

**Priest Council Minutes**  
**Archdiocesan Pastoral Center**  
**June 20, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory; Most Rev. Roy E. Campbell; Most Rev. Mario E. Dorsonville; Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher; Rev. Msgr. Charles V. Antonicelli; Rev. Ismael N. Ayala; Rev. Joseph A. Calis; Rev. Charles A. Cortinovis; Rev. John J. Dillon; Rev. Msgr. Donald S. Essex; Rev. Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; David M. Fitz-Patrick; Rev. William E. Foley; Rev. Scott R. Hahn; Rev. Mark D. Knestout; Rev. Msgr. Charles E. Pope; Rev. Kevin J. Regan; Rev. Raymond F. Schmidt; Rev. James M. Stack; Rev. Walter J. Tappe; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins

**Absent:** Rev. Alain M. Colliou; Rev. W. Paul Hill; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

**Opening Prayer and Comments**

Archbishop Wilton Gregory opened the meeting in prayer and welcomed all members to his first Priest Council meeting since becoming Archbishop of Washington.

**Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the June 20, 2018 meeting were approved without corrections.

**Administrative Items**

Monsignor Charles Antonicelli, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, introduced the implementation of Canon 1742, which stipulates that the Archbishop discuss the prospective removal of a pastor with at least two pastors from a group chosen for this purpose by the Priest Council. All pastors on the Council agreed to serve as members of this group.

The Council also agreed to Bishop Michael Fisher's proposal that Father LeRoy Fangmeyer, Monsignor Charles Pope, and Monsignor Peter Vaghi continue to serve as the three members of the Priest Council Executive Board until the present Council's term ends on August 31, 2019.

**Draft Residency Agreement for O'Boyle Residence**

Bishop Fisher gave a presentation on the new O'Boyle Residence on LaSalle Road, which will serve as a premier independent living residence for some of our retired priests. From a policy and safety perspective, it is imperative that only individuals who have the ability to live independently with minimal assistance reside in this new facility. It is also appropriate to ensure that all parties understand their respective responsibilities and that such understanding be memorialized in an agreement before a senior priest moves into the new residence. Prospective residents must be retired priests incardinated in the Archdiocese of Washington, in good standing and with faculties. They must also have demonstrated ability to live independently, confirmed by a care manager and with an agreement to periodic certification of this ability.

Retired priests who reside at the new facility will have a private suite and access to shared common areas. There is a monthly fee of \$500 deducted from the retired priest's stipend, and residency can be terminated by the priest or the Archdiocese for any reason with 60 days' notice. Residents agree to cooperate fully with House Rules, protocols, and routines (e.g. meal schedules, fire drills, proper treatment of staff). Overnight guests are prohibited unless authorized by the Director, and pets are prohibited. Residents must also acknowledge that the O'Boyle Residence staff are not trained health care professionals and that they will not provide assistance with personal care (e.g. bathing, dressing, eating, physical transfers).

Residents may discuss special needs, and decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of the Archdiocese. Physical modifications must be agreed upon in advance, and if approved, the resident is responsible for any cost. Residents must allow access for repairs, cleaning, and similar work, and except for emergencies, the Director will provide advance notice. Although the new O'Boyle Residence is located on the same premises as Redemptoris Mater Archdiocesan Missionary Seminary, seminarians and O'Boyle residents must each understand that there is to be no shared access. A house committee will be selected by the Vicar for Clergy and have periodic meetings with the Director to go over any resident's concerns. Additionally, a resident can report to the Vicar for Clergy at any time regarding disputes, concerns, and complaints.

The discussion that followed the presentation highlighted situations that arise when priests are in their retirement years. When a retired priest is living in a parish rectory but declining in his ability to live independently, the pastor is placed in a difficult position. The good relationship that a retired priest may have with a particular pastor may allow for a workable situation for a period, but then a problem can arise when there is a change in pastors. There was a consensus that, as with the new O'Boyle Residence, requirements need to be articulated for allowing a retired priest to live in a rectory. The importance of discussing end-of-life issues was affirmed, particularly funeral plans, given the possible absence of family members who are practicing Catholics. When deans make their triennial visits to parishes, they should check into whether priests have wills on file. Regarding the committee that will oversee matters related to the O'Boyle Residence, there was consensus that the committee's oversight should encompass the living situations and care of retired priests more broadly. Bishop Fisher stated that we will be looking to hire a health-care professional (e.g. geriatric nurse) who will provide key support in this area.

### **Confirmation Overnight Retreats**

Ms. Sara Blauvelt, Director for Catechesis, gave a presentation on confirmation overnight retreats for parish and school students of the Archdiocese. She began by referencing guidance on confirmation preparation from canon law, which affirms that every baptized person who is not confirmed, and only such a person, is capable of receiving confirmation (Can. 889 §1). Apart from the danger of death, to receive confirmation lawfully, a person who has the use of reason must be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises (Can. 889 §2). The faithful are bound to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially

parish priests, are to see that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the opportune time (Can. 890).

In the Archdiocese of Washington, young Catholics who were baptized as infants are confirmed in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (108 parishes confirm in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade). Over the past three years, 15,189 youth received the Sacrament of Confirmation:

2016 – 5,301 students	2017 – 4,957 students	2018 – 4,931 students
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A confirmation retreat is a significant and focused moment of spiritual preparation for the sacramental gift of the Holy Spirit, and it may be the only retreat in which some students participate.

Pastors and catechetical leaders set formats and parameters for sacramental preparation for confirmation. Daylong or overnight confirmation retreats are planned and implemented in light of archdiocesan Child Protection Policies. All volunteers are expected to comply with Child Protection requirements before they are considered and approved to serve as chaperones. In light of the recent challenges, some parents have raised concerns about the requirement of an overnight confirmation retreat. In some cases, though, parents voice a concern about safety because they simply want to skip the retreat for a sporting event. Most parishes report that they do not have overnight confirmation retreats, but those that do are passionate about them.

Regarding five other dioceses in the region, they neither require nor disallow overnight retreats. Additionally, no official record of how many parishes choose overnight retreats are kept. However, all dioceses indicated that most retreats are **not** overnight. Below is a chart indicating what is done in these dioceses concerning confirmation retreats.

<u>(Arch)Diocese</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Retreat Required</u>	<u>Format</u>
Arlington	7 or 8	N	Most parishes require a retreat, but it is left to the parish to define parameters as the diocesan guidelines do not give guidance.
Baltimore	8 to 10	Y	No specific requirements on the duration of the retreat. Some parishes take kids out of the diocese, while some stay in the diocese. They do not regulate this at the diocesan level.
Military	8	N	No specifications on retreat, but recommended
Richmond	10	Y	Parish choice - range from 4 hours to weekend long. The diocese brings in NET Ministries to offer regional confirmation retreat days for parishes to use if they want or as a “makeup” retreat for kids who miss the parish retreat.
Wheeling-Charleston	8	Y	Youth/young adult office puts on one-day “confirmation rallies” in four locations around the diocese each year, which serves as the confirmation retreat for many parishes. Some parishes will do a separate confirmation retreat for their own kids, which is certainly encouraged but not required. Most of those are one-day events, not overnight.

Ms. Blauvelt recommended that parishes who choose to offer an overnight confirmation retreat provide three alternatives for families who are not comfortable with the overnight schedule. As part of the written overnight retreat information that catechetical leaders/catechists provide to parents, they would also inform them of these alternative options.

The first alternative option would be that the student attend another parish's confirmation retreat with prior understanding of the pastors/catechetical leaders of both parishes. The catechetical leader/parent would identify neighboring parishes that offer a daytime confirmation retreat option. Parents would then inform the catechetical leader of the alternative parish day retreat they wish for their child to attend. Students/parents should learn the expectations of alternative parishes and would complete all paperwork/retreat expectations of the host parish selected.

The second alternative option would be that the student attend the day and early evening portions of the overnight retreat. This could include pick-up before the overnight portion of the retreat begins and a return to the retreat for the next day's activities.

The third alternative option would be that the concerned parent(s) volunteer to chaperone the overnight retreat. In that case, VIRTUS clearance with a complete current background check for parent chaperones would be required. The Child Protection Coordinator would verify and confirm volunteer compliance in advance of the confirmation retreat. Parents who are chaperones should be engaged and well-suited to that role.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the issue was raised of how to make the confirmation program attractive, particularly given that confirmation in most cases here is taking place at a difficult and selfish stage of life (8<sup>th</sup> Grade). A combined retreat between parishes may be a good idea in some cases, and it may be warranted to assess if the age of confirmation should be changed here. Regarding how the latter can vary between dioceses, every diocese has its own reasons for justifying the age at which confirmation takes place there.

It was noted that Adoration and Confession can be a powerful component of an overnight retreat. Enlisting parents who have reservations to become chaperones can also yield good results. Each parish is a little bit different with its own character, but it is good to have programs that incorporate parents because they are so often not catechized. A confirmation retreat can be an important event that leads a young person to continued participation in the Church, but we cannot pin everything on one retreat.

In terms of safety, it should be communicated to parents that we expect 100% compliance with VIRTUS and Catholic Mutual field trip requirements for any kind of confirmation retreat. Information about this requirement, as well as retreat content and alternatives to an overnight retreat, can be disseminated however the parish chooses, but the broader the dissemination, the better.

In conclusion, Archbishop Gregory announced a break before the meeting of the College of Consultors and closed the meeting in prayer.