

**Pastoral Council Zoom Retreat  
Summarized for parish  
September 26, 2020, 9– 11:30 AM**

Council members present: Alex Amado, Rob Cassleman, Fr. Steve Dublinski, Lorraine Farrand, Aurora Horstkamp, Jim Lincoln, Kevin Owens, Eric Patera, Char Snekvik, Mary Schweitzer, and Charlotte Worthy. Mary Sutherland, secretary.

**Opening Prayer** – Father Steve, Lord’s prayer. Father Steve thanked Char for sending out the notes from last year.

**Pope Francis’ Instruction on the Parish** –

The council read the first 41 paragraphs and paragraph 122, a summary, of Pope Francis’ Instruction:

*The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church.*

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>

A summary of the document is here:

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2020/07/vatican-issues-guidelines-for-parishes-in-the-pope-francis-era/>

Fr. Steve and the council discussed the main points:

Pope Francis says over the past few decades great changes have occurred in parishes.

There are several things that should disturb parishes:

1. So many people are living without the strength and comfort of Christ. We can see that in the secularization around us.
2. People are living with no community to support them. Even within parishes people are not feeling supported.
3. People are living without meaning and a goal in life. The coronavirus has really aggravated this. People stuck at home feel meaninglessness. Cut off.
4. Parishes tend to live shut up within themselves, serving the interests of internal groups.

In response: We need to enter into communion with the local community. We need to engage with Whitman county, the farming community, smaller towns. This enriches and enlivens church and selves. It’s the only way to have true progress.

What is the parish trying to do? Inspire a desire for God. Respect for every human life. Recognition of equality of all.

Respect for differences, longing for peace, solidarity, care for creation.

The essential attributes of the parish are to proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and exercise charity. These three things are part of fundamental parish life.

The parish must be a place of encounter for the poor and excluded. People come because they know the church will help. This is difficult during the pandemic. We are not getting as many calls; even though we know people are in need. We need to let people know we can help. We took another step, translated the St. Francis logo and information into Spanish.

We need to be careful of changing too fast. Especially when changing buildings. We must engage people with decisions about change. Don’t over clericalize. We should be walking together.

**To summarize:** We are called by Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be creative about what it means to be Catholic. Whole generations of people who are disconnected from the church. We need to engage those people; walk with them, not judge.

Can we do this by ourselves? We need ecumenical outreach, dialogue with others. There are other congregations with similar goals. Ecumenism has stopped during the pandemic. That is a great sadness, we need to keep it as a goal. Ecumenism traditionally is dependent on pastors. We need to change that; it needs to be rooted in the people of parish.

We need to look for ideas for people who are actively involved in social media. Younger people are communicating through phones. Are we relevant or not? That is the question Pope Francis is challenging us about.

**Pastoral election of officers** – **Chair and Vice Chair.** Lorraine moved to nominate Char to continue as Chair. The motion passed. Eric is the current vice chair. Rob moved that Eric continue as Vice Chair. The motion passed.

**Goals - Review Short Term Goals (1-2 years) that we discussed in September 2019.**

Thing to consider: the coronavirus is not going away. When setting goals, think of what can we do given where we’re at.

**Goals and what we have done/are doing:**

1. **Physical Building (decide what to do, begin fundraising):** Maintenance – brick wall in gathering space will be done soon. The front and side steps were repaired. The roof of steeple is still delayed. Parishioners are cleaning up from tree trimming, and working on the parish house. The chimney is falling apart. They removed the deteriorated awning behind the parish house, will build a new one. Possibly a ramp. Window sills and house were painted. Recent windstorms damaged the annex roof, hoping to deal with that along with steeple.
2. **Cultural (Begin to reach out to Spanish speaking community):** We have a Spanish song and reading at Mass. The homily subtitles and Praying at Home are in Spanish. We have seed money for Spanish ministry. We would like to be able to get a priest here to say Mass in Spanish once/twice month. We can’t do it when closed.
3. **Sex abuse crisis (Develop a long-term strategy):** Members discussed what happened in the diocese, whether it affected Sacred Heart. When the crisis became public, Bishop Skylstad went to parishes who had abuser priests, did prayer services. He listened. Sexual abuse in the Catholic church is still poison running through our veins. The damage is still present and harming people. It should be acknowledged. We need to have a conversation, but it’s too hard to talk about. The council would like Bishop Skylstad to come here to speak about the crisis after we can gather again. There are still parishioners who don’t come to the parish because of the abuse scandal

4. **Safety (Support committee's work to improve safety and security of parishioners.):** There were safety committee meetings related to the coronavirus. We need a meeting to look at some of the projects linked to the building, like first aid kits, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors. Easy to do when shut down.
5. **Catechesis for parents and grandparents (Help them teach children about the faith):** Faith formation is working hard to get info to parents and grandparents. Technology will always be part of what we're doing. For example, we now use Zoom for RCIA people who are out of town. It won't replace the in-person element. We need to get the Faith Formation info into Spanish.
6. **Ecumenism (Establish a closer relationship with other Christian churches):** Discussed this above. The council decided we need to find people who are interested in laying groundwork for co-projects with other churches? Things like VBS. We should have a Zoom meeting.
7. **Stewardship (Emphasize stewardship as a way of life):** Fr. Steve recently wove it into a couple of homilies. The ACA letter is going out next week.
8. **Welcoming new members (Do a better job welcoming people.):** We need a task force. Fr. Steve is taking pictures and has met some new families. Faith Formation is connecting with the children in new families.
9. **Vocation Ministry (Support the current ministry in its work of educating parishioners about vocations.):** We can't do handouts right now. Tomorrow is Priest Appreciation Day. We all appreciate Fr. Steve. Eventually we can have dinners with guest speakers again and raise funds to support future priests.
10. **Parish Directory (figure out how to publish a new one.):** We are working on it.

**Question:** How do we reach out to the broader community? An ecumenical group reaches out, but just to other Christians. **We need a separate group to engage the non-engaged, the Pullman community, the larger community.** It is not the same as the Social Justice Ministry. We should accompany people. It's a different call. **Rob, Jim, Alex, Aurora, and Mary Schweitzer volunteered to start a group.** We will start with a meeting with the youth group on a Sunday evening.

**Review Long Term Goals (3-5 years) that we discussed –**

1. **Spanish Mass (have Spanish Mass every Sunday, and more than just that):** We have funding for Spanish Mass from ACA money that was returned to us. Fr. Steve will contact a Spanish-speaking Jesuit in the diocese to see if he can come twice/month when we go back to having services outside. Another possibility in the winter may be to have both Spanish and English Masses at the Newman Center. Fr. Paul offered to let us use it. They have no Saturday Mass, and Sunday Masses are at 11 am and 5 pm. Many Spanish-speaking people watch an online Mass in Spanish already; we don't need our own. Alex sends the Spanish readings to about 20 people. We need an Hispanic advisory committee, about four people. Alex will find some members. They can figure out the best times for confessions, Mass, what is needed for catechism, etc.
2. **Ecumenical (Possibly exchange preaching, work together more.):** Discussed above.
3. **Breaking Ground (Begin building somewhere.):** This is the wrong title, since we don't know whether we are remodeling, rebuilding onsite, or building offsite. What is possibility of missing the opportunity to acquire land? The pandemic has slowed everything down, the landowners understand. We haven't lost any options. Who has the authority to say we're going to purchase property? 1. Recommendation of building committee. 2. Finance council & pastoral council, 3. Fr. Steve. But we would still go to parishioners also. In the survey, the majority said pick the best choice financially. Will probably go with less expensive option. Still not decided. Should we buy land as an investment, even if don't build on it?
4. **Stewardship (Integrate it into parish life.):** Another parishioner gave Fr. Steve a stewardship plan. That individual needs to start a committee.
5. **Liturgy (possibly have a webcast of the Mass, and use other technology to enhance it.):** We accomplished that goal. We will always livestream the Mass. There will always be people who can't come. If we look at who is going to drive-in Masses, we are self-selecting for those who are less likely to be exposed. Very few college students are at them. We could resume drive-in Masses, that would be fine. Not outdoor Masses yet. We will ask the movie theater if we can use parking lot for a whole month. Fr. Steve will try to order an FM radio broadcasting system to use when the weather gets cold. Mass should be at 10 AM because of the weather. People in the back of the parking lot couldn't hear. It needs to be louder.
6. **Sex Abuse: (Have evidence-based help for people.)** What does that mean? We want to help in a way that is supported by evidence. If we have some kind of event or conversation, we need to realize that lots of people have been abused. If someone is triggered by the event, they need support. We need a licensed psychologist present. Should there be a fund to help people without insurance who need counseling?

**State of the Parish Report:** It will be recorded in the church, not at Mass this year. We will prepare a video with written text, translate it into Spanish and have Spanish subtitles. Maybe by the middle of October. Topics: Finances, goals accomplished, (Mass streaming, progress on parish directory, catechesis), etc.

The Finance council recommended we pay musicians their regular amounts when they are not getting to work each week. A couple of them depend on that money.

**Welcoming people:** We need a plan. Could we have Dinners for Eight on Zoom? We have phone numbers of new people; we need someone to contact them. Fr. Steve and Mary Sutherland will think of some names.

**Fr. Steve** thanked everyone for their patience and hard work. Isolation is very difficult. We need to use creativity and keep planning. The members thanked Fr. Steve for recording Masses, videos, etc. and being nimble.

**Closing Prayer: Glory Be. Next meeting Saturday, October 10, at 10 am.**