

Saint Raphael Pastoral Council
Meeting Notes from February 24, 2020

Lou Servideo called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Saint Ann Parish Center. All members were in attendance except Tom Zawislinski. Kathleen Buchanan opened the meeting with a prayer for God's grace and guidance as we work to meet the true needs of our parish and the common good of all.

Lou reported that Betty Morse, parishioner and former Council member, has been diagnosed with cancer and is currently hospitalized at Milford Hospital. The Council joined Lou in a prayer to Saint Peregrine for Betty's recovery.

Acceptance of Record: The meeting notes from January 13 were accepted without dissent.

Mission Statement: The Council came to consensus and adopted the mission statement that had been proposed in January. It reads:

Saint Raphael Parish is a Roman Catholic Community of Faith where all are welcome.
We come together to praise God in Eucharistic celebration and reach out to minister
to one another in love. Guided by the Holy Spirit and firmly committed to the concept
of social justice, we strive to see Christ in others
and to bring His message of love and salvation to everyone we meet.

Ann Eden thanked the original Ad Hoc Mission Statement committee (Andrew Jorge, Cathy Coda, Lou Servideo and John Marmolejo) and the current committee (Al May, Rose Marie Marmolejo, Lou Servideo and Rich Wheeling) for their work in developing the Parish Mission Statement. Father John would like to have the statement printed, perhaps using calligraphy, and posted in both churches. Paula Demirjam agreed to take on that project.

Standing Committee Reports:

Social Justice (Human Concerns): Al May reported that Lynn Campbell, executive director of the Archdiocesan Office of Social Justice Ministry, had spoken at the group's last meeting about Archdiocesan and parish Social Justice programs. The committee's next task is to sort out and prioritize its efforts, which seem to be focusing on the problem of Human Trafficking. Some members had attended an educational seminar in Bridgeport on Human Trafficking, which is happening in schools in the area. A former West Haven police officer who had attended the seminar is willing to talk to parents about this critical topic. Further discussion at the group's next meeting, on March 2.

Parish Life:

Welcome Packet: Pat Pavlucik reported that the team "has built a prototype," which she gave to Father John to review. The packet includes: a schedule; parish history; a "welcome" letter with suggestions for becoming active; a list of activities; Faith Formation information; a Social Gathering sheet; a bulletin and a newsletter. Still needed: the parish mission statement [just adopted!] and a ministry contact list, which Father John will help to create. The team plans to have greeters who will meet personally with new people. Pat's research shows that there were 8 new parishioners 2019 (a number Father John will try to verify) and that 2 formerly inactive parishioners have joined the parish so far in 2020. Father John stressed how important this work is and thanked the team, something Pat did as well.

Website Review: Cathy Coda reported, “We’re pretty done with that,” but asked Council members to “keep an eye on the website and to let Nancy Vai know” about any necessary updates/ typos, etc. Father John applauded that “great idea.”

Social Gathering Team: **1)** Cathy reported 32 reservations for the February 27 Lenten Meal/Reflections from Father Jeffrey “Skip” Thompson. More widespread publicity (to other parishes, in the newspaper) might have made a difference in the number; something to remember in the future. Nonetheless, “we are looking forward to Father Skip.” **2)** Lou: The team met on February 4 and is “trying to do a day trip for the parish.” Team members will report on possibilities at their next meeting. **3)** Lou was pleased to report on “the big event,” a parish picnic (no date or location yet announced), courtesy of Father John. Parishioners will be able to socialize, including the stalwart folks who have worked so hard on past picnics. When he talked about “hard working parishioners” Lou gave kudos to Betty Morse, who has worked tirelessly on every committee/event she’s been a part of. **4)** [A bit later in the meeting, but reported here most appropriately] Lou expressed disappointment at the small number of people who attended Jim Lambert’s Estate Planning and healthcare seminar on February 20. The topic was one that generated a lot of positive feedback on the Social Gathering survey. Al pointed out that many non-profit organizations have similar presentations, a fact that may have accounted for the low turnout.

Prayer and Worship: Ann: **1)** Fr. Joe Sica’s booklet *Lenten Blessings Await* is available at all the church doors. Booklets were in place as of February 22/23. **2)** As a reminder to parishioners about the Lenten Meal/Reflections event, a joint effort of Parish Life and Prayer & Worship, a flyer circulated via Google Groups. [To no great effect, based on the numbers!] **3)** A Lenten Prayer Opportunities sheet is available at the church doors. The sheet is intended to acquaint people with Mass and Adoration opportunities at other local Catholic churches. **4)** Father Stephen Krugel will offer Holy Week reflections at Saint Ann Church on Wednesday evening, April 1 at 7:00 pm. In all, then, there will be three special Lenten presentations: Father Skip’s reflections at the meal on 2/27; an evening of music and reflection on Wednesday, March 18 at Saint Ann’s. (Music courtesy of Peter DeMarco and the Saint Ann Choir; reflections by Amy Ekeh); Father Steve’s Holy Week reflections. **5)** The committee continues to plan for a Corpus Christi celebration on Sunday, June 14. Sgt. Jay Kranyak of the Milford Police Department’s Traffic Division was very helpful in helping establish our route. Rose Marie Marmolejo has been the point person in trying to find a canopy for the procession. Father John, too, has been looking at possibilities. We will succeed!

Open Forum: **1)** Rich Wheeling reminded the Council that “we need to get started” on the selection process for new members. Current members of the Selection Committee are Rich, Lou and Cathy. [Current Council members whose terms expire in May: Ann Eden, Tom Jagodzinski, Pat Pavlucik, Lou Servideo.]. **2)** Trish Black wasn’t sure there had been enough advance notice in the bulletin about the visit of the Little Sisters of the Poor on February 22/23. Without sufficient notice parishioners might not have been prepared to make a donation to Sisters’ cause. A discussion followed about procedures for a second collection versus a free will offering. Conclusion: better direction is needed in the future to be certain we’re following proper procedures.

Father John’s Comments: **1)** Review of the sale of the Saint Gabriel School property: Within days of his arrival as parish administrator in late June of 2017 Father John was approached by members of the Boys & Girls Club of Milford who expressed interest in purchasing the former Saint Gabriel School property. Father John approached the Archbishop about a possible sale. In March of 2018 the Archbishop granted permission once the request had been reviewed and approved by the groups within the Archdiocese that are tasked to do so. The Boys & Girls Club did sign a contract but came back with a low purchase price, below the appraisal

figure from 2015. The parish consulted the appraiser, who said that the value of the property had gone up to \$3.4 million from 2015's value of \$3.1 million. Unable to meet that number, the Club opted out of purchasing the property.

Within 3 days an offer came in, through the Archdiocese, from Metro Star. Father John has looked at the Metro Star properties and has concluded that "Bob Smith develops quality properties." On December 3, 2019 Metro Star signed a contract to purchase the property and placed \$100,000.00 in an escrow account as a deposit. Since then, at their expense, Metro Star has done some drilling on the property to check on the removal of an underground tank - As a parish we knew the tank had been removed, but we had no proof, no paper trail - and to do soil testing.

Reports circulating on social media that "the parking lot is being dug up" are erroneous and stem from the presence of equipment which is there because the parking lot is a staging area for the group doing work on the roads in and around Naugatuck Avenue. The group has paid the parish \$1,000 for the temporary use of the property.

Last week the parish received another \$100,000.00. Our contract with Metro Star stipulates 2 ten-month periods to obtain the required approvals from the City of Milford. Every month, beginning in February, the parish receives \$4,000.00 out of the escrow account, money which is not refundable. The average tenant in the type of apartments planned for the property earns \$120,000.00. Affordable housing for this type of project means the tenant would earn \$80,000.00. (This is not low-income housing.)

In answer to a question Father stated we will be able to take anything we want from the building/property. Everything we don't want will be demolished with the building.

2) The video for the 2020 Archbishop's Annual Appeal will be presented in lieu of a homily at all Masses this weekend.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm. We will meet again on Monday, 3/23, 7 pm, Saint Gabriel Hall.

After adjournment the Council had an early Mardi Gras celebration and enjoyed King Cake from Haydel's Bakery in New Orleans.

Ann Eden
February 25, 2020