

St. Rita Parish Pastoral Council
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Church Narthex

Members in attendance: Fr. Michael, Dave Eberle, Myra Fox, Bill Greinke, Pat Rossman, Mark Schmitz, Anna Marie Smetana and Jean Weaver. Also in attendance were Trustees Dennis Collins & Sharon Gierahn, Mary Clair Weisensel, and Safety & Security Cmte Leader: Dave Smetana.

Not in attendance: Ellie Hammond and Bob Mitchell

The opening prayer was led by Father Michael at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Dave Eberle to accept the October 12, 2023 minutes as read and it was seconded by Jean Weaver.

Introduction of our Youth Representative: Bill introduced Mary Claire Weisensel to the PPC members and we welcomed her and her youthful perspective. She gave us a description of her background on where she goes to school and her activities. She is a senior at Horlick High School and participates in track, cross country and 4-H Club. She is planning on going into elementary education with a minor in science when she enters college next year. She is looking at a few schools around here: Carthage, St. Norbert's and Platteville. She is looking forward to working with us in the months to come.

Proposal: Before the meeting got underway, Bill proposed: "...that we table for now any discussion regarding the Siena subsidy agreement in all it's particulars. I think you will all agree that we have a good working understanding of the agreement and our parishes roll in it. We have heard and repeatedly discussed the whys and wherefores to a point that there is not much more to say other than to add more stress with continued discussion. This topic/issue is the responsibility of the PFC. It is within their parameters to formulate solutions and advise the pastor of strategies and actions to be undertaken. We can do them a disservice in their perspective and responsibility. Until the PFC determines a course of action and provides us with a plan, I submit that we should listen to Dr. Bob's liaison reports and hear what Dennis and Father want us to hear from the proceedings. If anyone has a solution or a suggestion regarding this topic, please give it to the PFC or to our liaison. I'm sure they would like to hear it." After some discussion it was voted on and unanimously agreed.

Pastor's Report: Father reported that the Siena School Systems has a concern regarding a case that is coming to the Wisconsin Supreme Court regarding the "Choice" dollars for schools. The SSS Board met last night via zoom to get updated on what is going on. They had a legal representative from the Archdioceses on the call with the Board and Trustees. The Supreme Court has not accepted the case as yet but they are expected too. If they accept the case there may be a quick ruling; if not, this could be a long and protracted matter. Dave Eberle clarified that they are asking for a ruling on the constitutionality of the voucher program. The voucher program provides funds to the families using private/parochial schools for the education of their children. Those voucher funds are provided for use by the family on their annual tax return. If the Supreme Court

over turns “Choice dollars going to private schools” it will have an effect of closing many private schools and would impact the Siena Schools, which rely heavily on this program.

Fr. noted that Patti Worzalla, is our new Business Administrator. She is very capable and qualified for this position. Suzanne has been in a couple of times to give her a few pointers. She has been hired for 20 to 24 hours a week. Her responsibilities include support of the PFC whose meetings she will attend. Father also indicated that she will be attending the CHIC meetings as well.

Father. hoped that we are enjoying Deacon Alex as he is enjoying coming to our church and giving us the homilies. He is getting good responses regarding his homilies. Once he is ordained, he will relocate to a diocese in Kentucky.

CHISC Update: Myra stated that the CHISC Steering Cmte. will be meeting this upcoming Thursday. The most active group is the Repurpose/Reuse Group. Some developers have come through and have another scheduled. Some of the challenges noted by these visits are the small room sizes, the asbestos and other underlying issues should someone be willing to redevelop the building and/or do the remodel themselves. Then they are putting all the money into this building and they don’t even own it. This is not appealing to developers. Some of the members on the CHIC committee have asked the question “Are we just spinning our wheels?” as the Diocese will have the final say on what we can do with the building. This committee has been working almost a year on this project and when it was started, they felt that within a year they would have a good idea on which way to go. Myra reported that at this time the committee has eliminated many reuse/repurpose ideas and is addressing the few remaining possibilities. What remains beyond that is to put a price on the tear-down of the building and to finally pursue any possibility of sale. that All paths we have addressed so far would be very costly for the parish to pursue.

Planning Committee: Jean reported that the survey was finished on Nov. 5th with 230 surveys submitted. Six surveys were rejected as they checked everything and did not make a selection from the list. The question was asked on how many were sent out and Jean will follow-up with Kathi to get the exact amount. Kathi and the members of the Stewardship Committee sent out the surveys. Jean reported that the returns came in as follows: 9% by mail, 9% Narthex and 82% were digital. Maybe going digital is the way to go for any future communication? 42 Survey responses were received on the 1st day, over 100 came in day 2 to 5; then they started to trickle in. There were about 50 comments from people that marked down “other” to voice their opinions. Committee member Bob Bartholomew offered to take these “other” responses to sort and quantify them. Bob has developed a spreadsheet breaking down these responses for the PSC to examine and consider. Jean reported that the committee is developing a results report in the bulletin to let people know that they have been heard and the Committee is reviewing all responses. The responses for the top 3 important issues facing the parish are as follows: parish members, mass attendance, and finances; followed by Cascia Hall, and the school and young families. The festival came in a distant 6th. The Committee’s thoughts are if we can improve mass attendance and membership then the finances will fall in line with the additional people. Cascia Hall is important to parish finances as well and is being fully addressed by the CHISC. We just have to be patient as this is a very complicated matter. Mark Schmitz, another PSC member, commented that we have a lot of Evangelization to do to up our mass attendance and membership. Discussion followed on how to get all this information to the parishioners. A number of avenues were identified; including: reading the response letter at all masses, putting the letter in the bulletin and via email

and put on the website. There was also discussion about a possible parish meeting in January sometime; to discuss the responses and to update the parish on PPC activities. That the PSC would organize and MC the PPC hosted meeting. Jean also reported that future surveys will be discussed at future PSC meetings, but that the immediate focus now returns to working on the vision and mission statement along with the strategic plan – all of which would be featured in the proposed parish meeting.

Parish Safety and Security: Dave Smetana reported that progress has been made since their last meeting. They have created an Emergency Action Plan which covers severe weather, fire/smoke alarm, shelter in place, evacuation, medical emergency and more. He discussed needed actions to be taken i.e.: creating building and door numbers for first responders, locations of AED/medical kits, and service disruption action plans. Father, Bill and Dave met with the Racine County Emergency Management Director at St. Rita and presented some of the action plan and requested that he review it. Dave reported that there is “grant” money available for security and cybersecurity which he is looking into. Dave will also make an appeal for volunteers to join this committee at all masses this weekend and he will answer any question after mass. This was approved by Father. Dave and Anna Marie told the meeting that they are trying to get some medical kits donated to SR.

Liaison Reports:

Stewardship: Sharon reported that some the Stewardship members stuffed envelopes for their annual appeal for time, talent and treasury. This year they included the survey form from the Planning Special Committee. She also stated that Debbie did notify Stewardship that the PPC would like the ministries to attend a strategy meeting to formulate means & methods to increase ministry membership and participation. We are need of more volunteers in all ministries.

Human Concerns: Their latest meeting was held October 25th. It was primarily to look at what was going to start happening with the 2024 church’s teachings for the upcoming year. It looks like rights and responsibilities along with solidarity seems like the topics for next year. However, Susan Willing and Deacon Greg are considering switching out one of the mentioned topics to “Care for God’s Creations’. They hope that when Susan gives the annual update presentation to the PPC in Dec. that she will be able to tell us who the speakers are for the upcoming year.

Prayer and Worship: Anna Marie stated that they had a meeting on October 5th and from minutes listed thy spoke on many topics. The minutes from our last PPC meeting covered the above Prayer and Worship meeting minutes.

Formation: They meet on Wednesday nights and on Sunday. The number of students is lower this year. 3 & 4 yr. olds attend religious ed classes on the first and third Sundays of the month and they meet in the Narthex during mass time.

PFC: (Bob was unable to attend this meeting.) Dennis mentioned that he has meet with Patti and feels she knows what she’s doing and very proactive. He stated that she gives the impression that she is all about policy and follows it. He anticipates that she will be good to work with.

Old/New Business:

Eucharistic Revival: Bill reviewed the handout regarding the list of events on the Eucharistic Revival calendar and strongly suggested that this is something we should be involved in. A discussion followed with no resolution. This topic will be discussed again in December.

Upcoming PPC Dates:

Tuesday, December 12, 2023
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

The closing prayer was led by Father Michael at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Rossman
Secretary
St. Rita Parish - Parish Pastoral Council