

## **Pastoral Council Meeting**

**April 21, 2022**

**In attendance were the following: Tammy Reagan, Kathleen Morgan, Dave Dart, Tammie Rucker, Wayne Hussey, Dana Brown, Cy Richards, Mike Kelly, Stephanie Gregoire, Fr. David Leibham, Jane Heckler**

**Fr. David opened the meeting promptly at 6:30 pm with a prayer from The Book of Blessings.**

**Fr. David provided the council with his reflections on Holy Week. He stated that attendance was up over last year for all of the Holy Week liturgies. There is seating in the church for 950 persons. 400 attended on Holy Thursday, 615 of Good Friday, 469 at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday and 3,765 on Easter Sunday, 400 from Queen of Angels Chapel.**

**Fr. David stated that there was an emphasis on the presentation of the Holy Oils during the Holy Thursday liturgy. The Washing of the Feet is optional and was not included. He was impressed by the number of people who remained afterwards for Night Watch. He explained that on Good Friday, instead of reading the Gospel of St. John, he opted to have the Middle School children perform a Passion Play. In previous years this was performed the hour before the Mass of the Last Supper began. He was impressed and moved by the performance as were others in attendance.**

**During the Easter Vigil 17 people were received into the Church, 11 were baptized. And all were very excited to be entering. Also, all marriages have now been validated.**

**When asked why there was no blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday or washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, Fr. David explained that those are both optional and he opted not to do them.**

**The new Mass schedule at Queen of Angels will begin on Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup>**

The handrail is still being altered and will be installed by Landon Marion when it is completed.

Last Tuesday Fr. David attended the Chrism Mass and received the Holy Oils to be used this year. He then attended the Personnel Board meeting.

Fr. David reported on the Deanery meeting where they discussed some post-pandemic observations. He stated that the parishes are reporting that there is a reluctance for the faithful to return to regular Mass attendance and that those attending live streamed Masses has also fallen off. But that those who are beginning to return are returning through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. While many are finally returning, many are choosing not to return at all because their spirits are broken. There will need to be a paradigm shift to encourage them to return. At Emmaus we have many new families joining because of the population shift occurring in our area. Also discussed the possibility of eventually returning to receiving Holy Communion from the cup, but this decision will be made by the USCCB. At this time there are no parishes throughout the world who are practicing this form of reception.

It was suggested that Emmaus dedicate one wing at either the Saturday Vigil Mass or the 8:30 Mass for social distancing to encourage those older parishioners to return to Mass who are afraid of contracting the virus. Fr. David stated that that was not necessary at Emmaus.

Fr. David then gave an update of the planned celebrations for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the diocese of Austin. It will begin on June 18<sup>th</sup>, Corpus Christi Sunday, with a procession downtown led by Bishop Vasquez to introduce the theme of "Eucharistic Revival". The Diocese will provide Religious Education modules for instruction on the history of the Church in Austin. There will also be an Inaugural Mass at the Bell County Expositions Center for 5,000 people. Each parish will be given a number of tickets to be dispersed to parishioners. The Diocese will also produce a video and a book. There will be several parishes named as Pilgrimage sites by the weekend of April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Fr. David alerted the council to the possibility of Roe v. Wade being overturned in June or July. The Diocese is working on a new program called “Walking With Mom’s in Need” for parents with emergency pregnancies. Unfortunately there are several Pregnancy Centers that the Church has been supporting that are now asking participants to sign a document that is opposed to Catholic teaching. Therefore the Church will no longer be able to support these organizations.**

**Tammy Reagan reminded everyone that Gala is coming up this Saturday.**

**Pastoral Council elections will be held on May 21-22. Tammy will coordinate with Stacie Massey to advertise for nominations. Tammy will be working on a revised statement of “the Nature of the Pastoral Council.**

**Dave Dart and Tammie Rucker will handle Coffee and donuts for the first Sunday in May.**

**Fr. David asked us to remember in our prayers the young people who will be making their First Holy Communion in the coming weeks.**

**The meeting was closed with an Intercessory prayer.**