

Pastoral Council Meeting Agenda

Tue Feb 2, 2021

6:30 pm via Zoom Conference call

Present: Mary Beth Coté, Pat Sormani, Linda Malm, Mike Reis, Fr. Greg, Deacon John, Sharon Gidumal, Joe McClory, Julie Edmiston, Joe Quinn.

Absent: Henry Xavier (new member)

Guests: Dick Schwer, Jim Lennon, Nancy Maloney, Elaine Little, Debbie Seymour

Call to Order 6:35

Opening Prayer/Reflection (extended) ...Deacon John

Approval of Jan 2020 meeting Minutes

Minutes were approved as written.

Committee Reports/Updates

-Elaine indicated that support for the Winter Arts Festival fundraiser was great. The Souper Supper is scheduled for Feb 19. We may have to cancel the mini-retreat because only 6 kids able to join right now. Some parents are not comfortable with face to face interactions yet; they are trying to reduce the risk. Elaine indicated they are hoping to be able to do the stations of the cross; this is planned to be filmed, in late February - early March.

-Nancy indicated CFP zoom classes will continue until March; they are hoping to be able to do some outdoor classes depending on the weather. The new date for 1st Reconciliation is Feb 21 at 11 am.

-Mike commented on Finance Council. He didn't have current month's numbers, but mentioned they did start discussing next year's budget at the last Finance Council's meeting (which is typically monthly). Elaine asked when requests for budget changes are needed, and Mike requested them to be sent as soon as possible.

Old Business

- **How we are Bringing Christ to Others**

a) Book, Calendar, Notes – status

Sharon reported on this effort. Delays were encountered due to weather, but now they are ready to start putting packages together, perhaps next week. They still need to figure out exactly how many people should receive packages; books and cards are available. Debbie said Cory had contacted her about her class making Valentine's cards for people they mail bulletins to, and they will also make a video greeting.

Fr. Greg indicated he would cross off the names of the 40 people he's already given books to. Sharon acknowledged they'd check with Fr. Greg before giving out packages.

b) Activities supporting the Homeless

There was an item drive for Hope Center, which is a homeless shelter Friendship House is running for New Castle County. We received a thank you note from Friendship house thanking us for our efforts.

Friendship house also runs a clothing bank, and Sharon reported now there's a project to help with school uniforms. A pilot program was done with one school (in which 2 shirts and 1 pair pants were provided to 75 children). Now the program is expanding to the Red Clay district. There will be an opportunity to support this. Used clothing is acceptable but it can't have a school logo on it. This is a help also with education, for kids who need uniforms to attend school.

c) Other ways?

No other items were brought up.

- **Projects/opportunities**

a) Education

Mary Beth thanked Jim Lennon for the information he previously provided about TeenSharp; she will be starting tutoring this week. The focus is high school level math, science, history, etc. Mary Beth offered to help anyone else who's interested to get started. Sharon indicated her husband would be interested. Mary Beth said the focus is to get kids ready for college.

b) Women's Voices in Church Leadership

Sharon and Jim will get together this month about this effort to have more women's voices heard. This may be a monthly effort.

New Business

- **How to handle upcoming elections**

Last year we all agreed to extend our term on Council; there was a comment that we probably don't want to do that again. Sharon asked for volunteers to work on a plan for electing a new Pastoral Council. Joe McClory, Dick Schwer, and Fr. Greg will work on this together.

Fr. Greg recommended asking this current group to continue because this past year has been so unusual, that he can't imagine asking a new group of folks to serve. This group has the knowledge and experience to move into the future.

Sharon said we can consider that a recommendation, and the group can discuss it. Dick thought Fr. Greg's comment may be the only thing that makes sense. He has tried to think of another approach, using website or newsletter to reach parishioners. It's hard to get a response in this kind of activity even if you're in person, so this situation is harder. He suggested they will put some thought into it but this may be the only thing that makes sense.

Joe McClory suggested putting a notice in the bulletin saying we're accepting nominations for Council and see if there is a response. Fr. Greg agreed with Joe's suggestion.

Dick said we also need to consider personal situation of all of us on Council, and whether people are willing to continue another year.

Sharon said her plan was not to solve it today, and asked the three of them to give it some thought and come with some recommendation next month. She said to feel free to poll people. Sharon also mentioned Henry Xavier will be joining Council as an appointee.

- **Communio discussion**

Sharon asked Fr. Greg to share his vision of Communio. Fr. Greg indicated he learned about this from Amazing Parishes, which was begun by a Paulist priest. They advocated a leadership group like what bishops have, but not a separate canonical group, rather a group who sees the bigger picture and can guide, lead, and direct the pastor. Communio comes from the Latin for communion, communication. This was established in 1970 after Vatican II. It's a circle of leaders to help inform and guide and direct the pastor; this circle connects with other circles of leadership. Communio is many. The individuals who guided him to this were Sharon Gidumal, Maritza Poza-Grise, Ed Schieffer, Jim Lennon. But so are staff, Pastoral Council and Finance Council a part of this. Every member of the parish has a voice and a say.

Fr. Greg apologized for not being more clear about this in the past. He said, the bottom line is that Pastoral Council has a canonical position. Communio does not. It's a spiritual element. For Fr. Greg, Communio is the vision that comes from hearing every voice.

Sharon thanked Greg for sharing his perspective on this.

How are we Praying, Listening, Discerning the Movement/Direction of the Spirit of God for our parish?

Sharon introduced this section of the meeting saying, we'd planned for this meeting to address how are we doing at this? Then Fr. Greg had written up some of his thoughts, which are helpful, along these same lines. Sharon asked if Fr. Greg would discuss these ideas.

Fr. Greg said, one of the things that most touched his heart this evening was the sharing and thoughtful responses to Deacon John's reflection at the start of the meeting. He thought that Deacon John spoke with amazing faith and love, and asked if he would preach that word he shared with us tonight at the video Mass and at the Sunday gathering this weekend.

Sharon asked if anyone had thoughts to share on Fr. Greg's write up. Joe McClory had sent an email saying there was a lot of good ideas for us as Council. Sharon acknowledged our mission is to advise the pastor so it's good to know what the pastor has in mind.

Mary Beth wondered if Fr. Greg wanted any input in getting ready for Holy Week; she had noticed a reference in his notes about what's coming up.

Fr. Greg said yes, he did. He acknowledged a group of parishioners having taken the lead. We will get directions from the Office of Bishops and our local ordinary as to what we can and cannot do. Fr. Greg had indicated he was open to the possibility of an Easter sunrise service. Joe McClory suggested Mass could be celebrated on the grounds of St. Mark's. Fr. Greg did this for many years at St. Mark's. So we should explore this.

Joe McClory said maybe Council can help as we come out of the pandemic, in trying to get people back into the building. Sharon mentioned part of our job as Council is to be eyes and ears of the parish, which is hard right now.

Our next meeting is March, which is in Lent. Sharon asked if there's anything Council can do to help with Lent, or Holy Week?

There was some discussion about small groups in the parish. When the pandemic started and things closed down, this interfered with some of those efforts. But there are groups meeting on Zoom, for example, Leo McDermott and Mary Louise Chesley-Cora both have groups, and Mary Beth also has a prayer group. Pat is in a group as well. We could perhaps make more efforts to get people together once the pandemic is over.

There is a mention in the weekly newsletter and bulletin about these groups. Debbie mentioned the Tamil community has their prayer on line too.

There was also a mention about the upcoming Lenten series; the Matthew Kelly book given out at Christmas is the focus of the Best Lent Ever program.

At the end of the meeting, Sharon thanked Deacon John for his dedication, for speaking up, for the work he's done. There were many affirmations of and thanks to Deacon John for his years of service.

Mary Beth volunteered to share a prayer to begin the next meeting.

Fr. Greg agreed we should continue with Tuesday meetings. Fr. Greg also asked us to pray for Bishop Malooly, and to send him notes of encouragement. He said they were soon to hear about a new bishop, and so now he said we need to pray even more for the leadership of the church.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 2, at 6:30 pm via Zoom

Closing Prayer

Meeting was adjourned 7:48 pm.