

St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council Meeting

Assisi Room of the Rectory

May 17, 2018

Members in attendance: *Fr. John Dillon; Alicia Church; Debra Crone; Justin Fitzgerald; Charles Giochi; Arleen Hall; Anton Handono; Daniel Koscinski; Bernie McGuire; Ann Pierre; Ken Raker; Travis Tomon.*

Others in attendance: *Melissa Egan (communications coordinator); Rosemary Hudecheck, (co-ministry coordinator for Action in Montgomery); John Winslow (seminarian in residence).*

The meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council started shortly after 7:30 pm on May 17 in the Assisi Room.

In advance of the Maryland Primary Election on June 26, parishioner Rosemary Hudecheck briefed the Pastoral Council at its meeting on the efforts of an umbrella community organization working to increase the numbers of county residents voting in the contest.

Hudecheck is one of two parish representatives of Action in Montgomery (AIM), a nonpartisan, multi-racial community organization advocating for affordable housing, after school programs, accessible transportation and decreased gun violence in Montgomery County. Hudecheck said the group wants to boost the numbers of voters in the Primary Election, which historically draws low numbers to the polls.

The Primary Election will determine the major party candidates for many state and county races, including Maryland governor, Congress, the Maryland General Assembly, Montgomery County Executive and Montgomery County Council.

“We’ve been going to meetings and every AIM member is trying to get 20 members to vote in the primary,” said Hudecheck, who represents St. Francis on AIM, along with parishioner Marianne Moore.

Hudecheck invited Pastoral Council members to sign a commitment card agreeing to vote in the Primary Election and consider supporting AIM’s platform, which includes:

- Increasing county funding for affordable housing from \$59 million to \$100 million over four years.
- Through a public-private partnership, helping provide \$800,000 annually in a legal defense fund for immigrants in detention facing deportation.
- Expanding the Excel Beyond the Bell program to 20 schools, serving 2,400 students, by 2020.
- Safeguarding the public transportation system from being privatized and bus service from being cut.

[Read the AIM Agenda \(PDF\)](#). Hudecheck also announced that a meeting to introduce candidates for Montgomery County Executive would also be held at The People’s Community Baptist Church on May 30.

Under other business, Pastoral Council member Daniel Koscinski discussed plans to disseminate the learnings of Pope Francis’ recent apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* to the young adult community. He handed out a draft one-page summary of the Holy Father’s apostolic exhortation to the group. He

also discussed the Young Adult Ministry's desire to connect with 270 Catholic – a group of Catholics in their 20s and 30s who live along the I-270 corridor – to see how they plan to communicate the exhortation.

"We're trying to find a core group of young people at St. Francis, but it's challenging to find them," Koscinski said.

Fr. John Dillon gave an update on two items of recent interest: the Indicators of Vitality Survey, which was open to those attending St. Francis from April 7-May 2 and the Architectural Feasibility Survey, which will determine facility enhancements that could be undertaken at the parish and their costs.

Fr. John reported that Deborah McDonald, executive director of the Archdiocese of Washington's Parish Pastoral Planning, has tabulated results from the 325 surveys that were completed online and on paper, but that she is still processing the written comments. Overall, the written responses were "polite and insightful," Fr. John said. McDonald will generate a report showing the survey's major trends and outlying information, which should be forthcoming in future months.

Regarding the feasibility study, Fr. John reported that Mullineaux & Mullineaux, the firm contracted to analyze prospective facility enhancements at the church and assign a prospective price tag to them, should complete its work in June 2018. In related business, Fr. John said he was "very close" to signing a contract to have the roof on the Rectory replaced after a spring wind storm damaged part of the roof.

Lastly, Fr. John spoke about ongoing efforts to jumpstart increased outreach to the Spanish speakers of the parish. He said Spanish-speaking parishioners had met with Javier Bustamante, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, expressing interest in starting a prayer group in Spanish. Fr. John also mentioned that St. Francis of Assisi Church would host two nights of Simbang Gabi, a nine-day devotional of Masses integral in Filipino culture that celebrates the anticipation of Christmas and honoring the Blessed Mary.

Under other business:

- Member Alicia Church reminded the Pastoral Council of the last business meeting of the year on June 21, which would consist of an hour-long business meeting and then a social with Pastoral Council members and parish staff.
- Fr. John reported on the Interfaith Dialogue featuring Fr. John Crossin, OSFS, on May 19 in the Parish Center.
- Debra Crone reminded fellow members that Student Service Learning hours earned by students attending Montgomery County Public Schools can only be earned at the church if the religious support they provide addresses the greater community beyond St. Francis parishioners.
- In response to Ann Pierre's question on whether the parents of Religious Education students would be informed where their children would be taken during an emergency evacuation, Fr. John said he would have a member of the Montgomery County Policy Department and Fire Department assess the church grounds this summer to identify the best safe area for children to go.
- Fr. John reported that the Parish Yard Sale on May 12 raised \$4,000 for the church.

- Member Bernie McGuire reported that the Knights of Columbus would hold a chili cookoff on June 12 at Fr. Cuddy Hall. (*Note: The cookoff was later cancelled due to an illness of one of the cookoff coordinators*).