

SAINT RAPHAEL PASTORAL COUNCIL
Meeting Notes from December 17, 2018

Lou Servideo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. There was a festive air, thanks to Lou's generosity in providing pre-meeting refreshments and Rich Wheeling's circulating information about the symbolism and tradition of the Christmas wreath. Cathy Coda opened the meeting with the lovely Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson. All members but the deacons were in attendance. We happily welcomed the return of Therese LeFever. November's meeting notes were accepted as sent.

Andrew Jorge reported for the Ad Hoc committee on ministries (now called the Stewardship Committee) that the group (Andrew, MaryJo Downs, Lou Servideo, Trish Black, Manfred Mohring and Pat Pavlucik, who has been "a really good asset") is working to identify a point person for each of the more than 40 parish ministries, to confirm that each ministry is active and to assess their willingness to participate in the ministry fair now scheduled for April 6/7, 2019. [Post meeting note: Due to an unforeseen conflict the fair's date will change again.] The group is doing a "great job," according to Father John, who encouraged them to identify where we might be able to merge ministries that exist at both churches, so that the parish can work on combined, not separate efforts.

Maria Tomasetti gave a Faith Formation update, noting, with enthusiastic agreement from Therese LeFever, that their ministries have "merged beautifully: GIFT is working well. Maria offered numbers: Some 100 families in GIFT; 20 1st Reconciliations on 12/8 with 4 additional scheduled for early next year; 24 young people, then, preparing for 1st Communion; 2 men in our RCIA program and 2 young children preparing for Baptism. The 12/14 Advent/Christmas program "filled the room" and everyone had a good time. Asked if the program needs more teachers, Maria responded promptly and decisively, "We can always use more teachers!" New teachers will need Virtus training. Therese informed us that she is a certified Virtus trainer. She also stressed the need to familiarize folks with GIFT, especially the fact that adults are welcome to participate.

Prefacing his remarks by reading several passages from the New Jerusalem Bible, then quoting Saint John Paul II and Walt Disney, John Marmolejo made a thorough and well-prepared presentation on "rebuilding" Saint Raphael Parish. His suggestions included "reaching the people in the pews, reaching out to people not yet in the pews and making church matter." He pointed out the power of the "message from the pulpit," especially to connect with the lost. He stressed the importance of ministry, service to parishioners and to those outside the parish, and of becoming "*giving* disciples in terms of both money and talent." John's focus on the importance of discipleship was reflected in his suggestion that the best mission statement for a parish would be: *Make disciples*, echoing Archbishop Blair's statement that "We need to GROW and GO!, GROW in faith as disciples of Jesus and GO make disciples."

Much of John's proposal had been inspired by *Rebuilt*, a book by Father Michael White and Tom Corcoran that recounted their work at a parish in Timonium, MD. Father John, familiar with their work and recognizing its value, suggested that the culture of Timonium might not be a good fit in New England. Ann Eden heard "Stewardship" in John's proposal and pointed out that Saint Raphael's has the "bones" of Stewardship, citing our many ministries as evidence, but needs to develop more "muscle" in making it come to life. Therese LeFever spoke for the entire Council when she said, "Good for you, John!" Discussion followed: Should we have a plan to implement

SAINT RAPHAEL PASTORAL COUNCIL
Meeting Notes from December 17, 2018

the proposal's suggestions? Who among us is reaching out? Consensus: Take what's realistic from the proposal and go forward. Cathy Coda shared her suggestion for a "Christmas letter" from the pastor, along the lines of "This is who I am, all you [many!] people here this season; we welcome you; we need you; we want you to be an active part of our parish family."

One very concrete proposal followed the discussion. As Andrew Jorge stated clearly, We need a mission statement. (Longer, perhaps, than John's pithy, *Make disciples*.) **Council members are to bring to the January meeting their ideas and concepts for a parish mission statement.**

Open Discussion: We now have a Pastoral Council e-mail (pcsaintraphael@gmail.com). Parishioners can now submit their questions and concerns to the Council. Father John and the secretary will have the password. The secretary will pass information that we receive to the appropriate committee or to the Council itself.

Father John's remarks: January will be a "tough month" for the Archdiocese, which will release the names of credibly charged clergy involved in the sexual abuse scandal as well as the amounts paid in settlements and their sources. Father pointed out that the Pennsylvania Attorney General's highly publicized report on the cases in PA dioceses, most of which had been raised and settled in the past, has, in fact, caused a resurgence of the scandal.

On the local front, we've had tenant issues with the weight lifting group that rents space on the upper level of the Saint Ann Parish Center. Council members, many for the first time, experienced the sudden, jarring sounds of weights being dropped on the floor above where they were meeting. Faced with the possibility of structural damage to the building (Debris has fallen in the Teen Room.) the Council agreed that "it's probably time to say goodbye" to that tenant. Our contract specifies the need for 30-day notice. Father John will proceed on the basis on the Council's agreement.

The fire alarm and fire door issues at the Saint Ann campus are ongoing as Father awaits responses from the vendors.

Lou was effusive in his praise of the December 2nd Advent Evening of Reflection: the music, Amy Ekeh's words, even the violet light that was cast on the crucifix. He also congratulated MaryJo (the Council applauded in agreement) on the success of the Christmas Fair, particularly the efforts of the Saint Raphael Children's Choir and the Saint Ann's Choir.

Next Council meeting: Monday, January 28, 2019. Jed Mohring will lead us in prayer. The February meeting will be held at Saint Gabriel's Ministry Center.
The meeting closed at 8:20 PM.

Ann Eden
Amended December 26, 2018