St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

February 13, 2023 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Barbara Anderson, Nancy Finley, Linda Kinzer, Donna Krieps, Cindy Morley, Mike Morley, Devin Sanders, John Zaborske

Fr. Marty began the meeting by reading from St. Ambrose’s meditation on the Psalms. An opening prayer followed. He then updated those present on the Growing Into the Future Together campaign, which is still in its early stages. Fr. Marty and campaign leaders have visited parishioners, and thus far those visits have yielded 53 gifts totaling $1.6 million in pledges. Visits are ongoing, and Fr. Marty is hoping that 50% of the campaign’s goal of $3.5 million will be pledged by the time the campaign goes public with an in-pew appeal on March 4-5, which is the Second Sunday of Lent. Letters will be sent to every registered family before that weekend, and Deacon Gary will follow in Deacon Ron’s footsteps and preach at all Masses on February 18-19 before Fr. Marty returns to preach at all Masses on February 25-26, as is his custom on the First Sunday of Lent. Council members thanked Fr. Marty for the homilies that he and Deacon Ron have preached thus far, and those present appreciated the hard work performed by many in the parish to get the campaign off to a good start.

Since Joel Palaschak was unable to attend the meeting, Linda gave an update on the exit interview Joel conducted with Jack Velazquez, who resigned from the council in recent months. Jack felt the council worked well because the group fostered openness and trust, and he felt more connected to his parish thanks to his time as a council member. Jack suggested the council might improve by offering more information about commission liaisons and their responsibilities during the discernment process, and he suggested that accessing meetings virtually might be helpful to future members. Those present were grateful that Joel conducted the interview and that Jack had positive impressions of the council and parish and plans to remain an active parishioner in the future.

The Parish Pastoral Council is currently three members short of its goal of 12 members, and other parish committees also will need new members to serve in 2023-2024 and beyond. To that end, the parish is holding discernment nights on March 9 and March 16 in the hope of adding between 15 and 20 people to various councils and committees. Letters were sent to parishioners who may be good fits for one or more such groups, but thus far very few have indicated they will attend one or both discernment nights. Fr. Marty plans to mention discernment from the chair during announcements the next three weekends, and several council members volunteered to stand in the gathering space after Masses to answer questions from parishioners about the discernment process.

Linda recently attended a Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting and distributed minutes from the event to those present. The meeting focused on what parishes are doing in relation to the international synod that is focused on missionary discipleship. Those present at the diocesan meeting also heard about plans for the diocese’s presence at the National Eucharistic Congress scheduled for July 17-21, 2024 in Indianapolis. Dan Price had been the St. Michael representative on the diocesan council for many years but has indicated a willingness to let a new person represent the parish. Cindy agreed to be the parish’s representative for the coming year, and those present thanked her for volunteering.

As usual, the council heard from commission liaisons who updated those present on what has been happening in ministries within their commissions.

For the Parish Life Commission, Nancy reported that the Knights of Columbus are planning a fish fry and blood drive, the Senior GEMS are hosting a Valentine’s Day event and a Medicare presentation, and Comforting Chefs will welcome a new ministry leader in the coming weeks. Parish scouting ministries have been active in the form of a pinewood derby, the receptions of medals at Mass and in planning for an upcoming banquet.

For the Peace and Social Justice Commission, Barb reported that one series of bereavement ministry meetings will begin soon and another round will be held in the fall. Respect Life is beginning a 40 Days for Life campaign on Ash Wednesday and will start a spiritual adoption program on March 25, which is the Annunciation of the Lord. The diocese has a new program for mothers in need, and Respect Life and Good Samaritans will assist in that endeavor. Good Samaritans remain active in their own right, as is Rebuilding Hope, which checked to see if wheelchair ramps were still needed at residences where they were previously installed. Those checks resulted in the returns of a few ramps which were no longer needed at residences, leaving the ministry with a good supply of ramps as it prepares to shift more responsibility of that ministry to Catholic Charities in 2024.

For the Education and Formation Commission, Donna reported that the parish school has 220 students in 2022-2023 and that online enrollment for 2023-2024 would begin soon. The school plans to adopt a new series of math and religion books for the upcoming school year. Barb attended a recent school open house and was impressed by what she saw, and those present were pleased to hear that school enrollment has increased slightly in recent years. Donna also reported that the annual Passport fundraiser would be held April 22. In other ministries, Marriage Prep (with a special series on natural family planning) and Baptism Prep continue to proceed normally, Bible Study will resume in March, and an evening of Theology Uncorked with Fr. Gregory Bim-Merle has been scheduled for June 27.

For the Spiritualty and Worship Commission, Devin suggested having members of Radiate do readings as Mass on a quarterly basis. Fr. Marty felt this was a good idea but requested that members of Radiate be trained as lectors and even as Eucharistic ministers so that they may perform their liturgical ministries well. Devin also announced important dates for the Lent and Easter seasons including Ash Wednesday Masses on February 22 at 7 a.m., 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.; a morning of reflection for liturgical ministers on February 25 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon; a night with Jesus on March 10-11; communal penance services on March 14 and March 29; Confirmation on May 5; and First Communion on May 7 at the 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses. A full Lent and Holy Week schedule was printed in the February 12 bulletin. Finally, Devin reported that the Precious Blood once again will be distributed at all Masses beginning on April 15-16 which is the Second Sunday of Easter.

For the Stewardship Commission, Cindy reported that members of that commission met and discussed goals and their charter. She then updated the council on a recent meeting she had with members of the parish’s Welcoming Committee. That group would like to see more things done to make new parishioners feel welcome, and suggested events included quarterly gatherings at the rectory, printing names of new parishioners in the bulletin and installing a welcoming board in the gathering space where pictures of new parishioners may be posted. Fr. Marty suggested that television monitors may be installed in the gathering space where information pertinent to new and veteran parishioners might be shared on a rotating basis in a modern and aesthetically pleasing format. Those present were pleased to hear of the Welcoming Committee’s ideas and look forward to seeing some or all of them implemented in coming months.

Finally, the council looked ahead to the parish’s 150th anniversary in 2024. Fr. Marty would like to form a small subcommittee to get the ball rolling on the project which will also include the parish school’s 125th anniversary in 2025. Linda, Donna, Nancy and Barb agreed to form the subcommittee, and they will begin meeting soon. A logo for the celebration has already been created, and Fr. Marty shared it with those present.

Following the Hail Mary, the council adjourned until its next meeting on Monday, March 13, at 7 p.m. in one of the small meeting rooms of St. Patrick’s Hall. Additional meetings are scheduled for April 3, May 8 and June 23.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox