

St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Triangle, VA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2021 9:30 am – 11:00 am

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

- a. All members were present, except Marianne Hayes, RE Coordinator.

II. Opening Prayer – Fr. John

III. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 20 February 2021 Pastoral Council meeting were motioned for approval by Clarence Neason, and seconded by Maggie Eaves, voted and approved.

IV. Hispanic Ministry Update – Iván Nazario

- a. The three scrutinies have been conducted for the RCIA candidates on past successive Sundays. There are two catechumens for baptism and one individual is already baptized and all will receive the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. This is the first coordinated preparation with Sheila Noble, Fr. Lalo and Fr. Jim and all are pleased with the results and eager for completion. There will be a review of the process for possible improvements for next year.
- b. On Good Friday the Spanish speaking community will conduct Way of the Cross via zoom at 11:00 a.m. A liturgy for Spanish speakers will be held at 7:00 p.m.
- c. The Easter Vigil Mass will be bi-lingual, and the Spanish speaking group is looking forward to this experience, since there has not been a bi-lingual celebration since Christmas.

V. Pastor's Remarks – Fr. John

- a. The Parish is at 82 percent of the financial goal for the Bishop's Lenten Appeal, but we need to push for 100 percent. The BLA is an important barometer for the Bishop as to how a Parish is doing, and the level of support the Parish has for the diocese.
- b. We are working through Francis House and Supervisor Bailey's office to reach out to the minority community to register them for the Covid vaccination. So far, we have 42 individuals registered for vaccinations. We will continue to promote the County program these next two weeks.
- c. The Holy week schedule is set. The palms will be blessed and distributed after each mass, but there will be no procession prior to the start of Mass. The presiders on Holy Thursday for bi-lingual Mass of the Lord's Supper will be Fr. George and Fr. Lalo.

- d. Fr Jim will preside at the 3pm Good Friday service. Fr Lalo will preside at the morning stations (in Spanish) and the evening liturgy (in Spanish).
- e. Fr John will preside on Holy Saturday assisted by Fr. Jim and Fr. Lalo (they will do the Baptisms of the RCIA candidates). Fr John will conduct confirmations of these individuals in a few weeks.
- f. The diocese has taken on the responsibility of developing an ecology project that involves alternative solar energy. We will be working with them as to the feasibility of transitioning to solar energy here at the Parish.
- g. We received word that some asbestos abatement work at a cost of \$5,000 needs to be done at the school and Parish center. There is some question as to whether the inspector actually inspected the area of concern. We are asking for a further inspection to clarify the issue.
- h. Fr John continues to have discussions with the administration of Pope John Paul HS as to issues impacting the relationship between the Parish and High School.
- i. There were several stories recently in the Holy Name Province newsletter highlighting the good work of the Parish in regard to advocating against the death penalty (Virginia has voted to end the death penalty). Further recognition was given for the tremendous work of the Francis House staff and generosity of Parishioners in responding to the needs of those most impacted by the Covid pandemic (food and financial assistance.)
- j. A report was given on the recent diocesan evaluation of our Parish finances. This evaluation was done for every Parish in the diocese.

VI. Finance Council Report – Marv Floom

- a. In February collections/donations were \$174K, down \$8,000 from budget but \$9,000 over this time last year. This is due to a large IRA Required Minimum Distribution donation. Spending was \$173k. \$1,000 less than collections and \$8,000 less than budget. \$12,000 more than last year because the school subsidy was deferred.
- b. Bishop's Lenten Appeal year-to date. As of 22 March, Only 394 households (vs prior yr. 492 households) have pledged. A total of \$140,000 or 81% of \$173,000 goal has been raised.
- c. Fr. George has procured upgraded internet capacity (dedicated fiber line) from Comcast at no increased cost.
- d. A solar Study & an outstanding Culvert Bond issue is still being analyzed by diocese.

- e. Only 5 sub-teachers are affected by minimum wage increase to \$11.00/hr. which goes into effect Jan 2022.

VII. Facility Discussion – Fr. John, Dr. Barber, Marv Floom

Every three years the Diocese sends a consultant to do a Parish school inspection as required under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act. The report indicates debris from the Thermal Shield Insulation in the crawlspace under the school. Remediation is proposed by abating debris by covering with plastic sheeting. This removes the potential for further damage. Cost estimate provided was \$5,000. It is unclear when such an inspection was held.

VIII. School Enrollment and Financial Status – Dr. Barber

- a. Dr. Barber thanked the council for its continued support; and especially Michelle Nicolai, Ulli Vaerst and Maggie Eaves for keeping her apprised of Prince William County issues that may impact the school.
- b. Enrollment has decreased from last year because of no pre-K students (20). Next year's enrollment numbers are 257 for grades K-8 with 18 four year old students projected for pre-K. There will be no after school care offered because of the need for greater numbers of adult supervision in this age group. Parents have been apprised of this and are in agreement.
- c. St. Francis of Assisi School had 12 entries for the Prince William Science fair. Eight students were recognized for excellence in their individual categories among all Prince William public and private school entries.
- d. All of the present staff is returning except one assistant teacher who is returning to school for a higher degree. This will decrease budget needs by \$25K as this position is not being replaced.
- e. The textbooks in use are ten years old and are one of the most expensive items to replace. A government grant of \$2000.00 will enable the school to purchase workbooks to supplement the text in use. There may be more grant monies awarded, but even this allows for no frill expenditures.
- f. New CDC guidelines of maintaining a 3 feet distance vs. six feet offer better space utilization and will allow for Parish use in some of the school rooms. K-5 classes currently have 30 students each.
- g. Dr Barber continues to stress the value of in-person education vs. virtual.
- h. The web page and Facebook are updated frequently as parents visit these sites to make determination for enrollment.

- i. Sister Karl Ann Homberg, Assistant Superintendent from the Diocese will make the annual Office of Catholic Schools Diocesan visit to St. Francis of Assisi school on Monday March 29..
- j. Dr. Barber closed by again thanking the councils and stated, “Where there is no vision, the people perish”, which is the guiding principle of the school and our community.

II. Old Business -- None

III. New Business

Terry Danner requested agreement from the Council to any shortfall for the \$9,000 VOICE (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) annual dues from the special collection. He offered the following background on VOICE

Church leaders realized that their parishes were doing social justice work. They decided to form an organizing group that could pool their collective power to make changes in the community.

Housing:

Held banks accountable during the foreclosure crisis. Won funds to help people affected by the foreclosure crisis. Also won money to be used for affordable housing. Some of this money was used to partner with Catholics for Housing to help save East End Trailer Park in Manassas.

SFA, Sacred Heart, and Holy Family VOICE teams worked with residents of River Run (55 and over affordable housing community). VOICE leaders partnered with residents to teach about tenant rights. Numerous fire code violations, health and safety risks, and parking issues were resolved with the apartment management company.

During the pandemic, VOICE worked with the Governor of Virginia and other state and local leaders to extend the eviction moratorium.

Education:

VOICE leaders in PWC worked to get additional Pre-K classes in Prince William County Schools. For the past few years, they have worked with the superintendent and School Board members to get additional funding in the budget for schools designated as Title I. This important work brings more equity across the county.

VOICE leaders in PWC worked with the superintendent to get Muslim holidays recognized in the school calendar. The directive provided an excused absence for students celebrating a religious holiday. It also made teachers aware of the date to avoid scheduling tests on those days.

Criminal Justice:

VOICE leaders in PWC worked to get a Public Defenders Office. The county has never had one until this year.

VOICE worked at the state-level to get Driver's Licenses reinstated to people with outstanding court fees.

SFA VOICE worked with local officials to end the PWC Adult Detention Center's 287g agreement with ICE.

A motion was made by Phil Bongiorno and seconded by Clarence Neason to concur with Parish funds being used to cover deficit of monies collected for the \$9,000 dues. Marv Floom agreed to take up the request with the finance committee members by email to expedite an answer. Fr John asked that the special collection not be held until July, after BLA is completed.

XII. Next Meeting – The May 2021 meeting will be May 1st, 2021 at 9:30 AM.

XIII. Closing Prayer – Offered by Terry Danner. “A New Serenity Prayer” Fr. James Martin SJ. (below)

XIV. Adjournment –11:30 am.

A New Serenity Prayer by Fr. James Martin SJ, from the blog The Jesuit Post

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
which is pretty much everyone,
since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not the last time I checked.*

*And while you're at it, God,
please give me the courage
to change what I need to change about myself,
which is frankly a lot, since, once again,
I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.
It's better for me to focus on changing myself
than to worry about changing other people,
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,
I can't change anyway.*

*Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter
than everyone else in the room,*

*that no one knows what they're talking about except me,
or that I alone have all the answers.*

*Basically, God,
grant me the wisdom
to remember that I'm
not you.*

Amen