

ST. MARY'S CHURCH
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES
November 18, 2015
7:00 pm

Present: Monsignor Amey, Fr. Chip Lockett, George Griffin, Matt Curley, Carole Day, Debby Eisel, Erin Iturriaga, Joan Madaras, Matt McCormick and Virginia Onley.

Absent: Paul Barrett, Kammie Bell, John duFief, Gary Funkhouser, Cele Galczynski, Karen Gilroy, and Lacy Prebula.

The meeting was called to order and Monsignor Amey gave the opening prayer. He read to us a message from Cardinal Wuerl about the Paris terrorist attack. The Cardinal asks that we stand with our Holy Father in making another impassioned appeal that the whole Church and all the faithful join as one to implore God to change enough hearts that all people might enjoy the gift of peace.

The minutes from the October 21, 2015 meeting were approved.

Pastor's Report

Monsignor commented on the recent strategic planning meetings for the school. All three meetings were similar in their message. The first meeting was for the faculty, the second meeting was for our Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council and School Advisory Board. The last meeting was for the school parents and interested parishioners. All three meetings were to inform people what our status is and what our long range plans are for the school. There was good input from the Catholic Schools office during the meeting as well. The outcome was very positive and the groups appreciated being included in the meeting.

Monsignor handed out the results from our annual October Head Count 2015. The absolute total for the month was 8219 people attending Mass. Overall we had almost 200 additional people attending Mass this October compared to last October. We noted that the 9 am Mass lost about the same amount as was gained by the Sunday 5 pm Mass. That Mass is definitely becoming more popular. There were no big differences overall since last year.

Monsignor announced that the Catholic Business Network Gala is this Friday evening. We are sending ten of our active parishioners to attend the gala. The CBN-MC Foundation donated about \$3500 in scholarship and grant money to our 8th grade students and to our school. Several St. Mary's parishioners are very active in the Catholic Business Network.

Our parishioner, Lou Brune, has just been instituted as an acolyte in the permanent diaconate program. He will help serve at the 10:30 am Mass on a regular basis and will be included together with the Extraordinary Ministers during Mass. Lou's permanent diaconate class graduates in 2017.

The Pope has named this coming year as the *Year of Mercy* which begins on December 8, 2015 and ends November 20, 2016. The biblical passage for the Holy Year's theme is from Luke Chapter 6 verse 36, in which Jesus tells his disciples, "Be merciful as your Father is merciful." The Pope has also revised the process by which Catholics may have their marriages annulled,

streamlining steps that many in the church considered too cumbersome and costly. The three main changes are; eliminating a second review by a cleric before a marriage can be nullified; giving bishops the ability to fast-track and grant the annulments themselves in certain circumstances; and by making the process free, except for a nominal fee for administrative costs. According to Pope Francis, the change happened because it was unfair that those seeking an annulment are "long oppressed by darkness of doubt" over the dissolution of their marriages. It was also in following of the Pope's idea of the Catholic Church being a "field hospital" that goes out to meet people where they are most in need, and then to treat their most serious wounds first." Pope Francis said he would grant all Catholic priests temporary authority to "absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it". The Archdiocese of Washington has already streamlined some of the requirements for annulments and abortion forgiveness. Monsignor has received several advertisements to purchase pamphlets for the Year of Mercy. He will decide what would work for our parish to use as handouts and for programs. Monsignor would also like to hear any ideas for the "Year" that the Council has. Carole Day will submit her ideas in writing to Monsignor.

The next Upper Montgomery County East Deanery meeting is at Good Counsel High School on December 9. The principal of Good Counsel asked to host the meeting.

All of the priests of the ADW were invited to attend a convocation which took place in Cambridge, Maryland, November 3 - 5. The Convocation is scheduled every two years. There were two presentations by Father Thomas Rosica, C.S.B.. The first was called, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Mind and Heart of Pope Francis" and the second was called "New Directions in Pastoral Ministry for Marriage and Family Life". Fr. Rosica cautioned the priests to be careful how the media interprets what is happening in the world today. Erin commented that she would like to hear more from our bishops about the current immigration situation. There is a lot of miscommunication because of the media. Other workshops were offered for the priests during the convocation. Information will be coming out from Cardinal Wuerl about the synod of the family.

Old Business

a. Parish Community Meeting - St. Mary's School

Debby commented that 99% of the feedback she received about the meeting has been very positive. There are a lot of young families that are excited and are active in the school. She has received some very good ideas from the parents about ways to make our school stand out. The annual IQAR (Internal Quality Assurance Review) was held today. Their recommendations basically were the same as was talked about at the meetings last week. Debby made an amendment to the school budget because the figures presented in the annual financial report were not correct. The parish on average gives the school about \$250,000 as a subsidy. This year, the school hopes to raise an additional \$60,000 in fundraising to keep those figures accurate. They plan to raise the money at the annual gala, through fundraising, and through the parish raffle tickets. This year's annual raffle has already begun. The annual gala is on April 9, 2016, and the theme is "Irish Blessings". Debby discussed the downward enrollment trend that has happened in the past 10 years. One of the reasons for the

decline is because of two new Catholic schools having been built in our area. It was also thought that our middle school was weak but now our faculty is completely different from two years ago. We have stronger teachers in math and language arts and a phenomenal faculty overall. The building committee has been working on new construction plans to reorganize and revitalize the school. The proposed plans are for a new façade to the school building which includes a parish meeting room that can be used at any time. The plans also include three new classrooms to allow for all day preschool. The parish dream is also to expand the gym. The four ideas that came from the parents after the meeting were:

1. To apply to be an IB school (cost could be prohibitive)
2. Offer full day preschool
3. Have an active alumni endowment
4. Apply for grants for faith based and community organizations

b. Building Committee Update

Monsignor Amey, Debby and the Delizzio Architects are meeting with the City of Rockville tomorrow to see how we can move forward with the building plans. We will need to have a certain amount of money raised before we can get approval from the ADW. Overall, the plans and the cost for the renovations seem to be in line with the capabilities of our parish.

New Business

a. Parish School Fund Appeal

Nick Martinelli and Debby spoke at the end of the Masses on the weekend of November 14/15 about the Annual School Appeal. Letters and a brochure were also sent out to our parishioners. Debby reported that we have already received \$18,000 toward this year's budgeted amount of \$40,000. She hopes we will raise even more funds this year. Monsignor commented that there is still some confusion about the difference between the Annual School Appeal and our monthly education collection. We need to clarify those collections for the parishioners. Debby would like to place the Appeal envelopes with the brochures in the pews this weekend.

b. Upcoming Parish Liturgical Calendar

The upcoming calendar includes our Thanksgiving Mass, the Advent Season, The Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the Christmas liturgies.

Liaison reports-

The Greg Gannon Food Drive takes place on December 5. A flyer is going in the bulletin this weekend.

The St. Nicholas Festival is on December 5, after the 5 pm Mass.

There is a flyer for the Advent Giving Tree/Alternative Giving also going in the bulletin this weekend.

Our school is planning to have the Gabriel Project Baby Bottle fundraiser in January.

Erin requested that the social concerns calendar for 2016 be put on the January meeting agenda.

Carole reported that Sodality will be selling the Montgomery County Right-to-Life Christmas cards after Mass. Carole will get together with Sodality to see if we will host the Right-to-Life marchers this year. She will report back to us on their decision.

Matt reported that the Youth Group attended a fall retreat at Camp Wabanna. Almost 50 students from St. Marys, St. Catherine and St. Bernadette attended the retreat. The Youth Group is also selling Christmas wreaths as a fundraiser to offset the cost for retreats and activities in 2016. The weekly Youth Group meetings continue to draw about 35-40 students.

George mentioned that we are looking for a husband and wife to manage our parish Pre-cana program. The couple who currently is in charge would like to step down once there is a replacement.

Next meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for January 20, at 7 pm. Fr. Chip gave the closing prayer. We have set the dates for our 2016 meetings. Please mark them on your calendar (Third Wednesday of the month):

February 17

March 16

April 20

May18

Parish Pastoral Council Positions

- President-Monsignor Amey
- Chairperson- George Griffin
- 1st VC and Building-John duFief
- 2nd VC-Gary Funkhouser
- Recording Secretary – Joan Madaras
- Corresponding Secretary-Virginia Onley
- Liaison for Community-Karen Gilroy
- Liaison for Service- Matt McCormick
- Liaison for Worship- Paul Barrett
- Liaison for Stewardship/Admin-Kammie Bell
- Liaison for Education – Carole Day