

# Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes ~ Sept. 17, 2020

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

**Absent:** Gerry Arango, Maureen Wortz

1. **Opening Prayer.** Debbie offered the opening prayer.
  
2. **Presentation.** We welcomed Sr. Kathleen Anderson, SSJ, who has facilitated for many Pastoral Councils at the parish and Archdiocesan levels. She spoke about the mission and role of a Parish Pastoral Council. There were these key takeaways:
  - Pastoral Council's primary role is to foster the full participation of the parish in the mission of the church. This is accomplished by meeting, prayer and deliberation over the parish's biggest issues.
  - PPC serves as a consultative advisory board to the pastor. Despite the many parish roles that members likely serve, they should have only one focus on PPC: *What's good for the whole?*
  - Pastoral Council deals with issues that are essential and important, not necessarily those that are immediate or urgent, and not the day-to-day operations of the parish, which are staff functions. This was summed up as "the view from the balcony, not from the dance floor." Council members should be "planners, not doers."
  - Pastoral Council needs to know what the Pastor needs from the group.
  - Although the Council should strive for consensus, this is more likely to mean a feeling that each member has been heard and accepts the group's decision, rather than complete agreement on an outcome.

Councils should reflect at the beginning of the year on where the parish is by asking:

- Who are we as a parish?
  - Whom do we seek to become?
  - How do we get there?
3. **Discussion.** Fr. Ed said that he needed Council members' input and observations, as COVID has sharply reduced the number and nature of his contacts and conversations with parishioners.

Members then shared about how their faith life and that of others has been affected by COVID.

Several members said that technology (online Masses, podcasts, video series, etc.) had opened many new avenues to nourish their faith and that their faith had grown as a result. Butch said that the technology and recent homilies by Fr. Ed and Fr. Brian had helped to “align worship with the lives we’re leading and broaden our reach.”

Others said that the technology had not nourished them spiritually. Still others said that technology had yielded new spiritual connections, but had not fostered personal connections.

There emerged general agreement, even among the technology adherents, that **the key challenge currently facing the parish community is identifying ways to restore, maintain and build personal connections among parishioners.** Many noted a feeling of deep isolation since the beginning of COVID. Several, especially those who are educating children and working from home, said they missed “the village” of authentic and personal community contact and sharing.

Fr. Ed noted the emotional and social lift that parishioners had reported from three rounds of personal check-in calls by a team of parishioners during the spring and summer.

Other suggestions included:

- Emailing Masses, writing notes and otherwise communicating directly with parish youths, not just with parents. During COVID, parents have become bigger gatekeepers for interactions that normally involved youths directly, which is not healthy for a youth’s developing autonomy or for a parent’s stress, one parent noted. (Mary said that direct communications and emails with youths was doable but required signed AOP authorization by parents.)
- Adding different voices to parish updates in email and the bulletin.
- Hosting an outdoor Mass, to attract the community and parishioners who may not be attending Mass now.

Members are encouraged to reflect on this challenge and these and other ideas for discussion at the next meeting. Liturgy ideas would be appreciated by Oct. 1, when the Worship Committee meets next.

**4. Closing Prayer.** Eddie offered the closing reflection and prayer.

***Next Meeting: 7 pm Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020***

*Mary Chollet  
Sept. 21, 2020*