

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

22 May 2021 from 9:30 – 10:30 AM

I. Call to Order & Attendance – Virtual Meeting on Zoom.

- a. Members Present – Fr. John O’Connor (Pastor), Terry Danner (Chair), Jean Allen, Phil Bongiorno, John Hales, Michelle Nicolai, Clarence Neason, Iván Nazario, Angelica Silva (Francis House), Pequitte Schwerin, Dan Sullivan, Ulli Vaerst, Dr. Tricia Barber (Principal), Maryanne Hayes (Director of Religious Education), Marv Floom (Finance Committee)
- b. Members not Present – Phil Bongiorno, Angelica Silva (Francis House)

II. Opening Prayer – Fr. John

III. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 1 May 2021 Pastoral Council were approved.

IV. Hispanic Ministry Update – Iván Nazario

- a. Sheila Noble and Iván finished local Confirmation Classes on Thursday May 20th. All required documentation and training have been completed. The sacrament of Confirmation will take place on 23 May at the 11:00 Mass.

V. Pastor’s Remarks – Fr. John

- a. The Parish survey on coronavirus and the restoration of masses has been completed. There were over 600 responders. Some were interested in continuing to wear masks, but this is an individual decision in the wake of the bishop’s announcement.
- b. The projections about the end of the coronavirus restrictions were shared. Since the meeting Bishop Burbidge has announced the following about ending the restrictions. “Every church in the Diocese of Arlington can now celebrate Mass and other liturgies at full capacity and with no social distancing limitations. Fully vaccinated individuals no longer need to wear masks. Those who are unvaccinated are encouraged to wear masks for the time being. No one will be asked about his/her vaccination status, and no one will be restricted from entering a church or inhibited in any way for not wearing a mask.”
 - o While some may feel the pandemic is over – Fr. John stressed it is not. There are still many things that can cause it to continue. The Parish is obligated to follow Legal and Diocesan direction. The Parish will follow both State and Diocesan direction, and change restrictions as allowed.
- c. The new mass schedule will be rolled out weekend of 12-13 June. Masses will be 5:30 PM on Saturdays, 8:00, 9:30, 11:00, 12:30 (Spanish). and 5:30 PM on Sundays. The time

changes to the 8:00 Sunday Mass and the 12:30 Spanish mass were based on the survey results. This will require many more volunteers for Lectors, Sacristans, Eucharistic Ministers, and Ushers/Greeters.

- d. As mass times change, the 9:30 mass will conflict with start time and drop off for RE attendees presenting a possible traffic flow issue. Fr. John asked the KofC to provide parking direction. The KofC will review the request and reply. If adopted, the KofC will provide high visibility vests for safety for those assisting in this. (Follow up note – the KofC agreed to do this).
- e. Reopening activities were discussed including resuming coffee calls, and a Labor Day picnic. Plans for the picnic are being firmed up as many of the previous picnic volunteers are ready to return to man the grills, and the KofC will provide sodas and bottled water. The event will be at the Lilac Pavilion at Locust Shade Park on 7 September 2021. Due to the coronavirus, people will be asked to bring side dishes for their own families as sharing them is not a good health practice at this time. Maureen Deuterma has agreed to handle Francis Fest, but will of course, require many volunteers to have a successful event. Marianne Hayes volunteered to assist. Francis Fest is tentatively scheduled for October.
- f. The Stations for Mychal concert mentioned in the last Pastoral Council is a bit in limbo, as we have not heard back from the event organizer. There has been a death in the Franciscan Community which was the sponsoring group. Fr. John will attempt to contact them.
- g. Fr. John reviewed the issue of Mass of Christian Burial for Quantico Cemetery interments. The friars have been getting large numbers of out of state requests for these services. Quantico National Cemetery has no chapel (it is not related to Quantico Chapel on the Base). As Arlington becomes less of an option, there is a large surge of burials at Quantico. The load has become such that the friars will be unable to honor these requests from outside the Parish.

VI. Finance Council Report – Marv Floom

- a. Chain Bridge Bank opened the portal so the Parish can apply to convert the \$150,000 Payroll Protection Plan loan to a grant. Approval is expected funds will be added to the Parish reserve funds.
- b. The engine seized on the Kubota utility vehicle the parish has been using for 5 years, and a new one will have to be procured for \$10,000. This the same price they paid 5 years ago. The vehicle is on back order until July.
- c. There will be an evaluation of the Parish grounds maintenance contract with possible dismissal and new hire.

- d. The Parish exceeded the Bishop's Lenten Appeal goal by \$4,000. This is similar to last year. Fr. John was very pleased, as was the bishop. These appeals are often viewed by the Diocese as a state of health measurement for a Parish.
- e. The Diocese will be setting up separate corporations for each parish. The details and impacts of this are yet to be known.
- f. There was discussion about continuing live streaming – including the monetary costs associated with it. There is interest in retaining it as an avenue for virtual attendance at Sacraments such as Weddings. However, whether it is retained for weekly mass is still being evaluated.
- g. The Parking Lot permit issue is still under review by the Diocese and County – no word yet.
- h. The Boy Scouts did a grounds cleanup. The St. Mary statue was power washed and they noted the hand was broken off. The Parish will evaluate having this repaired.

VII. School Report – Dr. Barber

- a. June 4th will be the last day of the school year, and the remainder of the school year is progressing well.
- b. Graduation ceremonies will be held outdoors, with mitigating protocols in place which will require masks for all graduates and the six allowed guests for each. Jodi Salley and the school librarian are technically trained to live stream school masses.
- c. Planning is beginning toward fall in person classes with 3-foot social distancing. Restrictions may change for schools after June 4 as new state guidance for fall sessions is expected in July.
- d. Fall Enrollment stands at 270 – these numbers can vary as people move in and out of the area. Most students that were new this year appear to be staying. Pre-K through 4th grades are full. There are some openings in 8th grade, and there are some waiting lists for certain grades.
- e. The student council completed a project to support Francis House.
- f. The school applied for a \$68K state emergency assistance grant from the State Department of Education. Grants will cover iPad upgrades and desks. The VA Department of Education is currently adjudicating the grants statewide. We are expecting to receive the grant.
- g. Dr. Barber has completed all staff evaluations.

VIII. Religious Education – Maryanne Hayes

- a. The Vacation Bible School sessions will be cancelled due to a lack of registrations and not enough volunteers.
- b. The last day of Religious Education for the 20-21 year will be on 23 May. Fall RE will be dependent on having many new Catechists – so please consider volunteering. They are particularly in need of bi-lingual Catechists.

IX. Old Business – None

X. New Business

- a. Pequitte Schwerin provided a background on Unity In The Community, (UITC) a county wide multi-faith organization that promotes cross-cultural understanding, promotes cultural diversity and basic human rights, seeks to prevent and address hate crimes, and promotes legislative changes to advance these goals (for more see <https://unityitc.org/mission-and-history/>). See the attachment on the actions from the most recent meeting. Also attached are the briefing notes. Faith group membership is \$50 annually and individual memberships are \$25.00.

Unity In The Community participates in the International Day of Prayer for Peace each year in September with Church of the Brethren in Manassas hosting this year. In order for St. Francis to participate as it has the past several years, we will need to submit either a poem, song, prayer, or a video of 5 minutes or fewer in length. Please contact Pequitte if you are willing to help with a creative idea as planning for the event is underway.

An agenda item from the 16 May meeting of UITC brought to our attention existence of African American cemeteries in the Thoroughfare, VA area that are currently controlled by a developer and may be destroyed. A press conference to be held on 18 May will request a stay of development from the Board of Supervisors in PWC. The Thoroughfare community is eager to protect and preserve this area to honor the heritage it represents. A discussion of the former slave cemetery in Dumfries followed.

- a. Because 5 July looks as if it might be the end of many of the pandemic restrictions, some sort of welcome back event for the parishioners seems appropriate. A volunteer sub-committee of Terry Danner, Dan Sullivan, Michelle Nicolai, Phil Bongiorno will begin planning. Labor Day picnic in September may be part of this.

XI. Next Meeting – The next meeting will be 19 June 2021 at 9:30 AM in person at the Br. Juniper Room.

XII. Closing Prayer – Offered by Terry Danner

XIV. Adjournment –10:30 am.

Attachment:

Unity in the Community