



**DIOCESE OF SCRANTON
PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023**

Msgr Van Loon called council to order at 3:05 pm.

- Roll Call was taken. *Present:* Bishop Bambera; Monsignor Van Loon; Fathers Shantillo, Polednak, Albert, Bechtel, Beck, Bryant, DeCelles, Edwards, Evanko, Fox, Glenn, Jeffrey, Kuhar, Kutch, McCreary, McDougall, Miller, Pisaneschi, Polmounter, Ricciardi, Wasnock. *Present by Zoom:* Fr. Tudgay. *Excused:* Msgr. Quinn; Fr. Czachor. *Absent:* Fathers Doris and Quinnan.
- Prayer Intentions: The recently deceased mothers of Frs. Sterowski, Bryant, Miller, and others; Fr. Yenkevich, who died recently; peace in the Holy Land.
- Fr. Evanko led Daytime Prayer at 3:07 pm.

Minutes from the September 12, 2023 meeting were approved.

AGENDA

1) Election of new chair

Fr. Polednak oversaw election of a new council chairman. Msgr. Van Loon, the current chair, and Fr. Evanko were nominated by ballot. Fr. Evanko won the runoff.

2) Consolidations

Fr. Tudgay presented two proposed modifications in West Side: the consolidation of Sts. Peter and Paul, Scranton, a personal parish, into its territorial parish, St. Ann, with Peter and Paul designated as secondary worship site; and, similarly, the consolidation of St. Lucy into St. Patrick, with St. Lucy as secondary worship site.

Fr. Paisley spoke about the linkage of St. Ann and Sts. Peter and Paul. He took over the pastorate of St. Ann's from the Passionists about a month ago, and has tried not to change too much too fast. The people are nervous about consolidation, but have been getting along well with one another at Masses and shared events. Sunday

attendance at Sts. Peter and Paul has been low, about 100 per week. The bishop called the question, and council unanimously supported consolidation.

Fr. Fox spoke about St. Patrick and St. Lucy Parishes. He was pastor of St. Patrick's when Fr. Ferretti retired a month ago, whereupon Fox took on St. Lucy's. He then consulted with the parishes at a meeting where he noted the declining membership at St. Lucy's (400 families and dropping; St. Patrick's has 1600). After discussion, the bishop called for a vote, and council voted in favor of consolidation.

3) Clergy Survey Proposal

Fr. Polednak talked about a survey of priests to be taken during convocation. The survey asks about satisfaction in one's current assignment, ministerial interests, skills, and needs, among other things. The intent is to aid the personnel board in its recommendations, as well as to get a sense of how the priests are doing in the midst of Vision 2030. The bishop will receive only a general overview of its results.

4) Holy Days of Obligation

Msgr. Van Loon continued the discussion about Holy Days. Many members of council favor transferring Ascension to Sunday due to declining attendance and the opportunity for a more solemn celebration on Sunday. Others wonder if asking less of people solves the problem. This decision would have to be made on a provincial or regional level; the bishop intends to raise the issue in November.

5) Diocesan Vestment Update

Msgr. Van Loon offered an update on the new diocesan vestments. Sample vestments can be tried on in the DPC. Mary Hallman and Fr. Wasnock have drafted a letter inviting active ministry and retired priests to buy in. Parishes will bear the cost of the vestments. The prices, \$645 per chasuble and \$1049 per dalmatic, are hundreds of dollars below retail. Each order will be sent, as the Diocese receives payment, to Holy Rood, who can furnish 20 vestments per month.

6) Transparency of Blueprints for Parishioners

The bishop led a discussion about transparency in the Vision 2030 process. To release information on possible parish modifications before plans are finalized creates unnecessary problems. But when should such information be released? And how can we empower parishioners with information, rather than simply imposing modifications from above? In discussion, a distinction was made between the general data, which should be given early, and plans for modifying a specific parish, which might be given a year in advance, depending on the circumstances. The importance of actively engaging pastoral and finance councils to develop creative responses to the data was also emphasized. Fr. Shantillo noted that the

availability of the data depended on timely cooperation from the parishes. Lastly, the bishop affirmed his desire for dialogue with the deaneries over the blueprints.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 7, 2023.

The meeting concluded with Evening Prayer, led by Fr. Polmounter at 4:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Mark DeCelles