

February 2021 Pastoral Council Meeting Summary

New Council Members: Steve Bailey, Emily Cobb and Susan Gatto were introduced at this Zoom meeting.

Financial Report: The Finance Committee is now meeting every other month because of COVID. The November and December financials were both described as “routine”. Church collections remain in decline but expenses are down as well because of fewer events and activities. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans from the federal government were forgiven which helps out a lot. At the mid-year point, our church is still in a good position because many parishioners have gone to on-line giving. It’s increased from about 50% of the parish at the pre-COVID level to about 70% today. This provides a lot of financial stability. The debt for the Spiritan Center construction has been reduced to \$1.49 million.

St. Oscar Romero Community: It was asked if we continue to pay rent on the Greenbrier facility that is not currently in use because of COVID distancing requirements. Father Tony explained that we are still paying rent. The owners did provide some financial relief in this regard and wishes us to remain there. When these protocols are finally lifted that religious community should thrive again.

Education and Formation Commission: Interim Head of St. Joseph School Matt Tucker reported it has 498 students enrolled PreK-12. There was an appointment only open house held the end of January. Mr. Tucker said the Elementary and Preschools are “busting at the seams”. He and his administrative team have begun work on the 2021-22 school budget. He’s spoken at Masses about the “Our Children, Our Future” fundraising campaign for new buildings and says \$5,600,000 has been pledged to date. There is also \$1.2 million left to match with the generous \$4 million donation already pledged anonymously. Father Tony noted that applications for the lead school principal are still being taken with Interviews to follow. An announcement about this position is expected by the end of March. So far, about 50% of the school staff are receiving COVID vaccinations. Some are being administered by UCA nursing students through the Conway Regional Health System.

New Parishioners Welcomed: Father Joseph announced that four new Catholics were recently brought into the church through its RCIA program. They are Preston and Maggie Martin, Noah Martin, and Todd Hennessey. We heartily welcome them all to this religious community.

Pastor’s Report: Father Tony talked about this being the Year of St. Joseph worldwide and our local devotions to our Patron through the seven sorrows and seven joys St. Joseph experienced. Father added we’ll continue with such devotions throughout the course of the year to grow closer to our Lord’s foster father. “With each sorrow comes the corresponding joy. This shows God is ever faithful even through difficult times like these.” He also said the Holy Father is adding a new feast day that will come at the end of July honoring Martha, Mary and Lazarus. It was a family that Jesus stayed close with and drew strength from.