

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

21 November 2020 9:30 am – 10:35 am

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

a. Members participating were Fr. John O'Connor, OFM, Pastor, Chair Terry Danner, Jean Allen, Phil Bongiorno, Maggie Eves, Vice-Chair, John Hales, Clarence Neason, Michelle Nicolai, Iván Nazario, Pequitte Schwerin, Ulli Vaerst, Dr. Tricia Barber (Principal), Marv Floom (Chair, Finance Council).

b. Absent were Angelica Silva, Dan Sullivan, and Marianne Hayes (RE).

II. Opening Prayer – Fr. John

III. **Approval of Minutes** – The 4th draft of the 17 October minutes was sent minutes before the beginning of this meeting. It was virtually approved about a week later and has been submitted for the Parish website.

IV. Election of Officers

A call for nominations resulted in one nomination for chair which was declined. A suggestion was made for the current officers to continue in their positions for the next year. Each officer was addressed and agreed to serve.

V. Town Hall Feedback

Fifty-two persons signed up for the Town Hall on 14 November with approximately 33 persons participating. The number is lower than was expected and a discussion was held as to better advertise or create outreach for more participation. All agreed the Town Hall is a good idea and want to continue. No date was set for a possible next one.

VI. Updates

- a. Mass is going well with approximately 160 persons attending the 9:00, 11:00, and 1:30 Masses. The Sunday evening 5:30 Mass has the fewest attendees with 90. The permanent camera installation is nearly finished at which time a 5:30 pm Sat evening Mass will be offered.
- b. The former confessional is being used to house all the technical equipment for the new camera functions. For better operational output, the server from the nursery area has also been moved into this space. To accommodate confessions, we are following Diocesan guidelines which directs no enclosed spaces be used. Currently we have chairs placed in the center aisle with plexiglass shields on either side. One individual is allowed

in the church while others wait in the lobby. When the pandemic ends there is a plan to install an open confessional screen on the right side of the church to mirror the existing one on the left.

- c. Colleen Wells who assists with operating the cameras for live stream Masses and the Children's Mass is currently unable to attend due to quarantine. Nikki Giraldi and Tom Pietler will continue to operate the cameras.
- d. The Covid testing which took place two weeks ago in our parking lot had turnout much lower than expected. Fr John stated that testing is difficult to obtain at present due to large numbers of individuals wanting to travel for the upcoming holiday. Fr George recently returned from his vacation and experienced this same problem. He was served at a local Urgent Care Clinic with minimal wait time.
- e. Special seating arrangements have been made for one individual claiming medical reasons for not wearing a mask during Mass. The Parish requires all attendees to wear masks during the in-person Masses. Other parishes in Deanery Five are using less-effective methods of scanning and physical distancing. The Diocese is not enforcing the state mandate of wearing masks in public places. Feedback from attendees has been positive on the process used at St. Francis of Assisi.
- f. The Parish has made plans for the Christmas Masses to be held in both the church and gym. There will be two at 4:00 pm, two at 6:00 pm, two at 8:00 pm and one at 10:30. The 8:00 pm Mass will be in the church for the Spanish speaking community while the Mass in English will be held in the Gym. There will be fewer Masses offered on Christmas Day. There will be no choirs for the usual Christmas music. All this is dependent on the number of local Covid cases and if the numbers continue to be high, we may have to resort to Phase I guidelines.

VII. Finance Council Report

- a. The Christmas collection is one of our biggest for the year, and since we lost approximately \$60,000? income due to the lack of a fall appeal, our finances are down \$49,000 from this same period last year. However, we are still solvent with campus expenses.
- b. There has been a total of \$15,000 donated for the new camera system.
- c. The new HVAC system is installed and functioning well. We are still awaiting certification on the inspection.
- d. Covid costs are \$27,000 from July through October for the new sprayer machines, cleaning labor and storage costs for the furniture removed from the classrooms. There have been no Covid cases among the staff.

- e. The parking lot permit review is nearing completion. A meeting between county, diocese, and St Francis primaries with the outside engineering firm who conducted the review will be held within the next two weeks to negotiate final resolution of outstanding issues. An initial reading of the report indicates that no major changes will be necessary for the county to agree to sign off on the permit.

VIII. Hispanic Ministry Updates

- a. Ivan Nazario is still working on more bi-lingual interactions for the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas Masses.
- b. There are three individuals in the sacramental prep program.
- c. Individuals of the Spanish speaking community tried to join the Town Hall event but left because there was no translation of the information. A suggestion was to advertise the topics beforehand and have some translation available.

IX. School Updates

- a. The enrollment is still stable at 244 with one kindergarten student leaving and one arriving.
- b. After Thanksgiving Dr Barber intends to send a notice to parents asking their intent to re-enroll their children for the second semester. A second notice will go out as usual in January at which time the tuition will be non-refundable. The semester ends next Tuesday 24 November.
- c. There are multiple extra-curricular activities ongoing.
 - 1. The Student Council conducts periodic food drives to assist the St. Francis House pantry.
 - 2. St. Francis of Assisi School Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society
 - 3. The Rosary Club has 50 members, and the intent is to conduct a bi-lingual rosary for the upcoming Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day.
- d. The 46 Chrome notebooks purchased under the CARES Act grant have arrived and are in use.
- e. The \$52,000 grant has also been used to outfit teacher's computers with cameras for better interaction with parents during conferences which are all held virtually.
- f. The school continues to prohibit all visitors to minimize Coronavirus exposure risks

X. St. Francis House Updates

The director Francia Salguero has had surgery and is unable to work at present. Her daughter Angelica Silva is filling in. We will keep Francia in our prayers for a speedy recovery.

XI. New Business

- a. A local gentleman approached Fr John for expansion of the food distribution efforts. He is likely unaware that the St Lucy Project exists in the Arlington Diocese, and that PWC Food Bank donates to Francis House. The local schools also distribute food twice weekly to families with children 18 and younger.
- b. Regarding the Vatican report on the mishandling of allegations against former Cardinal McCarrick: Should St John Paul the Great High School retain its name? Our grade school is a significant source of enrollment there. The board at present is not considering changing the name. Fr John is in disagreement with that and has challenged the board.
- c. Terry Danner attended a diocesan meeting discussing its strategic 5-year plan. A framework was shared which will be forwarded to our own strategic planning sub-committee for review and possible use.
- d. Fr John was approached by the Provincial about providing a chaplain at Marymount University. Due to traffic concerns our friars decided it is not a good use of their time and would interrupt their availability to this community.
- e. There is no update on taking over the chaplain duties at Quantico. At present there is a contract chaplain in place. Fr John will check with the Bishop as to the timing of this assignment.

XII. Next Meeting – The January 2021 meeting is set for 16 January 2021.

XIII. Closing Prayer – Offered by Terry Danner.

XIV. Adjournment –10:35 am.