

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2022

I. Call to Order & Attendance – Virtual meeting - Zoom.

- a. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am
- b. Members Present – Fr. John O’Connor (Pastor), Jean Allen, Phil Bongiorno (Vice Chair), Terry Danner (Chair), Maggie Eves, John Hales, Iván Nazario, Tony Mercogliano, Clarence Neason, Michelle Nicolai, Pequitte Schwerin, Dan Sullivan, Ulli Vaerst.
- c. Other attendees - Dr. Tricia Barber (Principal), Harry Flynn (Finance committee), Angelica Silva (Francis House), Sam Blakenly (Parish Business Manager)
- d. Members not Present – Maryanne Hayes (Director of Religious Education)

II. Opening Prayer – Fr. John

III. Introduction – Introductions were held for Sam Blakenly, the new Parish Business Manager

IV. Minutes for the January 2022 Pastoral Council meeting were approved.

V. Hispanic Ministry Update – Iván Nazario

- a. Fr. Lalo leaves the Parish on 14 March for his new assignment with the Archdiocese of Washington. There will be a sendoff after the 12:30 Hispanic Mass on the 13th.
- b. Fr. Chris Dunn will be at the Parish for introductions on Thursday, 24 February and will take over the Hispanic ministry. He previously served at Our Lady of Lourdes parish while in Peru. His actual start date is not yet determined.

VI. Pastor’s Remarks – Fr. John

- a. There will be a reception for Fr. Lalo on 13 March, and another is planned for 17 March after the 9:30 Mass. Fr. Lalo will be supporting multicultural ministries for the Archdiocese of Washington. He will reside at Holy Name College in Silver Spring, Maryland.
- b. Precautions for Covid remain in place for now. All staff are asked to consistently wear masks in parish buildings, unless in an office by themselves. Most parishioners and students are wearing masks. The outlook is cautiously optimistic, but there are other covid variants appearing that could change this.

- c. Some minor facility work was done in the parish office such as adding a headphone for the receptionist desk,
- d. Weekend collections have been challenging. Mail and electronic giving remain on pace, but in person donations have been inconsistent. Some weeks raise \$25 thousand and others \$13 thousand. This appears to fluctuate with attendance numbers.
- e. The live stream Saturday mass may be discontinued as the parish returns to more normal operations but will be retained for weddings and funerals on a fee basis.
- f. The forty-hour devotion will take place from March 14th through 17th – There is detailed information on the parish website and newsletter communications.
- g. The bishop announced an upcoming Diocesan capital campaign that will take place in 2023 or 2024. Fr. John would like to assure parish capital needs are met before that campaign.
- h. The synod initiated by Pope Francis “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission” asks that each diocese and parish does its own community information gathering. St. Francis will hold four in person sessions on Sunday 6 Mar at 1045 a.m., Sunday 20 Mar at 1045, Saturday 12 March 7:00 p.m., and Thursday 17 Mar at 7:00 p.m. A report for the bishop will be submitted and included in the synod work in Rome in October 2023.
- i. Fr. John provided a Provincial update.
 - a. Initial discussions involved considerations of vehicle use, which is a lesser issue in the larger challenge of provincial integration.
 - b. There may be three or four new Franciscan intentional communities created which would require staffing them by reductions or cuts in existing communities or ministries.
 - c. There are also discussions of a new location for provincial headquarters while still meeting the requirements of the province across a large span of ministries and geography.
 - d. Assignments may be delayed, and Fr. John may be asked to stay until 2024.
- j. Fr. John attended the Catholic Charities Ball – and while financially successful, little attention was paid to covid precautions.
- k. An award for charity outreach was presented by the bishop to Christ the Redeemer Parish,

- l. Fr. John was approached regarding supporting chaplain services for Quantico. Fr. John will discuss with Military Archbishop Broglio when he visits for confirmation.
- m. There was a discussion of questions to be addressed in the Synod sessions and how it relates to theology.
- n. The whole mask vs anti-mask skirmish continues.
- o. There was a diocesan risk management review of the school, which was primarily OK, with the suggestion of installing bullet proof windows for more security. However, this is financially out of reach. Other issues involved additional cameras and privacy protections.
- p. There had been a quarantine of certain classes due to positive tests or known exposures,
- q. Fr. John is hoping there is “light at the end of the tunnel” for covid. Confirmation will be in person on 7 May 2022 with the military archbishop presiding. April will hopefully be the month where some reopening occurs. The next 3-4 weeks' infection rate will determine this.
- r. Kudos to Dr. Barber for her recruiting acumen.

VII. Francis House – Angelica Silva

- a. Francis House is facing increasing needs for financial assistance after the end of the rent and utility cutoff ban.
- b. Some Afghan refugees are being seen mostly on a one-to-one basis with needs for school supplies, winter clothing, and assistance with filling out government forms. Lutheran Covenant Church is currently providing only housing assistance.
- c. There is a continuing need for pick-up and delivery of large, donated items. Several people that have trucks have volunteered but are physically unable to provide the lifting and carrying. After some discussion she will contact the High School about support, and if needed, requests can be circulated in parish communications.
- d. Food pantry demands remain low, which is also reflected in the community agency ACTS. No food is currently needed except for cereal. The overabundance will be distributed before expiration dates on the goods.
- e. Many calls for support have come from the Haymarket/Manassas area which were referred to local charities in the area.

VIII. School Report – Dr. Barber

- a. Enrollment for Fall semester stands at 234 paid, and eight pending. Two grades have openings, and private after-hours tours are being held for interested parents.
 - b. Eighty seven percent of students wear masks. A few parents are considering enrollment in schools where masks are not required.
 - c. Staff remain all vaccinated and all masked.
 - d. Four staff members will be retiring, and one is transferring out of the area. Dr. Barber's reserve of interested teaching staff proved valuable and she can fill the positions with qualified staff. Intent contracts for remaining teachers will be sent next week.
 - e. There will be some adjustments to seating in early March to better accommodate the new executive order in Virginia regarding mask vs. no masks.
 - f. The first week in February was Catholic Schools Week with some emphasis on Operation Care for single parent military families.
 - g. Mrs. Herman represented our parish in conjunction with a parish in Fredericksburg on the Care for Creation effort
 - h. Dr. Barber closed with kudos for Fr. John's handling of the Parish through the corona virus
- IX. Strategic Plan** – Phil Bongiorno discussed plans for the working group. They will use the existing vision and mission statements and the Prayer of St. Francis as guiding factors.
- X. Sam Blakenly** – He looks forward to easing the restrictions in the parish as covid fades. He is interested in furthering the relationship with Catholic Charities and Francis House to advance outreach and seek possible grants.
- XI. Old Business** – None.
- XII. New Business** – Tony Mercogliano provided the following update from the Men's Fellowship and Ministry Group: They now have 48 members and have been sending out weekly e-mails since the beginning of the year using Flocknote. About 60% of the recipients are opening/reading these e-mails. They plan to start Zoom meetings the first week of Lent (March 3rd) and hopefully return to in-person meetings in April.
- XIII. Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be 19 March at 9:30 AM on Zoom.
- XIV. Closing Prayer** – Offered by Pequitte Schwerin, meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.