



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

Archdiocesan Pastoral Center: 5001 Eastern Avenue, Hyattsville, MD 20782-3447
Mailing Address: Post Office Box 29260, Washington, DC 20017-0260
301-853-4500

Priest Council Minutes Archdiocesan Pastoral Center March 9, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl; Most Rev. Barry C. Knestout; Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Bishop-elect Roy E. Campbell; Rev. Msgr. Michael W. Fisher; Rev. Frederick J. Close; Rev. Alain M. Colliou; Rev. Msgr. Donald S. Essex; Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; Rev. David M. Fitz-Patrick; Rev. William E. Foley; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Kevin J. Regan; Rev. Raymond F. Schmidt; Rev. Msgr. Eddie L. Tolentino; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Moises Villalta, O.F.M. Cap.; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

Absent: Rev. Scott R. Hahn; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Mark D. Knestout; Rev. Lawrence C. Swink; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Tam X. Tran

Opening Prayer and Remarks

Cardinal Wuerl welcomed new Bishop-elect Roy Campbell, expressing gratitude that the request for an auxiliary bishop was answered by Pope Francis, who had seen the face of our Church and country during his visit. Referencing the day's Gospel reading (Matthew 7:7-12) containing the Golden Rule, the Cardinal stated that Council members, whether acting personally or ministerially, keep this rule before us and that all that the Council does is at the service of the Church.

Following the opening prayer, Cardinal Wuerl commended the Priest Personnel Board for the time and insight that goes into their consideration of the needs and availability of priests. Requests for parochial vicars and military chaplains are constant. The archdiocese has always had a significant number of priests serving in the military, and such requests are growing because the number of military chaplains is dwindling. Additionally, with an archdiocese this important and large, it is necessary to send priests to study for terminal graduate degrees. The last two priests who received terminal degrees, one in Canon Law and the other in Moral Theology, completed their work a number of years ago. In the coming months, the board will be discussing this issue and identifying men who could be assigned to work toward advanced degrees. The Holy See regularly asks the archdiocese for priests to work in its dicasteries, which is a tribute to the quality of our priests. The first priority is always this archdiocese, but there is also the need to serve the wider Church.

Msgr. Fisher remarked that a lot of thought goes into assignments and that there are always more needs than we are able to fulfill, but that these needs are kept before the board. Pastors are working very hard and chaplaincies are also a need, particularly within prisons and high schools. Cardinal Wuerl also noted the requests from his brother bishops for a priest to serve temporarily in another diocese. This Church has been greatly blessed, and we should consider how much are we entitled to hold onto such a blessing and not share it. The archdiocese presently has 78 men in formation, and Cardinal Wuerl noted the need for continued prayer for vocations and exhorted patience with one another.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 16, 2017 meeting were approved without corrections.

Clergy and Religious Compensation FY18 Recommendation

Mr. Eric Simontis, Chief Financial Officer, gave a presentation on the recommendation for clergy and religious compensation for fiscal year 2017-2018. This compensation includes both base pay and a social security payment. Providing some historical context, Mr. Simontis noted that clergy generally receive an annual increase somewhat in line with inflation, as well as an additional increase of at least 3% at each five-year anniversary of ordination. And, with the exception of last year, it should be noted that annual increases over the previous four years have been higher than inflation. However, for fiscal 2017, the Priest Council recommended that there should be no inflationary increase. For calendar year 2016, though, inflation ticked up to just over 2%. Given this higher rate of inflation and the fact that no inflationary increase was given in fiscal year 2016-2017, Mr. Simontis recommended a 3% increase in clergy compensation for fiscal year 2017-2018.

Msgr. Fisher noted that younger priests have a lot of start-up costs, and they are encouraged to participate in the 403(b) annuity program. There is also a \$500 reimbursement for moving expenses from the parish to which a priest is moving. In light of all of the aforementioned factors, and the fact that our compensation range is appropriate in comparison with other dioceses, the Council approved the recommendation of a 3% increase in clergy compensation.

Regarding compensation for consecrated religious within the archdiocese, for more than a decade, such compensation fell behind the amounts offered in similar (arch)dioceses. In response, relatively larger increases to compensation and benefits have been introduced in recent years (fiscal 2010 - fiscal 2016). These increases have brought the total compensation for religious in this archdiocese into near parity, providing roughly 96% of the average of similar (arch)dioceses. For fiscal year 2017-2018, Mr. Simontis recommended a 3% increase in stipend and a 3% increase in all benefits. The parishes with religious in senior roles (e.g. principal) evaluate an incremental gift that fairly reflects the location's financial situation and the highly valued contribution of that specific religious.

The Compensation for Religious Committee supports the recommended 3% increase. Now that we are at a comparable level to other dioceses, we do not want to come down from that, and staying level with inflation is good. There are presently 900 women religious in residence here, but the number of them in actual ministry positions is about 139. It was noted that, for a parish that employs a religious sister, providing extra money for their mother house can also be a way of offering support. The Council approved the recommended 3% increase in compensation.

In response to a question about retired priests, Cardinal Wuerl clarified that support of retired priests will be reviewed in May, and that decisions about disbursements come from Priest Retirement Board.

Archdiocesan Radio Ad Strategy

Mr. Edward McFadden, Secretary for Communications, gave a presentation on the strategy of the archdiocese for radio advertisements. This strategy consists of branding ourselves through having a consistent number of ads aired on as regular a schedule as possible, consistent voices with which listeners become familiar, a consistent message from week-to-week and month-to-

month, and a consistent reach and influence. This strategy is intended to serve the mission of evangelization to potential newcomers and to those who have left the Church, and the annual *Find the Perfect Gift* (Advent) and *The Light is ON for You* (Lent) campaigns are key components of this strategy.

WTOP has been running 30-second spots featuring Fr. Bill Byrne and, during Advent and Lent, Cardinal Wuerl. The archdiocese has budgeted \$340,000 for these ads, which includes the cost of in-house production and purchasing 30 spots per week, Tuesday through Sunday. The ads run weekly during the four weeks of Advent and seven weeks of Lent, and in non-campaign seasons, they run every other week. To increase the impact of these ads, the radio team sets benchmarks as our ads are compared to those of similar local entities (e.g. Diocese of Arlington, non-denominational churches), examines the quality, length, and time slots of the ads, considers how their reach and influence can be increased by working with other stations, and studies alternative digital platforms such as internet radio and mobile apps. Regarding a comparison for benchmarking, the Diocese of Arlington runs a total of five 60-second ads per week on WTOP, but our 30-second ads are timed better for the pacing and flow of WTOP, which has expressed the view that our ads are better-produced. We are reaching 1.6 million to 2 million unique listeners, and we aim to reach a different set of listeners at different times. It costs \$450-\$500 for a general morning ad on WTOP. Although the cost is higher if a specific time is requested, it may be worth paying a little more to target ads at specific times during drive times.

Regarding other outlets, WASH-FM has been considered, but the value may not be there. Mobile advertising through CBS Radio geo-targeting would allow listeners to receive information for specific parishes located close to them, and we are looking at internet radio and varied voices (e.g. testing a woman's voice on iHeartRadio). For next steps, we are producing a new "fixed position" weekly ad with Cardinal Wuerl for Monday morning and Friday evening drive-times, re-assessing our bi-weekly ad schedule by shifting non-drive time resources, continuing online testing with Pandora, iHeart Radio, and Spotify, trying different voices, and using pooled Spanish-language radio resources that involve collaboration with Catholic Charities.

Regarding outreach to the Hispanic population, we have bought a lot of time on Radio America, but with no clear branding for the archdiocese. In light of this fact, as well as how a young Hispanic audience is better reached through mobile devices, redirecting resources to digital platforms may be more effective for reaching that audience. Digital platforms have also been the context in which advertising through Christian radio has taken place, but the question with such platforms is whether click-through rates translate to increased numbers in our parishes. Radio advertising for *The Light is ON for You* is being supplemented by visual digital ads that are seen for 20 seconds every five minutes at certain bus stops around the metropolitan area. The Council affirmed the value of these outreach efforts and the strategy laid out by Mr. McFadden.

Diocesan Consultation for the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment

Dr. Susan Timoney, Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, and Mr. Jonathan Lewis, Director of Evangelization, Youth and Young Adult Initiatives, gave a presentation on diocesan consultation for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, scheduled for October 2018. Following Dr. Timoney's introduction of how this consultation involves a process for listening widely across the archdiocese, for which the Synod on the Family provides a helpful precedent, Mr. Lewis summarized the three sections into which the new Synod's Preparatory Document is divided:

1. Urge listening to reality of young people (ages 16-29) in today's world

2. Highlight the importance of discernment in the light of faith, and accompanying young people through three movements of discernment: “recognizing,” “interpreting,” and “choosing.”
3. Focus on the pastoral action of the Church “going out,” “seeing,” and “calling” young people

The Preparatory Document concludes with list of questions for consultation for the whole Church. This list provided the basis for three lists of questions that Mr. Lewis developed for the consultation within this archdiocese. These three lists were provided to the Council, and they are addressed to, respectively, young adults who identify as practicing Catholics, young adults who identify as non-practicing Catholics or non-Catholics, and adults age 40 and over. The subject of “Vocational Discernment” is used in a broad sense to encourage the “vocation to love” to which all the baptized are called as they live as lifelong missionary disciples. For some persons, this vocation to love will be expressed in the sacramental vocations of priesthood or marriage.

The archdiocese has the responsibility of gathering statistics on young people (ages 16-29). The three lists of questions will provide the means by which the archdiocese gathers this information, both online (promoted through social media) and through parish listening sessions. The Secretariat for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns (PMSC) will distribute listening session materials to pastors, and these materials will include options for local facilitators. Pastors will be asked to host listening session(s) with either young people (ages 16-30’s) of his choosing or a multi-generational gathering including young people (ages 16-30’s) and other adults. Pastors will submit parish feedback, which PMSC will aggregate along with other archdiocesan feedback. It is proposed that the archdiocese complete the draft of its Executive Summary by May 31, 2017, preceding the USCCB Consultation at their Assembly in June 2017 (pending approval by the Administrative Committee). The archdiocesan Executive Summary is due to the USCB by September 15, 2017.

The Office of Young Adult Ministry has sought input from the offices of Vocations, Consecrated Life, Youth Ministry, Catechesis, Family Life, and Cultural Diversity, as well as campus ministries. Listening may require more local effort and broader invitation, as most young adults are largely unknown to parish leaders. Young adults (millennials) are the least religiously-affiliated generation in American history, and so listening often requires going out to the margins to find them. The Church does not engage young people (ages 16-29) in as consistent and institutionally-organized a manner as it does younger youth and children. The overall priorities of the listening sessions should consist of:

- *Deference to Young People*: Prioritize listening to young people. We cannot listen only to adults talk about young people.
- *Learning from Best Practices*: Identifying among parents, pastoral leaders, clergy, and religious what the key indicators for success have been in helping a young person discern a vocation and live a life of missionary discipleship.
- *Going Out to the Margins*: Encourage pastoral leaders to talk to those who have left the Church or are marginally engaged in their faith.
- *Recognizing that a Moment of Accompaniment is not a One-Time Program*: Encourage a concrete follow-up from the listening sessions to honor the perspective of the participants and involve them in the solution or response.

The first recommendation for the archdiocese is to invite the whole Church of Washington to provide feedback about the emerging adult stage of life (ages 18-29). Due to a culture of delayed adulthood in the United States (later than in most of the world), significant choices of life often

take place closer to 18 or 23. Sociologically, the Synod age range is most similar to “Millennials,” which currently includes those from ages 17-36. The average age of marriage (Anglo community) in Washington, D.C. is 31 and in Maryland is 29. Should we extend the range to hear from those who have recently made life commitments?

The second recommendation is to integrate *Encuentro* listening sessions related to youth and young adults into the report for the Synod. Currently 38 parishes are planning a five-part spring series of inter-generational listening sessions on evangelization and Hispanic ministries. A Spanish-language online survey could be created, and *Encuentro* members could be encouraged to submit online feedback integrating their discussions.

The third recommendation is to reach out to the peripheries to listen to young people. This could include creating an online listening option, asking that offices of the CPA host listening sessions with their communities, asking that Catholic Charities host listening sessions for marginalized communities of young people, asking that all Catholic high schools host listening sessions as a part of their religion classes with juniors and seniors, or providing an opportunity for Cardinal Wuerl to speak with and listen directly to young people and/or leaders of young people.

The timeline for archdiocesan engagement in this consultation process consists of the following:

- March 3: Email sent to pastors through Moderator of the Curia to announce the process and timeline
- March 15: Resources sent to pastors, Catholic high schools, Catholic Charities, and CPA offices (with links to online survey)
- May 15 : Listening session feedback submitted to the ADW to allow aggregation of data before June USCCB meeting
- May 15 : ADW online surveys conclude
- May 31: Draft of ADW report given to Cardinal Wuerl
- August 1: Submit ADW report to the USCCB

In the discussion that followed the presentation, it was noted how young people are often afraid to make decisions. Where do they go after confirmation? One method proposed for reaching young people who are both involved in the Church and not involved in the Church is to build contact into instruments that we already have, such as asking a parish’s existing youth group to bring people who are not involved. The Council approved the timeline for the consultation process.

Closing Remarks and Prayer

In his closing remarks, Cardinal Wuerl noted the positive response that he had witnessed during the *Light the City* events, in which young adults are asked to invite passers-by on the street to come into a nearby parish for prayer. He reminded the Council members to pray for Deacon Carlos Hernandez, who remains in a coma, and he also reminded them of the burial the following day for Msgr. Hughes in Upper Marlboro. The meeting then concluded in prayer.

Next Meeting: April 6, 2017