



PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING

Catholic Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania

Thursday, June 22, 2023

Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA

10:30 A.M.

Members in Attendance:

Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, Very Rev. Michael P. Ferrick, V.F., Very Rev. V. David Foradori, E.V., Very Rev. Chris Hamlett, V.F., Very Rev. Robert Horgas, V.F., Rev. Brandon M. Kleckner, Rev. Matthew J. Kujawinski, Rev. Msgr. Edward M. Lohse, V.G., Very Rev. John P. Malthaner, V.F., Rev. T. Shane Mathew, Rev. Ian McElrath, Very Rev. Jeffrey J. Noble, V.F., Rev. Msgr. Joseph J. Riccardo, V.F., Very Rev. Nicholas J. Rouch, E.V., Very Rev. B. Lamounte Sayers, Rev. Christopher Singer, Rev. Msgr. Richard Siefer, E.V., Very Rev. Richard C. Tomasone, V.F., Very Rev. Thomas J. Whitman, V.F.

Members Excused: None

1. Opening Prayer

- a. The meeting was called to order at 10:27.

2. Final Restructuring Plan for the Oil City Deanery

- a. In light of feedback received from the people and priests:
 - i. Emlenton will become a secondary church with mission status of Beloved Disciple, Grove City.
 - ii. St. Mary's in Crown will be partnered with St. Joseph, Lucinda & St. Michael, Fryburg, and a parochial vicar has been assigned.
 - iii. A robust discussion on the two proposals followed.
- b. Action Taken:
 - i. A motion to recommend to the bishop the merger of St. Michael the Archangel parish, Emlenton, into Beloved Disciple parish, Grove City, by means of an extinctive union with Beloved Disciple church as the parish church was made by Msgr. Siefer and seconded by Fr. Whitman. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Final Restructuring Plan for the Bradford Deanery

- a. After considering the feedback received from the local pastors and parishioners, the planning committee has recommended the following:
- b. St. Eulalia

- i. St. Bibiana parish to be merged by means of extinctive union with St. Eulalia
 - ii. St. Augustine in Austin will lose mission status.
- c. Port Allegany will be merged with Smethport rather than Coudersport as originally proposed.
 - i. St. Elizabeth would be the parish church.
 - ii. St. Gabriel would be a secondary church with mission status and St. Joseph would be a secondary church.
- d. Discussion of all these proposed changes followed, with the council focusing its discussion especially on the proposed mergers.
- e. Action Taken:
 - i. A motion to recommend to the Bishop the merger of St. Bibiana parish, Galetton, into St. Eulalia parish, Coudersport, by means of an extinctive union with St. Eulalia church as the parish church was made by Fr. Sayers and seconded by Fr. Ferrick. The motion carried unanimously.
 - ii. A motion to recommend to the Bishop the merger of St. Gabriel parish, Port Allegany, into St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish, Smethport, by means of an extinctive union with St. Elizabeth of Hungary church as the parish church was made by Fr. Mathew and seconded Fr. Ferrick. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Final Restructuring Plan for the Clearfield Deanery

- a. After considering feedback from the local pastors and parishioners, the planning committee has recommended the following:
- b. Divide St. Mary parish
 - i. Frenchville to Clearfield
 - ii. Severin and Grassflat to Morrisdale
 - iii. Details on the proposed division of the cash assets and other liabilities must still be determined
- c. Merge Grampian into Curwensville
- d. Partner Osceola Mills with Houtzdale
- e. Robust discussion followed focusing especially on:
 - i. The possibility of dividing the Frenchville parish and
 - ii. The pastor of Curwensville and Grampian's support of the local recommendation to merge the two parishes that was expressed in the feedback on the preliminary plan, and
 - iii. The proposed partnership of Osceola Mills with Houtzdale.
 - 1. The council, in light of feedback from the Vicar Forane of the Clearfield Deanery and in light of the small size of the Osceola Mills parish, proposed merging Osceola Mills into Houtzdale outright.

f. Action Taken:

- i. A recommendation was made to table discussion of the proposed division of St. Mary parish, Frenchville, until this body's September meeting in order to allow time to gather additional information. The recommendation was accepted by the Bishop.
- ii. A motion to recommend to the Bishop the merger of Immaculate Conception parish, Osceola Mills, into Christ the King parish, Houtzdale, by means of an extinctive union with Christ the King church as the parish church was made by Msgr. Siefer and seconded by Fr. Foradori. The motion carried unanimously.
- iii. A motion to recommend to the Bishop the merger of St. Bonaventure parish, Grampian, into St. Timothy parish, Curwensville, by means of an extinctive union with St. Timothy church as the parish church was made by Fr. McElrath and seconded by Msgr. Lohse. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Proposed Plan for Erie

a. Detail:

- i. Blessed Sacrament & Sacred Heart as partners with St. Paul as secondary church w/o mission status and St. Stephen (merged into Blessed Sacrament) w/ mission status
- ii. St. Andrew merged into St. Jude w/ mission status
- iii. St. Joseph/BoL as mission of St. George
- iv. St. Patrick as mission of St. Peter Cathedral
- v. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel to merge into St. Luke
- vi. Holy Trinity to merge into St. Stanislaus as church without mission status
- vii. Mother of Sorrows to merge into St. Stanislaus with no mission status for any of its three churches
- viii. Holy Rosary to merge into St. John the Baptist
- ix. Mount Calvary to merge into Our Lady of Mercy w/o missions status
- x. St. Mark to merge into Our Lady of Mercy w/ mission status
- xi. St. Teresa of Avila to merge into St. Thomas the Apostle with mission status for Our Lady of Fatima but no mission status for St. Teresa
- xii. St. Boniface and All Saints to be partnered
- xiii. St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady of the Lake to be partnered
- xiv. St. John the Evangelist (Girard) and St. Lawrence to be partnered

- b. Lengthy discussion followed on the plan as presented. The council considered a number of alternative possibilities for mergers/partnerships contained in the plan. The council reached a consensus that the plan is a sound one and should be presented to the people, who would be able to give useful feedback that would aid the Bishop in making a final plan that will best serve the good of souls.
- c. Action:
 - i. A motion to endorse the preliminary plan and to recommend that the Bishop publish the plan was made by Fr. Sayers and seconded by Fr. Foradori. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Remaining meeting dates for 2023

- a. September 7 (Thursday) – Immaculate Conception, Clarion
- b. November 28 (Tuesday) – Saint Mark Catholic Center

7. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:05 by Ricardo and seconded by Siefer.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Ian McElrath