

St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Minutes for January 7, 2020

Members Present: Fr Frank Baumert, Betty Piskorski, Liz Fox, Monica Mora-Handlos, Joe Pesek, Barb Boettger, Travis Washington, Abby Skradski, Karen Fogarty, Connie Gewinner

Members Absent: None

Guests: Minh Trahn

Fr. opened the meeting with prayer.

OLD BUSINESS

MEETING WITH THE ARCHBISHOP: Pastors of parishes South of Dodge and East of 75th St. had their meeting with the Archbishop Thursday, December 19, 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to come up with the most feasible plan that will address the shortage of priests and declining attendance at Masses. Parishes were arranged into “clusters.” One cluster would include many of the parishes in the old Stockyard’s area. The number of weekend Masses will be cut down in many of those parish. The Hispanic population is increasing in this area so the need for Spanish Masses is higher than the need for English Masses. There is little parking for any of those parishes.

St. Thomas More, Holy Cross and St. Joan of Arc is also slated as another possible cluster. There are approximately 3,000 families in the three sites. This cluster would eventually have one senior pastor and one associate. There will be a reasonable Mass schedule; different Mass times for both weekend and weekday Masses at each parish, possibly two weekend Masses at each. Weekday Masses would also have to be reduced. Each parish would probably keep their own identity. A positive result from this change may be the sharing of resources and parishioners talents. Fr. expects there will be over 100 funerals a year among the 3 parishes. Fr. Frank seems to be the likely one to be chosen “senior pastor.” Even though planning for these will be starting soon, the major transitions might not happen for another year and a half, for they are contingent on when retirements might happen..

Our Lady of Lourdes already takes care of St. Adalbert’s. St. Peter’s has the Vietnamese parish and a Spanish speaking community. Expectations are that St. Francis Cabrini will build up due to the continuous growth near the downtown area and because Holy Family Parish is closing. Fr. says, “There are a lot of things that need to be worked out, stay tuned!” One comment from a council member was, “It is courageous to keep parishes open.”

NEW BUSINESS

NEW PARISH HALL/GYM: It would be advantageous for STM to have the extra space with a new Parish hall and gym. All 3 parishes in our cluster are hurting for space. We have to decide if we have the money in order to make a decision to do this. We will need to work with an architect to see the feasibility of all this. One possible plan would be to: _remodel the current gym, add 2-4

classrooms, move the offices over to the gym freeing up the rectory to be more of a private rectory space for the priests. The priests could meet with families and parishioners without all the extra traffic in and out as currently happens. Then build a new gym south of the school with a connecting passage from the school to the new gym.

We need to find out just what is feasible. Parishioners may be more excited about building a gym and a few more classrooms than a parish center. It is possibly a two to three million dollar project. Another positive is - this could help us bring our "School Catholics" into "Parish Catholics."

GAME ON: Travis brought to the table a new fundraiser called "Game On," an Interactive Game Show which is currently very popular at Holy Ghost Church. Woody Diederich will be putting it on. Different games e.g. *The Price is Right*, will be played. Travis asked the Council to drop in on the "Game On" activity at Holy Ghost to see what it is all about. Travis said they are very successful with it at Holy Ghost. It will be a community building event. It's a fun way to get to know each other – food, drink and raffle for a cost of \$35.00. It can involve about 250 people. He said once the parishioners experience an evening like this, they are eager to come again. The date we are looking at is May 2nd.

The interest in More Di Gras has been fading, but we have some very energetic people working to revive it this year. Comment was, "It's expensive."

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 4th at 7:00pm.

Fr. closed the meeting in prayer.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Connie Gewinner*