, we do want to avoid overloading parish staff, and Mrs. Willich is willing to help parishes in post-audit discussion.

The next step would involve having two or three parishes to be part of the initial pilot to develop and implement this operational assessment at the parish level. Pastors who are interested in being part of this pilot group are encouraged to contact Adrienne Willich at WillichA@adw.org.

Closing Prayer and Comments

Bishop Campbell closed the meeting in prayer and invited the College of Consultors to convene after a short break.

Next Meeting: March 22, 2018