

## **St. George Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 22, 2019**

6:30 pm, Father Sullivan Center

### **Attendees**

- Clergy: Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Fr. Ricardo Borja, Deacon Bob Tartaris. Trustees: Margot Burkle, Bill White. Members: Sarah Celotto, Maureen Fuest, Diana Harris, Harold Hutchinson, Joyce Ippolito, Rose Ann Kelley, Laurie LaTerza, Valerie LeShane, Joe Nelly, Criona O'Brien, Andrew Wang. Visitor: Cara Correll.
- Absent: Marilyn Rowland.

**Opening Prayer/Reflection:** Fr. Stephen led the opening prayer, followed by brief discussion in small groups.

**Welcome/Acceptance of June 30 Minutes:** Joe Nelly took photos of all members for our bio page prior to the meeting. He asked all members to email him a short bio to be printed alongside the photos for the bulletin.

Joe Nelly made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 30 meeting. Laurie LaTerza seconded, and everyone accepted unanimously. Representatives of the Peer Ministry group have yet to be named; they should be on the Council in time for our next meeting, since they will be chosen at the upcoming Peer Ministry retreat.

**“Love in Action” Stewardship Expo:** Joe Nelly advised that the Expo will be held October 5–6, and he would like to have two members to represent the Pastoral Council at each mass. He asked for volunteers to email him their availability. Members should plan to leave mass a bit early to get downstairs before the Expo begins at the end of each mass. Setup for the Expo will be October 5 at noon, then representatives will be at our table following all four weekend masses.

### **Pastor Report: Fr. Stephen**

- Fr. Stephen reported that he will be meeting with Tom Sweetser before our upcoming retreat, when we will be developing our vision for the parish going forward.
- The new school year has begun and is going well—great school spirit. There are 161 students. Several parish members are on the school board, which has members from all three parishes of the school, and some parents (not more than 50 percent). Fr. Stephen hopes to increase awareness of the school within our parish. With this goal in mind, there is always school news or announcements reported in the weekly St. George bulletin (this week's bulletin announced the upcoming fashion show), and we should all aim to remember the school when talking to parents who might be interested, etc. Financially the school is doing well and working toward being self-sustaining.

- Fr. Stephen advised about the upcoming capital campaign, the Hartford Bishops Foundation. Each church in the diocese will commit to a certain fundraising goal (based on parish income), and 50 percent of those funds will support the parish for special projects (capital, ministerial, etc.). The other 50 percent will go toward the HBF and its projects. All churches are required to participate.
- In determining how to use these funds, it is essential that we as a parish (and the Council) develop a vision for the future so that we can put the funds to the best possible use. There are no restrictions on what the funds can be used for; they can be used for brick-and-mortar projects, pastoral outreach, etc. We will be continuing our discussion as a Council based on the *Divine Renovation* book.
- It was noted that St. Margaret did the capital campaign last year, and some parishioners balked at being asked for the full amount all at once. We will need to consider ways to approach parishioners.

### ***Divine Renovation Discussion***

- Fr. Stephen began our discussion by asking: What is it that we need as a parish to continue to thrive, maintain commitment, and grow? What is the purpose of the parish? (Matthew 28 refers to spreading the faith—we should keep this in mind.)
- The following ideas were discussed: Bible study/education to bring people closer to Jesus; having a personal encounter/relationship with Jesus; importance of making community more aware of the things we do (without being too self-congratulatory); we should have had lots of people marching in the parade; need to be welcoming as a parish; religious education—how to reach parents; how to engage youth in the life of the parish.
- Cara Correll gave a brief explanation of the Montessori-based catechesis program she has been working on. The program gives kids tools and lets them experience Jesus through hands-on learning/play. They have First Communion when they are ready for it, rather than on an artificial timeline. The program involves building an atrium with materials for the children to use. The Ruiz Center might be a good place for it.

**New Business:** No new business at this meeting. Anyone with issues to discuss for the next meeting should contact Joe Nelly so he can put them on the agenda.

**150th Anniversary:** Fr. Stephen advised that the 150th anniversary of St. George Parish is not 2020, but rather, most likely, 2037. The church was incorporated in 1870, but there was no church building until 1878, and no resident pastor until 1887 at which time St. George became an independent parish.

**Closing Prayer:** Maureen Fuest. Next month's closing prayer will be prepared by Laurie LaTerza.

**Next meeting:** October 27, 2019, at 6:30 pm.