

Saint Raphael Pastoral Council
Meeting Notes from November 22, 2021

Lou Servideo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were in attendance except Deacon George and Cathy Coda. Tom Zawislinski's opening prayer asked for unity and peace and for joy at all times. October's meeting notes were accepted as sent. Ann Eden thanked Maria Tomasetti for acting as "secretary" in her absence.

Committee Reports:

Christian/Lifelong Faith Formation: Maria: the GIFT faith formation program is going well, although the expansion to an additional evening session has been "taxing." Maria thanked the GIFT ministers for their cooperation. First Reconciliation is scheduled for Saturday, December 11th at Saint Gabriel's. Twenty-two teens received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Cathedral of Saint Joseph on Sunday afternoon, November 7th.

Social Justice (Human Concerns): Al May invited all Council members to CONECT's 10th Anniversary Assembly at Bridgeport's Mount Aery Baptist Church on Tuesday, November 30. People can participate in person or via Zoom. CONECT was honored with the Bishop Donnelly Award at October's Annual Social Justice Dinner in recognition of their work in promoting a more just world here in Connecticut.

Prayer and Worship: Ann: **1)** The parish's annual Mass of Remembrance, celebrated on Sunday, November 14th at Saint Ann's, was "beautiful." Ann circulated programs from the Mass, at which we remembered all those with a connection to the parish who have died during the past year (October to October). The names in the program included parishioners, relatives/friends of parishioners and some long-time parishioners who had moved away. **2)** Copies of our Advent book of reflections, *Advent with Saint Joseph*, are "going fast." They are available at the doors of both churches. **3)** The Council-requested Mass for Healing in These Troubled Times, will be celebrated on Monday, November 29th at 8:00 a.m. at Saint Ann's. **4)** Look for Prayer & Worship's *Advent Saints* feature in the bulletins for the weeks of Advent. We'll focus on four saints whose feasts/memorials fall during Advent: Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Ambrose, Saint Lucy and Saint Peter Canisius.

Parish Life: Lou: **1)** Some ten young people visited the Trick or Treat Curbside candy distribution on the afternoon of Hallowe'en. Lou noted, and the Council agreed, that the number of trick or treaters seemed down from other years – although not all neighborhoods had seen a decrease! **2)** November 6/7's Veterans Day Coffee And brought in +/- \$800 in support of Wounded Warriors. The Coffee And was not so busy as usual. **3)** The November 21st reception in honor of Father John's 40th anniversary of ordination was great. Lou thanked Peter DeMarco and the choir for their participation; MaryJo Downs for her invaluable help; Cathy Coda for arranging the catering and for the tablecloths and Cathy's daughter Susan for helping set up for the reception; Kathleen Buchanan for handling check-in (with an apology for having given her the wrong list to work from!); and the volunteer cleanup crew of Melvyn Moral, Matt and MaryJo Downs, Leo Robinson, Betsy and Darryl Hine and Joe and Nancy Vai. We were able to send 3 trays of food to Beth-El Shelter, and they were "very much appreciated." **4)** The volunteer Task Force for odd jobs, currently "in a lull," will meet again in a month, as will the Social Gathering group.

Rose Marie Marmolejo has received 30 or more reservations for the December 5th Advent luncheon. Rose Marie and Pat Pavlucik have scheduled luncheon setup for Saturday, December 4th. Rose Marie is also accepting gift cards for the annual Christmas Giving Tree, another aspect of the parish's Christmas Giving Program that was outlined in the weekly bulletin of November 21st. The program includes gift-giving to 15 different organizations/groups. Kathleen Buchanan highlighted one organization, Boys and Girls Village, which serves some 900 boys and girls throughout Connecticut.

Open Forum: Al informed the Council that a group of churches and the Milford Clergy Association is working to resettle an Afghan family here in Milford.

Father John's Comments:

Anniversary Reception: Father expressed his thanks to all those involved in the reception. It was “humbling” and “fantastic.” Father said he “wasn’t planning anything” and acknowledged that the reception was “the culmination of the efforts of a lot of people.” He also shared with the Council members that he is now “the only working stiff left in the family.” The reception was “a wonderful experience.”

Roof Repairs: The flashing between the Saint Ann School building and the auditorium has been completed. There is now an all-around gravel stop on the auditorium roof. What remains: repair of the fascia board on the south side of the auditorium. Father will get a thermal scan of both roofs, through which we can see the presence of water in the roof membrane. The scan/analysis and report will cost \$1,000.00. There is still a problem in the library.

Confirmation at the Cathedral: Based on his experience on November 7th, Father is a convert to the idea of having Confirmation at the Cathedral. “I thought it was great.” Archbishop Blair greeted the almost 200 candidates warmly: “Welcome to your Cathedral.” Father has learned that the practice of Cathedral Confirmations is common in Europe. And our students “liked seeing Father John” participate in the ceremony. Other positives: the candidates sat with their sponsors; there are lots of places at the Cathedral to take pictures; the event was livestreamed. On the “concerns” side: the delay in notifying parishes about participation by their ministers, as lectors and altar servers, for example. (Note: Michael Deveny represented Saint Raphael Parish as an altar server.) With advance notice there might have been more people serving in those roles. Also, as Maria pointed out, families did not have the same numbers attend as in the past. The number of adult Confirmation opportunities also limited the possibilities for some candidates. That happened here at Saint Raphael, but Father John wrote to the Archbishop about the situation and was delegated to confirm the candidate.

Following a brief discussion, Council members agreed that the next meeting, originally scheduled for December 27th, should be moved to Monday, January 10th. That meeting will take place at Saint Gabriel’s.

With a kind “stay safe” dismissal, Lou adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Ann Eden
December 1, 2021