

DEACON COUNCIL MEETING

March 30, 2021

Via Zoom

Attending:

Bishop Lawrence Persico	Msgr. Ed Lohse	Fr. Nick Rouch	Fr. Mark Nowak	Dcn. Jerry Sobrowski
Dcn. Bill Saborsky	Dcn. Steve Washek	Dcn. Rich Shewman	Dcn. Denis Coan	Dcn. Dennis Kudlak
Dcn. Dennis Socash	Dcn. Bob Ball	Dcn. Kevin Kunik	Dcn. Tim Good	Mrs. Mary Good

Opening Prayer: J. Sobrowski

Topics:

- Director of the Office of Deacons
 - Office position to be filled by a deacon.
 - Bishop introduces the responsibilities of the office:
 - A combination of both formation and of ordained deacon community responsibilities.
 - To work with the Vicar for Clergy.
 - Vision of the position includes:
 - Assignments of deacons, diaconal concerns, represents the needs of the deacons and wives in the diocese.
 - On-going position, reports to the Vicar for Clergy.
 - Recruitment for formation candidates, formation curriculum, formation activities.
 - To represent all deacons including those in formation.
 - The position is expected to be full time and on-going. (questions regarding if paid position)
 - Director is assigned by the Bishop.
 - Similar position when Msgr. Bob Smith was the director.
 - Continued crafting of the position is occurring by the bishop and staff, not finalized. There has been some research of the positions in other dioceses, Rich Shewman has helped with this research.
 - The bishop also wishes to communicate more with the diaconal community and the director will assist with this effort.
 - More information of this position will follow soon.
- Revision of the Deacon Council (See draft of statutes – 3/8/21)
 - To align the deacon council with the presbyteral council in function and structure. The revision will replace what is contained in the current deacon policy handbook.
 - Upon approval of the structure, the timeline for elections and seating of the new council will be the end of summer to September.
 - Msgr. Lohse informs the council that canon law does not require a council of deacons, only priests. The deacon council is advisory in nature.
 - The council will work closely with the bishop.
 - There was a question regarding membership (Art. III) and it was decided to edit ~~the document by combining~~ sections C and D referring to non-voting members.
 - There is no reference to geographical representation. If there is no representation from a particular region, the bishop can appoint a member to fill this need.
 - Msgr. Lohse relates that the council is not representative of a particular region or constituency; rather, each member is concerned with the whole of the deacon community.

- The revision also eliminates any standing committees and other representatives such as formation, continuing education, etc. These will be overseen by the director of deacons.
 - This change will necessarily need a well-established communication network.
- Bill Saborsky relates that this is a clearer and more defined structure than the current council.
- The meeting format will likely continue with Zoom and other distance communication technology.
- Msgr. Lohse clarifies that a deacon wife can serve on the council without her spouse. The wife can be elected from all wives in the community.
- The director of deacons would be responsible for running the election process.
- Bob Ball inquires if this would include a staggered election of member where some may stay on the council from the prior election. The bishop related that the election would include the entire council and a refresh of the membership would occur. Current members could run again in the election and be reelected. The continuity between the councils would be the responsibility of the director of deacons.
- Appointments to the council is made by the bishop by defined needs such as those who understand the history of the council, prior experience, geographic area and specialized expertise.
- The executive committee does not have a general authority and cannot act on issues in the name of the council unless otherwise granted by the bishop.
- A vote for the approval of the Statutes for the Deacon Council was called by Jerry Sobrowski and was approved by the council by unanimous vote.
 - The vote included the recommended changes to article III combining sections C and D.
- Pastoral Involvement Questionnaires
 - The recent questionnaire sent to the community by Fr. Rouch included 57 deacons of which 40 responded. This was a good response by the community.
 - It was noted from the responses that the majority of deacons are preaching at the weekend mass (32 of 40) and were assisting at the Mass (34 of 40).
 - Results of the survey will be posted on the website for the whole community.
- Ordination 5/28/2021
 - Interviews with the 7 candidates were conducted in general were very positive.
 - A pastoral interest survey was also completed by the candidates. The assignments will be completed through the clergy personnel board.
 - In the future the director of deacons would be involved in this assignment process.
- Additional Discussion
 - The current council will remain until the elected council is seated.
 - The job description of the director of deacons will continue to be developed and then brought before the current council for review and approval.
 - This process may extend the election time into the fall 2021.
 - The Emmaus convocation will continue this year. The newly ordained will be invited to attend.
 - There will be a review of the current deacon policy handbook online and any outdated or irrelevant pages will be deleted from the website. Rich Papalia is responsible for the current information posted.

Meeting ended at 4:52 PM

Submitted by Deacon Tim Good.