St. Rita Parish Pastoral Council
Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Church Narthex

Members in attendance: Fr. Michael, Dave Eberle, Myra Fox, Bill Greinke, Ellie Hammond, Bob Mitchell, Pat Rossman, Mark Schmitz, Anna Marie Smetana, Jean Weaver and Mary Claire Weisensel. Also in attendance were Trustees Dennis Collins and Sharon Gierahn.

Guest: Jim Sisak, Trustee, St. Mary's by the Lake

The opening prayer was led by Father Michael at 7:00 p.m.

Bill Greinke distributed a hand-out from Dr. Sue regarding what you may want to fast during Lent. Everyone appreciated the hand-out.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Mark Schmitz to accept the January 23, 2024 minutes with approved changes and it was seconded by Jean Weaver.

Guest Speaker: Dennis Collins gave a brief update on the meeting that happened at St. Lucy's a couple of weeks ago regarding the combing of parishes. As leaders of this parish, it was discussed to reach out to the other parishes that will be involved in the clustering of parishes which are St. Paul, St. Mary by the Lake and St. Louis to invite them to attend one of our PPC meeting to introduce their parish and what they are involved in.

Tonight, we have Jim Sisak with us from St. Mary by the Lake. Jim thanked us for inviting him to our meeting as will be working together in the near future. Jim mentioned the official letter that was distributed by the parishes regarding the clustering. Father Michael mentioned that our letter was sent out today so every parishioner should receive it by the end of the week. There were letters available at our meeting.

Jim, started to tell us about the PPC at St. Mary's. The have a small council and only one committee which is Human Concern's. Jim was impressed by how activate our council is with all the ministries that we have. Of course, we are a much larger parish than St. Mary's as they only have about 240 families. They just celebrated the 170th anniversary of the parish. The original St. Mary's was located downtown then they relocated to Crestview in the mid 70's. At that time, there were many "downtown" parishes, approximately 5 within a half mile of each other and the bishop felt the need that St. Mary's should move further out. He explained that the reorganization of parishes is due to the smaller membership in each parish, the cost of keeping all of them maintained and the lack of priests that are available in our area. Many will be retiring by July 2025. Bill stated that one of the positives coming out of all this is the potential for combining efforts regarding volunteers. Jim also agrees with this. Also, he feels we must keep everyone on a positive note and that this will be good for all of us, making us stronger. Jean mentioned that our Human Concerns ministry is very active and asked how active theirs is? They have a very small group of people but many things such as: work on meals for the community at the Hospitality Center; assist the veteran's here in Racine; they have a "Meet your Neighbor" which is very similar to our

Kringlemingle. They have 2 masses each weekend, but all of our mass schedules will be changing due to the clustering. The priest will only be performing 3 masses each, or 6 total per weekend.

The question was asked of Jim as to what are the expectations of the St. Mary's parishioners at this time? He responded that it's expected that most of the parishioners will be discontented. As we all feel, this is our parish. Jim feels as parish leaders, we must show excitement and be positive about the new opportunities that we will all have through this endeavor. Jim did mention that Rachel Kroes has contacted them regarding Religious Education and at this time they only have 6 kids involved. Their parish office is only open part-time as is ours and no one other than the parish uses their building. Father asked if they have any fund-raising events. In the past, they had a parish picnic with everyone bringing a dish to pass and the parish did provide food to buy. About 150 people attended.

It was also mentioned that St. Mary's does not contribute to Siena School System. Nor does St. Matthew, their current sister parish, in S. Milwaukee contribute to the Seton School System. This will be a hard item to get used to for many of parishioners when we get clustered.

Father told us that in July he will no longer be our Pastor and that Fr. Thomas from St. Lucy's will be the new Pastor for the new Northwest Parish. Father does not know where he will be going but, currently, has two options. One option would allow him to retain his "Pastor" status by relocating to St. Steven in Oak Creek. The other would be for him to become one of the 3.5 "Associate Pastors" to be assigned within the Racine Deanery as part of the new plan.

Jim pointed out that the remainder of the Milwaukee Archdiocese is expected to go through a realignment of parishes in the near future. He added that the Deanery in Dodge County is facing the same situation as we are right now; that we two Deaneries are the forerunners of the inevitable for so many catholic parishes throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Bill pointed-out that at the last Arch-led leadership meeting concerning the realignment of the parishes, it was announced that a Formation Committee will be formed for each of the two new parishes. Volunteers from among the parish leadership in attendance at that meeting were requested for participation on these committees. The committee will be working with their new pastor in formulating a process for the completion of the many tasks of the realignment. Consideration to be given to how he would like to run his new parish, what are the priorities, and how he wants to get this done. We can set the groundwork by getting together with the other parishes like we are doing tonight. Getting to know one another and discuss new ideas. We must be proactive not reactive.

It was stressed by Dennis that we all mut be prepared for questions after the parish receives the letter this week. Please review the talking points that Bill sent out previously.

St. Louis and St. Paul will be invited to our next PPC meeting.

It was time for us to continue on with our regular meeting and Jim joined us.

Liaison Reports:

Bill added that with all our committee's we have, the PPC has started two more, but these are PPC Standing Committees. They are the Planning Committee and the Safety and Security Committee. We feel that the Safety and Security Committee is a 24/7 obligation for our parishioners not only in church but at all events. The Planning Committee is addressing one of the key responsibilities of the PPC to develop, keep current, and execute planning for the parish. Their efforts set the mission and goals of the parish in order to accomplish the Pastor's vision.

Bill also mentioned that we are requesting written reports from the liaisons to be distributed prior to the council meetings for member reference & consideration, instead of verbal reporting at the meetings, to cut down on the length of the meetings. Items needing PPC action or consideration will be allowed discussion time as needed, per the agenda.

Jean reported that Dan Schrank had encouraged us to volunteer at the SR School annual basketball tournament and also encouraged us to attend the Open House which was held on January 30th. That this participation would show our interest in the school by attending. Jean received a text from a teacher at the middle school which said, "Thank you so much to Pastoral Council and parishioners that have helped out at the basketball tournament and the Open House." The faculty of school noticed that we are reaching out/helping out and it is very much appreciated. Jean commented to her that we were very impressed with the school.

Pastor's Report: Father spoke of the letter that was sent out and that he will be addressing at all masses this weekend. Father also mentioned that Building and Grounds has received 3 bids regarding tree and branch removal from our property. He will be presenting these bids at the next PFC meeting. Father mentioned that Patti seems to be working out really well. She definitely is taking on some tough tasks regarding the festival volunteers and our insurance company.

We thanked Jim for coming and he invited us to attend one of their meetings.

Upcoming PPC Dates:

Tuesday, March 12, 2024
Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Tuesday, May 14, 2024

The closing prayer was led by Father Michael at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Rossman
Secretary
St. Rita Parish - Parish Pastoral Council