

Minutes from Pastoral Council Meeting

October 17, 2022

Present: In person Fr. Cyrus (Pastor), Deacon Jim Meehan, John LoRusso, Cathy Romano, Tom Bonaventura Matt Fair, Mark Rubino, Jamie Malaterra. Tom Devine, Grace Mary Avitabile, Juany Fumai. Via Zoom: Michelle Hopson

Absent: Bill Macnamara, Michele Harding

- Fr. Cyrus: Opened the meeting with a prayer and welcome

The minutes from the last meeting were not read and will be emailed to the members to accept, or correct. The minutes were accepted via email, Michelle Hopson accepted the minutes (from the June meeting) and Matt Fair seconded it.

-Cathy Romano spoke on the bishop's presentation at the Catechetical Summit held on September 20. This was a diocesan mandate for all Pastors, Directors of Faith Formation and Youth Ministers.

Bishop Caggiano said there is a great urgency about the need to catechize the young. He called for a new approach to forming our young in the faith which goes beyond the classroom to creating less program and more accompaniment.

We have begun to put into practice some of what our bishop has asked us to do. We have incorporated hospitality after our 9:00am Mass to encourage community. Our Sunday 9:00am Mass is our Family Mass with children participating. Our Confirmation preparation is collaborating with St. Francis joining together sharing five events this year. Our Catechists are encouraged to think outside the classroom and incorporate activities that include the whole community. This is a beginning and it may take at least ten years to come to fruition said Bishop Caggiano, but we must begin.

Our Religious Ed. Program enrollment is at 260 grades 1 to 8 with 46 students in grade 8 preparing for Confirmation and 45 in grade 2 preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion.

Cathy read Michele Harding's notes, "All is well. We are getting good turnouts for our events which started with a car wash kick off on 9/11 (half the proceeds were sent to the 9/11 victims fund). We followed up with two more service events in September. One was our Assumption Youth sponsored Save the Sound Clean UP. The other, at the request of two high school members, was the participation in the Pink Aide Posse, to help local women suffering from breast cancer in local hospitals. We ended the event with everyone attending mass together.

Teens have also been coming to me to get more involved and are presenting their own ideas. We are currently working on a gratitude garden to go into the Prayer Garden across the street. Another of our members has started a non-profit helping local homeless.

We are currently working on our annual Backpack Outreach program. This weekend we have teens volunteering at the Suicide Prevention Walk and at our Pumpkin and Pizza event.

We are also trying to collaborate with St Luke's and St Francis. Additionally, the youth group, with Cathy's help is working on some future parish events as part of the "creating Community Grant from the diocese.

I have 16 slots to take teens to Philadelphia next summer as part of Catholic Heart Work Camp. If I don't have enough takers by January, I will open the slots to St Francis.

I also have a young woman volunteer who will be a special speaker for our high school group about building faith during and after high school...the date to be announced.”

-Fr. Cyrus: - received a letter from a parishioner asking what we might do for the Eucharistic Revival. A good discussion on how to present to our congregation the true meaning of the Eucharistic ensued. Deacon Jim said that in a recent Pew Poll approximately 70% of people who go to Mass do not believe in the real presence.

All Council members were in agreement that we need to communicate the importance of this. Some ideas from the discussion: Have a series of short clips shown to the congregation during Mass, incorporate teaching at homily time, hand out literature on the real presence, have a procession on the Feast of Corpus Christi. Michelle Hopson suggested we teach the prayer of St. Padre Pio after communion.

- Fr. Cyrus: –spoke on our bishop’s initiative on parish collaboration. This initiative is asking neighboring parishes to work together on projects. We have already begun collaborating with St. Francis (Weston) and St. Philip (Norwalk) churches by joining together for a week long Mission trip to Appalachia at the end of October. Our Confirmation students from St. Francis will join our Confirmation students for a retreat on October 30th here at Assumption.

-Grace Mary Available: introduced the idea of young families gathering together in community to begin to build strong relationships among them.

-Juany Fumai: suggested we have baptisms during the 9:00am Mass so the community gathered could congratulate and welcome the family of the newly baptized. Fr. Cyrus said we will do that as we have done this with our First Communion children who receive their sacrament for the first time within the context of regular Sunday Masses.

-Fr. Cyrus: Updates: Tim Romano and Nancy Engle have received the Parish Metal of Service for their outstanding service to our parish. The Knights of Columbus held a dedication ceremony and blessing of Father James P. Ryle’s new Headstone last Sunday. Fr. Ryle was instrumental in the building of our church but he never got to see it completed. His funeral was the first Mass held in the church and his wish was to be buried out front, which he is. A new headstone and Celtic now mark his grave. There is a prayer garden being donated and built by Tim Romano in memory of Vinny Penna, Jr. a member of our parish and a Westport policeman who died at a young age. His dad, Vinny Penna, Sr. does the parish snow plowing and has for more than forty years as a donation to the parish and wished a memorial space be built for parish use.

Cynthia Psencik has been hired to maintain the Virtus database and coordinating events for young couples. December 3, we will have our annual tree lighting and blessing of the Crèche, plans are underway. John LoRusso suggested we have a raffle to help defray the costs of this event, a volunteer appreciation Christmas gathering will be held in December (date to be announced), There will be a parish Mission and Healing Mass December 5th & 6th with Fr. Lopez, OFS from the diocese of Rockford IL.

Deacon Jim Meehan closed the meeting with prayer

-Next Parish Council Meeting: February 6, 2023, 7PM McGrath Hall

Respectively Submitted,

Cathy Romano, Council Secretary