St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

May 8, 2023 Minutes

Current Members Present: Fr. Marty, Barb Anderson, Nancy Finley, Linda Kinzer, Cindy Morley, Mike Morley, Joel Palaschak, Devin Sanders, John Zaborske

Incoming Members Present: Martha Kozub, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio

Fr. Marty opened by reading from an Easter-themed sermon by St. Gregory of Nyssa, a 4th century bishop in Cappadocia. An opening prayer followed.

It is the council’s custom to invite incoming members to the last two meetings of the year. Current members welcomed Martha Kozub, Bob Solorio and Connie Solorio to the May meeting, and all present introduced themselves. Martha, Bob and Connie will be joined by Lou Bufano, who was unable to attend the May meeting, as council members serving through 2026. Devin recently completed his first three-year term as a council member and discerned for a second three-year term, but Linda explained that Devin agreed to change his second three-year term into a one-year term so that the council can return to its preferred 4-4-4 membership structure under which four people leave the council and four people join the council each year. Therefore, the council will have the following membership structure starting in August 2023:

Through June 2024: Linda Kinzer, Donna Krieps, Devin Sanders, John Zaborske

Through June 2025: Barb Anderson, Nancy Finley, Mike Morley, Joel Palaschak

Through June 2026: Lou Bufano, Martha Kozub, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio

Fr. Marty began the formal business portion of the meeting by updating those present on the Growing into the Future Together campaign, which to date has received $3,637,776 in pledges and places the parish at 103.94% of its $3.5 million goal and 27.24% away from reaching its challenge goal of $5 million. The pledges have come from 317 families so far, which is approximately 50% of the number of families who pledged in the parish’s most recent campaign, and the parish has also received additional 61 gifts (non-pledges) toward the campaign. The GIFT committee is working hard to turn one-time gifts into long-term pledges, and those present continued to be grateful to Mike and others who have manned the GIFT table in the gathering space after Mass week after week and have answered questions and addressed concerns from parishioners. Fr. Marty said that there is a welcoming component to the work of those who have sat at the GIFT table in recent weeks, and all present are hopeful that additional parishioners will assist them at the GIFT table soon. Devin shared a positive experience he had receiving a pledge bill via email, and Mike stated that GIFT envelopes will be included in the June monthly envelope packet parishioners receive in the mail.

The council then focused on Bishop McClory’s pastoral visit on May 20. The schedule for the afternoon remains unchanged from the one discussed at the council’s April meeting, Bishop McClory will arrive at 1 p.m. and then meet with the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee for approximately one hour. He will be present for meetings with commission and ministry leaders starting at approximately 2:15 p.m., after which he will visit the sick and homebound from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Bishop McClory’s visit will conclude with him presiding at the 5 p.m. Vigil Mass for the Ascension of the Lord. Barb suggested that the commissions portion of the afternoon might be a good time to review and update commissions’ goals and see how they relate to the parish’s three-year synod plan which was written in 2022. The plan calls for spiritual formation for liturgical ministers, an upgraded communications plan, and an outreach campaign to invite fallen-away parishioners back to Mass. Those present agreed that was a good idea, and new council members learned a little bit about what commission liaisons do during this portion of the discussion.

Cindy has been working with the parish’s Welcoming Committee and Stewardship Commission to plan welcoming dinners at the rectory, but she and Fr. Marty feel it is best to postpone those dinners until the fall. Council members agreed, and all present thanked Cindy for her years of service on the council as she departs from the group with plans to join the Finance Committee.

The 150th Anniversary Committee has been meeting regularly and is in the process of finalizing a calendar of celebratory events for 2023 and 2024. Barb distributed a tentative calendar of events which includes a gala kickoff event at Gamba’s in Merrillville on September 29. Tickets will cost $150 per person and will be on sale soon. Representatives from the committee will speak during Masses on May 13-14 and will be available at the GIFT table in the gathering space after Mass to answer any questions. Those present also discussed the idea of having a luau-themed event this fall to help financially support the parish school. Joel noticed the parish festival listed on the calendar of events and expressed concern about the most recent festival’s poor attendance and the current trend of festivals losing money. Fr. Marty noted that the festival raffle has long been the biggest source of income associated with the festival. Connie asked how much money the raffle makes as a result of tickets being sold at the festival rather than in pre-sales, and Fr. Marty said those exact figures were not quickly accessible during the meeting but could be obtained from the parish office or raffle committee. Bob shared an experience of how he and a scouting ministry reimagined a pancake breakfast to draw more interest. Barb stressed that the calendar of events is still yet to be finalized, and multiple people on the committee said that they are trying to create a series of events which appeal to people of all backgrounds and budgets. Although the event calendar may look extensive, the committee does not expect all parishioners to attend every event. The 150th Anniversary Committee will continue to meet regularly throughout spring and summer, including on May 15, and those present are hopeful the calendar will be close to being finalized at that meeting so that it may be distributed to commission members during Bishop McClory’s visit on May 20.

Finally, the 2023-2024 meeting schedule was determined with regular council meetings scheduled for August 28, October 16, November 20, January 8, February 12, March 11, April 8 and May 13 at 7 p.m. in one of the meeting rooms in St. Patrick Hall. A council retreat is planned for September 8-9, and meetings on December 14 and June 21 will be held at the rectory at a time to be announced.

After praying the Hail Mary, the council adjourned until its next meeting on May 20 at 1 p.m. An additional meeting to close the 2022-2023 council year is scheduled for June 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the rectory.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox