

# St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

## Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2021, from 9:30 – 11:00 AM

### I. **Call to Order & Attendance** – In person, Brother Juniper Room.

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

### II. **Opening Prayer** – Fr. John

### III. **Guest Speaker** – Peggy Arizzi, US Council of Catholic Bishops, Camp (USCCB) Upshur Coordinator

- a. Fr. John had visited with Peggy at the Camp Upshur Safe Haven on 15 October. He introduced the speaker.
- b. Note that DHS is operating the camps and the role of USCCB is to assist in the process.
- c. Current census is either at or soon to be at 5,000 which is the capacity. They expect to send on 1,000 on to the next steps in the process soon. 53% of the refugees are age 15 and under.
- d. Camp accommodations are a mix of older Quonset huts, and current military temporary facilities.
- e. Peggy did an excellent job of outlining the work of the Safe Haven Camps and explaining job roles in the Afghan refugee resettlement process. Her presentation notes are attached.
- f. Foremost is concern for the safety and welfare of the refugees. The threat to these individuals is real, and as a result, security is quite stringent. While a DoD Common Access Card may get you on the base, it will NOT get you into the Safe Haven Camp. The camps are strongly guarded, and you must obtain a DHS clearance in advance to access this area.
- g. USCCB is responsible for morale, wellness, and recreation. There are large numbers of youth, so early efforts have included youth activities, school activities, etc. Fr. John said you get a lot of fist bumps there from the children.

- h. Orientations given by legal and immigrant services include finance, health and hygiene, transportation, school system information; all of which are designed to help secure successful futures for these people.
- i. Peggy is adding staff to her team, and controls who is recommended for Safe Haven access. Access will be prioritized for those working full time with the refugees. These are a mix of temporary positions.
- j. There are several US citizens Afghan immigrants who assist, but the requirement is still for more individuals. The most common languages are Farsi, Dari, and Pashto – but many can communicate to a fair degree across some of these languages.
- k. There are also volunteers from Pillar Baptist and from one of the other protestant denominations from the local area.
- l. Needs for specific items will be channeled through Francis House. Often material donations accumulate quickly, so anyone with access to secure storage space would be welcome. This would allow larger, more effective shipments onto the base.
- m. Religious service needs are being provided (Afghanistan is 99.7% Muslim practicing Islam).
- n. English as a second language classes are underway.
- o. Support requests will go through Francis House.
- p. The refugees encounter basic processing overseas. They then come to one of the US camps on military bases operated by DHS. Once medical clearance and documentation is in order, and DHS feels they are ready, refugee families will be assigned to groups such as Catholic Charities of Arlington where they will be resettled in the communities.

**IV. Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the 18 September 2021 Pastoral Council were motioned for approval, seconded, and adopted as approved.

**V. Francis House Update** – Angelica Silva

- a. They are donating an inventory of school supplies they have to the Safe Haven at Quantico
- b. Francia has been out but is expected back week of 18 October.

## VI. Hispanic Ministry Update – Iván Nazario

- a. On October 31<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 there will be a bilingual Lord of Miracles mass. A procession carrying the Lord of Miracles statue will follow the mass. The parish is looking for Eucharistic Ministers as well as two people to help carry the statue. The mass will be live streamed.



- b. The Lady of Guadalupe Feast will be celebrated with a special mass on 12 December at 12:30.
- c. Iván is helping with Spanish language RCIA classes. They have 7 candidates enrolled.
- d. The National Catholic Congress on Hispanic Ministry “Raices y Alas” (“Roots and Wings”) will be held in the area from April 22-30, 2022. This is the most important Hispanic congress that has been held in our area.

## VII. Pastor’s Remarks – Fr. John

- a. Security on Quantico is tight and the security for the Safe Haven is much more rigid with heavily armed guards. DHS controls access to it.
- b. Boston College Theology School is doing a study on response to the pandemic in the Hispanic community. St Francis is one of twelve parishes chosen for interviews in the area.
- c. In compliance with Papal and Doctrinal guidance, Fr. John will not be granting religious exemptions from covid vaccinations.
- d. A letter was in the bulletin identifying any priests from Holy Name Province, that served at St. Francis who had been found to have credible allegations of misconduct.
- e. There will be a Diocesan pilgrimage at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in DC.
- f. Cardinal Gregory will be speaking at the Franciscan Fall Festival World Care Annual Benefit & Celebration, Fr. John will be in attendance.
- g. Fr. John will be evaluated for possible knee surgery in the future.
- h. The Parish annual appeal letters were sent out with a goal of \$200,000.
- i. Dr. Davis of the Health district has inquired about holding a Covid vaccination clinic at the Parish. Fr. John is agreeable with details to be developed.

## VIII. Finance Council Report – Marv Floom

- a. The parish Annual Appeal letters went out this week. Goal is established at \$200,000 vs 2019 goal of \$183,000.
- b. Diocese Annual Mass Attendance count continues this month. Ushers will be counting parishioners as they enter church during the weekend Masses.
- c. We withdrew a total so far \$100,000 in DIAL operating savings in September to support cash flow and make up for cumulative shortfalls in weekly collections over the past few months. Since Fr. John's announcement collections have increased and are averaging \$20,000 which addresses the weekly cash flow issue.
- d. The search committee has been convened to find a replacement for the business manager. We will post the advertisement shortly, with a projected start date for new hire as of 1 Jan 2022.

**IX. School Report – Dr. Barber**

- a. While there have been a few changes, enrollment for the Fall term stands almost the same at 267 (up 1 from last report).
- b. There have been three Covid exposures, but none originating in relation to travel nor school activities. School will be in person for the weeks following Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.
- c. Monday October 18<sup>th</sup> all students will resume in person classes.
- d. Francis Day was celebrated on campus to minimize any exposure risk. The day included a fundraising walkathon which netted \$7,300.
- e. An Eagle Scout completed a project to repaint the pavement outlines for games in the rear of the parking lot.
- f. Parent Teacher conferences will be virtual and held on November 11.

**a. X. Parish Grotto / Labyrinth – Terry Danner**

- a. Marv Floom noted the Secular Franciscans volunteered to do this year's clean-up of the Grotto area.

**XI. Pastoral Council update – Terry Danner**

- There will be new officer elections in November 2022, this affords new officers a one year overlap before the existing officers' terms expire.

**XII. New Business –**

- a. Father John noted that Fr. Michael Perry, Vicar General for the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor will be visiting.
- b. There will be special collection on 16-17 October for the needs of the sister parish in Peru.

**X. Old Business** – None

**XI. Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be 20 November at 9:30 AM in person.

**XII. Closing Prayer** – Offered by Terry Danner

**XII. Adjournment** –11:00 am.

Attachments:

Aid for Afghan Resettlement Presentation