



**PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL  
DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD**

*FAITH. HOPE. CHARITY*

**TO: Active and Retired Priests, Deacons and Religious Priests**

**FROM: Office of the Chancellor**

**DATE: June 30, 2020**

**RE: Summary Report of the June 2, 2020 Presbyteral Council Meeting**

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The following topics were presented and discussed at the June 2, 2020 Virtual Presbyteral Council Meeting held at the Bishop Marshall Center.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**

Jeffrey Trant, the Director of the Diocesan Office of Safe Environment and Victim Assistance, spoke about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District Attorneys' offices in Western Massachusetts. This document is an overview of standard procedures in response to sexual misconduct allegations known in the diocese.

In February 2019, District Attorney, Anthony Gulluni was dissatisfied with public remarks that were made regarding the diocese's response to the abuse crisis and he felt there was inconsistency with reporting. He established a clergy abuse hotline for victims to contact his office.

In 1993, the General Law in Massachusetts under 51A allowed for a commission to conduct credible criminal or civil investigations. The diocese assessed this process and approved it. Regarding abuse, any allegations of sexual misconduct needed to be reported. There were verbal agreements over the years and the standards changed with different District Attorneys. This led to incomplete documentation.

When the District Attorney's office conducts a review, the diocese will not conduct a parallel investigation. The Memorandum of Understanding puts forth an understanding of cooperation between the diocesan and civil representatives. It is incumbent upon the diocese to ensure a standardized process of reporting to law enforcement.

Abuse victims should be referred to Jeff Trant's office. Cases need to be documented. The diocese will not begin its review/investigation process during the 90-day investigation by the district attorney's office.

**CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

Bishop was surprised when Governor Baker placed the opening of churches in Phase 1. The conference calls between the Bishop, Vicars, and Deans allowed time for the diocese to put together a plan to anticipate the re- opening of churches.

There were protocols on social distancing and seating capacity. No parish in the Diocese had difficulties with going over the 40% capacity. Guidelines for the reopening of churches were sent out to priests and parishes.

The governor issued directives on opening schools and the Office of Faith Formation has worked on resources for Religious Education in the fall should there be a need to work remotely.

## **ORDINATION**

The ordination to priesthood will take place on August 15, 2020 at St. Michael's Cathedral.

## **150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will take place on September 27, 2020, just a couple days before the Feast of St. Michael on September 29.

## **CLERGY POLICY MANUAL UPDATE**

Fr. Malatesta gave information where members of the presbyteral council can read and comment on the Clergy Policy Manual. The website is [berkshiredeanery.org](http://berkshiredeanery.org). Once on the website, follow the link on DOS PM. The password is M@rshall.

The Income Policies were discussed. Msgr Bonzagni helped lead discussion through this portion of the policy manual. The topics of discussion under Income: Salary and Benefits of Priests were:

- Publication of salary
- Auto Allowance
- Christmas and Easter Bonus
- Mass Stipends
- Distinction of Mass Offering
- Missa Pro Populo
- Mass for the Deceased Bishops and Priests
- Mass for the Living Bishops, Priests and Deacons
- Founded Masses
- Requests unable to be fulfilled in a Parish
- Record of Mass offerings
- Excess Mass offerings
- All Souls Day
- Sacramental Offerings
- Funeral Stole and Offerings
- Wedding Offerings

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION, FORMATION AND SUPPORT OF CLERGY UPDATE**

### *Clergy Days and Annual Retreats for Priests*

Fr. Savage reported that the Clergy Day scheduled in May has been postponed as well as the Annual Spring Retreat for Priests in June. The Annual Fall Retreat for Priests at Enders Island is still scheduled as planned.

### *Parish Administration Course for Deacons*

The Parish Administration Course started via zoom on May 19, 2020. There are six deacons participating in the course. The purpose of the course is to prepare permanent deacons to become Parish Administrators of parishes without a resident pastor under the supervision of a canonical pastor.

### *New Pastors Program*

The New Pastors Program was rescheduled from the summer to March 2021 at the Holy Family Retreat Center.

### *Annual Celebration of Priesthood*

The Annual Celebration of the Priesthood may be celebrated in the fall.

### *CEFSC Website*

The Continuing Education Website is updated regularly, which includes this information, COVID-19 Diocesan Guidelines and other resources.

### **CATHOLIC LIFE CONFERENCE**

The original date for the Catholic Life Conference was March 21, 2020. The committee decided on October 17, 2020 for a new date with the same speakers at the Mass Mutual Center. All the speakers were engaged. The committee received 1,300 registrations. Only 25-30 people asked for refunds.

### **NEXT PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, September 1, 2020