



Archdiocesan Pastoral Council

Minutes

Zoom Meeting

May 8, 2021

Present: Archbishop William E. Lori, Mr. Richard Babbitt, Ms. Chelsea Baranoski, Ms. Cynthia Clarke, Ms. Elaine McCubbin, Ms. Gloria Olivares, Ms. Camilla Rawe, Mr. Larry Simmons, Mr. Alexander Wright

Excused: Ms. Anita Cain, Ms. Stephanie Clancy, Ms. Sara Miller, Mr. Jesus Eusebio Perez, Ms. Consuelo Petro

Guests: Dr. Diane Barr, Msgr. Jay O'Connor, Ms. Mary Ellen Russell, Deacon Christopher Yeung

Archbishop Lori called the meeting to order at 10:06 am. He thanked the members for their service over the past year and indicated that one member would be ending their term with this meeting.

Topic Addressed:

I. Returning to Church

Archbishop Lori introduced the topic by reporting that many dioceses are reopening without limits in different states.

- The real question is whether people are willing to return to church now and if not how to make them more comfortable in coming back. He noted that on-line masses are expected to continue into the future even when the churches have fully reopened.

Members Responded:

- Observed that many people are coming back and that this is causing Masses to be more crowded or for people to have to stand or only watch on-line;

- The Hispanic community is particularly ready to return after all the losses they have had;
- Other communities are much slower in coming back, particularly those that have many senior citizens;
- Important to keep cleaning protocols in place until there is herd immunity or more people are vaccinated;
- Also important to make sure those who want to wear masks are able to do so and that all wear masks for the moment to keep everyone safe;
- Good to help people receive the vaccine and observe social distancing;
- Getting harder to make sure people observe social distancing; and
- All right to come back more slowly over time.

II. Archdiocesan Mental Health Initiative

Mary Ellen Russell introduced the topic by reporting:

- Working with county and state officials on what is expected to be a difficult issue in the months and years to come;
- Want to make sure our priests and other pastoral leaders are able to address their own issues in these areas and are prepared to help their parishioners deal with these concerns as well;
- Establishing a work group to provide resources and assistance to the broader community as well as the Catholic parishioner;
- Want to hear about what should be done from the members.

Members Responded:

- Enthusiastically supported these efforts;
- Important to make sure that people know there is no stigma in reaching out to a counsellor or needing help;
- Want to make sure there are Catholic counsellors available for specific issues;
- Should reach out to the young and especially to the elderly who are often lonely, especially after the pandemic;
- One parish has put together a mental health resource card to provide information to their parishioners and staff;
- Includes a prayer to St. Dymphna who is the patroness of those with mental health issues;
- Need to be sure everyone is aware of these issues and can support others at their parish or in other places.