

## SJC Parish Pastoral Council Minutes – Oct. 1, 2019

**Present:** Fr. Ed, Eddie Bonett, Mary Chollet, Grant Derhofer, Kevin Haggerty, Melissa Pohl, Lynne Schofield, Debbie Traini, Butch Ward

**Absent:** Gerry Arango, Maureen Wortz

- I. Debbie opened the meeting with a prayer.
- II. Pastor's Report
  - a. As this was the first meeting of 2019-20 with a new Council, Father asked everyone to introduce themselves and to reflect on their roles on the Council. The new members of Council are Eddie Bonett, Grant Derhofer, Melissa Pohl and Butch Ward. Returning are Gerry Arango, Mary Chollet (representing parish staff), Kevin Haggerty, Lynne Schofield, Debbie Traini and Maureen Wortz (representing Parish Finance Council).
  - b. Fr. Ed also shared his expectations of the Council members. He reflected on the experience of pausing during Mass at the local nursing home to lay hands on each resident present and praying over them. He asked that Council members, too, consciously take the time to listen to others, to welcome them into our space, to be present to them and, as appropriate, to bring any issues they hear of to the Council.
  - c. **Parish Life Center:** Fr. Ed reported that after four years of exhaustive study and planning by the Parish Life Center Committee, he had decided not to pursue development of a Parish Life Center at this time. He noted that the former SSJ Convent, which was to have housed the Center, had now been remediated for asbestos — a next step that would have been required under any scenario for that building, including demolition. Father said that the parish was paying \$6,000 a year for minimal maintenance of the empty convent and that its continued deterioration and vacancy presented a liability to the parish. Therefore, regrettably, the building will be razed. The stained-glass chapel windows will be removed before demolition. No new development is planned on the site at this time. Fr. Ed will share this information with the parish asap.
- III. Parish Life Report
  - a. **Parish Giving:** Mary reported that studying the feasibility of a capital campaign for the Parish Life Center project had led to the realization of a general decline in parish giving over the past year. First-quarter giving is down by 0.5% this year over last. Even some active parishioners are no longer contributing to the parish, for reasons that are not clear. A new committee led by Fr. Ed will be studying how to reverse this trend.

- b. Block Census & Collection:** Returns and donations for the first two weeks of the Block Census and Collection are running about the same as last year. About 35 percent of parish givers now donate through the online Parish Giving system, which is considered a strong percentage. The staff is looking at ways to convert more givers to online giving.
- c. Events:** Mary noted a number of new events this fall, including the Caregiver Support Group on first Saturdays, the Children & Teen Book Drive Oct. 12-20 to benefit Drexel-Neumann Academy, YouthServe Sunday on Oct. 20, and a Blue Mass on Oct. 27 for first responders.

#### **IV. Discussion: Current Needs, New Shots**

Following up on a presentation by author Chris Lowney at the Ministry Appreciation Dinner, the Council discussed two questions posed by Lowney:

- What does the church need most at this moment?
- What are two things that your local parish could do to improve the experience of people who come to church ... or to reach out to people who don't come?  
What "shots" should we take?

The lists from that brainstorming session are attached separately, and the Council will return to the discussion next meeting. Mary noted that the Youth Group will also be considering the questions and may share their thoughts with PPC at the next meeting.

Fr. Ed asked if one Council member could help draft the agenda before each meeting. The group agreed to rotate that duty, with Eddie Bonett taking the first turn for November.

Eddie then closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next meeting is 7 pm Tuesday, Nov. 5.

-- Mary Chollet