



Holy Savior Pastoral Council Minutes

6 p.m., February 27, 2023

Rectory Basement, 7 Brown Street, Mexico ME

Attendees:

Fr. Aaron Damboise, President
John Bernard, Chairman
Sister Bernadette Gautreau, Vice-chair
Jennifer Kreckel, Secretary
Sharon Gates
Jamie Gallant
Bill Gallant
Linda Pepin (ex-officio)

Not present:

Margaret Donahue

Parishioners attending:

Linda Sassi
Vincent Sassi
Susan Adley
Marie DiSciullo-Naples (Worship & Spirituality committee)

The meeting convened at 6:01 p.m. with opening prayer by Father Aaron Damboise.

November minutes:

MOTION: Jennifer Kreckel made a **motion to accept the November 2022 meeting minutes**. Bill Gallant seconded.

Discussion: Linda noted an amendment on page 3 in the section pertaining to St. Mary's Chapel.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously to approve minutes as amended.

Parishioner item: Use of Latin in Masses

Linda Sassi (speaking for herself and Pearl Snowman who was unable to attend due to illness) provided the council a list of 76 signatures of parishioners making a statement, noting they stopped collecting signatures when they were advised it was improper to do so:

"We the parishioners of St. Athanasius-St. John's Church do not believe that incorporating Latin in our masses is a way to attract new people to our parish. We are striving to go forward, not backward. We

love our church and work hard to keep it alive. The decision to bring Latin to our church was decided by a few individuals. The church is made up of many people with many opinions regarding a change of this nature. Many of these individuals are ready to have their voices heard. The following individuals do not wish to see Latin used at our masses.”

Other points Linda S. raised include:

- The desire to participate completely in the mass, as an intimate experience in language that makes her feel connected to Jesus.
- Disappointment that parishioners weren't included in the decision to reintegrate Latin.
- Vignettes of Latin being confusing/alienating and off-putting to some visitors
- Skepticism that the increased attendance cited at other parishes which have incorporated Latin is likely to translate to similar increases at St A & J.

Full text of Linda's presentation is attached (Atch 1).

The council had a thorough discussion of the perspectives presented. The new missal was discussed in conjunction, with views expressed that in addition to small print and much page-flipping required, the songs were unfamiliar and not conducive to the joyful singing parishioners value.

Fr. Aaron expressed gratitude to Linda S. for her honest expression in an appropriate way. He acknowledged the discomfort and fear regarding the changes, which came after his reflection and study of Vatican II documents as well as experiences in previous parishes and parishes around us. Fr. Aaron is looking for the parish to grow, not stay where we are. He also noted discomfort with a new language can be viewed as solidarity with others who struggle to integrate based on language differences—almost as a fast from language we are comfortable with.

Of note, Latin is being incorporated into Mass during Advent and Lent (the penitential seasons), with English in other seasons of the liturgical year.

John closed the discussion noting that the council is advisory, and we all pray for guidance to do the right thing.

There was a short intermission in the meeting, during which Linda S., Vince, and Sue departed.

Committee reports - Worship & Spirituality Committee

Marie provided an update on the Worship & Spirituality Committee, which meets quarterly and focuses on the liturgical and spiritual life of the parish. Her report is attached (**Atch 2**).

Fr. Aaron has eight tickets available for parishioners to attend the Chrism Mass on April 4. Fr. Aaron also noted good attendance at Ash Wednesday Masses: 114 in Bethel and 97 in Rumford.

Committee reports – Cemetery Committee

John stated that Richie Philbrick, chairman of the cemetery committee, was unable to attend due to incoming snowstorm. Fr. Aaron reported on the committee in Richie's absence; Richie will be invited to update at the next pastoral council (May 22).

Fr. Aaron stated cemetery bylaws need to be updated (1984). A subcommittee is working on that, and Fr. Aaron is getting examples from other parishes. The goal is to ensure we have bylaws, and to have the

committee advise on the upkeep of the cemetery. He noted the committee hadn't met during Covid, so for the initial meeting the existing committee members reconvened. The cemetery committee is Richie, Jan Bordeaux, David Blouin, the sexton, priest, business manager, and office assistant.

John noted the bylaws should include job descriptions and description of the process for changing bylaws.

Easter Vigil – Initiations into Church

Fr. Aaron said there are 11 young people making sacraments this year. Nick Puia's three children will receive sacraments at Easter Vigil. Father also reported he met with two adults who are seeking baptism.

Alpha update

Fr. Aaron has been meeting with people to get together Sunday evenings for an initial Alpha group. He has four people interested in getting trained in Alpha by immersion to discern if they want to participate. Feedback is that it's similar to the family groups that St. Joseph's & St. Theresa's used to do.

Update on school rental/status

Fr. Aaron stated someone has shown interest in using the building for senior living. There is a letter of intent to lease, then purchase after five years. Fr. Aaron is working with the diocese on the lease, which is not yet signed. Per the LOI, while leasing, the other party would cover expenses and pay \$30,000 per year in rent, which would be available to the parish for operations. At the end of the five years, they would purchase the building for \$500,000, which would go into stable patrimony.

Implications for the current renters are not clear now, but the parish has asked if the Food Pantry can stay. If it needs to move, there is discussion about options for accommodating it in the parish hall. Fr. Aaron said we may need a subcommittee about how to support the food pantry's need for space.

Bereavement subcommittee

Fr. Aaron stated we do a good job on funerals and helping families through the funeral process, but after the funeral there are opportunities for more support to the families. Funerals have become somewhat transactional, and we want to go beyond that. He reviewed some options he's seen for further support (calls, cards, courses, retreats, meals). He requested a subcommittee form to consider options to meet local needs with local resources, likely volunteers in coordination with office staff. The Diocese has a director of lifelong faith formation who may have ideas.

Jennifer Kreckel and Sharon Gates volunteered to form a subcommittee, with Sharon noting her previous experience in facilitating bereavement support.

There was discussion about difficulty with getting volunteers. It was noted in general parishioners are generous with their money, but less so with their time. Sister B said she may run it by the Bible study group.

Local funeral homes have some bereavement support programs and materials that may inform parish efforts. Father emphasized the need for this ministry, as there is a sizable part of the parish in this category.

Other business

- **Sister B's Bible Class:** Sister B reported that on the week when temperatures were far below zero, and the town had a warming shelter, her Bible class was studying passages including Isaiah "feed the hungry, clothe the naked..." Connie Venskus voiced desire to actually do something to help people out in the cold. She collected on the spot a generous donation from class members to purchase food goods that evening, which she delivered to the warming center. Sister B cited this as an instance of putting the Word into action.
- **Rides to church:** Jennifer said she had contact with someone unable to drive who was having trouble finding a ride to Mass. She asked if there was a mechanism to arrange for rides. The group decided a notice should go in the bulletin asking people to contact the church office if they need a ride or if they are willing to give a ride.
- **Upcoming meetings:** Meetings are at 6 p.m. in the rectory basement. The next meeting is **May 22, 2023**. Sharon noted she will not be available to attend.

Meeting closed with prayer and adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Pepin
Office Assistant

February 27, 2023

Good evening, Father Aaron and members of the Pastoral Council. First, we would like to thank you for allowing us to speak tonight and bring our concerns to you regarding the use of Latin in our church.

The following is the statement that headlined our Petition:

We the parishioners of St. Athanasius-St. Johns's Church do not believe that incorporating Latin in our masses is a way to attract new people to our parish. We are striving to go forward, not backward. We love our church and work hard to keep it alive. The decision to bring Latin to our church was decided by a few individuals. The church is made up of many people with many opinions regarding a change of this nature. Many of these individuals are ready to have their voices heard. The following individuals do not wish to see Latin used at our masses.

Give them the signed petition

Father Aaron, when we spoke with you regarding this issue, we discussed very personal reasons why we did not agree with your decision to include Latin in our masses. We want to participate completely in the mass. We want the mass to be an intimate experience. When we say, "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy" we feel connected to Jesus. That same connection is felt when we say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, and "Lamb of God." These same words spoken in Latin have no connection for us.

Yes, we still believe that it should have been a parish wide decision to go forward with this. St. Athanasius-St. John's church is our church. As we stated before, the way this was handled was inconsiderate!

In gathering the signatures, we had conversations with people, a dialogue. Some feedback we received from parishioners was the following; "I thought that it was something that came from the Diocese in Portland!" or "I thought that this was all settled with Vatican II, why are we bringing all this back!?" Still others thought that our current Pope had initiated it. As you can very well see, there is much confusion around this issue. Other individuals said that they were just tolerating the Latin. How sad!! One parishioner told us a story regarding her slightly disabled son who attended a mass that included Latin and left because he thought he was in the wrong church. We want a language that is inclusive for everyone! We want to know what we are saying! Pearl's husband is a convert, he asked her what was going on with the mass!? He no longer knew what to say. Another person told us of a woman who had been coming to mass on a regular basis with her children and a spark was ignited in her husband to go with

her. He attended Christmas Eve Mass and later told her that he was not going back. Some individuals were not in favor of the Latin usage at mass but were hesitant to sign the petition.

In a recent post on your Facebook page, Fr. Aaron, you included a story that apparently spoke to you. It describes one parish in St. Louis. It was a story about a priest who wanted to reenergize his parish. He asked his parishioners what they wanted most from their parish. The answer was, "a devout Sunday experience." Changes were implemented, such as incense being used, and Latin chants were sung. Not everyone responded favorably to these changes. Some people went to other masses in neighboring churches and others left the church altogether. It was also stated that after five years, attendance was nearly doubled. Happy ending for that church, I guess...

One of the points in this story that stuck out to us is that he asked his parishioners what they wanted from their parish. He had a dialogue with them. Also, something that makes a point is the location of the church, a big parish in St. Louis, in a big city with many Catholics to draw from. What works in one parish may not be the right fit for another.

Is it worth the risk of losing the few parishioners that we still have, in order to satisfy someone's nostalgia for a return to Latin?

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

Worship & Spirituality Review of Activities for Pastoral Council 2/27/23

Presented by Marie J. DiSciullo-Naples, W&S Commission Member

Worship & Spirituality Commission:

Fr. Aaron, Pastor, Deacon Rod Kuhl, Nick Puiia, Sacred Music Director,

Marie DiSciullo-Naples, Mary Madigan, Deb Murphy, Elaine Palmer,

Vision and Focus - is on the Liturgical & Spiritual Life of Parishioners of Holy Savior

➤ **Focus on the Liturgical & Spiritual Life:** What has been done in the past? Advent, Christmas, New Year, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time.

- **Bring Ideas to Life**
- **Implement Activities**
- **Members of commission take responsibility**
- **Meet quarterly**

UPDATES:

-Adoration on Fridays after Mass when no funerals for 1 hour.

-Ushers collecting with pole baskets reestablished; gift bearers walk down together and collection bearer behind them.

-Funerals attendees invited to be seated by 10 mins before the hour of the Mass

-Advent of 2022 including the St. Michael Prayer at the end of all Masses.

-Beginning in January we will have 2 Lectors for Masses

- Fr. Aaron will offer some Adult Faith Formation before Masses at times to review parts of the Mass or teaching to encourage a greater understanding of our great prayer the Mass!

- Jan. 30th Lector/ Eucharistic Minister Refresher & Lectio Divina "Holy Reading" - Fr. Aaron & Marie D-Naples

- Altar Server Training May 2023 TBD

- Resuming Mass at Nursing Home- Rumford Community Home & Pinnacle once a month as allowed

RETREATS/ HOLY DAYS

October 2022 - "Loss of child healing Retreat" well - received & began with Reconciliation Sacrament

All

Saints Vigil Mass Oct 31st, All Saints Day - Nov 1st - 6:pm and 8:15 am & 6 pm at OLS

Nov 2nd-All Souls day- Mass at Noon followed by procession to St. John's and the reading of the names of the deceased year to date; Thibault's Remembrance Ctr, provided tent & chairs (both funeral homes were invited to participate, deceased names were read at the concluding service at the cemetery

November 2022- "Enthroning the Bible" - now Bible enthroned in front of Ambo. Parishioners invited to place Bible in their homes to be more conscious of God's Word in our lives. Need to have reminders in upcoming bulletins...

Thanksgiving Mass - 9:30 am - A blessing table for foods provided to be blessed (next year bigger table)

December 4th 2022 - Advent Retreat: "Emmanuel: God is With Us"- well received also reconciliation offered

December 7th, 2022- Feast of the Immaculate Conception- 6 p.m.-Vigil Mass at St.J&A

December 8th Feast of the Immaculate Conception -8:15 am Mass St. J &A; OLS at 6 pm

December 24th Christmas Eve Mass - 4 pm St. J's & A's ; 6:30 OLS

December 25th Christmas Day Mass - 9:30 am

December 31st - New Year's Eve, Saturday -Regular schedule

January 1, 2023 - New Year's Day, Sunday, Regular Schedule

Feb 22, 2023- ASH WED LENT begins! Ashes distributed (Fr. Aaron, Deacon Rod) -

Deacon Rod will also provide ashes to Rumford Community home & Pinnacle as able

Feb 24, Mar 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 -Stations of the Cross-4:30 pm with "Lenten Soup & Soul Food - * first

one was Friday pm fairly well-attended 25-30 people, soups and mac and cheese delish and guest speaker: Eddy Naples shared his Holy Land power point with great info, humor, photos. Well received!

* if people can bring meatless dinners for next Friday please office know and if you can help out before stations for set-up

MARCH 3rd Ecumenical Service WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 11:00 am - St. J's & A's Hosting

"I have heard of your faith " Ephesians 1: 15-19 -country is Taiwan, social after service

churches represented: Mexico Congregational Church United Church of Christ aka the "Green Church",

Dixfield Congregational Church, "Church on the Hill", Rumford United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church,

St. Barnabas and Holy Savior Parish Roman Catholic-12 participants in service and Noel Palmer Music

March 13th - Fr. Aaron -on Vatican II - How are we doing? Also Scott Vallancourt, Music Minister

from Auburn will offer info on Liturgy, music, chanting, remembering our Judaeo-Christian roots.

Music - Nick Pulia -Director of Sacred Music - Goals to encourage Reverence to Sacred Liturgy,

Increase parishioner participation in the Mass (not as observers), learning to Sing the Mass rather than

Singing at Mass; Choir to lead congregation in sung prayer, singing at Masses throughout the year, small choir

group (Schola) and larger group for Feasts; New Hymnal: Source & Summit

FAITH FORMATION - Catechists: Fr. Aaron, Diane Breton, Mary Madigan, Elaine Palmer,

Marie DiScullo-Naples*(as needed) &* Mary Theriault making Baptismal garments as needed Recently (2023)

helping with some of the Sacramental Preparation

Faith Formation - October 2022 - Year 2 new format meeting every other weekend from after Mass on Sundays

until about 10:30 -12:30 pm. At least one parent is also present in the classes too.

There are 15 in class and 11 are receiving Sacraments (3 at Easter Vigil the others on April 22). Fr. Aaron

shares the teaching along with video & book series called BLESSED. The young people are interactive. Diane

Breton has done an AMAZING work integrating great crafts for them. Mary Madigan is a regular helper to her

as well. Elaine Palmer and Diane alternate making snacks for their meetings. They close with the song "I

will be a community is obviously being formed

March 5th Reconciliation Retreat following the KOTC Breakfast from 11:00 -1:00 pm ;

March 27, 28th 6-7 pm - "The Light is On for you" Mar 30th Thurs OLS 6-7 pm

April 1st, First Reconciliation 10:00 am:

April 3rd First Communion Retreat- 8:00 - 2 pm - 8:15 am attending weekday Mass

April 12th -Blessing Cup Meal with families- Church Hall

April 2nd - Palm Sunday - *to be confirmed *The Stations of the Cross through the eyes of Mary

Holy Week Masses Mon and Tuesday at 8:15 am NO Mass Wed

April 4th Tuesday, Chrism Mass - if interested see Fr. Aaron to get a ticket

April 6th - Holy Thursday- Last Supper 6:00 p.m. St. J's & A's

April 7th -Good Friday - 6 p.m. Veneration of the Cross and Communion (no Mass)

*** Divine Mercy Novena starts today each day before Divine Mercy Sunday April 16th**

April 8th -Easter Vigil - 8:00 p.m. followed by hour of Adoration -

Nick Pulia.s 3 children receiving sacraments.

April 9th - Easter Sunday- 8:00 am OLS Mass - 9:30 am Mass

April 16, Divine Mercy Sunday- Reconciliation at 1:30 available, Adoration, Veneration of the Divine

Image and Reflection and Chaplet at 3:00 p.m. followed by social

***April 22, 10:00-with Bishop Deeley for Sacraments of Communion/Confirmation followed by social**

May- Month of Mary and May Crowning Mother's Day TBD with Faith Formation

June 11th Feast of Corpus Christi- procession TBD

Mass for Graduating Seniors TBD June 8th is MVHS ; June 9th is Dirigo Graduations

Vacation Bible School August 2022 - "LET THE CHILDREN COME and HE BLESSED THEM" Mk.10:14-16 -

*coordinated by Diane Breton, Marie DiSciullo-Naples, with daily snack helpers & guest speakers, (Sharon Gates, Deb Murphy, Noel & Elaine Palmer) songs, crafts, prayers, collected for for food pantry, change for Ronald McDonald House, wrote cards to residents of the Rumford Community Home and lots of FUN in the Lord! *Fr. Aaron joined us everyday for snack time too and visited with all the children!!*

SAVE the DATE for AUGUST 7-11, 2023 Theme is on the GIFTS and FRUITS of the HOLY SPIRIT!

We need help to set up the hall (moving tables and chairs) and clearing stage areas for our program on August 5 or 6th if able& willing please confirm with us or office.