

## Cluster 22 Pastoral Council Meeting

January 27, 2020, 6:30 pm, St. Maximilian Kolbe

Present: Terry Grey, David Steinbrick, Richard Borelli, John Moreshead, Dave Greeley, Jennifer Hansen, Kris Benson, Msgr. Paul Stefanko, Deacon Mark

Guests: Brian Turner, Paul McDonald, Katie Vaillancourt, Katie Benedict, Tom Meyers, Richard Sawyer, Michael Komich, John Thibideau

Absent: Fr. Innocent, Ed McGarrity, Amanda Doherty

Opening Prayer by Msgr. Paul

Vote to accept minutes from 11/25/2019 as written; unanimously approved

CLI subcommittee report: Ed, Terry & David met and took the suggestions which were presented and accepted at the previous meeting and tried to work them into the framework provided by CLI, fitting new "smart goals" into our current 3 priorities. They added some dates/deadlines to many line items, found that more information was needed on a few, and added a few items for future consideration as the suggestions were designed to be a progression of immediate, short term, and long goals. They will finalize & update the plan, set a timeline for committees. The Pastoral Council needs to arrange to share this update with committees and with the parishioners ASAP (as we had promised to do this by January).

Request to share this information immediately with the finance councils so that they may use it when planning next year's budgets.

Old business: card for Anne Marsh will be brought to next meeting. Question: will Anne Marsh's spot as representative for SJHC be filled? Msgr. Paul says no; we only have 2 meetings left in his tenure.

Diocesan updates from Msgr. Paul: Back in 2006, *Telling Anew the Story of Jesus* created 30 clusters to address having fewer priests and a smaller church going population. Using this document, clusters of parishes went through a process to determine which of 4 models they would choose to serve their cluster. As each cluster is different, each outcome was different. Many clusters have since repeated the process and made changes their original plan.

State of affairs in the diocese today is different than expected. Instead of 80 diocesan priests, we have 46 diocesan priests plus 20 international priests helping out. 4 priests will be retiring in the next year, and 4 are on (unanticipated) leave. Several international priests are arriving to replace others who are finishing out their allotted stay.

The entire diocese counted attendance in the month of October. On any given Sunday, there are 144 buildings being used for mass, with an average of 26,000 people attending those masses. With only a fraction of Catholics attending mass (estimated 10% of the 200,000) and with the increasing shortage of priests, the thought is to adjust the mass schedules to 1) create a fuller church and therefore a better experience and 2) relieve some of the burden on the priests.

This summer, each site will have 2 people trained in SCAP (Sunday Celebration in Absence of a Priest), anticipating that some clusters will be losing a priest and not be able to keep the current mass schedules. SCAP can be used, rotating through a given cluster, to fill in.

Update from the Finance Councils: One year ago, SJHC council looked at the current cluster structure/operation (3 churches, 3 finance councils served by 2 priests, one staff, one pastoral council) and asked if this is the most efficient/effective model. Having 3 parishes creates inefficiencies and duplication of costs. Each parish is only aware of its own finances even though all 3 are sharing costs. Researching the idea that combining to become a single financial unit could help manage resources more efficiently, all three councils gathered together and were visited by Fr. John Skehan to learn more about *Telling Anew the Story of Jesus*, options for cluster organization, and the process for making any changes to the current organization structure. Realizing that this is a multi-step process, requiring LOTS of communication, and a decision belonging to more than just the Finance Councils, the finance councils now collectively turn to the Pastoral Council with the following statement:

The three Finance Councils of Cluster 22 jointly recommended that the Pastor direct the Cluster Pastoral Council to initiate a structured, organized, and facilitated process to review the administrative and organizational model of the Cluster. This process should follow the guidance, spirit, and intent of “Telling Anew the Story of Jesus” by the Diocese of Portland. Initiating this process requires a thoughtful and thorough communication plan with parishioners, assuring them that no changes have been predetermined. This is a healthy “next step” in evaluating how the cluster has evolved and what is the best way to serve the current and future needs of the people. The cluster business manager and the Finance Councils are available in an advisory capacity concerning the current state of parish finances and the implication of different models.

Msgr. Paul clarified that this is not just a financial decision, and there are multiple steps before any change would be made. The first step is for the councils to jointly decide to move forward with an investigatory process, second is communication with parishioners, after which any recommendation would be made to the Bishop. The Bishop, after consulting with his advisors would approve a final decision.

After some debate as to what next steps should be & whether a process should begin now when we know Msgr. Paul will be retiring this summer, the Pastoral Council moved to educate themselves by 1) having everyone on the Pastoral Council reread *Telling Anew the Story of Jesus* and 2) inviting Fr. Skehan to speak to us about the document and what a communication process might look like. Msgr. Paul will reach out to Fr. Skehan, and the hope is for this meeting to take place the week of February 13. This new project will not change or arrest the timeline for finalizing the updated pastoral plan (stemming last year’s survey & input sessions) and communicating this to committees and parishioners; this will continue as planned.

Closing prayer & meeting adjourned.