

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2020

- I. **CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE** – Called to order at 9:30 AM in the Br. Juniper Room

Members present were Fr John O’Connor, OFM, Pastor, Chair Terry Danner, Jean Allen, Phil Bongiorno, Maggie Eves, Vice Chair, John Hales, Clarence Neason, Chuck O’Hern, Pequitte Schwerin, Ulli Vaerst, Dr Tricia Barber (Principal), Marv Floom (finance committee)

Members absent were Michelle Nicolai, Angelica Salguero, Dan Sullivan, Marianne Hayes (RE Director)

- II. **OPENING PRAYER** – Clarence Neason led us in an opening prayer

- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - A motion was made by and seconded to approve the 11 Jan 2020 minutes. Motion unanimously carried. These will be forwarded for posting on the web.

- IV. **CARE FOR CREATION REPORT** - Jim Bundy introduced Page Gravely from Catholic Energies who gave us an update on the possibility of installing solar panels on St Francis campus buildings. Catholic Energies was formed 12-15 years ago to help pastors focus on stewardship and advocacy based on Laudato Si. The company representatives have secured power bills, photos of electric meters and panels as part of the process to determine if solar panel installation would be financially feasible and/or save funds for the church with long term usage. VA Dominion Power rates are relatively inexpensive and the proposed cost of approximately \$500K over a 35-40 year period could reduce electricity costs by 70%. We consume about 688,000 KW hours of electricity and this system would provide only about one half of what we need. Developing a relationship with a Power Purchase Agreement would cost approximately \$80K upfront. A better option was suggested to replace all lighting with LED bulbs which could offset the \$80K. An audit for that exchange would be conducted free of charge. A motion was made after the presentation to go ahead with the LED audit after securing the known rates we presently pay for Dominion Power.

- V. **HISPANIC MINISTRY COORDINATING COMMITTEE** - Key committee members from the Spanish speaking community introduced themselves to share who they are and what they are trying to accomplish. In attendance were Ivan

Nazario, Cecelia Gonzalez, Mirna Medina and Fr Ignatius. Ivan stated that there are several committees, working different projects. One of them specifically addresses how the Spanish speaking community might better interface with the English-speaking community. The next meeting is 3 Mar and Jean Allen from the Pastoral Council will act as liaison. Ivan said the biggest stumbling block is the lack of English language skills. Many parishioners are reluctant to come to bi-lingual events concerned they will not be understood. Currently they are working to combine some activities with the Knights of Columbus. The two groups will begin hosting a monthly potluck after the 1:30 Mass. All of the Spanish speaking community will be invited. Also, during Lent, there will be joint soup suppers and bi-lingual expression of the Stations of the Cross. Soup suppers will begin at 6:30 with Stations at 7:30 The other committees are working with lectors, two choirs, prayer groups, and social outreach. Ms. Medina will start a Marriage class for Con-validation this summer and is becoming credentialed. Input from the Hispanic Ministry was requested for inclusion in the 2020 – 2025 Parish Strategic Plan.

VI. PASTOR'S REPORT

- a. Province Consolidation: HNP will withdraw from ten ministries. Eight of the ten are parishes. Provincial consolidation is still scheduled for 2023 subject to a review by an outside consultant. A Provincial Chapter Meeting will be held the first week in June that will elect the leadership for HNP. Fr Kevin Mullen, the current Provincial, has indicated he is agreeable to run for Provincial again. Two weeks after this is another meeting to discuss new assignments for friars that could impact St Francis. There is a Friar in Silver Springs who has indicated an interest to be assigned here. Recently, a “visitor”, a friar from another OFM Province, in this case Ireland, met with Fr John O'Connor, Fr John Alderson, and Fr Ignatius Harding for the purpose of understanding their thoughts on the fraternal, ministerial and spiritual aspects of life at St Francis, Triangle.
- b. Parish Finances: The October Count (date in time census) shows an overall increase in attendance. Average Catholic attendance nationwide is 39%, while St Francis is 63%; among the top four in our diocese. Marv Floom gave update on parish finances as well and stated we are \$20,000 ahead of last year, possibly due to the warmer weather and a greater than average Christmas collection. Our Annual Appeal netted \$184,000. We have been approved for replacement of the HVAC system for the school and bids are expected 3 March. The cost is approximately \$250K and will be bundled into a refinanced loan from the Diocese totaling \$840K. The \$840K includes the balance remaining on the parking lot loan. The monthly payments for the refinanced loan are much lower, providing leverage for unforeseen expenditures. Car raffle tickets will be arriving from All Saints Parish next week.

- c. School Enrollment Status: Re-registration is going on now for current students and enrollment is steady at 235 students. The recent Open House was well attended, and orientation to the school is also available by appointment, which is convenient for parents of prospective students. Dr Barber stated she will have a better feel for enrollment numbers in March.
- d. Strategic Plan Update: Maggie Eaves stated that 7 March is the deadline for submission of Action Plans by each ministry. The Visioning Committee will take about one month to collate the inputs and report back to the Council.
- e. Other: **Bishop's Lenten Appeal** is ongoing and Fr John O'Connor will speak at all Masses next week. Please be as generous as possible as the parish is assessed on participation. We met our goal last year and hope to again.
- f. **Coronavirus:** The diocese has imposed no mandatory restrictions regarding the kiss of peace and distribution of communion, etc.
- g. The **Prince William Area Free Clinic** in Woodbridge will be closing due to financial difficulties. Catholic Charities will take over management. They intend to staff the clinic by making greater use of volunteers and will continue to serve the underprivileged regardless of religious affiliation.
- h. **Security:** Danger to public attendance at churches has risen 35% according to an article in this Saturday's Washington Post. Our parish is taking appropriate steps by designating active or recently retired law enforcement officers as part of a security task force. A volunteer officer will be present at Mass. Ushers will know who officer is and where he is sitting. We currently have 21 individuals who stepped forward to participate. The Bishop is pleased with the program and wishes to export it to other parishes as a model. At no time will regular civilians be allowed to carry concealed weapons in church. The cadre of individuals includes FBI, DEA, Police, and Sheriff's Deputies.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Parishioners who lector have asked for a light on the ambo.
- b. Additional handrails on the steps leading up to the perdella have been suggested to match the one on the side of the church near the tabernacle. One would be to assist cantors, and one in front near the Baptismal font. Marv Floom will relay this to the finance council to obtain pricing information. Fr John stated they are quite expensive.
- c. A week from Fri Fr John will join 200 others at a conference at the Fairmont Hotel to discuss the topics "Where the Church is Now and Looking to the Future". On Sat morning the topic will be the "Challenge of Preaching to the Young".

VIII. NEXT MEETING: Tentative scheduled for 21 March at 9:30 a.m.

IX. **CLOSING PRAYER:** Chuck O'Hern led the group in a closing prayer.

X. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:40

Minutes submitted by: Pequitte Schwerin

Approved by: Name