

Collaborative Parish Council Meeting February 21, 2024

In attendance: Nino Amoroso, Father Darin Colarusso, MaryJo Farelli, Deacon John Kobrenski, Trish Rafferty, John Santarpio, Joe Serwatka, Monica Silvey, Jane Shawcross, Henry Theberge, Mark Ward, John Waterworth

Fr. Colarusso opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:11 pm. The minutes of the December meeting were accepted. Father gave an **Update to the Finances**. Mass attendance has stabilized or slightly improved at both parishes. St. Monica has less than 600 people attending Mass on the weekends. Both parishes are still in the black this year because of the Grand Annual donations, but once the anticipated expenses of the second half of the year are met, both parishes will be in the red. St. Lucy surpassed its Grand Annual inside goal of \$60K. It is currently at approximately \$74K. St. Monica had only raised about \$60K, but thanks to a \$5,000 matching gift and Father speaking at all the Masses there, a few more large donations were made this week and another \$4K in smaller donations was received. Father will use a second gift of \$5,000 as a second Matching Gift incentive. Joe wondered why the weekly budget varies significantly at St. Monica. Father suspects it has something to do with the way the electronic funds are transferred, particularly from people who pay monthly.

Father reiterated that our parishes do not receive funds from the archdiocese to help with deficit spending. The parishes are required to turn over 10% of Offertory collections to the Cardinal as well as honor an 8% assessment for the ministerial services of the archdiocese. Father would like to see a group of **volunteers** working the funerals as liaisons with the family and acolytes at the funeral masses. The Diocese would provide training in that ministry.

Father met with **personnel** of both parishes on January 9th to explain that due to our financial situations we can't be duplicating effort or paying for work that is not being done. He is talking with Human Resources at the diocesan level to handle the letting go of some staff members properly and ethically. Father also looked into the possibility of having the hospital help defray the cost of our second priest who would act as a part-time Catholic Chaplain. The hospital wanted too many weekday hours to make it financially worthwhile. The school custodian has retired and not been replaced. There was further discussion of the impact volunteers have on the budget. More volunteers mean staff is let go or their hours are cut back.

Holy Week services were discussed. Our Collaborative has gone from 2 separate Holy Weeks to one set of televised services during the pandemic, to alternating some of the services last year with Holy Thursday at St. Monica to use the Chapel for Adoration and Good Friday at St. Lucy. Last year, 110 people attended the Vigil at St. Lucy and 175 at St. Monica. The Council agreed to alternating the Vigil going forward with it being held at St. Monica this year. There is only 1 RCIA candidate this year between both parishes, but the **question of what to do about the blessing of the Easter candles** was discussed at length. Father does not like the idea of blessing 2 candles, so he will confer with other collaboratives to see how they handle the need for more than one candle.

Nino asked about efforts to attract more young people. Father mentioned the Penance service with contemporary music that will be held February 28. A school Mass was very successful.

Joe noted that the collaborative website still has Father Joe D'Onofrio's picture on it with no mention of Father Harvey. The Pastor will request that Karl rectify that.

Monica asked about a kneeler being used at Communion time. To avoid a tripping hazard, she suggested putting the kneeler off to the side for those who would wish to use it. Father would only consider doing something like that if there were a High Holy Mass.

Mark asked about volunteers who could be used to do the things that are not getting done in the parishes. Father highlighted the need for 2 people to run the Fall Fair at St. Lucy. Karl and Kira did it last year, but to be successful and grow, it needs volunteers to work with the Sodality and the school to maximize profit and attendance. Mark Alaimo has offered to help with a Gala fundraiser at St. Monica.

John S. wondered if the parish or Council had any connections to Major Donors. Father noted that they might buy tables at an event or donate substantial items for an auction.

Henry suggested using lectors from both parishes for the Vigil services.

Mary Jo mentioned that the school children will be collecting food for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and that the Holy Thursday collection will go to the society. The St. Vincent de Paul Society disperses approximately \$50K in funds each year.

Motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm after a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Shawcross