

**Priest Council Minutes**  
**Archdiocesan Pastoral Center**  
**February 27, 2020 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. Ismael N. Ayala; Rev. David W. Beaubien; Rev. Joseph A. Calis; Rev. Daniel B. Carson; Rev. Msgr. Salvatore A. Criscuolo; Rev. Msgr. Donald S. Essex; Rev. LeRoy J. Fangmeyer; Rev. David M. Fitzpatrick; Rev. William E. Foley; Rev. Kenneth J. Gill; Rev. Scott R. Hahn; Rev. Mark F. Hughes; Rev. Mark D. Knestout; Rev. Anthony E. Lickteig; Rev. Raymond H. Moore; Rev. Mark L. Smith; Rev. James M. Stack; Rev. Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi; Rev. Msgr. James D. Watkins

**Absent:** Rev. John J. Dillon; Rev. Msgr. William J. English; Rev. Thomas G. LaHood; Rev. Msgr. Charles E. Pope; Rev. Lawrence A. Young

**Opening Prayer and Comments**

Archbishop Gregory opened the meeting in prayer and announced that, with regard to concerns about coronavirus infections, Fr. Dan Carson will be meeting with health officials to put together a packet of recommendations for parishes, consulting with other dioceses, and review of what we should do in the event of a serious outbreak.

**Approve Minutes**

The minutes of the January 23, 2020 meeting were approved without corrections.

**Update on RCIA in High Schools**

Ms. Sara Blauvelt, Director for Catechesis, provided an update on the implementation of RCIA in Catholic high schools. The intent of this initiative is to build on the exposure to the Catholic faith that non-Catholic students are receiving in Catholic high schools. It entails partnership between these schools and our parishes, the adaptation of the catechumenal process for the high school setting, and the formation of campus ministers, volunteers, and student teams.

This past January 22, the initiative was announced to Catholic high school presidents, with their main concern being the question of staffing. Following outreach to 18 pastors, there have been 13 affirmative replies to participate in the conversation. For gathering input from pastors and high school campus ministers regarding implementation expectations, an online survey was sent on February 14, and 5 parishes and 10 schools have responded as of February 27.

A unique challenge will be to connect the sacramental life with the parish in addition to the school. Some high schools (i.e., Gonzaga, Georgetown Prep, DeMatha) already have working relationships with local parishes, while others will need to establish these relationships. There will need to be specific sacramental and liturgical formation to

augment theology in religion classes. One issue will be overcoming the mentality that this ministry entails hiring more employees when, in reality, it could be staffed by adults who are already school employees, together with student volunteers. Parents of interested students would of course need to give consent, and so family engagement and support through participation in designated Masses, meetings, and parish community opportunities would be important. This also raises the issue of whether the parish or the school is the setting for youth ministry. In response to the survey question concerning readiness to start an RCIA program this fall, three schools said yes, three schools said no, and four schools declined to respond to that question.

For the next steps in this process, Ms. Blauvelt suggested the following:

- Using data results to develop a guidelines resource for schools and parishes
- Meeting with campus ministers to discuss best practices and to identify necessary supports
- Offering adapted “RCIA Bootcamp” to interested campus ministers and staff/student volunteers
- “Introducing” collaborating pastors and campus ministers (as requested).

In the discussion that followed, Archbishop Gregory indicated that he is open to whatever is best for the locality involved, and he is not viewing this initiative as a requirement for Catholic high schools. For those students received into the Church, it would be fitting to have a Mass at the school during Easter week to acknowledge and welcome them. For those schools that have not implemented this initiative, seeing this kind of positive outcome in another school might prompt them to consider it. It is also important to connect students with sources of support for their practice of the faith after they graduate. Noting the short-term and long-term considerations prompted by this initiative, Archbishop Gregory directed the Council to continue to offer observations to Ms. Blauvelt to aid in the creation of the guidelines resource.

### **Financial Update – Fiscal Year 2019 ADW Parishes and Schools**

Deacon Eric Simontis, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the financial status of parishes and schools as of the end of Fiscal Year 2019 (figures are approximate):

#### Parish/School Cash and Investments, Notes Payable, and Other Payables

- Total Cash and Investments increased \$5.9 million and 4% to \$175 million
- Notes Payable decreased 22% to \$7.4 million and Other Payables increased 11% to \$8.8 million.

The majority of parish cash and investments resides in the parishes of Washington, DC and Montgomery County (Washington, DC – 41%; Montgomery County – 36%; Prince George’s County – 15%; Southern Maryland – 9%). About 32 parishes continue to have insufficient cash for operations, which is measured as not having enough cash to cover 6 months’ expenses.

### Parish Revenue and Expense

- Parish Net Surplus totaled \$1.9 million, down 89% from the prior year due primarily to a decrease in Parish Revenue and an increase in Capital Expenditures
- Parish Revenue decreased 4% to \$141.6 million
  - Offertory, which represents 62% of parish revenue, is down \$3 million and 3% from the prior year, to \$86 million
    - Sunday collections are down 4%
    - Holy Day collections are up 7%
  - Investment Income decreased \$1.6 million
  - Other Revenue decreased \$800,000
  - Building Fund, Contributions, and Donations decreased \$746,000
- Parish Expenses increased 7% to \$139.6 million primarily due to an increase in Capital Expenditures

For Fiscal Year 2019 as compared to Fiscal Year 2018, fewer parishes (44) had increases and more parishes (98) had decreases in Sunday offertory. Parish revenue is comprised primarily of offertory and donations (80% combined), while parish expenses for physical plant and capital expenditures represent 36% of total expenses.

### School Revenue, Expense, and Enrollment

*Archdiocesan parish and regional elementary schools and Mary of Nazareth School, excluding Consortium of Catholic Academies*

- School Revenue increased 2% to \$127.6 million due to an increase in elementary and nursery school tuition rates. School enrollment decreased by 1% to 13,009 students at 49 schools.
- School Expenses increased 1.5% to \$124.9 million due to increases in Operation and Maintenance and Nursery School/Daycare expenses.

An overall net surplus in revenue was driven by schools in Montgomery County and Prince George's County, which together comprise 70% of total school revenue. For Fiscal Year 2019 as compared with Fiscal Year 2018, fewer schools (26) had a net surplus and more schools (23) had a net deficit. There are 19 schools at 90-101% enrollment, 14 schools at 80-89% enrollment, 9 schools at 70-79% enrollment, 5 schools at 60-69% enrollment, and 2 schools at 45% enrollment. Among these schools, there are 13 schools with below 200 students.

### Current School Issues

#### Number of Schools / Enrollment History

*All Catholic schools (Pre-K, K-8, High Schools, and Independent Schools)*

- 2017-2018     93 / 26,254
- 2018-2019     92 / 26,171

- 2019-2020 92 / 25,693

Schools currently in consultation owing to financial challenges include:

- St. Bartholomew, Bethesda
- St. Mary of Piscataway, Clinton
- Holy Family, Hillcrest Heights\*
- St. Francis International, Silver Spring\*
- St. Margaret of Scotland Early Learning Center
- Archbishop Carroll High School

*\*Catholic Schools Office is actively managing under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)*

### Parish and School Initiatives

#### *Revenue*

- January 2020 report on increasing digital giving and parishioner engagement
- Master contract with WorldPay for low-cost parish credit card processing
- Building new FamilySuite reports for parishes to monitor offertory giving

#### *Banking*

- December 2019 pastor meeting on preventing fraud in electronic banking
- Program for parish credit cards under ADW vs. under pastor's personal credit

#### *Parish Operations*

- Parish secretary email distribution list and online share site
- Checklists for bookkeeper and pastor turnover
- Workbook for budgeting employee salary and benefits
- Payroll processing for interested parishes

#### *ADW Monitoring*

- Monthly parish and schools meeting with Bishop Fisher, Bishop Campbell, and the Moderator of the Curia
- Interim financial reporting
  - Monthly offertory income
  - Quarterly school results
  - Quarterly parishes with large payables

There was a brief discussion about the continued decline in some parish and school financial operations and a concern that, unless we make some decisions on these parishes and schools, it will stretch our financial resources.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, Mr. Simontis conveyed that he welcomes feedback about how the Central Pastoral Administration can help in ways that may not be occurring presently. Comments from the Council centered on concerns based on what has

been revealed about the disbursements of Theodore McCarrick when he was archbishop. Archbishop Gregory noted that Mr. McCarrick's sources for donations were not limited to the territory of this Archdiocese, with much money coming from elsewhere. There was consensus that it would be good to publish an article in the *Catholic Standard* concerning facts about the handling of money by Mr. McCarrick and current archdiocesan financial practices. Such practices include multi-layer review for all disbursements, including the fact that the Archbishop does not sign checks.

Archbishop Gregory affirmed that the Priest Council will henceforth be provided with an annual review of the budget. He also stated his impression that the report from the Vatican concerning Mr. McCarrick will focus on who knew what about him and when they knew it, as opposed to his handling of money while Archbishop of Washington. Although Archbishop Gregory does not know exactly when the Vatican will release the report, he believes it could be during March 2020, and talking points will be prepared upon its release.

### **Closing Comments**

Archbishop Gregory concluded the meeting with announcing a five-minute-break before the meeting of the College of Consultors.

### **Next Meeting**

March 26, 2020