

St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Thursday, 04/21/2022 (via Zoom)

Present: Fr. Alexander Muddu, Anne Bradshaw (chair), Pat Brim, Alvin Calhoun, Jennifer Kost-Phillips, Deacon Frank Leaming (ex-officio), Jim Lepp, Toni Lesko, Jose Lugo, Jim Schmitz

Absent: David Biddulph, Sue Brim (ex-officio), Deacon Dave Geary (ex-officio), Trish Johnson, Ron Wisniewski (ex-officio)

Call to Order: 7:02 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The March meeting notes were approved as written.

Fr. Alex's comments:

- Fr. Alex thanked everyone for their prayers and their generosity of time during his hiatus from performing pastoral duties due to the government's delay in renewing his work permit. The bulk of the council was supposed to transition out in November but stayed, and he appreciates the commitment. He also thanked the group for working with him during their term. He appreciated that the group made his work easy, always cooperated with him, and guided each other. The current council will work to bring pending items/ideas on which the group has been collaborating to fruition.
- Fr. noted his work permit is usually for one year, but this time it has been issued for two years so that the same problem with processing delays won't happen again in a year's time.
- Trish Johnson has resigned from the PPC because of family commitments.
- Father will be working to add a few new members – possibly two more. Because we are a small parish, we don't need a large council.
- Fr. extended a welcome Jim Lepp and expressed his thanks to Jim Schmitz and Jennifer for their renewed commitment to the council.
- Fr. noted that 55 pairs of shoes were donated for St. Joseph's school in Uganda, and he shipped them out this week.

Infrastructure:

- Three bids for the roof have been obtained.
 - One of the contractors noted that it was important for the cause of the roof leakage/failures be investigated.
 - The bids are currently pending, as there is a need for a dedicated fundraising effort to raise funds for the roof replacement.
- Deacon Frank suggested that a separate committee be established to lead the roof effort.
 - Fr. Alex noted he would be working with the Finance Council on a 15-year plan and a capital campaign for building maintenance, including the roof.
- The insurance reports contained several issues, and as a result, there was only a small insurance claim for the roof damage that occurred last summer. Subsequent to the meeting, it was noted that the reports would be re-reviewed.

Old Business:

- The debt reduction celebration/picnic proposed for 6/12 is underway. Anne, Sue, and Jennifer have taken on the role of the planning committee. The following update was provided at the meeting, and several others were provided to Fr. Alex and Deacon Frank subsequent to the meeting:
 - A statement has been prepared for the bulletin and to be read at Masses.
 - There is a flyer that will be inserted into the bulletin, emailed through Flocknote, and mailed to folks who don't have email/aren't on Flocknote.
 - Final numbers must be provided to the caterer by 5/29. Folks MUST RSVP AND PICK UP TICKETS in order to attend.
 - We are having tickets printed with an online vendor, and hopefully we will have a sponsor to pay for them. After people RSVP, they can pick up their tickets after Mass or the day of the event.
 - We have selected a caterer – Jake's in Ashland. Food service will be from 12:30-2:30 p.m.
 - \$15.50 a person, which includes pulled pork, pulled chicken, slider rolls, hush puppies, baked beans, potato salad, sweet and unsweet tea, and lemonade. There are additional charges for servers to work the buffet table, but they set it all up and take it all down.
 - We'll have an ice cream cart (cart from the Brims, ice cream from BJ's – like ice cream sandwiches or popsicles)
 - We'll have a cookie assortment from BJ's.
 - We have rented an 800 sq. ft. tent that will be set up and taken down for us. When we get the final tally of people, we will also rent tables and chairs from the tent place, since they will also set them out and pack them up.
 - Ron Jewel has said he'll provide the music.
 - Sue has rented a bouncy house with a slide for the kids.
 - We will serve beer and sell beer tickets from a central location so that whoever is staffing the beer tent doesn't have to take money.
 - We're going to do a 50/50 raffle.
 - We're going to raffle off Fr. Alex's parking spot – at his request, for six months.
 - Pat will be working to get local businesses to sponsor different parts of the picnic, like a business can sponsor the food tent for X amount or sponsor the beer tent for X amount. We'll put up signs for the businesses who sponsor and give them space in our bulletin. If someone will sponsor the event tickets, their logo goes on the back side of the ticket. Hopefully, through sponsorships, we can defer a lot of the cost.

- The kitchen clean-out was completed the first week of April, and the commercial cleaners completed the bulk of the project the same week.
 - Fr. Alex expressed his thanks to the volunteers who completed the cleanout.
 - The floor will be completely cleaned – stripped, etc. – at the end of the month.
 - Sue created a list of kitchen rules to be posted.
 - Anne noted that there should also be rules created regarding purchasing food products for the church.
 - Most of the items in the pantry were expired for more than three years. Certainly, some of the expiration can be blamed on COVID, but there were many items purchased in bulk that would never have been used and that were expired over four years.
 - Also, there were too many purchases of the same items – sugar, condiments, drink mixes, coffee, tea, etc. – all of which were either expired, disintegrated because of how long they'd been in the pantry, or eaten by mice.
 - Parishioners planning any kind of event that requires use of the kitchen should have to submit a list of proposed purchases for approval by the office to ensure no more double buying, no more bulk buying of items that won't be used, etc.

- Spring Clean-Up Day on 4/2 was a huge success.
 - Fr. Alex thanked Pat for coordinating.
 - More than 50 people came out to help – several families and folks who have never come out before.
 - There was an aggressive to-do list, and most of the items got crossed off that day. Some power-washing still needs to be completed.

- Historical cemetery:
 - The committee met earlier this month.
 - Fr. noted that no church funds will be used for the work that needs to be done. The group is trying to obtain grants to fund the project.
 - Anne noted that some parishioners were aggravated that the church was taking on a cemetery that didn't belong to us when the St. Mary's cemetery on Woodford Rd. needs a lot of work.
 - Pat said that he had lined up someone to power-wash the cross at the St. Mary's cemetery in the coming weeks. He also noted that he hoped the plaque for the Paige Rd. cemetery would be completed this summer to conclude that project.

- Road signage:
 - When the St. Mary's Next Left/Right signs were damaged several years ago, it was suggested that we ask VDOT to repair them. Anne reached out to VDOT, and after VDOT inspected them, they said the signs had to be removed, because they were not VDOT signs, and they took them down. The signs were privately made signs located in the official right-of-way, which is 20 feet from the center of the road on either side.
 - After the signs were taken down, Pat obtained bids for new signs – approximately \$400 – but we could not put them up unless we got them erected outside of the right-of-way. Doing so would place the signs on private property, and without the permission of the land owners, we couldn't put them up.
 - The project has been pending information on the land owners, which Jose obtained last month as follows:
 - To the left of the church and across the road: Milford Excelsior LLC, PO Box 279 Milford VA 22514
 - Behind the church, Hope Bailey, 18254 Boxley Road, Ruther Glen VA 22546 (not necessary for signage, but good to know)
 - To the right of the church, Willis Boone, PO Box 235, Bowling Green VA 22427
 - Permission needs to be obtained from the land owners to erect new signs.

- Living Our Mission (LOM):
 - Anne noted that some council members might be willing to work towards finishing the LOM project instead of leaving it a PPC project.
 - Fr. Alex subsequently noted that he would establish a LOM committee.

- Ministry updates:
 - Detention center:
 - Caroline Correctional Center is still closed. Deacon Frank has reached out and is waiting for a response.
 - The Illegal immigrant Detention Center is open, but volunteers need to submit new forms.
 - Jose is going to reach back to the same people who volunteered pre-COVID.

- There is currently no training schedule; the center is waiting for applications so that training can be scheduled.
- If there is a request for a priest by any of the detainees, the priests don't need to get trained; as long as the visit has been coordinated by the chaplain, the priest will be approved.
- Jose noted that he would continue to lead the liaison efforts with the detainee center even though he is stepping away from the council.

Thurman Brisben/Homeless Ministry:

- The first St. Mary's meal was earlier this month, and the next one will be 6/13. At the 4/6 meal, there were maybe 25 individuals served, which is a low number – pre-COVID we would feed three times as many.
- The St. Mary's group is going to schedule two more dates for the year, but there aren't many dinner slots available.
 - Penny Geary, who coordinates the scheduling, asked the group if they might be willing to do a lunch, and the response was positive. Therefore, the two remaining dates this year may be either a dinner or a lunch.

Polar Bear Plunge (PBP):

- The PBP for 2022 concluded with a thank you lunch on Sunday 4/3. Fr. Alex thanked the volunteers for their participation in the event.

Adult Formation:

- Adult formation got off the ground during Lent with two groups.
 - One group participated in a five-week session of Formed content that focused on discipleship.
 - The other is still doing a session on Mary; that group expanded during Lent.
- Deacon Frank will lead an upcoming session on Acts, and Valerie Sparks was considering leading a group via Zoom.
- Pat noted that we need to think now about how we want to move forward; Pat and Sue's group had a very positive experience, and Deacon Frank talked to folks who had positive experiences in the Lenten groups, but any efforts going forward will need Father's engagement, endorsement, and promotion of it.
 - All the content for all the age groups has been mapped out.
 - One of Pat's ideas is to target religious ed parents.

Altar Servers:

- Altar Server training will take place this Sunday, 4/24, between the Masses. This is in response to Fr. Alex's idea to host a Children's Mass on the fourth Sunday of every month.
 - The first Mass was to take place this coming Sunday, but it has been shifted to the fourth Sunday of May to allow proper time for planning.
- Altar servers trained this Sunday are eligible to serve in any Masses, though, not just the Children's Mass.

Children's Liturgy of the Word:

- Post-Covid, we could not get enough volunteers to get this liturgy back up and running, because we need two volunteers each week, per Mass.
- Some parishioners have expressed an interest in having the ministry start back up.

- Deacon Frank noted that Gail Bingaman said she thought she had enough volunteers to get it started, so he will ask her to talk to Fr. Alex, and Fr. will also follow up with her. If so, it would only be at the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

Parish Communication:

- Communications ministry consists of managing Flocknote, the parish website, the parish's official Facebook account, the digital announcements in the Narthex, all Outreach, and the Formed platform.
- Pat noted that the parish needs to determine going forward how we're going to manage it. There are about 20 people currently in the Communications group, but folks need to be organized.
 - The website needs refreshed.
 - Facebook needs to be monitored.
 - Pat will train the office staff to load the digital announcements based on the bulletin announcements.
 - News needs to be posted on the website regularly (Tres Bradshaw has been making updates as requested).
- The bulk mailing project we did is directly linked to a spike in interest on our website, and we had a few people reach out to ask for more information.
 - The group should consider whether or not it was worth it. Now that we worked out all the details, a second mailing would be quicker to do; maybe a consideration for Advent.
- Anne noted that it's time for the Outreach brochures to be taken around to the local hotels and the Caroline visitor's center, as summer travel usually brings visitors to the area. We need someone to volunteer to take the brochures out to the local area.
- Anne also noted that, if the parish is still going to sponsor Zoom events – meeting, formation groups, etc. – the parish should consider signing up for a paid Zoom account.
 - A basic paid account is \$15, and there is no time limit. Free Zoom accounts have a 45-minute time limit.
 - Currently, Anne's family pays for the Zoom account to facilitate meetings Anne participates in, since they don't live in Caroline. But now that Anne is rotating off the council, they are going to stop the paid account.
 - A parish account could be used by multiple groups – a process could be established for requesting the information from the parish office when the need arises.

New Business:

- Jose requested that the parish consider celebrating Mass in Spanish for one of the Hispanic feast days, for example 11/19 - Virgin of Divine Providence, 12/12 - Our Lady of Guadalupe, etc.
 - Fr. noted that the diocese has stated that those parishes not celebrating Spanish Masses on Sunday not begin the practice, but Jose clarified he was not asking for a regular Mass in Spanish.
 - After some discussion, it was agreed that Jose would compile a list of possible feast days that could be celebrated, and then one date could be agreed upon for an annual Spanish celebration.

Meeting adjourned: 8:25 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday, 5/19/2022