

St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
11/15/2018

Present: Fr. Alex Muddu (Pastor), Anne Bradshaw (chair), Maria Bridge, Pat Brim, Alvin Calhoun, Deacon Frank Leaming (ex-officio), Ben Stinson, Ron Wisniewski (ex-officio); Gloria Bolecek (guest)

Absent: David Biddulph, Sue Brim (ex-officio), Lauren Henkel (teen representative to council), Toni Lesko, Jose Lugo

Call to Order: Anne Bradshaw (7:05 p.m.)

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the September and October minutes were approved as written.

Unfinished Business:

➤ **Ministries:**

- 50 people are registered for the Rejoice! Advent program.
 - Pat and Maria will host a kick-off meeting on Saturday 12/1 where they will show the introductory video, and people who have not yet picked up their journals can do so.
 - Attendance is not mandatory; the video can also be watched online.
 - The program's first session will be Sunday, 12/2.
- Approximately nine people signed up to participate in various ministries during last month's ministry fair. Food Pantry, Greeters, and Breaking Bread all obtained volunteers after the Masses on recent weekends through sign-ups in the narthex.
 - PPC will follow-up with a note in the bulletin regarding opportunities to help the needy during the holiday season through our service ministries.
- Maria spoke with a point of contact at St. Jude's who runs that parish's FUNdraising ministry. He provided information about the various fundraisers their group has done. She and Anne will meet with him in person later in the month to better understand the group's structure.
 - The goals for a similar group at St. Mary's would be to do the following:
 - Organize an annual schedule of fundraising events in order to eliminate competing events.
 - Establish a process for canvassing ministries regarding annual needs and then subsequently determine how the proceeds for established fundraisers could be distributed to meet those needs.
 - Initiate and manage an annual parish fundraiser.
 - Once more information about structure and framework is obtained from the St. Jude's ministry, the PPC will discuss a concrete plan for ministry creation at St. Mary's and discuss the opportunities provided by such a ministry with those parishioners who currently organize the majority of the fundraising.
- The Detainee Center ministry is not yet active but is making significant progress.

- Deacon Frank and Jose will be participating in a conference call with the diocese on Friday, 11/16. When Jose initially contacted the diocese, they were unaware that the centers were up and running. However, there are actually three detainee centers in the diocesan area – the Caroline County one, one in Farmville, and one in Williamsburg. The diocese will try to coordinate parish efforts related to the detainee centers in these three areas.
 - Deacon Frank and Jose are trying to obtain missals, bibles, and Spanish-speaking clergy to support the ministry. Hopefully the involvement of the diocese will help in these areas and possibly offset the costs of the materials needed.
 - Jose is trying to locate the bibles and other materials that were part of our prison ministry, which were most likely boxed up when the prison shut down.
 - The Knights of Columbus has agreed to provide rosaries for the detainees.
 - Currently there are about 90 people housed at the old prison with space for up to 225, about 45-50 of which will eventually be women. Therefore, it would also be good to have female parishioners willing to take part in the ministry once the women's section opens.
- PPC Member Terms:
- Not enough members were present for the council to discuss membership terms.
- Paige Rd. Cemetery:
- The group has met several more times since our discussion in September. They are now considering a different design for the entrance besides an archway. Pat showed an artist's rendering of an entryway with new pillars and new statues of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.
 - All of the clean-up is done, and the utilities have marked the area so that the septic tank can be excavated. However, because of all the rain, the digging cannot take place right now and may have to be delayed until spring.
 - The next meeting for the group will be after Thanksgiving.
- VIRTUS® Certification
- In light of the church scandal related to sexual abuse, the PPC discussed our parish's responsibilities with regard to ensuring the safety of our children.
 - VIRTUS® is a program created by the National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. that is designed to empower organizations and people to better control risk, with specific emphasis on preventing sexual abuse and responding to victims.
 - Anyone working with minors in the church must attend VIRTUS® training and keep their certification current, per diocesan policy.
 - Deacon Dave is the coordinator of the VIRTUS® certifications in the parish.
 - There was discussion among the group related to following up on a prior inquiry about ensuring our parish is current and in compliance with all VIRTUS® training.
 - Anne will ask Deacon Dave for current statistics/reporting.

- The group expressed an interest in sharing this information with the parish as a way to demonstrate our commitment to protecting our parish's children.
 - Fr. Alex expressed concern about ensuring that all activities meet the diocese's Code of Conduct with Minors policy, which requires that two unrelated adults, who have both been trained through VIRTUS®, be present.
 - Children's Liturgy of the Word was brought up as a possible area of concern. This is expected to be part of what Deacon Dave is tracking, but Anne will reach out to the ministry lead about making a push for more volunteers so that we don't get into a situation where we need to give up this ministry, which many families value.
- Addressing the Scandal
- The group had a follow-up discussion to the one that took place at the September meeting about what, if anything, the parish should do to address the scandal.
 - Members agreed that ensuring the safety of our children and the parish's compliance to all diocesan policies was the number one priority.
 - Fr. Alex has met with parishioners in small groups to discuss the scandal, and he will continue to address it that way.
 - Pat suggested that VIRTUS® training be made available to all parishioners, not just those working with children, since it brings an awareness to the warning signs of possible abuse and of predatory behaviors. The group agreed that a parish-wide invitation to VIRTUS® training could be organized after the holidays.
 - It was also suggested again that a lay person be responsible for tracking VIRTUS® compliance vs. a member of the clergy. While there is technically nothing wrong with Deacon Dave tracking it, the "optics" of a lay person doing it vs. a clergy member could be a positive thing in the current post-scandal culture.
- Infrastructure/Facilities:
- Ben presented carpet samples for the rectory, and the group agreed on one. The cost is \$2,325 with an upgraded pad, in addition to the painting part of the project, which will be \$3,600. The estimated total cost to paint and carpet the rectory is \$5,925, which the Finance Council approved on Wednesday night.
 - Ben expects the carpet to be installed by the end of the year; the painting can begin as soon as the painting contractor has time.
 - Ron stated that Finance Council had \$13,000 set aside for building repairs, so after the upgrades to the rectory to eliminate the smoke smell, that leaves about \$7,000. Currently besides the issues with the parking lot, it's now possible that the roof is also in need of repair.

New Business:

- CERVE:
- Gloria Bolecek, who is the treasurer of the Caroline Emergency Relief through Volunteer Efforts (CERVE) organization, discussed the mission of the organization and the ways in which St. Mary's could take part in it.

- CERVE is a tax-exempt, non-profit group that serves the needy in Caroline County, providing limited amounts of funding to people in need, many of whom may not qualify for social services.
 - CERVE provides emergency lodging and fuel to travelers and assists county residents with utilities, rent, and/or prescriptions – all up to a maximum limit per service.
 - CERVE is also working to identify gaps in services provided and to coordinate efforts to reduce fraud and/or abuse of resources. For instance, CERVE is currently working with area food pantries to ensure that recipients only get one Thanksgiving dinner versus collecting Thanksgiving food at multiple pantries over the course of a few weeks.
 - Individuals or groups/organizations can become members of CERVE by donating \$25.
 - There are 17 churches with membership; currently St. Mary's is one of the largest parish's in the county that is not represented with membership in CERVE. Gloria's membership and representation as treasurer is personal.
 - Many county churches make annual donations to the organization; we do not.
 - Meetings are held monthly on the third Tuesday at varying locations. The next meeting is January 15th at 4:00 p.m. in Ladysmith at the Ladysmith Congregation church on Rt. 1. – it used to be the Hispanic Congregation of Ladysmith.
 - Pat proposed that St. Mary's become members of CERVE and make a donation in 2019. The PPC accepted the motion; Anne will contact Ron about obtaining the Finance Council's approval and the process for moving forward.
 - Gloria will speak after the Masses on a weekend in January in order to increase the parish's knowledge of the organization.
 - Gloria noted that the meetings are a good way to hear about what other churches are doing. For instance, at least one noted that they have an active Motel Ministry, which serves families who live in motels.
 - Some PPC members will try to attend the January meeting.
- Finances in the bulletin:
- A parishioner inquired why the church's finances are not included in the bulletin anymore – the weekly/annual offering data.
 - Fr. Alex looked into it; the new accounting system does not easily provide reporting, but Sue Brim took some training to assist her in running reports on the new system.
 - The parish expects the data to be included in the bulletin again soon.
- Parish field trip:
- Penny Geary asked if the council could organize a parish trip. A few years ago there was a trip to Washington, DC to the Basilica, and Fr. Biber said Mass at Catholic University.
 - The council agreed that a similar trip would be good, but it also agreed that the trip should take place sometime in the spring.
 - Potential destinations in the DC metro area can be discussed at the January meeting.
- Diocesan Audit:
- In the coming months, the diocesan deanery for our area will be conducting an audit regarding several areas of church administration from 2015-present.
 - The Finance Council and the Parish Office will be tracking on these areas in preparation for the audit.

➤ Parish Hall Rental Policy:

- A non-parishioner has requested to rent the parish hall for a wedding reception, but the current price list does not include a price for non-parishioners.
- The group agreed that \$350 per hour for the first four hours would be an acceptable price based on the current price scale for members, noting that the hall can only comfortably accommodate 100 people for an event like a wedding reception.
- Fr. Alex requested that the group consider drafting a policy for renting the hall, similar to the key policy drafted last year.

Next *regular* PPC meeting: Thursday, January 17th, 7:00 p.m.

PPC Planning meeting: Thursday, November 29th, 6:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:00 p.m.