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

**September 13, 2018 7:00 PM, Final**

Call to Order at 703 PM

**Members in Attendance**: Fr. Chuck Adam, Grace Christopher, Ann Elsbecker, Bill Mausser, Leigha Rios, Kim Schmitz, Shirley Schneider

**Members Excused**: Pam Bourjaily, Tracy Clapp, Dimy Doresca, Ann Houlahan, Keith Less, Marijke Nielsen, Tony Ringgold, Norma Ward

**Members Absent**: None

**Guests**: None

**A. Opening Prayer-A Prayer for our Parish Discernment**-All

**B. Items of Business**

**Review of August 9, 2018 Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**- Motion to approve minutes by Leigha Rios. It was seconded by Shirley Schneider. Vote all in favor, no nays and motion carries.

**C.** **Announcement**

Upcoming events, Tuesday November 13 at 7:00 pm, our parish listening session for Vision 20/20 will be held in the parish hall. Kent Ferris, Director of Social Action and Catholic Charities has been assigned as our facilitator. Information to be provided when available.

**D. Comments from Fr. Chuck**

1. **Annual Diocesan Appeal (ADA)**- The STM Annual Diocesan Appeal for 2018-2019 has been set by the diocese at $93,419. The kickoff will start September 22/23. During last year’s campaign, there were 342 donors and STM has received a $35,000 refund after all pledges were received. That was an increase of 67 donors compared to the previous year. We will continue to push to increase the number of donors to meet our goal for the upcoming year.

**2. Expansion Campaign**- We continue to meet with Andy Gaertner, our diocesan facilitator. The process is moving forward! Lead individuals for the campaign have been named: Rod and Blanca Lehnertz, Jim and Cathy Nepola, and Aaron and Brandy Klosterman. Honorary chairs will be Tim Walch, Susan Puhl, and John and Nancy LePeau. Filming is being done on the premises to facilitate the production of a video. Kickoff to introduce the campaign to parishioners is October 13/14 weekend. The team is discussing the use of a slogan that would incorporate the word “more” (St. Thomas MORE). Jorge Lopez, who designed the expansion campaign mockup, received several suggestions and so added brick to the exterior to make it even more aesthetically appealing.

**E. Items from Pastoral Council Members**

1. **Welcome/Greeter Ministry**- Leigha said that there will be further discussion as far as who will be taking part in the first phase of the Welcome/Greeter ministry (opening doors at Mass, handing out worship aides and welcoming all who enter). The initial thought was that it would involve Confirmation students/parents, but this line of thinking is evolving.

**2. Joy of the Gospel, Listening Session for Vision 20/20** – Update on Bishop Zinkula’s Vision 20/20- Fr. Chuck said that STM has suggested Tuesday, November 13 to be used as our parish Listening Session with the diocese. This will be the culmination of the 3 study/sharing sessions on Joy of the Gospel that DRE Shannon Duffy will be offering in October. The parish sessions will focus on questions about missionary discipleship and evangelization. This is also in conjunction with the reflection sessions that our Pastoral Council is implementing next at this meeting and for the following two meetings.

**PC discussion of Forward and Chapter 1: Go Forth with Joy from the Joy of the Gospel.**

***Q: In what ways does STM parish reflect this vision of constantly going out beyond the four walls of the church to reach those who are not with us on a regular basis?***

PC members, we have included Bill initial responses to provide ones view of the question, but the two main questions discussed are identified as “group” discussions.

INTRODUCTION: The Primacy of Encounter

The entire exhortation begins with these words, **“The Joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.”** These words form the very title of Pope Francis’ message.

**Q: Why do you think these words are so important? What is Pope Francis saying in this very foundational introductory sentence?**

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.” (3)

Bill: Each day is anew with new paths to explore and if we have an openness to the encounter, that permits the spirit to fill us with evangelization.

**Q: How can I have such an encounter? What words might you use to welcome a renewed personal encounter with Christ?**

“Now is the time to say to Jesus, “Lord I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.” (3)

Bill: To bring the message of Jesus to others, we must first renew my covenant within myself. The words of welcome are “I need you”.

**Q: Pope Francis describes this renewed personal encounter with Christ as a “risk”. What is “risky” about this encounter? What has prevented you from taking this risk?**

“The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.” (3)

Bill-His dream is to witness a transformed Spirit that moves us by faith that never tires of seeking his forgiveness and his mercy.

***Group-***Pope Francis invites us to have a renewed personal encounter with Christ. That means inviting Christ into our daily lives every day. Pope Francis realizes that this can be “risky”. Often it is hard to bring religion into the workplace or school. We care what others think about us. We know that it is important to have a personal encounter with others. We know that a sense of community is essential to building a strong church, workplace and school. Faith sharing groups could be vital in building a sense of community in our parish. STM does offer several Bible studies and faith sharing groups for men and women. Does everyone who wants to be involved know all that we offer? Are there better ways to notify parishioners of the different groups at STM? Is there or should there be a list of all groups at STM to help facilitate parishioners and their interest?

**THIS ENCOUNTER PRODUCES JOY**

**Q: Perhaps a little tongue and cheek, Pope Francis notes,” There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter” (6) What do you think he means by that?**

“Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” (7)

Bill-I think he is referring to the lost sheep that are waiting for Jesus or me to recover/impact via Evangelization.

**Q: Why does this sentence so clearly articulate the “heart of the Gospel”?**

**Describe an encounter with Christ which changed your life, giving it a new horizon and a decisive direction.**

**Joy of Evangelization**

“Goodness always tends to spread...Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others. When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfillment.” (10)

Bill- He is asking us to take the risk of personal fulfillment.

**Q: To simplify, what Pope Francis is saying is that evangelization leads to our own fulfillment. Sharing our encounters of Christ with others makes us happy. Do you believe that? Why or why not?**

So, What Are You Waiting For?

Bill- Many opportunities are lost because we perceive that we do not have the time.

“What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity....We cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings; we need to move from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry.” (15)

Bill- To evangelize places me at risk of offending in an environment that may offend in the arena of protected religious rights for all.

**What would happen if you took these works seriously? What would happen to our parish? Our workplaces? Our homes? Our neighborhoods? Our schools? Our world?**

Bill-We open ourselves to be potentially judged as hypocrites if we forget that we are human frail to error,

CHAPTER 1

THE CHURCH’S MISSIONARY TRANSFORMATION

“An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the “smell of the sheep” and the sheep are willing to hear their voice.” (24) “Mere administration can no longer be enough.” (25) “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.” (27) “Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: ‘We have always done it this way.’ I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.” (33)

***Q: The Joy of the Gospel has been described as Pope Francis” “I Have a Dream” speech. What is his dream for the Church? What needs to change?***

“Pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines...the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary.” (35)

Bill-I believe his dream is to “go forth” Love, seek, hear, bear with the goal to celebrate every small victory, with every step forward in the work of evangelization.

***Group-*** We discussed that we as evangelizers need to be involved in outreach-outside the church. As Pope Francis says, “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.” We feel that the Church is bruised and hurting with the clergy sexual abuse. It is hard to not hide. It is important to show that we are all sorry for what has happened and ensure it does not happen again. At STM all our volunteers with the RE program are Virtus trained and have all passed background checks. Thus, assuring that as a parish STM is maximizing present safety measures to ensure a healthy parish community. We realize that Catholics are not the only group that has been challenged with these issues recently. Also, we all can identify opportunities to grow.

**Q: What do you think Pope Francis is saying about the message we are called to convey? What’s been the most beautiful, most grand, and most appealing aspects of your own encounters with Jesus?**

“In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead.” (36) “Before all else, the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others.” (39)

Bill-The message I have received is that I am a better person with God’s love than without His love.

**Q: Here Pope Francis presents the Gospel as an “invitation” of God to respond to. How have you responded to this invitation?**

“Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ...I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the center and then ends by being caught in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: ‘Give them something to eat’ (Mk 6:37).” (49)

Bill-The Church’s mission to transform begins within. I am a part of its whole. I can make a difference in transforming my environment by getting involved.

**Q: Reflect on above passage. How does it speak to you? This is how Pope Francis concludes this chapter entitled, “The Church’s Missionary Transformation.” What kind of transformation is the Holy Father calling us to embrace? What is your immediate reaction? In this season of Lent when we are called to “repent” or “turn around,” what is Pope Francis asking us to turn from and what is he asking us to turn to?**

ASSIGNMENT FOR PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 11:

PLEASE READ CHAPTER 2 AND CHAPTER 3 FROM JOY OF THE GOSPEL (EITHER PRIMARY REFERENCE OR GROUP READING GUIDE).

*CHAPTER 2: Discerning the Challenges of Today’s World*

What are the greatest challenges to evangelization in STM parish? Who are we missing?

*CHAPTER 3: Proclaiming the Gospel (Kerygma)*

To what extent does STM help people to 1) know God’s story, 2) know their own story, and 3) share how those two stories intersect?

F. **Update to Stewardship form and possible Stewardship Fair—Fall 2018**

Considering our Joy of the Gospel discussion our Stewardship form and whether a spot light Sunday for a one Sunday Stewardship fair might need to be considered. Fr. Shared that he has already been thinking about this and looked at the calendar with the front office and right now no Sunday free of other events is open that will accommodate a Stewardship fair. Bill will work with Norma to discuss our Stewardship form as revisit this discussion next month.

G. **Situational Awareness training**

Discussion deferred till October.

**H. Old Business/Reports and Commission Meeting Minutes**-PC Liaisons share information from their commission’s meetings:

1. Church Life/Family Life-no August meeting

2. Finance Council

3. Regina BOE Update

4. Religious Education

5. Social Justice/Social Action

6. Worship and Spirituality

7. Youth Ministry Report

1. **STM Pastoral Council Agenda Timeline 2018-2019**
2. Joy of the Gospel-October-Review Chapter 2-3
3. Joy of the Gospel-November-Review Chapter 4-5
4. Update to Stewardship form and possible Stewardship Fair-Fall 2018
5. Review of Election process-Norma and Kim-Jan 2019
6. Possible addendum to Bylaws regarding terms of Commission Chairs-Spring 2019
7. Coordinate May Election weekend with Worship and Spirituality Commission Chair- Feb 2019

**J. Closing Prayer-Diocesan Prayer: Vision 20/20 from Pentecost to Pentecost**

Meeting adjourned at 802 PM

Respectfully submitted by Kim Schmitz