Chelmsford Catholic Collaborative

Pastoral Council Meeting

March 1st 2020

The meeting was held at the new parish center at Saint Mary’s and called to order at 7:08 pm

Role call of council members and guests:

Peter Lando (co-chair)  Ray Wagner  Jessica Hagg (absent)
Scott Davidson (co-chair)  Chicki Rigazio (absent)  Paul Therrien
Father Brian Mahoney (absent)  Mike Condor  Laura Conte
Father Corey Bassett-Tirrell  Angie McMaster (absent)  Augustine Tweneh
Seminarian Andrew John Rondelli (absent)  Drew Jubinville  Karen Drake
Ellen St. George  Lori McDonald (absent)  Rob Donnelly (absent)
Beth Jacavanco  Delaney Schiefen (youth)  Cathy Latina (absent)
Katrina Horan (absent)  Steve McMillan (absent)  Matthew Kunze (youth)

1) The meeting began with an opening Lenten prayer led by Father Corey.

2) The minutes from the February meeting were reviewed and approved.

3) Father Corey started the meeting off by giving an update on the weekly offertory variances for both parishes. The numbers still do not look good but appear to be improving at Saint Johns. In Father Corey’s opinion, doing just pulpit talks in November every year to parishioners isn’t going to cut it. He felt that holding more fundraisers and social events during the year to raise money might improve the situation as capital projects and loan debt of new parish center at Saint Marys are also having an effect on the deficit. Another thought he had was researching the possibility of receiving endowments (ie: wills) as another way of improving the deficit as he’s found that this method is actually working and beneficial to other Christian denominations. Changing the fiscal year from July thru June to October thru September was also briefly discussed as starting the fiscal year in the summer time is usually not a good measure on how things will end up as these are the ‘lightest’ months for weekly collections due to parishioners being away on vacation.

4) The group then went over the following questions Father Brian presented from February’s meeting:
What does it mean for us to be a community of faith in 2020?
What does it mean to be a parish?
How are we bringing others to Christ?
What is it that would draw you back to the Catholic Church?
How can the church serve its community better?
Are we meeting people where they are?

Karen Drake started the conversation off by stating she had heard from a parishioner who suggested holding hands during the ‘Our Father’ could strengthen the bonds of our community. She then stated that her son wished the church would interpret the scripture like Canadian author Professor Jordan B. Peterson does in his books.
Father Corey then briefly explained an on-line program called ‘ENGAGE’ which Bishop Robert Baron is promoting. It is an easy way to reach and ‘engage’ our parishioners in our faith, especially for those who do not attend Mass on a regular basis. This program is built on the flock notes platform and ‘appears’ it could have an immediate effect if promoted correctly as it contains high quality videos and mini-courses (ie: the parts and meaning of the Mass). Mike Condor then added that we (our collaborative parish) need others to feel a ‘sense of community’ so parishioners feel a sense of belonging and will hopefully lead to being more encouraged to participate in church events / activities / etc.
Father Corey followed up by stating we (parishioners) gather because the Holy Spirit calls each and every one of us to attend Mass. From there the community is built. Worship comes first, then community. Our worship needs to move us to encounter Jesus Christ in order to share with others.
Karen commented that our parishioners also need proper education and knowledge as well. Father Corey agreed with this as many Catholics believe the Holy Eucharist is just a ‘symbol’ and is not actually ‘the body of Christ’. He then reported that he spoke with a few young adults in their early twenties from outside our parish who attend daily Mass. Some felt they weren’t getting much out of the Mass as to them more emphasis was being placed on entertainment (ie: music) portion of the Mass and that the celebration of Mass needed to become more transcendent and demonstrate a deeper concentration in our beliefs. Scott Davidson felt our collaborative does a good job in meeting people where they are inspired by events such as: Adoration, Father Brian’s talks, social events, etc. Beth Jacavanco added we should encourage parishioners that if something spiritual isn’t ‘working’ for them at one parish, don’t give up. Try it at the other parish. Delaney Schiefen, one of the young adults representing our youth on the P.C.C., informed the group that many of her peers have not been brought up in the religion. She feels that community needs to be built first, then worship, as our youth need to find a place they feel they can belong. Worship and religion can be addressed once they are here. The goal should be to get them here first. Matthew Kunze, the other young adult on the P.C.C., followed up on Delaney’s comments by stating many of his peers that go to C.C.D., do not go to church. For many, C.C.D. is the only church activity they do. Drew Jubinville then added that his daughter is thinking of joining a local Protestant youth group, not to worship there but to belong to a ‘fun’ community. In relation to what Drew said, Ellen St. George explained some of the activities her children did when they were young outside of their own parish which brought them the ‘messages of our faith’ while doing in a ‘social’ activity environment. Father Corey stated maybe we (the collaborative) are taking on too many activities/events/initiatives but not many of them well? Doing less and doing them well might be the ‘best’ answer. Beth Jacavanco said that the ‘stick and stay’ activities in building up our community might be as simple as continuing the coffee and donuts after 8:30 Mass at Saint John’s on Sundays. Another one is ‘Soup and Stations’ on Friday evenings during Lent. The group agreed that many of the initiatives, activities and events require a decent amount of volunteers and that volunteers are not always treated well either by peers or the parishioners. Father Corey emphasized that treating volunteers is of upmost importance and all incidents of mistreatment of volunteers should be reported to him directly! If volunteers aren’t treated well, they’ll stop volunteering.

5) Peter Lando gave a quick update on what the Initiatives Committee has been doing. This committee put together a proposed list of ideas to help build up the community and get our youth more involved. Some of which will give the collaborative an opportunity to sponsor events that shares the talents of many. Adding a movie night and youth game night are other ideas added to the list that we brought at tonight’s meeting.

6) Drew Jubinville, who was the Director of the recent men’s A.C.T.S. retreat, gave an update on the retreat that was held from Feb 13th – 16th at Saint Thecla’s retreat center in Billerica. He reported fifty-two men attended and was deemed a complete success. Dennis Gearin, a parishioner of Saint Johns, generously provided all of the cooking with the help of volunteers throughout the weekend. Former parish Priest Father Bob Nee was the resident priest all weekend. Co-Director Ray Wagner echoed Drew’s comments and that he was having good withdrawals after having served on two consecutive men’s A.C.T.S. retreats over the past four months, one of which was held in Maine.

7) A brief overview on today’s Gospel (Matthew 4:1-11 - ‘Jesus led by the Spirit into the desert’) was discussed next. Scott Davidson shared the discussion he had with one of the children in his C.C.D. class on how to determine when the Devil is tempting us to do something bad.

8) Round table discussion
The upcoming women’s A.C.T.S. retreat in April was advertised by Beth Jacavanco. She also mentioned that Jim Robson received many books from the old Espousal Center in Waltham and is looking to give them away. He will also be doing a presentation on ‘Relics of the Passion’ on Thursday March 5th and 12th at Saint Marys.
Ray Wagner announced that there is another men’s A.C.T.S. retreat coming up in March at Saint Thecla’s. This one is being sponsored by the A.C.T.S. from the Peabody area. No, he is not serving on this one, but has a few registration forms if any man from our parish is interested in attending ;-) Ellen St. George commented on how successful the ‘Soup and Stations’ presentation was at Saint Johns the previous Friday. She then announced the upcoming Saint Patrick’s day dinner which will be held on Saturday, March 14th at Saint Johns.

Paul Therrien complimented Father Corey on the ‘Stations of the Cross’ he led at Saint Marys the previous Friday. Father Corey ended the round table discussion by reminding everyone about the ‘Year of the Holy Eucharist’ (Holy Thursday 2020 thru Corpus Christi 2021) celebration and the events that will be announced on our website in the near future pertaining to the Holy Eucharist and Holy Mass.

**List of tasks to be completed prior to next month’s meeting**

a) Review of monthly meeting minutes by ALL P.C.C. members once they are sent via email by Ray.
b) Update from Initiatives Committee.
c) Update on facility projects by Father Brian.
d) P.C.C. members to continue to give thought about Father Brian’s questions in item # 4.

Closing prayer was led by Father Corey

Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm

**Next meeting is currently scheduled for Sunday April 5th, 2020 – 7 pm**

Respectfully submitted

YBIC

Ray Wagner