



Getting to Know Your Saint Mary's Parish Pastoral Council

As we approach the season of Advent, we think of the humility of God. God is not only with us; God has emptied Himself into our human nature. During these challenging times, it is important that we take actions to reinforce St. Mary's spiritual community. As baptized Catholics, we are all baptized into the servanthood of Christ. The skills and strengths that we may have, through the grace of God, are to be used for the good of others. Pay it forward during this season of Advent; this season of humility. The Lord is with us!

Even though we currently cannot interact as we did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our parish continues to function. Along with other parish ministries, your Parish Pastoral Council still meets virtually on a regular schedule to provide our pastor advice and support for the good of the parish community.

We are beginning a series of communications to give you a general overview of the functions of the Parish Pastoral Council and to introduce you to its members. In each issue, we will highlight members who will talk about their roles on the Council and what they are doing to meet the challenges of maintaining a spiritual life in this current environment.

History and Responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council

The Second Vatican Council recommended the structure of diocesan and parochial pastoral councils as one way to establish a working collaboration of Bishop, Pastor, and laity. In the *Code of Canon Law*, promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1983, local bishops were authorized to establish parish pastoral councils to assist the Pastor in his pastoral planning with expert opinion and advice for the good of the parish. Under the *Code of Canon Law*, a parish pastoral council is not a decision-making body. It possesses a consultative vote only. Through reflection, prayer, planning, motivation and support, the Parish Pastoral Council serves the Pastor by helping identify and encourage those ministries or services that are needed for the growth of a living parish community. Council members will often serve as liaisons to the various parish ministries and coordinate specific initiatives at the request of the Pastor.

The current St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council operates under by-laws updated in February, 2017, and normally meets 9 times per year. The Council consists of 8 appointed lay members and 8 ex-officio members.

Rev. Msgr. Robert Amey: Pastor/President-Ex Officio

- Rev. Kevin Fields: Parochial Vicar/Vice President-Ex Officio
- Deacon Lou Brune: Permanent Deacon-Ex Officio
- Deacon Dan Kostka, Sr.: Permanent Deacon-Ex Officio
- Kathy Yates: Pastoral Assistant/Recording Secretary-Ex Officio
- Debra Eisel: School Principal-Ex Officio
- Cecile Galczynski: Liturgy Coordinator-Ex Officio
- Thomas Patchan: Minister of Religious Education-Ex Officio

- Gary Funkhouser: Chair
- Virginia Onley: Vice Chair
- Kammie Bell: Liaison for Stewardship/Administration
- Jenn Do: Liaison for Education
- Karen Gilroy: Liaison for Community
- Adrian Ilagan: Liaison for Worship
- Matt McCormick: Liaison for Service
- Joe Quirk: Liaison for Social Concerns

In addition to providing ongoing support to Msgr. Amey for the functioning of the parish, some of the past and current accomplishments of the Parish Pastoral Council include:

- Coordinating activities to celebrate the Parish Bicentennial 2013 - 2017
- Assisting the Pastor in accomplishing necessary capital improvement projects
- Coordinating the parish's response to concerns about child abuse allegations within the Catholic Church
- Establishing measures to protect the parish from potential security threats
- Assisting in planning the safe re-opening of in-person Masses during the pandemic
- Coordinating food drives and other charitable activities
- Coordinating social activities such as the Bull and Oyster Roast

In this issue, we would like to introduce four members of the Parish Pastoral Council:



Adrian Ilagan, Liaison for Worship

I have been married to my wife for 20 years and am the proud father of a 2020 graduate of St. Mary's School. I have lived in the DMV area since 1980 and have been a St. Mary's parishioner since 2015. Pre-COVID, I was commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and volunteered as the accompanist for the weekly Friday School Mass. I currently assist as an usher at the 5:00 pm Sunday Mass. It is my humble privilege to serve as the Worship Liaison in the Parish Pastoral Council for St. Mary's Church.

Like many of you, I was deeply saddened by the limitations which prohibited our church to gather and celebrate the Eucharist at the onset of the pandemic. Personally, I found myself thankful for the technology that allowed me to continue participating in Mass on-line and the opportunity to connect with family members from all over the world to pray as one. My prayer community, BLD Washington (Open in Spirit to God), has also sustained me through weekly Praise and Worship on-line. I am grateful for the swift and careful action the clergy and staff implemented to re-open our parish safely as soon as possible. I hope that we can resume our regular worship and activities in the near future. In the meantime, I offer my prayers of God's peace and strength to all of you. May we all experience His great love and healing for all of us in the grace of ordinary days.



Jenn Do, Liaison for Education

I am a local, growing up in Rockville and at St. Raphael. I graduated from Wootton and then the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with an accounting degree. I married lucky Mark and together we have four children: daughter Siena (St Mary's School Class of 2020) in 9th grade at Brookewood - and Siena's three siblings, all at St Mary's School (Andrew, Class of 2023; James, Class of 2025; and Elizabeth, Class of 2030!). Our family has attended St Mary's Church for the last 11 years. Within St Mary's School, I have been a room parent "a few times" and have been intimately involved in the gala committee for at least the last five years.

During the pandemic, I learned that I am much more self-disciplined with my time than I thought, especially regarding individual and family prayer - and exercise!

One thing I am doing to maintain my spirituality despite the current restrictions is to go to Mass whenever I can and to pray much more intentionally with my kids for the end of the pandemic and for those "in charge" at all the institutional levels.

One small thing I am doing for others currently is to ask them how I may materially or spiritually support them. I have also been known to fast for someone in some small way.

I am passionate about my children, the pro-life cause, the beauty and complexity of the written word, and BBQ, shellfish and Filipino food (eating all these, not making them!).



Matt McCormick, Liaison for Service

I have been a parishioner at St. Mary's for 25 years. My wife, Mary, and I are both from Annapolis, and we were happy to find such a great Catholic community here in Rockville. All five of our children graduated from St. Mary's School and we would love to give a shout-out to Principal Eisel and the amazing teachers and staff at the school. Our youngest is a freshman at St. John's in DC and all are doing well! I have been a member of the Council for the last four years.

One of the areas I would like to touch on is service to others during this trying time. I felt all I was doing, was eating and drinking with my family and really did not have it too bad. We were finally able to help someone else outside of our immediate family when we were able to be cradle care parents for a newborn for 30 days. I think right now it's important that St. Mary's and others step up to help others. Food drives and other ideas should be put back on the table and we need to help our neighbors any way we can. The pandemic has impacted a lot of people and it would be great for St. Mary's to be a shining star.

Lastly, on the spiritual front, my family did enjoy our experience going to Mass virtually all over North America. We saw Mass from Toronto, Detroit, University of Maryland, St. Matthew's in DC, Basilica, etc. We are very happy to be going back to St. Mary's at this time and believe St. Mary's has done a great job, protecting the parish while opening up. If you have not attended Mass, and do not feel comfortable on weekends, maybe try a weekday Mass. Make sure you watch Father Fields' videos first! St. Mary's is also pre-recording Mass. God bless everyone, our prayers are with you!



Deacon Lou Brune, Permanent Deacon Ex-Officio

Michelle and I have been married for over 32 years. We met as members of the Family Mass Choir at Holy Trinity Parish, Georgetown, DC in October 1988. In June 2017, I was ordained a deacon of the Archdiocese of Washington. My longtime friend, Father Harry, and Monsignor Amey 'vested' me at ordination. Michelle and I have been parishioners for 22 years. My parents, Louis & Nancy Brune, had been St. Mary's parishioners. Our son, Matt, is a 2008 graduate of St. Mary's School. Our daughter, Genny, is a 2009 graduate of St. Mary's School.

I have also served as St. Mary's MD Catholic Conference Coordinator, "Lobby Night" in Annapolis, MD; Chair, St. Mary's School Strategic Planning Committee (led to St. Mary's School as a 'Blue Ribbon School'); St. Mary's School Advisory Board member and, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Michelle and I have served as St. Mary's Marriage Preparation team members. I served for 7-years as Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 457, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Rockville, MD. This is my son and godson's scout troop. Matt and I are both Eagle Scouts.

One thing that I have learned about myself during the pandemic is not to be afraid. Pope St. John Paul II, one of my favorite saints, said, 'BE NOT AFRAID!' We cannot allow fear to define us. We must trust in God. God is with us! To maintain my spirituality during the current restrictions I pray often. I pray the rosary. I am reading *Mother Teresa, The Private Writings of the "Saint of Calcutta"*. St. Teresa of Calcutta struggled incredibly before and during her ministry and stayed close to Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. I frequently reflect on St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Francis, and St. Charles Borromeo; all ministered to God's people during crisis. I also have *Love is a Radiant Light, The Life & Words of St. Charbel*. I plan to read that next. I also have Mike Aquilina's, *A Year with the Angels*. I find myself praying more to my Guardian Angel during this pandemic. One thing that I have done to serve others during the current restrictions is to try and keep my staff's morale high at work. Since many of them have experienced personal crisis due to COVID-19 related stress and deaths of family members. I also am praying for everyone I know and also praying for our St. Mary's parishioners' intentions during this stressful time. GOD IS WITH US!

Look for our next posting in which we will highlight more Parish Pastoral Council members. In the meantime, may God bless you, keep you and your families safe and preserve our parish community.