St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

March 13, 2023 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Deacon Ron, Nancy Finley, Linda Kinzer, Donna Krieps, Cindy Morley, Mike Morley, Joel Palaschak, Devin Sanders, John Zaborske

On the tenth anniversary of Pope Francis’s pontificate, Fr. Marty began the meeting by reading from St. Peter Chrysologus’s sermon on prayer, fasting and mercy, which are three hallmarks of the Lenten season. An opening prayer followed.

Fr. Marty then updated those present on the status of the Growing Into the Future Together campaign. The first campaign pledge weekend held March 4-5 yielded approximately $700,000 in pledges. Paired with the $2.1 million pledged previously, the campaign thus far has generated approximately $2.8 million in pledges, which is approximately 55% of the parish’s challenge goal of $5 million, a goal Fr. Marty plans to continue to stress in the coming weeks. Fr. Marty also plans to shift the focus of the campaign from how much the parish has pledged thus far to how much the parish still needs to pledge in order to reach its challenge goal. Thus far approximately 200 families have made pledges, and a bulletin graphic showing campaign progress has been created to keep parishioners informed and to remind others to participate. Mike has sat in the gathering space after all Masses in recent weeks to answer questions from parishioners, and he said that feedback has been generally positive and that some people have even pledged during those conversations. Linda was hopeful that snowbirds returning from Florida may pledge in the spring, and the parish is also hoping to see an increase in pledges after Palm Sunday and Easter Masses which always draw large crowds. Fr. Marty also explained options if the parish generates significantly more than the $2 million needed to upgrade the school’s HVAC system but less than the $5 million challenge goal. On a related fundraising note Fr. Marty announced that the parish’s Catholic Services Appeal goal for 2023 has decreased from approximately $111,000 to $109,000 as a result of a new goal calculation system implemented by the diocese this year.

Bishop McClory has announced plans to resume pastoral visits to parishes, and St. Michael plans to welcome him on Saturday, May 20. Bishop McClory is expected to arrive on campus at 1 p.m., at which time he will attend a joint meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council. Fr. Marty suggested having commissions meet later that afternoon to discuss their synod goals and how Bishop McClory’s pastoral letter has been incorporated into those goals. Council members will review Bishop McClory’s pastoral letter as well as Fr. Jacob McDaniel’s response to it in preparation for May 20. The afternoon will conclude with Bishop McClory celebrating the 5 p.m. vigil Mass for the Ascension of the Lord.

Mike and Devin met with Robbie Hansen to discuss upgrading technology in the southeast meeting room to allow for remote access to meetings and events held there. Those present were receptive to their ideas, and a formal proposal will be prepared before the project is approved. It is hoped that some equipment may already be at the parish for this project and for installing monitors in the gathering space on which parish announcements could be shown on a rotating basis.

The first discernment evening was held March 9 and was attended by approximately 20 people. The second discernment evening will be held March 16, at which time those present will have an opportunity to learn more about different councils and committees. Cindy and Devin were pleased by the number of attendees, and new members of each organization should be announced soon.

Cindy led a discussion on the parish’s welcoming efforts, which may include dinners at the rectory and, at Joel’s suggestion, small gifts for newly-registered parishioners. Those present debated how often such dinners should be held and how many veteran parishioners should be included. It was determined that a very small number of active, veteran parishioners should attend and that contacting the parish office to get an accurate count of new parishioners would be useful in determining how often dinners should be held. Fr. Marty and Cindy are excited to begin this project, and it is possible the first dinner will be held in the spring.

In Barbara Anderson’s absence, Linda updated those present on plans for the parish’s 150th anniversary. A small subcommittee has been formed and plans to meet in late March or early April to share ideas.

Fr. Marty and Linda also discussed the parish’s transition from working with a company to sell ads and produce a bulletin each week to self-publishing the bulletin. Parish Communications Director Megan Jones is working to sell bulletin ads and asked council members to contact her if they know of companies who may be good advertising fits.

In commissions news, Nancy updated those present on what’s been happening in the Parish Life Commission. The Knights of Columbus sold 340 dinners at a recent fish fry and will be having a membership drive on March 18-19 and a blood drive on March 30. The parish scouting ministry recently held a Blue and Gold Banquet at which 8 Cub Scouts became Boy Scouts. Five members of the group received medals for scouting at the February 11 vigil Mass. Senior GEMS is planning a trip to Valparaiso this spring and will host a Medicare expert for a meeting on March 28. Comforting Chefs have been busy transitioning to a new ministry leader but have continued to provide services as needed.

John updated those present on the Peace and Social Justice Commission. Rebuilding Hope will hold a service project at Shady Oaks on April 22. The Wheelchair Ramp ministry recently installed its 50th ramp in the last 3+ years and was featured in the *Northwest Indiana Catholic*. Parish Nurses are doing monthly health readings. The Hope and Consolation ministry has been conducting bereavement sessions on a regular basis. The Good Samaritans are helping 10 families a week with food and providing rent assistance as needed. A Holy Thursday food drive will keep their pantry well-stocked for the spring months. Respect Life’s 40 Days of Life program remains in progress and the ministry will make spiritual adoption cards available on March 25, which is the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Donna discussed Education and Formation Commission events, including bible study and an adult education series called Forgiven. Baptism Prep, Faith Formation and Radiate continue to be busy, as does Marriage Prep, which Devin said welcomed a nurse to a recent meeting to discuss natural family planning. The group may invite a financial planner to discuss tithing and other Christian forms of money management at a future meeting.

Devin then updated those present on Spirituality and Worship events, including a recap of the Night with Jesus on March 10-11 and important dates in April and May, including the return of the distribution of the Precious Blood on April 15-16, Faith Formation Masses on April 18-19, Confirmation on May 5 and First Communion on May 7 at the 9:30 and 11:30 Masses. The Liturgy Committee is also making final preparations for the Sacred Triduum which runs from April 6-8.

Without a formal update from the Stewardship Commission, Linda turned attention to the council’s pending action items, which include commission charters and other tasks. Fr. Marty would like charters and other important documents to be placed on the parish web site, where minutes of council meetings are also posted. Linda asked council members to review minutes shortly after they are sent and to reply to her with any changes so that they may be made in the formal record and then posted to the web site.

Fr. Marty concluded the meeting by leading those present in the Lord’s Prayer. The Parish Pastoral Council will next meet on Monday, April 3, at 7 p.m. in one of the small meeting rooms of St. Patrick’s Hall. Additional meetings are scheduled for May 8 and June 23.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox