

## St. Francis of Assisi Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

January 31, 2019

### Parish Center

*Members in attendance:* Fr. John Dillon, Anna Breece, Alicia Church, Debra Crone, Justin Fitzgerald, Anton Handono, Daniel Koscinski, Bernie McGuire, Ann Pierre, Vincent Price and Travis Tomon.

*Ex-officio members and others in attendance:* Deacon Dan Finn and Communications Coordinator Melissa Egan

On Thursday, Jan. 31, 12 members of the Parish Pastoral Council met in the Parish Center to further develop four key priorities that were identified from the Indicators of Vitality Survey that parishioners took in April 2018. The key priorities that the Parish Pastoral Council worked with included the following:

1. **Plant and facilities** (the Pastoral Council ultimately did not do further work on this priority, since it's being addressed by a working group of clergy and parishioners, including Deacon Jim Datovech, John Vilgos and others).
2. **Stewardship** (tackled by Debra Crone, Arleen Hall and Ann Pierre)
3. **Increasing engagement** (tackled by Alicia Church, Deacon Dan Finn and Daniel Koscinski)
4. **Drawing people into the church** (tackled by Anna Breece, Bernie McGuire and Travis Tomon)
5. **Engaging young adults and families** (tackled by Justin Fitzgerald, Anton Handono and Vincent Price)

Deborah McDonald of the Archdiocese of Washington instructed the group to develop an **overall benchmark goal** for their priority area, **measurable barometers of success** and **action steps**.

Here is what the groups developed in small groups and presented to each other at the end of the evening:

### Key Priority 2: Stewardship

**Goal:** A measurable increase of income for the parish and voluntary service from families.

#### Barometer of success:

- 8 to 10 percent increase in income.
- 5 to 10 percent increase in voluntary services to the parish.

#### Actions:

##### Three months:

- Educate parishioners on the parish's finances.
- Have a town hall meeting where Fr. John will educate and inform the parishioners.
- Educate on the spiritual necessities of giving and its rewards.

Three to six months:

- Organize or explore quarterly fundraisers.  
Examples: Bingo
  - Themed dinners
  - Movie nights
  - Spirit wear
  
- Request that families involved in Religious Education programs are required to give a set amount of volunteer time to help the program.

After the presentation, Parish Council member Debra Crone said her group considered the survey finding that parish staff said they needed help, particularly with administration of the Religious Education program. That was the reason for including the family requirement to offer volunteer service in Religious Education. “We want it to be family involvement, not just parent involvement,” she said.

Parish council members Justin Fitzgerald and Anton Handono also suggested ways to improve communications about finances. Fitzgerald suggested that the clergy give a five-minute summary of the church’s financial standing after Mass and then invite people to learn more at the Town Hall. Handono also suggested putting the weekly offertory collection in a more strategic place in the bulletin to call more attention to it.



**Key Priority 3: Increasing Engagement**

**Goal:** Increase the number of parishioners ages 18-40 who are actively involved in ministries.

Three months:

**Barometer of success:** Identify parishioners ages 18-40 and if they are involved in a ministry.

**Action Steps:**

- Contact ministry leaders to find out how many new parishioners 18-40 are involved in their ministry.
- Contact Parish Office and ministry leaders and collect the following data.
  - Name
  - Phone number
  - Address
  - E-mail

Six months:

**Barometer of Success:** Invite them in person to get involved in a ministry and invite them to attend the Ministry Fair.

**Action Step:** Call, e-mail, send invitations, offer one-on-one invitation and engage this group to find out their interest.

Nine months:

**Action Steps:**

- Determine if three- and six-month benchmarks were successful.
- Dinner with Parish Council and ministry leaders – include all 18-40-year-olds if involved in a ministry or not.

Twelve months:

**Barometer of Success:** Increase number of volunteers ages 18-40 by 20 percent and identify those who may be interested in taking on a leadership role.

**Action Step:** Provide training, encouragement and show appreciation!

Two to three years:

Repeat process and tweak, as needed.

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#### **Key Priority 4: Drawing people into church**

**Goal:** Draw families to a deeper relationship with God through worship and entice them to come back every week.

Three months:

**Benchmark:** Develop plan to welcome families with young children to the Mass.

**Action Step:** Have a finished plan.

Six months:

**Benchmark:** Assess what parents want.

**Action Step:** Talk to parents, either in individualized conversations or group meetings.

Nine months:

**Benchmark:** Develop a plan to act on those conversations.

**Action Step:** Have and act on finished plan.

After small group member Travis Tomon presented to the larger group, Ms. McDonald asked the larger group of participants whether anything needed to be added. Parish Council member Alicia Church mentioned that she has been to parishes where the pastor tells the congregation that crying children are fine. Parish Council member Justin Fitzgerald also mentioned that he's attended churches, where the choir or cantor sings a few verses well and then concludes the singing. He said he thinks that would appeal to young families.

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### **Key Priority 5: Engaging young adults and families**

**Goal:** Make the parish a place where young adults and families can experience a sense of community through leadership opportunities, programs and activities.

**Barometer of success:** Number of participants. More young adults and families involved in parish ministries and leadership positions within the ministries and programs.

**Action Steps:**

Three months:

- Advertise what opportunities we have.
- Open the leadership opportunities by establishing a term limit within the ministry leadership.

Six months:

- Each ministry is broken into sub-committees. Establishing more opportunities for young leaders in the ministry.

Twelve months:

- Visible change with more young adults coming up as leaders within the ministries.

Following the presentation, Parish Council member Travis Tomon wondered what would happen if emerging leaders were scheduled to move into leadership positions and then determined they didn't want them. Parish Council member Alicia Church also counseled her peers that they must remember these are volunteers who freely give of their time and talents to the church.

After the small group presentations concluded, Fr. John Dillon briefly discussed an upcoming leadership event called "Engaging the Mission," which would take place Saturday, March 16, at Catholic University

in Washington DC. He said he hoped to send eight to 10 people to the event and invited Parish Council members to be among them.

Fr. John also invited Parish Council members to attend the Catholics in Annapolis legislative advocacy event on Feb. 21 in Maryland's state capital. The event would give lay Catholics and clergy alike the opportunity to stand up for life issues, scholarships for needy students, bills to prohibit assisted suicide and other issues important to Catholics.

In addition, Parish Council member Alicia Church asked her peers to help at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Dance, which was held Saturday, Feb. 2, in the Parish Center. Parish Council member Anna Breece also gave a report on activities and events happening at St. Jude Regional School, which St. Francis of Assisi Parish financially supports. Breece mentioned the school's Catholic Schools Week celebration, which would be capped off the following day with an International Day at the school.

The council meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.