

Saint Raphael Pastoral Council
Meeting Notes from November 25, 2019

Lou Servideo called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. All members were in attendance except Rich Wheeling. Because Al May was running late, Father John opening the meeting with a prayer.

Mission Statement: The Mission Statement sub-committee (Ann, Rose Marie, Al May, Lou Servideo and Rich Wheeling) has made incremental progress in formulating a mission statement. Full report at our next meeting.

Standing Committee Reports:

Parish Life:

Welcome Packet: Pat Pavlucik: Deadline for completion of the packet is 2/1/2020. Components completed to date: Registration form; welcome letter; list of ministries; information pages on Faith Formation, library and gift shop, food pantry. Working on condensed version of parish history and Active Parishioner page as well as a packet holder. The group proposed formation of a Welcome Ministry, whose members will distribute the packet, possibly through home visits. Completed packet will go to Father John by 2/1/2020 for review. Next meeting: December 11th.

Website Review: Cathy Coda: Most website pages have been updated. Still seeking information re: Saint Gabriel's stained glass windows. (The website has a history of the stained glass windows at Saint Ann Church.) Father John recalled that, shortly after his arrival in 2017 he had spoken with a college student (?) who seemed interested in researching the windows. Cathy will see if anyone has knowledge about the student, who might have information we can use.

Father John reported that the old Saint Gabriel website will be taken down. It had remained up because the Saint Gabriel online giving had been tied to that website. Father has sent letters to all those using the Saint Gabriel website portal, advising them to change to the Saint Raphael portal before 12/31/19, then delete their Online Giving connection at the Saint G portal. Al May, who had spoken at Masses about the advantages of Online Giving, may be pressed into service again.

Social Gathering Team: Lou Servideo: 1) The Choir Concert with Sarah Hart (11/10 and 11/11) was "very good." Performers have been impressed with the church and with the choir. 2) Advent Music and Reflections on 12/8/19. Sister Lany Jo Smith, ASCJ will offer reflections on "Mary, the Heart of Advent." 3) November Coffee And/Coffee and Conversation focus on Wounded Warrior project brought in \$869, thanks in part to "town criers" Ann Eden and Frank Elliott. Lou would like to see such a focus become a regular initiative. 4) Advent Meal on December 1st. Setup on Saturday, 11/30, 11 am at Saint Ann Parish Center. Please come to help, if you can. 5) Lou advised Council members not to "space [themselves] out too thin," taking on too many projects.

Prayer and Worship: Ann: 1) Advent booklets, selected by Val Yergeau, are available in both churches. 2) Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion under Both Species circulated as an insert in the bulletin for November 23/24. Also posted on the parish website and on church bulletin boards. 3) Spread the word and plan to join us on Sunday, 12/22 for caroling! Meet at Saint Gabriel's at noon and proceed to the Walnut Beach arch. Help us spread our joy in the season and in our faith. Cathy has spoken to Susan Patrick of the Walnut Beach Assn. and will see about posting information through them. Ann will invite the Wildermere Beach Congregational Church members to join us.

Social Justice (Human Concerns): Al May: 1) At the 11/18 meeting the group discussed *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on social justice; reported on October's Social Justice Dinner. 2) Topics addressed in a meeting w/Father John: integrating food collection between our 2 churches. (Maria Tomasetti arranged to have food donated at Saint Ann's brought to Saint Gabriel's on the 3rd weekend of November. That practice to continue.) 3) Al circulated a sample of a monthly Social Justice meditation that will appear in *The Parish Press*, affording parishioners an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of social justice in a Catholic context. 4) Giving Tree bulletin insert mentioned new connection w/New Haven's St. Gianna Center. 5) A speaker from the Brian O'Connell homeless project spoke to the committee about Brian's Bags; the project is trying to raise money for a van that would offer laundry facilities and showers to the homeless. 6) Lynn Campbell, Executive Director of the Archdiocesan Catholic Social Justice Ministry is a possible speaker at January's meeting. 7) The group hopes to have a speaker in the spring to address the Church's teaching on social justice.

Father John commended Al and the committee for working to blend the social justice ministries that had existed at each Saint Raphael's two campuses. Such an umbrella does not exist in many parishes. Kathleen Buchanan observed that the Social Justice umbrella is so large that we don't understand all that it encompasses. We should have policies and procedures for each aspect of the ministry. We could combine into one function the existing Giving Tree, Summer Vines and 3rd Sunday food collection efforts.

Safety Committee: Tom Zawislinski gave a brief history of the parish Safety Committee (an ad hoc group, not a Standing Committee, per Father John). Tom was instrumental in forming the committee, attended a Milford Police Department seminar on the subject and gathered information from both Milford PD and the Waterbury PD on protecting the churches from theft and vandalism and protecting parishioners within the church as well. The Milford PD did a survey of both properties (some of it via drone) and made recommendations re: lighting, trimming of shrubs, etc. Father John recounted his experience while pastor of Saint John Vianney in West Haven and underscored the value of such a survey.

Ministry Review: Trish Black, working with a small group, has been reviewing the list of ministries and circulated an updated breakdown of Lou's list indicating how the ministries fall under each of the Standing Committees. Re: the idea of adding/revitalizing ministries (50+ Club, Anniversary Celebration, e.g.) Ann suggested that parishioners who want any new ministries added should be willing to organize and staff the ministry; that doing so is not the responsibility of the Council. Maria Tomasetti has been researching a ministry of visits to the homebound (beyond what EMCH's do), a very complex ministry. Maria hopes to garner ideas and guidance from the staff at Saint Bridget of Sweden Parish, which has an excellent program. Trish will continue working. Next step: revising the current list of parishioners who participate in our ministries; the list has not been updated in a while.

Open Forum: 1) Cathy recommended setting up a common calendar for Council meetings, to avoid conflicts of meeting times/dates. Members agreed that it would be a helpful tool. Cathy will pursue. 2) Lou presented a "Saint Ann's Kitchen Initiative," recommendations from the Tag Sale/Christmas Fair team for cleaning/updating the kitchen. Cathy is in favor of hiring professionals. Lou and Kathleen will work with others, at Father John's suggestion, to break the list down according to what needs to be done and by whom. 3. Lou reminded the Council that setup for the Christmas Fair begins in the Saint Ann Parish Center on Monday, December 2nd and asked for their help if possible.

Father John's Comments: 1) As of 1/31/20 all tenants will be out of the former Saint Ann School building. We need to think creatively about using rooms on the second floor, which will now be available. Rooms can be designated for particular use. Lock changes will be necessary. 2). Edo Construction has repaired the sidewalk on the east side of Park Avenue near Saint Gabriel Church. 3) We are working to solve the blight issue behind Saint Gabriel Church and on putting in a 22-space parking lot with a surrounding fence. Plan currently at an impasse while we obtain necessary approvals. We are in discussion with Chris Saley, City of Milford Public Works Director. 4) Milford Police Department responded to a break-in at the former Saint Ann Rectory and found graffiti; tools and equipment stored in the building not damaged or stolen. The building, which is in a residential zone, has been sealed up. 5) Father has made an executive decision and instituted a moratorium on inserts in the weekly bulletin. We print a weekly bulletin and have a monthly newsletter. Why the need for inserts, which are wasteful? One-third of the side of the bulletin that is printed in color will now be reserved for material formerly presented as inserts.

Al May read his opening prayer as a closing prayer, invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the Pastoral Council.

We will meet again on Monday, December 16th, 7 pm at the Saint Gabriel Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Ann Eden
November 30, 2019