



Archdiocesan Pastoral Council
Minutes
February 29, 2020
St. John Neumann Church, Annapolis
Approved April 28, 2020

Present: Archbishop William E. Lori, Mr. Richard Babbitt, Ms. Chelsea Baranoski, Ms. Anita Cain, Ms. Stephanie Clancy, Ms. Cynthia Clarke, Mr. Larry Simmons, Ms. Elaine McCubbin, Ms. Sara Miller, Ms. Gloria Olivares, Mr. Jesus Eusebio Perez, Ms. Camilla Rawe, Dcn. Christopher Yeung

Excused: Ms. Consuelo Petro and Mr. Alexander Wright

Guests: Dr. Diane Barr, Mr. Daniel LeDuc and Ms. Mary Ellen Russell

Archbishop Lori called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Deacon Christopher Yeung led the group in the opening prayer.

Archbishop Lori thanked the members for their support especially Ms. Sara Miller who is an APC member and local parishioner at this parish.

Meeting Summaries from November 2, 2019 and January 18, 2020 were reviewed and approved. There were no additions or corrections.

Agenda was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) Guidance Document Ad Experimentum was reviewed again by the group.

Ms. McCubbin moved to adopt the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Guidance Document Ad Experimentum dated February 2020. Ms. Clarke seconded the motion. Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) Update

Archbishop Lori introduced Ms. Mary Ellen Russell to give an update on the current Maryland Legislative Session.

Mrs. Russell noted:

- Legislative session 37 days left in the session;
- Statute of Limitations to amend the laws regarding child sexual abuse still very present;
- Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) hearing in the senate - hopeful bill will not go anywhere this year;
- BOOST Scholarship funds included in this year's budget - hopeful that bill will get attached to Kirwin Commission funding; and
- Have been working on other issues - with new leadership things are handled differently sometimes.

Question or Comments?

Archbishop Lori indicated that the MCC team has been doing great work during this session.

The Catholic Church and the "Nones"

Archbishop Lori introduced Mr. Daniel LeDuc, editor of The Trust Magazine, Pew Charitable Trusts to provide information to the group on this subject since his group has done a lot of listening on this subject.

Mr. LeDuc reported:

- Data on the NONES comes from pew Research Center which is non-partisan entity; not a political situation so it is considered the "gold standard" of information;
- Pew Research Institute does not present ideas or suggestions for change, but provides information so others may use the data to make decisions;
- His presentation used numbers gathered in October 2019 which are the latest numbers;
- US still a very religious country with more than 65% reporting they consider themselves Christian;
- 10 years ago 75% of US citizens reported they considered themselves Christians;
- By 2050 Islam will be largest faith in the world;
- NONES atheists/agnostics/no religious affiliation;
- 26% say they are NONES - most believe in God or a higher power;
- Changes are generational - more recent generations have declined in faith;
- 50% of Millennials identify as Christians; and
- 40% are NONES; are largest COHORT going forward.

Why Is This Happening?

- Related to the religious teaching of individual churches;
- Public policy of churches a factor;
- 70% of those surveyed say don't believe in God;
- 34% said they don't like religion;
- Catholicism had largest net loss of any religion;
- Those who identify as NONES or other religious only 2% converts;
- No other religious group has had a similar experience in the past decade;
- The number who attend services gone down by 7% and this number is continuing to drop;
- Growth of NONES is having a big impact on churches and society;
- Their impact is happening very quickly; and
- Is a generational change that will affect the future in many ways.

Discussion:

The members indicated that they were hearing most of the information presented today for the first time. A number of members noted that the information reflected their own experiences with their own family members or friends.

The Members said:

- Young people are drifting away from the church in large numbers;
- Hard to get young people to come to church;
- Many don't share the teachings of the Church;
- Difficult to have discussions about faith with those who have left the Church;
- Many not interested in hearing about the faith of the parents or others;
- People are "spiritual" rather than religious so they don't want to be involved with a church;
- Being apart from the Church can be connected to an inability to go through the annulment process or the need to have their marriage convalidated;
- Gay people do not feel welcomed or positively received at parishes which causes separation; and
- Important to hear from the people in the parishes about these issues.

Suggestions

- Need to look at solutions as various aspects of the situation are controllable and others are not;
- Parish outreach is important including youth and young adult ministry – have to understand that this ministry should be a priority for our parishes even in their budgeting process;
- Should also look for successful programs in other areas of the country and in other dioceses;

- No need to reinvent the wheel on what is successful since this is a problem for the whole church;
- May need to provide better education regarding some of our teachings that have alienated people;
- Our parishes need to be welcoming so everyone feels embraced there;
- Good to use Bishop Barron's program to increase faith;
- Church should help people with their marriage issues;
- Need to use social media better and more frequently given how this is used by so many people now;
- Important to engage parents and help them pass on the faith to their children, no matter what the age of the child;
- Should not water down the teachings of the Church to be "politically correct" – have to be sure people understand these teachings well;
- People in the parishes need to be understand these issues so they can be part of the solution for the future; and
- People need to be engaged and educated about these issues.

Archbishop Lori stated:

- Was good to hear members observations and suggestions;
- Need to understand what is being done within the church;
- Members would have some homework as a way to have a more informed discussion;
- Members would plan between meeting times;
- Would need to determine who should be present for the discussion;
- Faith discussions hinge on an individual person's encounter with Christ and how they answer the call to holiness;
- It is important to look at the time of the founding of the Church since we are being called to do church in a "new way" rather than return to a more comfortable time; and
- Thanked Mr. LeDuc for his presentation.

Survey Workgroup Report

Ms. Stephanie Clancy, Ms. Elaine McCubbin, Ms. Gloria Olivares and Mr. Larry Simmons are members of the APC's Workgroup

Ms. Russell noted:

- Had conference call with members of the workgroup on this issue;
- One of the initial conclusions was that it might be good to interview Mrs. Daphne Daly (Director of the AOB Planning Office) and Dr. John Romanowsky (the Director of the Evangelization Department);
- They can give an update on what data is already available on this subject as well as what is being done locally so that any survey would not duplicate efforts;

- Would be important to survey those parishioners who have already left the Church to find out why and what can be done to bring them back;
- Parishioners could also be surveyed about these questions; and
- Need to be sure there is a “paper” option as well as an electronic option so that everyone will have a chance to respond.

Archbishop Lori indicated:

- Appreciate the work of the group;
- Surveys can go out of date;
- May want advice on specific issue or something like that;
- Will need a good communication feedback mechanism;
- Important conversations are not “bottled up” in groups like the Presbyteral Council or other groups; and
- Need to be sure things go through the Archdiocesan regional meetings as well as with the Evangelization Department and the Pastoral Planning office so approach is consistent.

The Members suggested:

- See if it is possible to use the APC webpage to gather information or feedback;
- Would also be good to “take the temperature” of parishioners in general;
- Data Analytics is important so will need someone who knows about this to be part of the discussions; and
- Should include those who are responsible for the RCIA program, adult education and others since their work is important to success in this area; oversees the program.

Archbishop Lori stated:

- The Rite of Election is tomorrow;
- Currently one-third of parishes doing active Evangelizing outreach with one-third doing something but unsure what to do or are under resourced for success; one-third are reluctant to change anything due to leadership issues or simply a desire to keep the status quo;
- Question of where put your energy as a diocese;
- Want to try to support the two-thirds of parishes already doing things but moving those who parishes that are stuck is a major problem;
- Parish programs alone will not actively evangelize others as it takes people to evangelize;
- Focus for next Meeting is reaching out to former Catholics and the NONES and input on how to do this;
- Want to make sure Presbyteral Council is aware of these efforts and Archbishop Lori will mention the APC to them; and
- Thanked the members for their contributions to the meeting today.

Reading Assignment for time:

- *Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis
- Archbishop Lori's pastoral letter "*A Light Brightly Visible*"

Next Meeting Date: June 13, 2020 in Western Maryland

Meeting closed with prayer at 12:03 pm.

Respectfully presented,

Diane L. Barr, JD, JCD, PhD