

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

16 January 2021 9:30 am – 11:30 am

I. **Call to Order & Attendance** – Virtual Meeting on Zoom.

- a. All members were present.
- b. The following were also in attendance. Christy Escher and Laurel Collins from Catholic Charities to discuss Migration and Refugee Services, and Fr. George to discuss parish communications.
- c. Since there were guest speakers, everyone introduced themselves.

II. **Opening Prayer** – Fr. John

III. **Approval of Minutes** – The minutes of the November 21st, 2020 Pastoral Council were approved.

IV. **Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services** – Laurel Collins & Christy Escher

Ms. Collins briefed on the range of immigrant services that Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) provides. These include refugee settlement, English as a Second Language training, and workforce training. Hogar Immigrant Services (another Catholic Charities organization) handles naturalization, citizenship and legal services.

The presentation provided an overview of where refugees come from, and the processes required for admittance. MRS arranges for housing, household items and furnishings, and food staples. Arrangements are made for a volunteer to meet them at the airport and take them to the residence. The main focus of the presentation was to discuss the myriad needs the family has and how a Parish can be involved in supporting them.

While numbers of Refugees declined to under 200 in the last year of the Trump administration, they are planning for an estimated 400 to arrive in the Diocese in this fiscal year.

These services are highly dependent on volunteer involvement and donations such as food staples, household supplies, furnishings, transportation, etc.

A number of St Francis parishioners have been involved in providing extensive support in the past. MRS wishes to continue and grow parish volunteer support for the program.

In the discussion Angelica Silva offered St. Francis House food services to help. Marianne Hayes raised the possibility of using Confirmation volunteer hours toward this effort.

Pequitte Schwerin will convene a subgroup on this with volunteers Michelle Nicolai, Maggie Eves, Jean Allen and Marianne Hayes to discuss ways to present this information to the parish members and enlist help of volunteers if the parish decides to become involved as a support agency.

A copy of the presentation and the Resettlement Supply list is attached. Please note the Briefing is only released to the Pastoral Council and cannot be further released without permission from Catholic Charities. **However, the supplies list carries no restrictions is releasable.**

V. Parish Communications - Fr. George

Fr. George provided a presentation on Parish communications. This is a look at the modes, styles, and effectiveness of such platforms as emails, bulletin, Facebook, Twitter, and website. Several before and after examples were shown for improvement and better effectiveness. Some metrics of usage had not been seen previously. The briefing slides are attached.

An enduring challenge for Parish communications is nurturing with content, design, and monitoring – which requires a significant commitment of time. Fr. George and Tom Peitler have conducted a review of Parish technology infrastructure (not the School) and feel there is an opportunity to save costs on Telecommunication services by consolidating and updating services. Technology is providing new options for services, unimagined at the time many of our existing services were put into place. Some equipment updating may also be needed. An audit of assets, security, backup and recovery details is also needed before updates can occur.

Fr. George will lead a communications subgroup. Volunteers for this included Marv Floom, Terry Danner, Pequitte Schwerin, Marianne Hayes, and Dan Sullivan.

VI. Mass Video Streaming Updates

- a. Fr. John noted that the Masses are mostly 'sold out', with the exception being the 5:30 Sunday Masses. Thankfully there has not yet been a need to follow up with contact tracing due to Coronavirus infection among attendees. There continues to be unfilled needs for volunteers to assist with ushering and checking in attendees at the Masses.
- b. Fr. John said that the new streaming equipment is working well with few glitches. and most of the bugs are ironed out at this point. Live streaming will become a permanent part of the Liturgy. Feedback has been very positive. The Parish will also be able to provide live streaming of weddings, Mass of Christian Burial, and other events on a fee basis to cover costs. While a great technology, the parish remains in need of volunteers to operate the video and audio systems during events. This requires some familiarization to be able to do it. Streaming a wedding would be more complex and would require two volunteers to make it work. Fr. John again lauded the contributions

of Tom Peitler, whose financial, technological expertise, and time has made this possible. Coleen Wells and Nikki Giraldi have been key resources in the project.

- c. Fr. George is meeting with the current team on live streaming and reviewing that may impact its usage. Iván Nazario has been training and supporting the Spanish language Mass. Maggie Eves volunteered to help support the live streaming operations.

VII. Finance Council Report – Marv Floom

- a. The Christmas collection was a \$64,000, which is a \$3,000 increase over last year. Fr. John was impressed by the commitment to the Parish.
- b. Donations for the first half year ending Dec. 31 are down \$90,000 from the comparable period last year. This is about a 10% decline. Fr. John noted that the fall appeal was not conducted this year. While the year to date results are a bit unfortunate, some parishes are not faring as well.
- c. Fr. John said The Bishop’s Lenten Appeal will be starting soon. The Coronavirus situation will have some impacts on how this is implemented at Mass.
- d. Chain Bridge Bank has not opened the Payroll Protection Act Loan Forgiveness Portal yet for the Parish. We have until June to file and the bank is addressing the largest customers first.

VIII. School Updates – Dr. Barber

- a. The School was on virtual learning for the first week after Christmas break, as a preventative measure – not because of any reported cases.
- b. No school employees, teachers or volunteers have reported any Coronavirus cases.
- c. At present the school is re-enrolling current students.
- d. The school children will continue with live streamed Mass and will not be having Mass in the church. Jodi Salley provides the audiovisual operations for the live stream for the school Mass.
- e. Dr. Barber submitted a list of school staff, volunteers, and Friars for Coronavirus vaccinations. There is no indication of when vaccines will be given by the Prince William Health District.
- f. There was a sidebar discussion of frustration with the Health Department work on Coronavirus vaccination, and related discussions from a County Board Presentation and Q&A. “COVID-19 Situation Report – Brian Misner, Fire and Rescue and Dr. Alison Ansher, Prince William Health District”. The video of this presentation at the County website, and related Q&A is available at

IX. Fr. John's Remarks

- a. Since the one confessional was repurposed as the audio video control room for the church, an additional portable confessional will be installed in the church. The Bishop is directing a departure from enclosed confessionals for many reasons – not the least of which is the Coronavirus.
- b. There will be a note coming from the Bishop, following up on the Pope's change to canon law formally clarifying that women will be able to act as acolytes, eucharistic ministers, and lectors.
- c. Fr. John thanked all who are helping in distributing drive by Communion on Sundays from 12:00 – 12:30. He is getting very positive messages from parishioners on this. Some had not received Communion since March.
- d. Marcia Connolly retired after 25 years' service as the Parish receptionist. Maureen Deuterma is covering the position in the interim. The selection of a permanent replacement will be delayed, and there will be consideration for bilingual skills.
- e. There have been ongoing meetings with Diocesan engineering regarding the open parking lot construction permit. Ed Knapp is engaged in discussions to resolve this and close out the project. The big issue is the 'as built' blueprints don't match what was built. Exacerbating this are changes to county standards since the project was started. Fr. John continues to monitor this as a financial risk.
- f. No Coronavirus cases have been reported by the Parish nor the school staff.

X. Hispanic Ministry Updates – Iván Nazario

- a. Iván started doing the live streaming audio visual operations for the Spanish language Mass and is looking for a second volunteer to support this.
- b. He has contacted Sheila Noble regarding Spanish speaking RCIA candidates and dates for sacraments.
- c. Fr. Lalo started a "Coffee with Father Lalo" website for Spanish language communications, <https://cafeteandoconelpadrelalo.com/>
- d. Iván will help translate social media content into Spanish. Fr. Lalo has been providing this service to date.

XI. Strategic plan update – Maggie Eves

- a. There was a brief discussion of updating the strategic plan. The subcommittee team will have an update at the next Pastoral Council Meeting.

XII. Next Meeting – The February 2021 meeting will be 26 February 2021 at 9:30 AM.

XIII. Closing Prayer – Offered by Terry Danner.

XIV. Adjournment –11:30 am.

Attachments:

CCDA MRS Programs Overview

MRS R&P Supply List

Parish Communications Presentation