

St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

February 12, 2024 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Fr. Robert, Barb Anderson, Lou Bufano, Nancy Finley, Linda Kinzer, Martha Kozub, Donna Krieps, Devin Sanders, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio, John Zaborske

With this meeting occurring just two days before the start of Lent, Fr. Marty opened the proceedings by reading from St. Clement I's letter to the Corinthians which is included in the Office of Readings for Ash Wednesday. An opening prayer followed.

Bob reported that two people have expressed interest in joining the new audio-visual ministry which is being spearheaded by Robbie Hansen. Robbie would like to speak at Masses this spring in an attempt to get more people involved in joining the ministry. The parish's upcoming pictorial directory might be another means of getting people interested in joining the ministry too.

The pictorial directory is one of several initiatives of the parish's 150th anniversary committee. Barb reported on several anniversary-related events and the committee's plans for the remainder of 2024. More than 300 people enjoyed the parish choir's Christmas concert on January 7, and more than 160 people enjoyed the parish's St. Valentine's dinner dance on February 10. Those present congratulated Devin and the rest of the dinner dance planning team on a job well done, and those present who attended the dinner dance all agreed it was a wonderful evening. The dinner dance was the first opportunity for people to have their photos taken for the pictorial directory. Additional opportunities will be available after Masses on Mother's Day weekend and at Fr. Marty's 40th anniversary celebration on August 18 and at the parish's 150th anniversary Mass and celebration on September 29. Parishioners who are not able to have their photos taken at those events may submit a suitable photo online later this year. Parish communications coordinator Elizabeth Munoz will obtain pictures and other information from the highly acclaimed 2004 pictorial directory to use in the updated version, and the parish may hire a graphic designer to assist with the project. The 150th anniversary committee is also planning on having a presence at the Schererville festival on June 8 and plans to have a float and two convertibles as entries in the festival parade that same day. Those present agreed that Faith Formation students and students from the parish school should participate in contests to determine float designs, and the winner(s) will receive awards. Those present also discussed what food options might be appropriate for upcoming celebrations and were excited to learn that a parishioner is interested in designing suncatchers featuring the church's rose windows which would be available for purchase later this year.

Fr. Marty then updated those present on the parish's GIFT campaign. The campaign committee meets regularly, and one year into the campaign the parish is on the right track. To date the parish has received in pledges 77% of the campaign's overall goal of \$5 million. The first project to be completed will be the installation of air conditioning in the parish school. Fr. Marty said the parish hopes to have 2/3 of the cash needed to complete that project in the bank later this spring. Preliminary work for that project is underway, but some materials needed to complete that project may not become available for a year. The parish is working hard to get the remaining 23% of the campaign's overall goal pledged so that in the future the second project (a new parish office) might be completed as well. The February 24-

25 bulletin will include a list of parishioners who have given to the campaign thus far (but not their specific donations) as well as words of gratitude toward them. The GIFT campaign booth in the gathering space has been helpful in providing accurate information to parishioners and shaping campaign communications efforts. Fr. Marty and Lou described the tactics they've used to defend against campaign misinformation, but those present remained optimistic about the campaign's current trend and are confident the campaign will reach its goals.

Connie said the Welcoming Committee's first dinner at the rectory went well, though she and others were disappointed that 12 confirmed guests were no-shows. One of the 9 guests wrote a letter to the parish thanking parish leadership for the nice evening, and Linda read her letter aloud to those present. The next such dinner is scheduled for late April.

Commissions have been meeting to complete required action items. The Parish Life Commission is working on their charter document, goals and strategies. Devin distributed the Spirituality and Worship Commission's charter document, goals and strategies, and those present discussed ideas for ensuring that new parishioners who express interest in joining a liturgical ministry be contacted as quickly as possible so that they may receive any necessary training in a timely fashion. Devin said that before the pandemic the parish had more than 300 liturgical ministers but that number has been almost cut in half in recent years, so new liturgical ministers are very much needed. Barb said the Peace and Social Justice Commission has completed their action items. She reported that several members of the Good Samaritans ministry are having health issues which make it difficult for them to complete ministry tasks, including walking up and down stairs to access the food pantry. Those present felt that an appeal for new members during Masses might be appropriate and that recently retired parishioners might be a most receptive audience. Barb said she herself plans to join the Good Samaritans ministry later this year, and those present are hopeful that others from the parish community will join her.

In other matters, Lou thanked everyone for participating in this year's super raffle, including Fr. Robert, who made his drawing debut on Sunday. Discernment sessions are scheduled for early March, and the council anticipates having up to 5 new members for the 2024-2025 term. Those present shared good wishes for a meaningful Lent, and Fr. Marty encouraged those present to pray for Msgr. Richard Zollinger and Rev. Stanley Dominik, two retired priests of the Diocese of Gary who died recently. Msgr. Zollinger once served as diocesan vocations director before long pastorates in Griffith and Knox, while Fr. Dominik once served as vicar general in addition to pastorates in Hammond and his native Whiting.

Following the praying of Hail, Holy Queen led by Fr. Robert, the council adjourned until its next meeting on March 11 at 7 p.m. in one of the meeting rooms in St. Patrick Hall. Additional meetings are scheduled for April 8, May 13 and June 21.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox