

**Saint Raphael Pastoral Council
Meeting Notes from March and April 2020**

Preparations for the March 23rd meeting of the Pastoral Council had begun on March 9th, the day Lou Servideo sent a reminder to Council members to submit their items for the meeting's agenda. Within a week the drastic changes caused by the coronavirus had set in. Effective March 17 we could no longer gather to worship as a faith community and parish meetings, per the Archdiocese of Hartford, were "to be kept to an absolute minimum."

Lou Servideo organized an e-meeting for March with an abbreviated agenda, essentially an exchange of reports from the various Council committees with additional comments from Father John. April's meeting, scheduled for the 27th, consisted of information from Lou and Father John that was circulated via email on April 18th and 20th. What follows are the notes from March and April.

March E-Meeting (3/23/20):

An opening prayer was posted expressing our need for God and for the strength, wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Standing Committee Reports:

Parish Life: Cathy Coda reported on February 26th Lenten meal and on plans for a parish picnic on Sunday, September 13th.

Lenten Meal: featured a 3-soup, tuna sandwich and desserts menu. (Potato and vegetable soups courtesy of Rose Marie Marmolejo; tomato soup a kind donation from The Bridgeport Flyer; desserts courtesy of Trish Black and Kathleen Buchanan). 35 attendees. Income: \$185. Expenses: \$236.90. \$100 donation to Father Skip Thompson, our guest speaker, whose after dinner talk was both interesting and inspiring. "A good time was had by all." Next year: more extensive publicity.

Parish Picnic: planned for Sunday, September 13, noon-5 pm on Saint Gabriel School grounds or on the lot behind Saint Gabriel Church. Catering by Scott Rohrig of Lasse's (kindness of Father John). Scott will provide a cook, server, grill and tent. Cathy has access to large tents for dining. Parishioners will picnic as guests; games planned for children and adults. Goal: 100 parishioners in attendance. If each Council member accounts for 10 attendees, we will surpass our goal!

Social Gathering Team: Lou: The 3 day trip possibilities (boat trips on the Sound; dinner theatre) originally proposed for the Council's consideration have been postponed because of the coronavirus until at least the fall of 2020 or possibility spring of 2021.

Prayer and Worship: Ann Eden: Committee moving forward with plans for a parish-wide celebration of Corpus Christi on Sunday, June 14. Because of the coronavirus, Father Steve Krugel's Holy Week reflection, *From Crying "Hosanna" to Crying "Crucify Him"*, scheduled for April 1, has been canceled. The committee mourns the passing of Betty Morse, a beloved committee member, part of the first Saint Raphael Pastoral Council and the 1st Saint Raphael parishioner to receive the Saint Joseph Medal of Appreciation (on March 18, 2018). The Lord called Betty home on Sunday, March 15.

[*Post meeting updates:* 1) Father Steve kindly sent a copy of his presentation which was posted via Saint Raphael Parish Press Google Groups on the first of April. 2) Restrictions on public gatherings will probably cause the cancellation of June's Corpus Christi celebration. Information will be circulated via parish Google Groups updates.]

Social Justice (Human Concerns): Al May: The focus of the subcommittee's March 2nd meeting was on educating parishioners re: sex trafficking and being alert to it in communities, schools, even in homes via the

internet. Group hoped to have a speaker address the topic this spring and to have information available after weekend Masses. Plans currently on hold due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Membership Initiative: Rich Wheeling: Rich, Lou and Cathy met to finalize plans for the selection process, scheduled to begin the weekend of March 28/29 and conclude the weekend of May 23/24. The process includes announcements at Mass, [in the newsletter] and in the weekly bulletin; distribution of nomination forms, prayers of petition, verification of nominees, orientation and final selection. The team has formulated the petitions; Father John has approved them. [See updates in April's notes, below.]

Open Forum: 1) Rose Marie: The pork roast dinner to support HomeFront has been postponed pending the selection of a new HomeFront date. 2) Lou: Friendly reminder re: our next Ministry Fair which should be scheduled for October/November this year.

Father John's Comments (e-mailed 3/24/20): Father thanked the members for participating in the e-meeting. Per a notice he received from the Archdiocese, the timeline for not celebrating Mass in public has been extended from April 3 to April 30. This will include the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter and will mean the delay of Sacraments of Initiation to a future date. By week's end Father hopes to receive guidance from the Archdiocese as to what we should do about the services of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. "What we are going through is unprecedented in modern history. It has given me the opportunity to reflect on what it must be like to be believers in places where people are not able to worship freely

Please remember that our churches are open for you to visit and pray in the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Saint Ann Church is open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. (unless I forget to open...that happened this morning). Manfred is opening Saint Gabriel Church M-W-F-Su Noon - 4:00 p.m., Tu & Th 8:00 a.m. - Noon, Sa 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. I continue to say Mass privately each and every day for the scheduled intention and for those affected by the COVID-19 virus. You can watch Mass everyday at 10:00 a.m. on WCCT-TV (CW20) and WCTX-TV (MyTV9) (channels 20 and 9 on Optimum).

Continue to pray that we weather this storm. It is a worldwide challenge that will come to an end. The only question is when. I ask that you please pray daily the [Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe for Protection from the Coronavirus. Father attached a pdf of the prayer, which has been printed in the bulletin.

May God continue to bless you and your families. Stay healthy, and WASH YOUR HANDS!"

April Updates:

Saturday, April 18, 2020:

Lou reported on the results of discussions he has had with Father John:

With the likelihood that Council meetings for April and May will be canceled because of the health crisis, Father has extended until May of 2021 the membership terms of Ann Eden, Tom Jagodzinski, Pat Pavlucik and Lou Servideo, whose terms were to have ended in May of 2020.

Father does want certain projects to be completed during this summer: the signage at our two churches, Saint Ann and Saint Gabriel, and the relocation of the Ten Commandments monument from Saint Gabriel School to Saint Gabriel Church. Ed Caprio will coordinate the movement of the monument.

Once we are able to resume the public celebration of Mass, Father would like the Prayer and Worship Committee to arrange for a Mass to celebrate the re-opening of the churches and to pray for those who have died and for their families.

Lou will stay in touch with Council members and will advise them of further updates from Father John. Members should let Lou know if there is anything they wish to bring up.

Monday, April 20, 2020:

Lou circulated an updated list of Pastoral Council Members. Because of the coronavirus and in order to be fair to everyone, the terms of all current Council members have been extended for one year.

Some members, Lou included, have suggested that the Council conduct further sessions via Zoom meeting. In that way we could address items such as the Mission Statement (a proposed revision is up for consideration) and the Parish Picnic. Please share your thoughts.

Notes prepared by Ann Eden
April 29, 2020