

St. Michael Parish Pastoral Council

March 10, 2025 Minutes

Members Present: Fr. Marty, Fr. Robert, Deacon Ron, Mick Adamson, Lou Bufano, Lisa Codo, Nancy Finley, Barbara Judge, Linda Kinzer, Martha Kozub, Mike Morley, Bob Solorio, Connie Solorio

Fr. Marty began the meeting by reading from St. Gregory Nazianzen's sermon on God's generosity. An opening prayer followed.

The March Parish Pastoral Council meeting came in between the parish's two discernment sessions, during which parishioners discern for positions on various councils and committees for the coming year. Fr. Marty said that approximately 15 parishioners came to the first discernment session on March 6, and that number included some parishioners who are re-discerning since their current terms end this year. Fr. Marty feels that the parish might not have enough new people to fill all the openings on various councils and committees in the coming year, which prompted Bob to ask if the parish could or should do anything differently next year in order to drum up more interest in the discernment process. Fr. Marty said the council may wish to consider thinking about the discernment process year-round, and everyone present was hopeful that the second discernment session on March 13 will bear fruit. The Parish Pastoral Council is looking forward to inviting incoming members to its May meeting as has been its tradition.

Connie reported that 46 new families have joined the parish since October 2024, and the parish plans to invite them to a welcoming dinner at the rectory on May 2. An announcement regarding the event may appear in a future bulletin. Those present considered whether the parish should have future welcoming events at a local restaurant or in a more casual setting such as a picnic, but all were hopeful that those who reply positively to their invitations to the May 2 dinner will honor their commitments to attend. Lisa and her family received such an invitation when they joined the parish, and she was impressed by the parish's welcoming spirit. Lisa's presence at a welcoming dinner led to her becoming more acclimated with the parish and its ministries, and all present hope that those who attend the May 2 event also will feel compelled to become more active parishioners.

As part of her welcoming dinner responsibilities, Connie also helps disseminate names of new parishioners who may be interested in joining a ministry to the appropriate ministry leaders or commission liaisons. Many commission liaisons have met with ministry leaders within their commissions in recent months to review and update their commission's charter. Two such liaisons are Lou and Mick, who recently met with members of the Stewardship Commission to work on their charter. Lou recently heard Bishop McClory speak about stewardship, and many of Bishop McClory's thoughts resonated with Lou, who shared them with members of his commission. Lou is hopeful that he can present his commission's charter document at the council's April meeting, and all present were pleased by the progress that all commissions have made toward completing their action items. The council's April meeting will also include a review of the council's accomplishments of the past year and the taking of a group photo for publication in the parish's 2024-2025 Stewardship Report set to be published later this year.

As part of his recent State of the Parish homily given annually on the First Sunday of Lent, Fr. Marty reported that the parish school will have an updated HVAC system by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year and that the G.I.F.T. campaign can now begin to turn its focus toward constructing a new parish office center. Those present were very pleased by this news and shared their experiences with

the school's bidding process and construction timeline. The campaign-related news was one of the three parts of Fr. Marty's homily, another being the spiritual aspects of Lent. The third part, and one that merited significant discussion by the council, was strategic planning at both the parish and diocesan levels.

Fr. Marty began this portion of the meeting by referring to a pastoral council manual issued by the diocese decades ago and revised most recently in 2012. Fr. Marty explained the contents of the manual and how it was Bishop Melczek's wish that every parish develop a parish pastoral council to assist the pastor in leading the parish. The manual made references to the five commissions--Parish Life, Education and Formation, Peace and Social Justice, Spirituality and Worship and Stewardship--that have been active at St. Michael for many years. Since Bishop Melczek's retirement, at various times the diocese has presented to parishes other ideas for parish pastoral councils and similar groups to assist the pastor with his work. At present, the diocese is beginning its own strategic planning process at the same time St. Michael Parish is developing a new strategic plan of its own.

Over the past two months, the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee met multiple times to begin the process of creating a new Parish Pastoral Plan. During their meetings the two groups formulated a new Parish Vision Statement and a new Parish Mission Statement, both of which will be foundational pieces for the new Parish Pastoral Plan. Both the new Parish Vision Statement and Parish Mission Statement appeared on the cover of the March 9 bulletin and were mentioned by Fr. Marty in his State of the Parish homily.

The new Parish Vision Statement is

To more boldly proclaim Jesus Christ in word and deed to build a better world.

The new Parish Mission Statement is

To help every parishioner to grow in their relationship with Christ by word and sacrament, through education and formation, bringing others to Christ in His church by:

- *Cultivating vocations, caring for the poor, the ill and the most vulnerable, and reaching out to the unengaged.*
- *Helping families live out their faith together to build a strong foundation for discipleship across generations.*
- *Providing and maintaining a campus that supports all parish needs.*

Fr. Marty explained that the parish's new parish vision statement and new parish mission statement must always be remembered and adhered to as the parish develops its new strategic plan and that everything in the new plan must do what the vision and mission statements say.

Fr. Robert then wondered what the parish values about commissions as they are currently structured. This question led to a lengthy discussion about the commissions themselves and the ministries they currently include. In regard to the latter, Fr. Marty made an important distinction between ministries and activities. A ministry has a more outward connotation was defined as something an individual does for someone else in the name of Jesus Christ. An activity has a more

inward connotation and was defined as something individuals or groups do for themselves to enrich their relationship with Jesus Christ. With those definitions in mind, Fr. Marty asked council members to consider the list of ministries printed on page 2 of the bulletin and think about whether they are ministries or activities. Council members will provide their feedback at the April meeting and that feedback will be beneficial as the parish develops its strategic plan in the coming months.

Deacon Ron asked how commissions are currently working, and those present said commissions have several useful purposes. Annual or bi-annual meetings give commission liaisons and ministry leaders the chance to communicate formally and enhance cooperation among ministries. Commission meetings also give liaisons the opportunity to make sure ministries adhere to their commission's charter. The council looked forward to additional planning-related discussions at future meetings.

After Fr. Robert led those present in praying the Glory Be, the meeting adjourned. Future meetings are scheduled for April 7 and May 12 at 7 p.m. in one of the meeting rooms in St Patrick's Hall and on June 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the rectory.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Cox