

**PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING 12-21-2023**

Meeting was convened at 6:37 p.m. in the rectory.

**Present** – Father Joe, Kathryn Moery, John Riordan, Matthew Lee-Own (via Zoom), Michael Griffin, Jorge Otero, Katie Pomroy, Adam White

**Opening Prayer** – Michael delivered the opening prayer: “Prayer to St. Raphael” “Prayer to St. Gabriel” and “Prayer to St. Michael”. Michael shared a personal story of witnessing the intercession of St. Raphael in returning a lost dog to him.

**Minutes** – Minutes of the 11-16-2023 PPC meeting were reviewed and approved without correction.

**Announcements** – **No announcements were given at this meeting.**

**Book Discussion [15 mins]** – Discussion was opened into Chapters 6, 7 & 8 of Divine Renovation: Beyond the Parish.

- John Riordan began the discussion by discussing the different approaches to structural change in the Church that Fr. Mallon highlights in these chapters: (1) Clustering, (2) Regions, and (3) Amalgamation. [Chapter 6, pg. 101-104]
- In the selected chapters, Fr. Mallon discussed the efforts at restructuring taking place in Pittsburg and Chicago.
- Adam shared a perspective from a prior parish of his in which the main church helped support several other parishes in the area which were struggling.
- Fr. Joe spoke about the situation in places like Maine where there is often a single pastor for 6-7 parishes. This is due to the overall declining Church population in places like Maine (where the overall population is also experiencing decline). Additionally, the model of having a single pastor for numerous parishes leads to priests being overworked and possibly burnt out. *See* Chapter 7 (discussing responses from priests conducted using Gallup’s Q12 survey).
- Kathryn inquired from the approaches described in the book, which were most likely to be applied to the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- Fr. Joe explained that the Archdiocese doesn’t gain anything from amalgamating the current parishes as the parishes are staffed and operated by religious orders. Archdiocese has not closed any parishes that are maintained by a religious order.

- Kathryn suggested that as part of next year's (2024) discussions that the bylaws be reviewed with an aim of determining where Assumption Church sits as part of a grouping of parishes.
  - What is Assumption's mission statement?
  - What does Assumption wants to accomplish under a restructuring model?
  - What is Assumption doing that sets us apart from the other parishes [i.e. Holy Name, Old St. Pat's, etc.]
- Fr. Joe noted that the three goals of our parish so far have been: Welcoming, Accompanying and Sending
- Fr. Joe further discussed some of the practices that were rooted in older structures of the parishes such as requiring a letter from a parents' home parish to have their child baptized in another state.
  - This is an example of the Church hanging onto structures as opposed to living out a mission.

### **Old Business [20 minutes]**

- **Update on Couples Event for 2024** – Fr. Joe provided an update on the status of the Couples & Newlyweds event –
  - Fr. Joe sent an email to 11 couples who were married at Assumption or married through the parish (i.e. participated in marriage preparation at Assumption) and have been active in the Parish.
  - These couples were asked, “Looking back on the marriage preparation you received, what would have been more helpful to you / what would you have liked to see?”
  - Fr. Joe received eight responses and six couples were able to participate in a 30 min Zoom session with Fr. Joe to discuss. The following insights were gleaned from the discussions:
    - An important consideration that was not part of the original vision was the question of why more couples are choosing not to come to the Church to get married. The couples interviewed were very aware that their contemporaries / peers did not even consider a Church wedding for a number of reasons such as: (1) disagreeing with portions of the Church's philosophies / teachings, (2) having a fiancée of a different religion, (3) the couple already cohabits
  - Fr. Joe suggested that a way of addressing this concern might be to have some of the recently married couples provide a “testimonial” of sorts overcoming some of these objections – hearing that “its o.k. to be married in the Church” from people who have actually gone through the process.

- Fr. Joe inquired if we can have these sort of testimonials put onto the website.
  - Additional feedback from the sessions were that: (1) couples reported the overall preparation was good as was the wedding liturgy, (2) felt that a speaker who covered anything that was discussed in the Pre-Cana would be helpful, particularly a topic on communication post marriage and dealing with in-laws especially once the couple has children, (3) mixed reactions to the concept of having a “mentor couple” for newlyweds.
  - John Riordan noted that marriage is one of the major events through which a couple will have a connection with the Church, and that couples that do not form a faith connection at this stage are less likely to come back to the Church absent significant life events.
  - Fr. Joe determined that we should postpone the planned couples / newlyweds event to April to ensure that we have use of the sanctuary following the replacement of the pews.
- **Young Adult Engagement:** Discussion was opened into the question of engaging with the current young adults that are actively participating in the Church to inquire, “Why / what circumstances in life / faith kept you going to Church / active in Church as opposed to contemporaries that have fallen away.”
  - Interest in figuring out what is bringing people to the Church within all the age groups
- **Website Update – Adam White:** Adam delivered an update on the status of the website update project.
  - Current subcommittee for this project consists of: Adam, Matthew and Beth
  - Want to upload more media to the website to show activity of the Parish: (pictures and press about the events in the Parish community such as the monthly sandwiches, hospitality, etc.)
  - Minutes of PPC meetings and contact information for PPC to be posted on Parish website
- **Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> Hospitality Sunday [KoC / Secular Servite Order] – Matthew Lee-Own:** Matthew provided an update on the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> Hospitality Sunday hosted by the Knights of Columbus and Secular Servite Order.
  - Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event was overall a success with most of the attendance from the 9:00 A.M. and 10:30 A.M. masses.
  - An important result of the event was that it put leadership of Knights of Columbus in touch with leadership from the Secular

Servites to coordinate future events involving both groups –  
Praying Servite Rosary around Feb 2024.

- Christmas Bazaar was good – poinsettias sold out very quickly
- **Planning for Fr. Joe's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – Members of the Special Events Committee will be planning celebrations for Fr. Joe's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination.

### **New Business [5 minutes]**

- **Overview of Ministry Renewal Project – Matthew Lee-Own:**  
Matthew delivered an update / made proposal to renew the handout listing Assumption's ministries.
  - The current ministry flyer that we place in the back of Church has a listing of ministries but lacks any contact information for the ministries.
  - Additionally, the flyer indicates that interested Parishioners should fill it out and place it in the collection basket at Mass for a member of the ministry to contact them.
  - Proposal to renew the contact information for all ministries by the following:
    - Contact the leadership of all ministries that are currently active or which would like to be advertised in the flyer to get a stable point of contact for each ministry.
    - Work with webmaster to create static email addresses for each ministry so that should a leader no longer serve in the ministry or move away from the Parish, that the contacts and mailing list do not have to be remade from scratch.
    - Reprint the ministry flyer with the static email address to contact for getting involved with each ministry.

**Closing Prayer** – Father Joe delivered the closing prayer.