

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council

December 4, 2014

6:00 PM

PRESENT: Joe Cox, Deacon Bob Digan, Maggie Free, Charles Houff, Carol Lombardo, Deacon Jim McElroy, Fr. Jack Sheaffer, Don Zukowski.

ABSENT: Devon Atwell

EXCUSED: Sheila Viale, Hilary Walker

I. Opening Prayer

Father Sheaffer opened the meeting at 6:03 PM with prayer, asking those present to pray for Hilary Walker who is recovering from injuries from a fall.

II. Review & Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the October Meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council were accepted.

IV. St. Mary's School/Parish Relations

- A. Fr. Sheaffer is continuing monthly Confessions with Grades 3-8; the response from the students has been good.
- B. Mass will be celebrated on Monday, December 8th at 9:00 AM and on December 19th at 9:00 AM
- C. Fr. Sheaffer has completed the Stained Glass Class with two of three groups of 8th Graders. The third group will take place after Christmas.

V. Holy Days of Obligation

- A. December 8th – the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is one holy day that is not dropped when it falls on a Monday. However, because it does fall on a Monday, we cannot have a vigil Mass the night before because all of those Masses would be for the Sunday obligation. The schedule will be as follows: St. Mary's in Lee 7:15 AM and 7:00 PM, St. Mary's School 9:00 AM, St. Joseph's in Stockbridge 12:05 PM, and St. Mary of the Lakes in Otis 5:30 PM.
- B. Christmas Masses – December 24th 4:00 and 5:30 PM at St. Mary's in Lee, December 25th 8:00 AM in Otis, 9:30 AM in Stockbridge, and 11:00 AM in Lee.

- C. January 1st – Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. December 31st 4:00 PM in Lee, January 1st 8:00 AM in Otis, 9:30 AM in Stockbridge, and 11:00 AM in Lee.

VI. Christian Service

- A. Annual Winter Coat Drive

Joe Cox indicated that the drive was very successful and that all items have been delivered to the Christian Center in Pittsfield for distribution to the needy. Ellen Merritt of the Christian Center was very appreciative.

- B. Dreams of Joy

Joe Cox indicated that this weekend marks the end of the drive. He will leave the collection containers in place for this weekend and the following weekend.

- C. Future Plans

We will have another personal care needs drive tentatively planned for January 24th through February 1st. Since we received a number of used and even empty items like deodorant sticks and toothbrushes, we will make clear that this drive is for new and unused items. We will also be holding the Free-Trade Sale for Catholic Relief Services again as well as “Operation Rice Bowl” during Lent. Joe mentioned a “Diaper Drive” that might be a possibility next summer.

VII. Spiritual Life

- A. Mass of Remembrance

The Mass of Remembrance was not well attended. Fr. Sheaffer will look for a better way to advertise it next year.

- B. Funeral Coordinators

Sheila Viale has been working with grieving families and is reaching out to Fred Conforti and, hopefully soon, Carol Lombardo. The planning seems to be going well. Families seem to do well with it and the staff at Kelly Funeral Home like the system as well.

- C. Thanksgiving Day

We needed to cancel the Thanksgiving Day Mass at St. Mary’s in Lee and the Ecumenical Service at St. Joseph’s because of the storm. There were four boxes of bread. One box was distributed at St. Mary’s on Friday morning. Three boxes were delivered to St. Paul’s in Stockbridge for distribution.

D. Lenten Mission 2015

Deacon Jim has received a commitment from Msgr. John Bonzagni to run the mission. We are hoping to have the mission on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent.

E. Advent Penance Services

December 7th at 6:30 PM at St. Ann's in Lenox

December 14th at 3:00 PM at St. Joseph's in Stockbridge

VIII. Our Lady's Oratory

A. Schedule

Deacon Bob reported that Donna Abbott has updated the schedule; we will get it posted on the parish website as soon as possible.

IX. Old Business

A. Stewardship Appeal

We have had an increase in giving – it's too early to tell exactly what the long-term increase will be.

B. Daily Mass in Oratory

Daily Mass attendance has been too heavy to allow us to move the Mass into the Oratory. Perhaps when the weather gets much colder, we will move in there. Daily Mass attendance does tend to drop as it gets colder.

C. Cold & Flu Precautions

An announcement about being careful when ill or when health is fragile. The announcement in the bulletin recommends receiving Communion in the hand if one is ill as well as simply waving and verbally exchanging the Sign of Peace at Mass. Also hand sanitizer will be available at all the doors of our churches beginning this coming weekend.

D. Life Teen/Edge

Fr. apologized for not being able to meet with the planning team this month and will schedule a meeting that will take place shortly after Christmas.

X. New Business

A. Religious Education/CCD

Fr. Sheaffer indicated that we need to look at restructuring our CCD program next year and seriously look for someone to coordinate or to

help Libby with some training and with her other responsibilities in the parish. Libby had been doing it for the past couple of years on a volunteer basis.

B. Book Club

Deacon Jim is working to start a Book Club. Members would primarily read works of fiction by Catholic writers and meet to discuss them. He has had five people express interest thus far.

XI. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council will be held at St. Mary's School in Lee on January 22, 2015, at 6:00 PM.

XII. Closing Prayer

Fr. Sheaffer closed the meeting with a prayer at 6:35 PM. Father asked for prayers for Stan and Penny McClure from St. Mary of the Lakes. They were moving into their daughter's house in Shrewsbury on Monday and the daughter died in some sort of accident at the house. The funeral will be Saturday. Fr. Sheaffer and Carol Lombardo plan to attend.