

Summary of February 2020 Pastoral Council Meeting

New Board Member: Ms. Rita Sanders attended her first meeting as a new Council member replacing the retired Ray Luyet.

Financial Report: Data from the months of November and December was examined. There were no out of the ordinary expenses to discuss, but there was attention focused on the recent decline of Mass collections. If this were to continue, some hard decisions might have to be made in budgeting for the next fiscal year. It was noted there are 1,850 families in the parish but 600 or more don't contribute regularly. It was said that St. Joseph is no different than many other parishes in that respect. Catholics in the main are not known as overly generous givers. Yet our parish must strive to find ways to change this thinking without making constant appeals for money. It's essential this be done if we're to fund all our needs and services.

Education and Formation: At the time of the meeting, the high school was waiting to hear if one of our students qualified as a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. It has since been learned that Nicholas Brorman has achieved that rare honor. Will Steel was the last St. Joseph student to be recognized as such in 2009. Principal Diane Wolfe attributes Nicholas' selection, in part, to the special training in college entrance test preparation that our two English teachers have. She also said one of our math teachers is going to receive similar training.

Parish Life Commission: The Commission sponsored Lenten Dinners will be March 4 and 18 and April 1. The charities that will benefit from the admission charges will be Alzheimer's Arkansas/JoeBear Apparel, the Catholic Campus Ministry Capital Campaign, and COHO (City of Hope Outreach).

Social Justice and Charitable Outreach Commission: The St. Peter's Episcopal Guatemala Mission was February 16-19. Nine missionaries connected to our parish were registered. They were to distribute clothing and shoes, and assist with construction projects. A Family Mission Trip to the St. Joseph Center in North Little Rock is set for April 24-26. There's already been one Delta Disciples Mission Trip that was made in mid-January. Another is set for April 30-May 3. Several potential projects for local residents are being vetted. The MOF (Men of Faith) Appalachia Mission Trip is set for June 2-6. The \$1,000 deposit to Hand-in-Hand Ministries for the cancelled Belize trip might be used to fund a few scholarships for Appalachia.

Old Business: The church piano used at Masses is not functioning optimally. It stays out of tune and has been adversely affected by humidity. The musicians and choirs that depend on it would like to see it replaced. A Steinway being looked at prices out at \$22,000. The possibility of a special fund-raiser for it was brought up. It was thought by some that a goodly number of parishioners would support such an effort. Others wondered if current expenses and Spiritan Center debt might warrant pushing such a request back a while? A question was also raised about possibly selling the current piano to help defray the cost? The consensus seemed to be that piano we now have would be put to better use if it were donated to the Elementary School. It's said to be in need of a much better instrument than what it now has. There was also some brief discussion about the need for new church kneelers. The subject of church security came up again. It was reported this has come up elsewhere, including Magnolia where Father Burmester pastors. He said local law enforcement officials were invited to come in and advise what church members, particularly ushers, should do to prepare for potential security threats. There's Diocesan support for this approach, and the Council agreed. It was suggested that school Resource Officer, Brad Fornash, might be a highly qualified person to consult with on this.

Pastor's Report: Father Tony was looking forward to Father Chandra's return around March 1st. He also was excited about the pilgrimage he was leading to Mexico which would include the carrying of parishioner's petitions to be presented at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.