



**ST. JOAN OF ARC CHURCH  
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
MARCH 5, 2019**

**Members Present:**

Rev. Gabriel Baltus, OSB  
Susan Cassa  
Amy DiSanto  
Susan Fronck  
Mark Jablonski  
Mary Beth Kerner  
Mathew Klody

Tom Kmiecik  
Patrick Krapec  
Michael Lewandowski  
Jenny Mosteller  
Barb Richardt  
Mary Beth Sobolewski  
Matt Zurek

**Absent:**

John Basile  
Catherine Casolino  
Dave Mankowski  
Dan O'Connor  
Deacon Gregory Razka  
Rich Weigel

**Guests:**

Drew Olejnik

**I. OPENING**

Evening Prayer was held in Room 24 of the Parish Center at 7:00 p.m.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

The Meeting began at 7:20 p.m.

December minutes were approved by Matt Zurek and seconded by Mary Beth Sobolewski.

**Pastor's Address**

**Fr. Kenneth's Retirement**

Fr. Kenneth Zigmond has retired after 38 years at St. Joan of Arc. He will now reside at St. Procopius Abbey. A retirement reception was held last Saturday and was very well attended. This is likely the first time that the parish has had only one priest. Due to this change, there will no longer be a 6:30 am Mass on weekdays, as it would be difficult to secure a visiting priest to celebrate one of the two Masses each day. The weekend Mass and confession schedule will remain unchanged. Fr. Gabriel has asked the Abbot for a

regular weekend assistant. Until we receive a regular assistant, we will continue to receive help from retired diocesan and other order priests.

### **Holy Week and Easter**

The Good Friday liturgy will take place at 3:00pm this year, and a devotion/prayer service with Veneration of the Cross will take place at 7:00pm.

There are no adults to be baptized at the Easter Vigil this year. Those in RCIA will be received into Full Communion on May 5<sup>th</sup>. We will have a more abbreviated Vigil this year, and plan to encourage more people to attend, perhaps with a video announcement in the upcoming weeks.

### **Safety Outreach Update**

We have discussed in the past concerns about the vulnerability of those attending Mass and other services at our church in the event of crisis. Fr. Gabriel would like to have the staff trained in the A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) program and form a committee to make a safety plan for the school and church. Father has been in contact with the police department regarding this issue.

### **New Finance Council Members**

Two parishioners have joined the Finance Council: Cathy Cawiezel, who has a background in finance and works for the Village of Lisle, and Kevin Bayci, a newer parishioner who is a civil engineer.

### **School Campus Minister**

Fr. Gabriel explained that maintaining a strong Catholic identity in the school is a major priority, but we need a person with the proper background and education to teach Junior High religion, rather than relying on homeroom teachers who do not have such training. Test scores have shown that the Junior High students' knowledge of the faith is not as sharp as in the past. Therefore, Fr. Gabriel and Michael Sweeney have sought to hire a full-time campus minister, who will begin in the fall. They interviewed a candidate two weeks ago and are waiting for her decision on accepting the position. This individual would teach 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade religion, oversee faith formation in the rest of the school, maintain a good connection with the parish, and find creative ways to keep students imbued with the faith.

### **School Parents' Attendance at Sunday Mass**

During Fr. John Belmonte's (superintendent of Catholic schools) visit last month, it was brought to our attention that among schools in the Diocese, ours ranks fourth from last in school families' Sunday Mass attendance. Students were polled in November and January as to whether they had attended Sunday Mass, which revealed that only 34 percent (at most) of our students attend Sunday Mass.

Fr. Gabriel discussed this troubling statistic at Mass during the weekend which began Catholic Schools Week. One of the steps to address this problem is the hiring of a campus minister. It was suggested that it is made known to school families that the campus minister is being hired due in great part to the lack of Mass attendance. Also, Fr. Belmonte provided us with materials aimed at helping us to increase students' Mass attendance. Fr. Gabriel is reviewing these materials and considering the suggestions therein, some of

which have already been attempted at our parish. The Council recommended that this effort to increase Mass attendance should be viewed as a “campaign”.

Patrick Krapec expressed concern, based on conversations he has had with several other families, that our parish is unwelcoming and cold toward young families. These families related that they have been scolded or been embarrassed by other parishioners during Mass regarding the behavior of their children. Patrick related that he has experienced unfriendliness toward his own family, as well. Patrick said that we should make it clear that everyone’s children are welcome. He gave an example of a parish who distributed flyers reassuring families that they are welcome, not to worry if their children are restless, and encouraging them to explain what is occurring during the liturgy to their children.

Fr. Gabriel said that this is a very delicate topic, and one where all sides need to be heard, both those who are distracted by the noise in church, as well as those who are trying their best to be at Mass with their children. Father would like to communicate to the parish that all parties need to be conscious of one another and be considerate of others at Mass, although he has not decided when or how to do so.

It was proposed that we can also support families with young children by ensuring that the nursery and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd are available each week. Also, we will begin to have “Children’s Liturgy of the Word” in the fall.

However, it is not sufficient to simply blame the parish and its members for being the reason why families are not going to Mass. Much of it stems from a lack of catechesis: people have forgotten that the Sunday obligation is not a man-made law, but rather a divine command. We have to emphasize why going to Mass is essential to one’s life of faith. If one does not desire a relationship with Christ, it will be difficult to find any means of getting him/her to come to Mass, and students’ relationship with Christ also needs to be nurtured at home. It is also helpful to have sports teams come to Mass, and for coaches and teachers to encourage their students and their parents to attend Mass.

### **Adult Faith Formation Update**

The Parish Mission will take place March 18-20. The presenter will be Fr. Thomas Loya, pastor of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church in Homer Glen. He will speak on the connection between Catholic spirituality and the environment, Catholic art, why God made us male and female, and how having a “Catholic worldview” can help to address the problems in society.

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, Michael Lewandowski will give his Cloud of Witnesses presentation on Saint Joan of Arc. Michael said he would also be willing to give a presentation on our patroness for the school families at a later date, since March 28<sup>th</sup> falls during spring break.

Michael explained that we had to cancel the Christ Renews His Parish men’s retreat, which was originally scheduled to take place in February, as we did not receive enough registrations to conduct the retreat. We hope to reschedule for a later date. We may also consider a one-day retreat, as it is difficult for many people to commit to an all-day retreat on a Saturday and Sunday.

### **Lenten Soup Supper**

Jenny Mosteller asked if the Council would be willing to host one of the Friday soup suppers during Lent. The Council members responded in the affirmative. Jenny will ask Vicente Fernandez to assign the Pastoral Council to one of the Fridays in Lent, and will send a request for volunteers once we have a date.

## **School Board Update**

Drew Olejnik reported that at the last School Board meeting, an update on the Technology Committee was provided. Also, the recent school Auction was quite successful, exceeding their goal by raising \$100,000. During a “call for cash” at the auction, \$12,000 was raised for technology. Other topics that were also discussed were: continuing concern regarding decreasing enrollment; the finance and resource management pillars of the strategic plan; and a recap of Catholic Schools Week. Discernment for new School Board members will take place at their next meeting.

Patrick Krapec expressed concern that while we have had a successful year for fundraising, we are still experiencing low enrollment. Mark Jablonski added that we need to look beyond just keeping up with other schools; we need to have something unique to attract families. Drew mentioned that it was suggested that one of the school board members serve as a “spirit chair” to promote excitement about classroom activities and service projects.

Drew also explained that more people are sending their children to preschool. Our PreK 4 program has already filled a classroom for next year, but the administration is reluctant to add another classroom, because if we do not get at least 16 children in each class, the preschool program won't be able to pay for itself, as is required by the Diocese. The Council recommended that the school should fill this gap.

### **III. REMINDERS**

Jenny reminded the Council of their Adoration hour commitment.

Matt Zurek asked the Council to consider volunteering for the April 30<sup>th</sup> Pads Night.

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be on Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **IV. CLOSING**

The meeting ended at 9:19 p.m. Closing prayer was the Salve Regina.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Kerner  
Recording Secretary