**Final St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

November 12, 2020 via zoom

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm; General Meeting

Call to Order: 7:05 pm

Members in Attendance: Father Chuck Adam, Pam Bourjaily, Dimy Doresca, Keith Feldmann, Karen Grajczyk-Haddad, Karen Hanson, Keith Less, Barb Lopez, Leigha Rios, Shirley Schneider, Jason Wagner and Norma Ward.

Guest: Shannon Duffy, Religious Education Director

Members Excused: Mick Langguth and Spencer Knight

Members Absent: Matt Lopez, Sam Aitchinson

1. Father Chuck: Opening Prayer from Bishop Zinkula’s 2020 Election Letter:

Gracious and loving God, let your spirit be with us today.  
Hear our prayers and increase in us the will to follow your Son Jesus.  
Help us to draw on the resources of our faith as we use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

1. Items of Business
2. Welcome to Shannon Duffy, our Religious Education Director who is going to update us on the Religious Education (RE) anti-racism curriculum.
   1. Shannon briefly outlined his ideas:
      * Shannon wants to connect the curriculum with the Martin Luther King Jr celebration in January.
      * Open with the prayer ”We are all in God’s Image” from Loyola Press or the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).
      * Add scripture passages, including the Great Commandment and continue with the theme of “Loving God and Loving our neighbors”.
      * Discuss what this means with follow up questions, for example, “what does it look like to love our neighbor, and who is our neighbor?” (Shannon noted that he sometimes asks the older children to assist with the readings/lesson.)
      * Add a special gift package, and note that it is a priceless gift so that when the younger children open it, they see themselves in the mirror—use it to show “how God’s sees us and how we see one another and to build up diversity, asking the family what does that mean, who am I and who are my neighbors?
      * Additional information on the Feast of St. Martin de Porres (November 3), who is the Patron Saint of Social Justice, Racial Harmony and mixed-race people.
      * Review of material from USCCB and the Loyola Press to find one or two activities. Shannon noted that these sources are organized by grade level and his teaching is family style.
      * Reference to Catholic Social Teachings focusing on the dignity of all people and how we are our brother’s and sister’s keeper.
      * Finally, he is planning to add a “Live It” activity for the entire family and is currently looking for an activity/assignment. Example: How do we live in racial harmony? Shannon also wanted to focus on Catholic Relief Services and their link to “Who is my neighbor?
      * It was also noted that the distribution or any collection of the results of these activities is difficult and hard to capture.
   2. Feedback from PC members:
      * Barb—referred Shannon to October 15, 2020 by Barb Arland Fry*:* <https://www.catholicmessenger.net/2020/10/who-is-my-neighbor-2/> *Who are our neighbors?* She suggesting including the question “how we can embrace all of our neighbors, not just focus on racism. We need to throw a wider net for our neighbors and broaden our horizons as a parish.”
      * Father noted that some of the suggestions offered would be covered by the Subcommittee/Taskforce led by Shirley and Karen.
      * Dimy—also suggested to have the lessons Include the broader topic of social justice. The example given was Archbishop Oscar Romero as he fought for the marginalized in San Salvador. He spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture amid a growing war between left-wing and right-wing forces. Dimy added that It is also good to talk about the non-violence associated with Dr. King and Archbishop Romero. Dimy added that it was good to keep this in the context of Catholic Social Teaching which emphasizes the life and dignity of all people as we are created by God.
      * Pam—thanked Shannon for his efforts and noted the critical nature of this education and how important it is that children learn to live out their faith.
3. Update on Pastoral Council anti-racism subcommittee/taskforce and discussion of Catholic Messenger article on Assumption HS (Davenport) response to students’ racist video (article link below).
   1. Karen G-H and Shirley: We met as a group on Oct 27—and discussed whether we want to focus on anti-racism or to have a broader focus on Catholic Social teaching and have the awareness through lots of different mediums. (It was noted that this effort is targeted to launch at the beginning of Lent.) The USCCB has a lot of materials to use that would be applicable during Lent, such as the Stations of the Cross. “We want to entice everyone with “ways to love your neighbor” which leads to a much softer approach.“
   2. Dimy noted that Social Justice (SJ) will work with the Task Force. Two members from the SJ Commission are on the Task Force and wanted to do the broader discussion. There are no worries about duplication of effort, as everyone wants to make this a long-term effort. He also said it was good to provide the parishioners with information during Lent, give them time to let the information sink in and keep moving forward.
   3. Pam thanked Shirley and Karen G-H for the update.
4. Follow up from Leigha regarding our Outreach to one-person households and the Welcome Video.
   1. 244 households (Phase I) have been contacted with emails, texts and phone calls. Leigha provided some of the comments from the parishioners. We hope to distribute the Phase II information (60 and older) by the 2nd week in December. Note that any discrepancies or email links that are broken should be sent to Pam so she can give it to Maricarla. Pam thanked Leigha and also appreciated everyone’s effort.
   2. The Welcome Commission is getting ready to work on the actual welcome video and would like the approval of the script from the Pastoral Council (PC) members. Pam provided a summary of the efforts. Members suggested that the video start with parking lot and then the gathering space. PC members reviewed and unanimously approved the script and process for the Welcome Video.
5. It was voted that a December Pastoral Council meeting was not needed.
6. PC members reviewed and approved the October 8, 2020 PC meeting minutes. Father Chuck also thanked those volunteering to work on the Outreach Effort. Thank you also to the Knights of Columbus with our parking lot masses, bulletins, food drives, etc.

Article to read re anti-racism for November PC meeting:

* <http://www.catholicmessenger.net/2020/11/remorse-over-assumption-students-racist-tiktok-video/>

1. Comments from Father Chuck Adam:
   1. Liturgical consultant visioning forum feedback: Several members were on the call last night. Ken is really a prayerful person and it will be more specific as we go forward. Every week there will be questions to turn in—survey—please turn in by Sunday evening. There will be a different session each week. Information is also in the bulletin.
   2. Update on plan for Christmas Masses. Father reviewed tentative plans with the members, outlined current mass processes and contingency plans for bad weather
   3. Finance Council meeting was last night. (FC) is trying to be careful/cautious with planning our budget and at the current time we are ahead of budget. Our Annual Diocesan Appeal goal is $106, 400. We have $95, 178 at this time toward that goal. Capital campaign funds are right at $5M. Payments are coming in, but we haven’t added any new pledges. Father is hoping our Liturgical Consultant will generate some excitement.
2. Commission reports and discussion:

**Church/Family Life**, Judy Frits, chair

* PC members: Mick, Barb, Leigha, Norma
* October Meeting Minutes attached
* Highlights: Barb reported that they are planning to do something for Lantern Park and the nursing home residents for Christmas to let them know we are thinking of them. A card shower maybe? New member meal and euchre night are on hold. Judy is going to put something in the bulletin about the new 50+ Fellowship group. Pictorial Directory is being planned for next summer 2021. Terry Connor volunteered to be the administrator for the directory to maintain membership changes.

**Faith Formation,** Shirley Schneider, chair

* PC members: Matt, Shirley, Karen G-H
* October Meeting Minutes attached
* Highlights: Shirley reported that John and Nancy Le Peau want to step down from Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Father said Shannon was picking it up right now and it will continue through Zoom. Rite for the Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) has 6 children and 1 adult attending. RCIA has 2 people registered. The group is working on identifying items for Advent.

**Social Action/Social Justice,** Dimy Doresca, chair

* PC members: Dimy
* October Meeting Minutes attached
* Highlights: Dimy announced that Fair Trade is back—there is a table set up in the gathering space/foyer with the honor system is in place. Parish FB page is available for online ordering. You can also buy directly from the company. Karen G-H noted that there should be options on the form for what type of coffee, tea, chocolate, etc. Dimy will contact Kim Novak to add “options” to the order form. He also requested to spread the word about Fair Trade and thanked everyone for their support.

**Welcome Commission**, Leigha Rios, chair

* PC members: Pam, Keith F., Leigha, Norma
* October meeting Minutes attached
* Highlights—Note previous info on Welcome video and Outreach activities.

**Worship & Spirituality**, Janet Steenlage, chair

* PC members: Pam, Karen H.
* No November meeting
* December meeting will discuss the plans for Christmas masses
* Advent Prayer partners started

**Finance Council,** Mark Thoeny, chair

* PC members: Father Chuck, Pam
* Highlights: See Church Finance update from Father Chuck

**K of C,**  John Kauble, chair

* PC members: Keith L.
* Highlights: Keith L reported that the Knights raised $1K with the chili dinner prior to the movie. Plans are being made for how to do fish fries—carry out only. Final push on the car Raffle. December 20th is the date for the drawing.

**Stephen Ministry,** Meliza Wise and Lee Gullickson, co-chairs

* PC members: Pam, Karen G-H.
* Highlights: There is a Stephen Ministry event on Saturday with other churches in the community, more info is in the bulletin, 9-11:30 am this Saturday.

1. Father Chuck: Closing prayer: Prayer from a Novena to St. Charles Borromeo

Almighty God, you have generously made known to human beings the mysteries of your life through Jesus Christ your Son in the Holy Spirit. Enlighten our minds to know these mysteries which your Church treasures and teaches. Move our hearts to love them and our wills to live in accord with them. Give us the ability to teach this Faith to others without pride, without ostentation, and without personal gain. Let us realize that we are simply your instruments for bringing others to the knowledge of the wonderful things you have done for all your creatures. Help us to be faithful to the tasks that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

Next meeting is Jan 14. 2021

1. Meeting adjourned: 8:13 pm.