

MEETING MINUTES: PASTORAL COUNCIL, OCTOBER 3, 2021

In attendance: Fr. Kirk Slattery, Matt Trinca, Alan Wesenberg, Michelle Trinca, Tyler Shiels, Bruce Zook, Linda Popolano

1. Linda opened the meeting with prayer.
2. Matt proposed that over the next three months the PC develop a series of small steps we can take weekly and monthly to bolster the parish's ministries and build a community of volunteerism. In talking about the three ministries/activities no longer operating at all, which are Social Justice, Stewardship, and the Senior Social Group, we learned that (1) there is ParishSoft software module that is a Parishioner Portal through which parishioners can update their own information and also volunteer. However, this module is time-consuming to get up and running and would require training, and also there is no available staff that would have the time to do so. Also, while available to all parishes in the Diocese as part of the ParishSoft software, Fr. Kirk does not know of any other parish that actually uses this module. We also learned from Bruce that (2) when the Stewardship Committee did have meetings, they developed a timeline for when in the year to best hold a Ministry Fair. If that time turns out to be early in the calendar year (after the winter holidays), then we can use Matt's plans of small, incremental steps over the next three months to work up to such a Ministry Fair. (Linda has sent an e-mail to Marc Lanning to try to obtain a copy of the Stewardship Committee's timeline.)
3. Michelle asked about updating the parish directory. Fr. Kirk said St. Gabriel's will not be creating anymore of the magazine-type photographic directories because all previous experiences with the companies who produce those (primarily to make money from having parishioners purchase their family photos) have not been good experiences.
4. When looking at ministries and volunteerism, Fr. Kirk asked us to keep two things in mind: (1) Some ministries (such as the Liturgy & Worship Ministries and some of the ministries formerly classified under Parish Life or Outreach) are very necessary to the mission of the church; however, there are some that could be probably classified as activities or hobbies and not necessarily as ministries. (2) When looking at any means to keep track of ministries and volunteers, we need to look at the possibilities from a multi-dimensional perspective, that is, from the various views of those who will be utilizing these systems, such as clergy, staff, parishioners, newcomers, etc.
5. While we have now completed determining which ministries/activities still exist vs. which do not (and Linda has drafted a reverse side of the Parish Registration Form to reflect this information), we now have to determine which are true ministries that serve the parish mission vs. which are activities, and then categorize them as such.

6. When discussing the difficulties people have with managing their time so that they can volunteer, given the demands of jobs and family life, Fr. Kirk spoke about the cultural situation that deprives people of having time for spiritual life and utilizing their time and talents at the parish. We discussed how we have to get across the message that in asking people to volunteer, we are not asking them to take on another job; we are talking about serving Jesus. We have to make clear that without an actively participating community, there is no church. In this regard, Matt said that people are catechized but not evangelized, that is, they have not had a personal experience of Christ.
7. In regard to new parishioners volunteering (especially those who fail to complete the back of the registration form), Matt suggested (and Linda will follow up on this in her next round of revisions) adding wording (in English and in Spanish) to the front of the registration form that reminds new parishioners to complete the reverse side of the form.
8. We discussed the possibilities of Ministry Leadership Retreats and Dinners. Fr. Kirk said that only a small number of those invited attended the one-day Ministry Retreat at Benet Hill back in 2013 and that only about 30% of ministry leaders attend the annual Ministry Leadership dinner. Tyler suggested perhaps quarterly shorter events for ministry leaders might work as an alternative.
9. It was agreed that personal invitations are also a very effective way of asking people to join ministries. Fr. Kirk told us a primary teaching about stewardship is not to say “we need help”, but rather to invite with a positive vision of the outcome. Related to this, we need to give those not involved a better idea of what each ministry actually does. Before the parish school opens (now scheduled for mid-2024), Fr. Kirk would like to change the culture of the parish to fulfill this healthy vision, which basically says to newcomers and the uninvolved: “this is where we’re going and we want you to be part of it.”
10. Fr. Kirk will be attaching these types of ideas to his preaching, around the liturgical calendar. He said one of his most effective homilies was an Advent homily about giving a gift for you don’t have to spend money or buy from a store. Likewise, we can talk about sharing time and talents as a gift to Jesus which doesn’t need to be purchased and has a value beyond dollars.
11. In regards to the Outreach Ministry, which was coordinated by Janet Hutchinson on the previous Pastoral Council, their focus was on two different areas. One was Outreach Projects, which occur throughout the calendar year and include the School Supply Drive, Thanksgiving Baskets, and the Giving Tree, and Sue Garcia will continue to coordinate the group which handles those projects. The other was the Tithing schedule, which is a weekly tithe of \$500 from offertory donations to different charitable organizations. The Tithing schedule for the current fiscal year until July 2022 is already complete, but, for future fiscal years, Fr. Kirk wants the Tithing schedule to be decided on by the PC. He would like us to think in concentric rings, that those organizations closer to home and in alignment with the mission of our parish and of the Church as a whole get a greater share of the tithe dollars.
12. It was decided that the PC Commissioning would take place during the 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday, November 14th. With Bruce leaving the PC, one or three new additional members would be necessary to

keep the number of voting members an odd (rather than an even) number. Fr. Kirk wants parishioners to know who the PC members are and he wants them to be visible, so that people are comfortable with coming to talk to them.

13. Michelle mentioned that the website needs modernization and to be cleaned up, especially because it should be more streamlined before the parish school is opened. It needs better categorization for ease of use. When Michelle and Tyler mentioned costs for a more modern website, Fr. Kirk told us that the diocese hosts the current website at no cost to the parish.
14. Michelle suggested that perhaps we should have a slogan or “battle cry” as we undertake the first three months of steps to increase involvement and volunteerism. Fr. Kirk suggested the PC work on this before November 14th. A few off-the-cuff ideas suggested were “Be the Light” or “Jesus is the Light; We are the Torchbearers”.
15. The agenda for our next (via ZOOM) meeting at 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 18, will be (1) 2021 Tithing list for review, (2) Project Management – prioritize major efforts and then choose small steps towards accomplishing the top priorities over the next three months.
16. Linda closed the meeting with prayer. Alan volunteered to lead prayer at the Oct. 18th ZOOM meeting.

Approved by:

Fr. Kirk Slattery, Pastor

Matt Trinca

Matt Trinca, PC Chair

Approved on:
