

Priests' Council Planning Day 23 August 2021

The Priests' Council of the Archdiocese of Louisville held its annual planning meeting on August 22 – 23, 2021 at the Cathedral of the Assumption.

Sunday, August 22, 2021

Present: Fathers Anthony Chandler, Chris Lubecke, Minh Vu, Phillip Erickson, Peter Do, Chuck Walker, John Stoltz, Brandon DeToma, Richard Goodin, OFM, Paul Beach, Jeff Shooner, Jerry Bell, William Bowling, Terry Bradshaw, Bill Hammer, Martin Linebach, and Kevin McGrath, OP

Monday, August 23, 2021

Present: Archbishop Kurtz, Fathers Anthony Chandler, Chris Lubecke, Minh Vu, Phillip Erickson, Peter Do, John Stoltz, Brandon DeToma, Richard Goodin, OFM, Paul Beach, Jeff Shooner, Jerry Bell, William Bowling, Terry Bradshaw, Bill Hammer, Martin Linebach, Jeff Hopper, Pat Dolan and Dr. Brian Reynolds

Excused: Fathers Chris Rhodes, Ben Cameron, CPM

The Meeting was called to order at 9:00AM. Fr. Anthony Chandler offered words of welcome. Archbishop Kurtz led mid-morning prayer and was assisted by Fr. Pat Dolan.

Fr. Chandler gave a recap of the Sunday, August 22, 2021 meeting. Two main topics, COVID-19 and racism, were discussed.

COVID

- COVID Pastor Group helped all to remain connected with questions readily answered.
- Restrictions did lead to feelings of isolation.
- Archdiocesan Monday Leadership Briefings were an effective form of communication.
- Parishes given latitude to adapt guidelines to unique parish needs; some pastors felt that a universal approach was needed in some areas.
- Frustration in political polarization with mask mandates.
- Parishes approached this unique time with creativity with many ministries continuing within guidelines; live streaming, Monstrance in window for safe viewing, confessions in parking lots, etc.
- Overall sense of successfully providing for needs of parishioners with safety and concern.
- Increased communication between Pastoral Center, Office of Schools and Archbishop's Office was welcomed and beneficial.
- Joy with return to in-person classrooms.
- Dr. Karen Shadle along with the Office of Worship provided timely and beneficial Holy Week, Year of St. Joseph guidance.

Archbishop Kurtz added his thanks for the thoughts of the Council in reviewing practices that worked well and areas that could have been handled differently. Discussions of this nature are always beneficial. With the Monday Archbishop Leadership Briefing Emails, the Archdiocese already had in place a communication tool to reach a wide audience of pastors, deacons, ecclesial lay ministers and parish leaders. This effective mode of communication proved invaluable with the constant and uncharted changes that COVID necessitated in planning, financial and worship practices.

Archbishop noted that the isolation that many felt intensified emotions. Many parishioners and school families voiced policy opinions from a place of pent-up emotions, which greatly hindered fruitful dialogue.

Dr. Brian Reynolds commended the behind-the-scenes work of the Office of Schools staff. Long hours were needed to try to stay ahead of the almost constant communication from the Kentucky Health Department, Jefferson County Health Department and Lincoln Trail Health Department. There were many instances where guidelines issued from these departments were not consistent and led to confusion on the part of parish and school staff trying to navigate policy changes.

The Payroll Protection Program was a successful financial tool for many parishes. Eighty-Four loans were issued and most have gone through the process of forgiveness.

Archbishop Kurtz joined the Judicatory Heads of the Kentucky Council of Churches (KCC) in meeting with Governor Beshear early in the pandemic. Archbishop reiterated that while the Archdiocese worked with the governor's office, decisions were based on sound medical advice from public health authorities and Church teaching on care for the common good.

Vaccine Mandates

The Holy See and the chairs of the USCCB Committees on Doctrine and Pro-Life Activities carefully reviewed the ethical use of the COVID-19 vaccines that are available in the United States and communicated that their use is morally permissible.

In light of the clarification from Pope Francis, the Holy See's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Doctrine and Pro-Life Committees, the Archdiocese of Louisville will not issue religious exemptions for the Covid-19 vaccines.

Racism

- Fr. Minh Vu spoke at a ministerial association about the larger issue of racism.
- Many joined the Daniel Rudd Celebration at the Basilica in Bardstown, along with the Daniel Rudd Memorial Plaque Dedication at St. Joseph's Cemetery. The Daniel Rudd memorial will help all to understand the richness of our Catholic heritage especially our black Catholic experience.
- Fr. Chandler thanked Annette Turner and the Multicultural Ministries staff for their diligent work in conducting workshops and a forum for discussion regarding racism with time to reflect on first-hand experiences.
- The March, 2021 Archdiocesan Leadership Institute, with Bishop Fabre as the main presenter, was well attended.
- The Moving Towards Oneness program began 25 years ago and is ongoing, as is the Walking in My Shoes resource.
- Politicization efforts are proving to be an obstacle for raising racism awareness.
- Prayer has been removed from the public forum as a means of uniting individuals.
- Indian pastors are experiencing prejudice due to a lack of patience with language differences.
- Cultural differences can be viewed in a toxic manner or as a positive opportunity to learn and appreciate another's background

Archbishop Kurtz reflected that with both topics, COVID and racism, emotions are heightened and discussions are often heated. Utilizing a similar approach of being present to listen to one person at a time will likely be the only way to bring about successful dialogue. This approach of one-on-one listening and resisting fitting a person into a particular group will eventually lead to a critical mass of change in hearts.

Possible Topics for 2021 - 2022

Fr. Anthony Chandler listed several options for possible topics of discussion for the 2021 – 2022 year of Priests' Council Meetings.

- West End Parishes
- Replicating the 'Latino Response' Initiatives for Young Adults
- Faith and Science – Gold Mass structure in place for yearly event
- Ongoing parish planning, aging parishioners, competition within parishes to remain financially viable
- Vocations – variety of ministry opportunities for priests
- Ongoing support for young adults after Confirmation
- Retired priests updates
- Guidance for newly assigned pastors to parishes with schools
- Racism
- Consistency of priestly formation in areas of financial, scriptural, theological, etc.

ARCHBISHOP KURTZ' REMARKS

Priests' Council serves a twofold purpose, first, to participate in governance as a consultative body and secondly, care for the life and ministry of priests.

Archbishop outlined his retirement timeline. Archbishop turned 75 in August and has written to the Holy Father his desire to retire. Archbishop is 18 months out from his cancer surgery and remains cancer free. In part, because of the cancer diagnosis, Archbishop has petitioned to retire with a quicker timeframe than what might be typical for an Archbishop. Archbishop will likely continue to serve until a successor has been appointed. For the period after the announcement of the successor and before the installation, Pope Francis may appoint an Apostolic Administrator or the College of Consultors may be asked to elect a Diocesan Administrator.

Synod on Synodality

The General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will take place in October 2022. Preparatory documents and questionnaires will be made available in September 2021, Archbishop suggests adding this topic to the October Priests' Council agenda. Archbishop will be the celebrant for the October 17, 2021, 9:30AM mass at the Cathedral of the Assumption to offer prayers for the success of the Synod.

Eucharistic Revival

The USCCB has undertaken a 3 year movement regarding Eucharistic Revival. The Bishops will be drafting a formal statement on the Eucharist in the life of the Church, there will also be proposed plan for a Eucharistic Revival to help deepen the understanding and love of the Real Presence of the Eucharist among the faithful. Archbishop, on August 5, 2021, sent an Archdiocesan Leadership Briefing outlining a summary of how this teaching document of the Eucharist fits into the plan for Eucharistic Revival. Dr. Karen Shadle will be leading the Archdiocesan committee on Eucharistic Revival.

Retired Priests

Archbishop asked Fr. Jerry Bell to give an update on the plan for options for retired priest. Fr. Bell handed out a proposal for retirement living at Nazareth Home Clifton. Fr. Bell also distributed a retired priest residential option survey. Both of these documents (see attached) were mailed on August 27th to senior priests as well as those who will be retiring within three years. This survey needs to be returned by

September 17, 2021. The Priests' Council endorsed the continuation of research on the Nazareth Home Clifton options.

Vocations

The Archdiocese has a Covenant relationship with the two dioceses of Vietnam regarding both priests and seminarians. Archbishop will also be entering into dialogue with the diocese of Leon, Mexico to gauge opportunities for a similar relationship.

Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities has been prioritizing parish outreach communication. Archbishop suggested inviting Catholic Charities to give an update to the Council.

DR. BRIAN REYNOLDS' REMARKS

Dr. Reynolds distributed the Chancellor's Report (see attached.)

- The Archdiocese has created four short videos designed to be a tool to invite parishioners back to the mass. Pastors are invited to add their own introduction to the videos.
- Dr. Reynolds' pointed out the back page which lists one example of 2020 Census findings. Dr. Reynolds' cautioned that while the numbers may not be completely up-to-date the data is very useful in predicting trends, which can be used as a tool in parish financial planning and school planning, etc.
- Catholics Charities has begun planning to take part in the Afghanistan refugee services, as Kentucky is likely to be chosen as a key place for refugee placement. More information will be forthcoming.
- The Long Term Ombudsman program has added several Kentucky counties and is now serving close to 10,000 nursing home residents.

Afternoon Session

Dr. Brian Reynolds distributed the Finance Report (see attached.)

- Kentucky Tuition Tax Credit Bill has passed through the legislature and will begin as law in 2021. This bill will have a \$25 million impact across the four dioceses of Kentucky for both Catholic and private school tuition assistance.
- Strategizing ways to renew emphasis on long-term stewardship practices.
- Lilly Endowment Grant Three – Potential to apply for \$500K grant to address parishes experiencing financial instability due to race issues or COVID impact.
- Still on target to replace PDS software in next fiscal year.

Fr. Chandler thanked all of those attending especially those attending for the last time. Archbishop Kurtz offered a final blessing. The meeting ended at 1:40 PM.

Next meeting of the Priests' Council: 1:00 PM, at the Pastoral Center, Thursday, October 7, 2021