Chelmsford Catholic Collaborative

Pastoral Council Meeting

April 5th 2020

The meeting was held remotely via internet WebEx ‘Go to Meeting’ session due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and called to order at 7:00 pm

Role call of council members and guests:

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

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

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

3) Father Brian started the meeting off by giving an update on the status of our collaborative due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic as churches at both parishes are now closed. Should they open during this crisis for shorter periods of time during the day, measures will put in place for those who enter to clean the area they are occupying with cleaning materials that will be provided by staff. Father Brian then stated that should the churches re-open during this crisis and anyone leaves without cleaning their immediate area, the churches will be closed again.

4) The plans for Holy Week were discussed next.

a) As has been occurring during the past couple of weeks, Confessions will still be heard Monday and Wednesday afternoons (weather permitting) in the parking lots at both churches. Monday confessions will be held at Saint Johns while Wednesday’s will be held at Saint Marys. The timeframes for both days will be from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. With many other local parishes not offering Confessions during this crisis, participation is booming as Catholics from other parishes have been attending. Father Brian heard that some are coming down from New Hampshire and this unique way of offering this Blessed Sacrament has been mentioned in the newspaper and on TV. In anticipation of expecting more than 200 people this coming week, he is bringing in a 3rd Priest to assist.

b) There will be many events ‘live streamed’ from both parishes during the week. All evening services from Wednesday (Tenebrae) through Saturday (Easter Vigil) will be ‘live streamed’ from Saint Marys. All ‘live streamed’ events for both parishes for the week are posted in this week’s bulletin.

5) Father Brian mentioned that other events such as baptisms, funerals and weddings that are coming up are being handled as best as can be. Some services are being rescheduled. For funerals, only gravesite services are being performed at this time. The actual funeral Masses for those that have ‘crossed over’ during this crisis will be held once churches are open again keeping in mind and balancing a funeral Mass schedule with those funeral services that will occur naturally after the churches re-open.

6) The new parishioner check-in Initiative developed by Father Brian was discussed next. This is designed to reach out to parishioners during this crisis via the phone to assist them where feasibly possible. Father Brian stated scripts are being finalized this week for the volunteers who will be making the phone calls. Each volunteer will receive a list about 3 dozen parishioners to call.
7) The weekly offertory shortage was discussed next. Considering the situation all parishes are in, Father Brian reported that even though there is a short fall at both of our parishes, he is very appreciative of how many parishioners have stepped up to assist our collaborative financially. Besides asking Paul Firicano to reach out to the vendors our parishes owe money to, he will also have the finance council look into the benefits both parishes are eligible for via the CARES act. Steve McMillan reported that his small company is currently going through the CARES process and that the rules are changing daily. He is offering his time to the finance council should they need some advice. Loan repayments to the Archdiocese are being looked at as well to see if adjustments can be made. Father Brian is also staying in close contact with the office staff about watching expenses as staff are obviously concerned about their job situations should the financial situations at both parishes not improve if the current crisis lingers on. Only two staff are working in the office at any given time and no one else is allowed in the office. To further assist in the financial shortfalls, Cardinal O’Malley has pronounced that the collection received during Easter weekend this year will remain within the individual parishes.

8) Father Brian has put ‘on hold’ all event planning for the months of May & June. Besides churches being closed and sterilized, all buildings and rooms that will not be used during that duration will also be closed and sterilized.

9) He also mentioned that local area hospitals are not calling on services to be performed by Priests during this crisis but nursing home services are still available if a Priest is called. Father Brian is handling all nursing home requests from our parishes should any come in.

10) All facility projects are on hold at this time, including the elevator project at Saint Marys.

11) Father Brian mentioned that he would like to form some on-line faith sharing/prayer groups within the parish after Holy week and is looking for volunteers to co-ordinate this effort.

12) He also reported that the participation of ‘live streaming’ Masses and other online events has been increasing the further this crisis goes on and is currently looking for ways to improve the experience for those attending. Angie McMaster asked if there was a way to put the readings/Gospels/responses for the Masses aired via ‘live stream’ on the website. Father Brian stated that is being looked into. Beth Jacavanco wanted to know if there is anyone on staff who can develop instructions for those folks who are not technically savvy at home with setting up and configuring their home devices for ‘live stream’. Father Brian said that those instructions have been developed and were sent out. He did advise that the Google Chrome browser is best for the ‘live streaming’ of our online events while Firefox does not work. He stated he will send the instructions out again.

13) Father Brian reiterated that he is available for anyone who needs help during this crisis!

14) Round table discussion
   a) Chicki Rigazio informed the group that, before this crisis began, there were times when she had entered Saint Marys church in the early morning and found a few of the windows to be open. To her it didn’t make sense, especially in the cold winter. Father Brian said that sometimes parishioners have gone in the night before and forgot to shut them.
   b) Cathy Latina and Laura Conte complimented Father Brian on his homily today.
   c) Ellen St. George and Augustine Tweneh stated they have enjoyed the ‘live streaming’.
   d) Karen Drake offered thanks to Father Brian and the entire parish staff for everything they have been doing.
   e) Katrina Horan informed the group that her family had purchased a new home in Lunenberg just prior to this crisis. Once it is over and her family has moved she will be leaving the council.
   f) Lori McDonald asked about Catholic appeal. Father Brian responded that it is on hold until this crisis is over.
   g) Ray Wagner thanked Scott Davidson for the excellent job he did in setting up this meeting remotely. He also stated that should the churches have to be closed via order from the governor then abortion clinics should be closed too as they have remained opened as well during this crisis. He then commented to Father Brian that his wedding, scheduled for July 3rd to Christine Lagasse, may have to be ‘live streamed’ ;-)
   h) Steve McMillan seconded many of the compliments made above.
Scott Davidson stated he attended the 8:30am Mass via ‘Live Stream’ and felt bad for Father Corey for having to celebrate his first holy week Mass, since he ordained as a priest, under these circumstances. In addition, Scott gave a big ‘shout out’ to music director John Volpe for the great job he has done as well.

Father Brian stated the new Mass schedule, which is currently scheduled to be implemented in June, would probably go into effect sooner if it reaches a point we can celebrate Mass again in our churches just before that time.

**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) Father Brian is looking for volunteers for the check-in initiative.

c) Father Brian is also looking for volunteers who can try and get the online faith sharing/prayer groups program ‘off the ground’.

d) Update on status of the parish and financial position due to the Coronavirus by Father Brian.

Closing prayer was led by Scott Davidson

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm

**Next meeting is currently scheduled for Sunday May 3rd, 2020 – 7 pm and will be remote again.**

Respectfully submitted

YBIC

Ray Wagner