

January 15, 2024 – Pastoral Council Meeting at Sts. Peter & Paul

Present – Fr. Jarred Kohn; Matt Eilerman (SM); Sarah Werner (SM); Kim Ruhenkamp (SM); Diana Paulus (SPP); Brenda Schmitmeyer (SPP); Jeff Banks (SH); Paul Hoying (SH); Sarah Albers (SH); Steve Baker (HA); Sheila Bensman (HA); Deacon Paul Timmerman; and Jill Heitmeyer.

Absent: Michelle Seger (SPP) and Leslie Higgins (HA)

6:30 PM

Fr Jarred welcomed all and invited everyone to join him in praying a decade of the Rosary together.

REVIEW OF RETREAT DAY

Comments from Members:

~ Fr. McCullough did a great job presenting and that we need to remember to not discount parishioner's fears and anxiety in association with the Beacon's process.

~ Opened up thoughts of being willing to think about not just looking at being a part of one church, but the bigger picture of the family.

~ We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and need to work together to build better programs and resources. Fr. McCullough offered that we should look for opportunities.

The question was asked of Fr. Jarred if he could give some explanation on why Fr. McCullough was closing one of the churches in the family he is assigned to as pastor. Fr. Jarred explained that prior to Beacons, St. Matthias was in debt with low attendance and not enough being given through stewardship to care for the needs of the building itself. He said that another factor that played into this is that because of the number of churches in that area, people were driving by other churches to come there when they could have been attending a church closer to their homes. Lastly, there was a push to invite the Latino community and offer Masses in Spanish to help with attendance and stewardship, but that was rejected by the parishioners. All these factors were contributors in that decision. A council member made the comment that really the closing had nothing to do with Beacon's that the issues were already at hand prior to Beacon's beginning.

A member stated that she believes some parishioners think there is already a plan in place to close churches in our family. Deacon Paul stated that there is no need to think about closing if we focus on evangelization and using our resources with our youth to keep them coming back to the community and supporting our churches.

Discussion about St. Henry and one of the smaller churches there, comparing it to Sts. Peter & Paul. Concerns about if we go down to three priests how do we still have a Sunday Mass at Sts. Peter & Paul? Fr. Jarred made very clear that even if we do go down to three priests in the future, he very much wants to still make it work to have a Sunday Mass and other things happen at Sts. Peter & Paul. He stated that it may need to be a Vigil Mass, but that would be determined after looking at all the schedules. He also explained a little about the seminary and how the numbers with seminarians and current priests could change.

CONFESSION TIMES

Fr. Jarred encouraged the members to suggest or even ask other parishioners what might be some better times for confessions. He added that confessions at Sts. Peter & Paul seemed slow and sometimes Thursdays at Holy Angels. When asked what times he thought worked best, Fr. Jarred said 5-6 pm seemed like a good time. When asked about Days of Grace, Fr. Jarred said for the last round, Holy Angels was steady, St. Michael was busy and Sacred Heart varied.

A suggestion was made that having confessions at Sts. Peter & Paul when parents are dropping off students for CCD classes might help. It was suggested that at St. Michael, to possibly add a confession time after the 8am Mass, but there was then talk of whether this would work for the priests since they are already offering confession prior to the 11am Mass, it would be a tight schedule.

Fr. Jarred encouraged members to pray on these suggestions, seek information from other parishioners and bring feedback.

MINISTRY SCHEDULER PRO

Fr. Jarred gave an overview of the program and stated that we aren't quite ready to jump on this. He spoke about how we are finding ways in the system which will allow us to keep families together for scheduling.

He said to please assure parishioners that they will be able to access the app if they are comfortable with that technology and if not, they will be able to call into the office to request a manual change to their schedule.

Fr. Jarred stated the plan is to tentatively launch May 2024.

The question was asked about messages for subs and Fr. Jarred said users will be able to set their preferences to either receive in an email, in the app or by text message.

SUMMER IDEAS

Fr. Jarred said he was seeing if there was any interest in doing a summer program – just as an example spoke about a priest he knew who did a Summer RCIA series.

The first reaction was that there is so much going on in the summer with kids being out of school, vacations, etc. that it can be hard for people to commit. Another member thought it might be nice to do something specifically for the retired crowd. It was also suggested to possibly wait until Fall for a special program.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE FAMILY

Fr. Jarred asked the members what questions they have with regard to the schools in our family. The question was asked how are the churches supporting the schools. Discussion was had with regard to Holy Angels that there is a stipend that is given to the school, but that there has been much work in the last couple of years to have Holy Angels School be more self-sustaining and

thereby have reduced the stipend amount. With regard to St. Philomena Montessori School at Sacred Heart, the school is being charged pro-rated costs on some of the utilities, no rent is being charged. There was also comment with regard to Lehman Catholic High School. It was explained that Lehman is owned by the Archdiocese. Holy Angels does pay a per student stipend for those who are registered members, it is right around \$350 per student.

The question was asked about student numbers attending at Holy Angels. Fr. Jarred said that with the way the classrooms are now situated, they are quite full, not a lot of room for more students. It was also noted that St. Philomena is full, as well. A question was asked about expanding St. Philomena and Fr. Jarred shared that there will be a first-grade classroom that will start with 8 students and can expand to 24.

It was asked that with government funding, how this affects the stipend given at Holy Angels. Fr. Jarred explained that it definitely helps reduce the amount of tuition and therefore, the stipend. Another member questioned if they are “strings” attached to receiving the government monies. Fr. Jarred said at this point no, but that things can change quickly and that has been a concern of his.

OTHER QUESTIONS

A member from Holy Angels asked if the Parish Picnic Committee was in place and working on the festival for the Spring. Fr. Jarred said he hadn't heard from the committee and that it would need to be looked into. This prompted the question of whether all churches in the family have festivals. The answer was no, Holy Angels has the festival in the Spring, Sacred Heart has a festival in the summer, Sts. Peter & Paul have the turkey festival in the Fall and St. Michael does not have a festival.

It was asked if committee members could add to the agenda for Council Meetings. Fr. Jarred stated that members can send suggestions to him.

Will prior meeting minutes be approved at the beginning of meetings. Yes.

Will meeting minutes be published? Yes, on the websites.

Finance Committee is a separate entity, do Pastoral Council Members get to approve finances? Not specifically, there may be items that are brought to council members for discussion.

Will finances be published more often than just the yearly report? We are looking at putting finance information in the bulletins quarterly.

How do capital projects get approved and financed? The process starts with George Sholtis as the Manager of Grounds and Facilities and will include the business manager and appropriate bookkeeper. Once quotes are secured, approval is needed from the 3 Pastoral Council members, head of finance, and head of buildings, specific to that church. If the project is over \$25,000 or is a change to the interior of the church, it would require approval from the Archdiocese.

Monies to cover the costs for projects come from each church specifically.

What if funds are raised for a specific project and then that project doesn't happen? There would need to be discussion with the donors of why the project isn't happening and their approval of using the monies for a different purpose.

Can the three Pastoral Council members from a specific church meet privately to discuss a project specific to their church? Members cannot meet without the pastor's consent and possibly being present. It would then be the same process as outlined above in How do capital projects get approved and financed.

How do questions from parishioners best get answered? Fr. Jarred stated that council members are welcome to call or email him, as well as the person(s) asking the question, themselves.

Past practice at St. Michael/Sts. Peter & Paul was to include in the Sunday Mass announcements any parishioner who had passed that week, can we go back to doing this? Yes. Fr. Jarred also added that the plan is beginning in May, announcements at all the churches will take place prior to Mass beginning.

Why are we using St. Joseph Pillar of Families when we are still separate churches? Fr. Jarred pointed out that the Archdiocese has put our four churches together under one pastor. He also gave examples of other area churches that used a common name even before Beacons (Petersburg Parishes and NFLRegion).

Question regarding bookkeeping procedures and how monies are tracked. Stated that a parishioner had a program that could possibly be useful. We have to use the ParishSoft program as provided by the Archdiocese, but send an email showing what was being proposed and our finance people can look at it.

Why can parishioners request specific Mass intentions for Christmas and Easter. There was some question this year as some of our churches had, for many years, had the Mass intentions for Easter and Christmas Masses for the Benefactors of the church. There was a parishioner at one of the churches who had a specific intention and a phone call was made stating that their intention would still be read but that we would also be adding "and also for the benefactors of the church" after their family intention was read. We are working on getting specific guidelines in place.

Comment was made by a member that people are more apt to pick apart what they aren't happy about even when something works fine.

Concerns with some not receiving emails. Will send a text email tomorrow, please respond back so that we know all are receiving the emails.

Fr. Jarred stated that we are looking at unifying the website so that more info can be readily available to answer questions.

Fr. Jarred thanked everyone for coming and stated the next meeting will be Monday, February 12, 2024 at 6:30 pm. Deacon Paul closed the meeting with prayer.

Adjourned: 8:00 PM