St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

October 10, 2022 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Barbara Anderson, Nancy Finley, Linda Kinzer, Cindy Morley, Mike Morley, Joel Palaschak, Devin Sanders, Jack Velazquez

Fr. Marty began the meeting by reading from St. Maximus the Confessor’s response to an inquiry by Thalassius. The theme of St. Maximus’s response was Jesus Christ as a lamp set upon a lampstand and the light which illumines all people. An opening prayer followed.

Linda asked Fr. Marty to provide an update on the upcoming capital campaign, and Fr. Marty explained that the process has hit a few snags. To start, the person originally assigned to us decided to retire, so another person is taking his or her place and is getting up to speed. At present, we are about a month behind the original schedule. Fr. Marty and others plan to meet with CCS this week to clarify the strategy as we move forward. In addition, meetings with architects also have been scheduled to review plans and costs associated with the two projects verified by parishioners in the meetings and electronic survey this past summer. Those two projects are: Upgrading the HVAC systems in the school building (air-conditioning and ventilation) and constructing a new parish office that is fully accessible for parishioners and ministries, like the Good Samaritans.

Commission liaisons then updated those present on activities within their commissions. For Peace and Social Justice, Barb reported that the Rebuilding Hope ministry assisted elderly parishioners with moving furniture, installed their 41st wheelchair ramp, and is working on a project at St. Ann in the Black Oak neighborhood of Gary. The Respect Life ministry had a very successful rose sale at which they sold out of roses at all Masses. Council members felt it would be a good idea to have Respect Life report the actual dollar amount of money they made during the rose sale so that parishioners may see the impact of the sale. Respect Life also plans to participate in a vigil at Planned Parenthood and is in the middle of their 40 Days for Life campaign which runs from September 28 to November 6. The Good Samaritans ministry has noticed increased demand for food and other goods in recent months. They will hold a food drive on Thanksgiving Day and give out baskets ahead of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Good Samaritans also plans to donate gift cards to be used by teacher assistants at St. Michael School. Finally, Cindy reported that the Stewardship Commission is working diligently during this month where ministries are being highlighted at all Masses, and the commission has received several ministry interest cards from parishioners wishing to join a ministry.

Council members then looked ahead to their retreat on October 28-29 at which they plan to review and update the Pastoral Plan, Parish Council charter and the 5 Commission charters. Following the retreat, commission liaisons may wish to hold commission nights at which they will lead their commissions in reviewing and updating the charter of a particular commission. The Education and Formation Commission has already selected November 14 as the date for their meeting. Nancy and Joel requested guidance for running the Parish Life Commission meeting since they are both new to the council, and council members offered their full support. Fr. Marty said that Ted Markiewicz will be present during the council retreat on October 28-29 and will be a good resource for those present since he has many years of experience in working with council and commission charters.

Fr. Marty distributed copies of the parish’s financial report and reviewed the document page by page with council members. The council paid particular attention to the school portion of the report, and Fr. Marty explained how Al Balcer, who was recently hired as the parish’s scholarships and grants coordinator, plans to have an impact on that portion of the report in the coming years. Fr. Marty asked all present to sign a form attesting to the fact they approve of the report, and that form and one signed by members of the Finance Committee will be sent to the diocese. The report will be available to all parishioners in the coming weeks.

In other matters, Devin said he noticed loose or missing gutters on the east side of the church, and Fr. Marty said those were caused by issues when the new roof was installed. Fr. Marty is working with the general contractor and expects replacement gutters to be properly installed next spring. Joel mentioned the Knights of Columbus honored a member this past Sunday and he would like to see that featured in the bulletin. All agreed this was a good idea. Finally, the idea of recognizing outstanding lay ministers was raised after the idea was dormant during the pandemic, and Fr. Marty asked the council scribe to review past minutes to see if any decisions had been made. The council scribe recalled that the consensus of a previous council was that it was a good idea to recognize outstanding lay ministers but there was no consensus when it came to how to do it properly and equitably. The council agreed to discuss the matter further at another time.

Following a closing prayer, the council adjourned until its retreat on October 28-29. The next regular meeting will be Monday, November 7, at 7 p.m. in one of the small meeting rooms in St. Patrick Hall. Additional meetings are scheduled for December 14, January 9, February 13, March 13, April 3, May 8 and June 23.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox