

Mary, Mother of Mercy
Parish Council Meeting of 11/11/2021 ~ Minutes

Present: Mark Albanese, Tim Davis, Tom Duff, Gerry Frank, Susan Guydosh, Scott Hamula, Fr. Bernard Maloney, Bill Masterson, Andrew Morpurgo, Charles Mullins, Richard Pell, Kathleen Rourke, Donna Ryan, Br. Francisco Serrano, Lynne Stager, and Barbara Willers

Not Present: Leo Kawczenski, Laurenda Denmark, and Jacqueline Leidenfrost

Tim began the meeting at 7:00 p.m. with a reminder to sign in.

Opening Prayer:

Brother Francisco led us in a prayer of thanksgiving and the Our Father.

Minutes:

The minutes for the Council's meeting on September 9, 2021, were approved as written.

Finance Council: *(see also written report)*

Father explained that it is required by Canon Law that every parish have a finance council (FC). The Diocese of Rochester suggests that the FC report to the parish council (PC).

Eileen, parish business manager, will be joining the PC in an ex officio capacity.

See the FC report for an overview of the parish finances. Here are some highlights:

- The parish invests in Communis Investments, which has shown a good return, up to \$82k in one year. This year the parish also received an unexpected gift of \$10k plus other gifts.
- The parish has two cemeteries where the income never matches the expenses.
 - The HC cemetery is part of the parish corporation but the St. James cemetery is a separate corporate entity.
 - Every cemetery needs a permanent maintenance fund to maintain the care of the cemetery over the years. This is why there is an occasional second collection to support the parish cemeteries.
- CMA goal this year is about \$2k less than last year. Already 50 households have responded with money or pledges.
- The parish has two new staff members:
 - Bob Doane is our new handyman. All requests for maintenance work or repairs should go through Fr. Bernard.
 - Pamela Jones is the parish's new cemetery manager. She has been in charge of the Waterloo and Seneca Falls cemeteries for years. "She knows about cemeteries!"

Buildings and Grounds:

- The committee is getting quotes on a new steam boiler for St. F.
- Presently researching best answer for pine room, sacristy, and rectory roofs at St. J.

- Also at St. James the sewer line in back and the cross on top of the church have both been fixed.
- One of the second floor showers at the St. J. rectory has been replaced.
- The committee is considering recommended repairs to the organ at St. J. It is a very nice organ that is worth investing money to maintain it.
- Holy Cross is considering the best plan for the garage and to fix driveway cracks.
- Both St. F. and St. J. have sidewalk repairs that need to be done.
- All churches are having the smoke detectors replaced with ones that last 10 years (no annual beeping).

Word (evangelization and education) Committee report *(see also written report)*

- Religious education classes are meeting at St. J. every other week.
 - There are four families and five kids. One is preparing for first communion.
 - Other parishes are reporting similar problems with getting kids to return post-Covid 19
- There are 4 kids studying for confirmation
 - Two more are finishing their second year at Immaculate in Ithaca and two are in the parish program.
 - The actual confirmation ceremony (April 5) will be a joint event with numerous parishes.
- RICA – no one interested this year

Worship (liturgy) Committee report: *(see also written report)*

- There was an Advent Holy Hour with Br. Francisco.
- The Christmas schedule is in place
 - Kate Small will play the organ at the 4:00 and 6:00 pm. Christmas Eve Masses
 - On Christmas day there will be only one Mass in the morning.
 - No Saturday evening Mass that weekend.
- A Christmas letter to all parishioners is in process. It will be sent via U.S. Mail and should be out Thanksgiving week. It includes:
 - An invitation to holy hour and Christmas
 - Invites people to return to Mass
 - It will mention that the 4 p.m. is a family Mass and people should be aware it is likely to be crowded.
 - The parish is active and healthy and would like you to rejoin us. “We miss you.”
 - Father would like further suggestions.

Witness (outreach) Committee report: *(see also written report)*

- The committee did not meet prior to the PC meeting
- Br. Francisco thanks everyone who helped out with the Crop Walk.
- Charlie is coordinating a Catholic Charities coat collection.
- Birthright usually sets up a box for donations at St. J. Looking into doing that again this year.
- A sox/mitten/hat/scarf tree will be set up at St. James for distribution via Catholic Charities.
- Tompkins Co. Workers’ Center (TCWC)- TCWC, with April Michael from Immaculate as the liaison between parishes in Tompkins County and TCWC, would like to get parishioners

involved would be advocating for workers' rights and a living wage among area employers. There will be a blurb in the bulletin

- The T'burg Food pantry will need parish participants in January along with our usual monthly table for donations.
- Seneca County is doing their annual angel tags project. Ask Gerry if you would like to get a tag so you can sponsor a recipient during Christmas.
 - The tags need to be returned by Dec. 6 as the distribution will be Dec. 8 at the VFW in Ovid.
 - People from Willard will be helping but they could use additional help.
- Coat distribution was the third Saturday in October and served 16-18 families.
- Br. Francisco was the lead for the CROP walk, assisted by Gerry, Camille, and Sr. Anne. Others also helped with food packages.
 - Participants enjoyed having the food distribution outside.
 - "High marks" from other churches who were very impressed.

Fellowship (social) Committee report: *(see also written report)*

- Br. F. helped first communion kids write and make Halloween cards, which were then mailed to our homebound parishioners.
 - As suggestion was made to have carolers with poinsettias visit the homebound in December, or just drop off at nursing homes with a letter.
- Fingerlakes Florist in Ovid says order Christmas flowers now.
- Dec. 3 is holy hour. Possibly have a social after?

Other Business:

Communication & Engagement:

- It is important to publicize our activities, make people aware that we are active and then build on our momentum.
 - "We are doing good deeds"
 - Each committee is working to get people engaged.
 - Need to be sure to get mentioned after—close loop of our efforts—with thanks.
 - We all have to work on message, to get people engage with our parish
 - Also important to retain the people we have, to thank them and keep them involved.
- Thanks to Susan and Father for doing e-mail list of 300 (250 emails and 50 US mail) to receive information on parish when COVID hit. "Applause"
- Let people know on Facebook and Instagram that they can "Like" parish and share with friends
 - Need to get younger people to see we are active and that what we do matters.

Diocese News:

- CMA letter that went out to people has nice photo of Fr. Bernard
 - Bishop is required at age 75 to put in retirement.
 - Our bishop's probably won't be accepted until court cases end.
- Synod – called by Pope Francis
 - Will take two years to consult with people in church
 - Diocese will be reaching out to get people's responses.
 - The theme is communion and participation
- Next year the USCCB has declared it to be a year in celebration of the Eucharist "to emphasize the wonder sacrament of Jesus's body and blood."

- What does that mean?
- Reverence for sacrament
- more to come

Other Activities:

- 10 part series by Bishop Baron:
 - AM and PM programs had little attendance
 - COVID interrupted and the series was never completed.
- Friday afternoon luncheon and instruction for elder people?
- Theology on Tap to be considered at boathouse?
- Brother Francisco to possibly do an instruction on what church teaches?
 - Would people be interested?
 - Maybe do this as part of Lent?
 - Similar format as Fr. John's Soup & Spirituality

Closing prayer:

Fr. Bernard provided a closing commentary on St. Martin of Tours whose feast day was today, which is also Veteran's day. The saint was a soldier who became a great preacher and instructor of clergy. He is the patron saint of soldiers. Closing prayer: "your will be done"

Meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m.

Next meetings:

Our meetings are generally quarterly, on the second Tuesday of a month, at St. Francis. The present schedule:

Jan. 13, 2022 [later cancelled]
March 10
May 12
June 9

Respectfully submitted by Kathleen E. Rourke