

St. Gianna Parish Council Meeting Minutes

November 25, 2019

Meeting called to order 6:35 at St. Brigid McMahan Hall

Opening Prayer by Fr. Devine

In attendance: Norma Spadola, Mary Berstene, Betty Ferreira, Barbara Judycki, Mickey Hunt, Donna Wolcott, Glen Baldi and Rick Metcalfe.

September minutes approved as written but noted that the agenda had an incorrect date. As that doesn't affect the minutes, they were accepted as presented. Rick Metcalfe motioned to accept the minutes and Betty seconded the motion. Meeting notes will be posted on the website shortly.

**Open forum**

Mary began by reminding everyone attending that the forum would be 15 minutes in duration per the new constitution, so members of the parish council can work together to address the meeting agenda. After the 15 minute open forum, any issues that parish members wish to raise can be emailed to Karla or alternatively, parish members can call the rectory between parish council meetings to address them or bring them to the attention of Fr Devine or a parish council member at any time.

Sr. Barbara asked for support in the collection of soda cans and bottles since her source, the St. Mary's Home daycare, is closing. She noted that she just purchased 4-\$50 Stop & Shop gift cards with the monies earned from bottle returns.

There was discussion on where people could leave the bottles and it was determined that we would investigate some sort of container to be placed at the rear of St. Mark's near the garage. Sr. Barbara will prepare a brief announcement for the bulletin to solicit support from the parishioners.

Ed Czaplak reminded everyone that on Sunday, December 1, St. Mark's will be hosting the annual Advent Wreath making event from 6:30-8:00 PM at the St. Mark's Pastoral Center. All parishioners from St. Gianna are invited to attend. All invited are asked to bring a dessert to share with others.

He also noted that NBC Connecticut News (Channel 30) was featuring a story on the Catholic Church on the 11PM news, Nov. 25.

Norma Spadola asked Fr. Devine if he knew what the mass schedule would be for Christmas. He advised as follows:

St. Mark's-	4:30 PM	Christmas Eve
	10:30 AM	Christmas Day
St. Brigid's	4:00 PM	Christmas Eve
	Midnight	Christmas Eve
	11:00 AM	Christmas Day

Another question was raised about when the last time the floors were cleaned at St. Brigid's church. Fr. Devine advised that this was the responsibility of the maintenance person. Barbara Judycki asked if the floor tiles had asbestos in them. Fr. Devine advised that if the floor tiles were to be replaced, there would be an asbestos issue.

Ann Bach thanked everyone who participated in and assisted with the annual Christmas Craft Fair. It was a huge success with over 600 people attending by noon. There were about 200 more that came in after that time. Norma asked if there was a date set for the 2020 Craft Fair and Ann advised that no date has been confirmed for next year at this time.

Another question was asked regarding the status of the elevator or lift at St. Brigid. Fr. Devine said that it was in process and the works have been approved by the Archdiocese. The issue causing delay is the permit process for the town of West Hartford and all is with the Fire Marshall at this time.

The Open Forum closed at 6:50 PM.

## **REVIEW OF MINISTRY FAIR**

The ministry fair was held the first 2 weekends in October and Mary reported that there was good representation from most of the ministries. The Craft Fair and Adult Education seemed to attract many people.

The point was raised that perhaps we could prepare a flyer with a list of the ministries that included the name and contact information for the heads of each ministry. Mary noted that Keith Griffin did an excellent job creating flyers for this event and perhaps he would be able to do it. Betty advised that, years ago, the Ladies Guild used to publish a booklet of the ministries at St. Brigid which was given out when as part of the Welcome Wagon basket. Fr. Devine thought that this was a good idea. Betty is going to try to find a sample to share with the Parish Council members for consideration.

We received inquiries for ideas of new ministries as well. The Prayer Chain is handled by the Ladies Guild. Lou Ann Templeton of St. Brigid has been in charge of making calls to the home bound.

Betty felt that the weekend ministry event was a good opportunity for the heads of the committees to get to know each other.

Norma suggested that we designate one month a year (most likely October) as Ministry Month and focus on not only the Ministry Fair but events that showcase our ministries. Perhaps we could have representatives of some of the ministries speak after mass to educate others on what we do. Fr. Devine suggested that she draft a proposal for council consideration.

## **Pastoral Welcome Points and Next Steps**

The question was raised as to why the cantor at St. Mark's doesn't offer the same script as is done at St. Brigid's with regards to turning off cell phones and greeting your

neighbor. Fr. Devine will speak with the Music Director, Greg Flowers, to see about implementing this.

Another question was raised as to why the ushers were not distributing the bulletins at the end of mass at St. Brigid as is done at St. Marks. Fr. Devine had a meeting with the ushers and the thought was aired that if this change was made, people may use it as a reason to walk since some arrive very early to mass and like to read it prior to mass.

A compromise solution was suggested that the bulletins could be available at the door before mass but that the ushers would also distribute them at the door at the end of mass. Rick Metcalfe expressed concern that they may not be able to get ushers to be at the church early to distribute bulletins prior to and after mass. Discussion ensued.

Fr. Devine said that there is no such thing as too much hospitality.

It was also mentioned that St. Marks has two headsets available for parishioners who are hard of hearing. They are wired into the sound system and those that use them have found them very helpful. Fr. Devine will call Unitech, the company responsible for the sound system at St. Brigid, to see what can be done to secure similar headsets for St. Brigid.

He also noted that they have begun discussions with Tim Pikiell regarding the construction of a bathroom on the first floor of St. Brigid church.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

We revisited the idea of having a pamphlet outlining all the ministries of the parish. It was noted that John Clark, who headed up the Social Action ministry at St. Mark, was going to be stepping back from his commitment to that committee. Also, since the retirement of Louann Warren, we need to find someone who is willing to step in and coordinate these activities.

Glen Baldi noted that the Knights of Columbus have committed to oversee the school backpack project for next year. Mary suggested that Keith Griffin might be helpful as someone who could coordinate this at St. Mark.

Fr. Devine suggested we get all the details on what John Clark has been doing and put them in writing so that we can find a suitable candidate. Mary Berstene will follow up on this issue.

Rather than putting a notice in the bulletin, it was suggested that the Parish Council members should reach out within their circles of influence for new candidates for a ministry. It was also suggested that, perhaps, it would be better to have a strong committee for Social Action comprised of the coordinators for each project rather than have one person responsible for all activities.

Rick Metcalfe said he would reach out to John Clark to get more details on what the job entails.

Barbara Judycki inquired as to why committee reports were not being read and discussed at the Parish Council meetings.

Then, Fr. Devine asked Brian West and Sue Ficaro, the two delegates from St. Gianna Parish, who participated in the Synod meeting and discussions, to share their thoughts and comments.

Brian began by recapping the history of the synod, explaining that this has been going on for a couple of years. Over the course of this time, input was compiled from parishioners about where the church was, where it is now and where it is going. It was noted that the two persons selected to represent the parish were selected by the Archdiocese.

The archdiocese came up with four main themes that dominated the meetings.

There were several propositions within each theme. Well over 200 people were divided into 11 groups which met and discussed the changes.

The 4 themes were:

Encountering Christ- ongoing conversion-personal and parish relationships with Jesus

Becoming Missionary Disciples- how we reach out daily to evangelize

Sent on a Mission- Outreach –organized activities that reach out to the community

Collaborating in the Local Church- the Archdiocesan church giving us the tools and training to do that.

Both lay and clergy were represented at the synod meetings. While no decisions were made, a final report is being developed based on all the information provided.

The official conclusion of the synod will be celebrated by a Mass at Pentacost in 2020.

40 parishioners from each parish will be invited to attend this event which will be held at Oakdale Theatre on Sunday May 31, 2020 in the afternoon. Brian and Sue will be included on the list from St. Gianna Parish.

Sue Ficara added that she walked away feeling very positive from the energy of the meetings. She mentioned how attending mass should really be considered the beginning of the week and not the end of the week.

An example was provided of the Archdiocese of Green Bay which has been very successful in growing the membership of their churches. Due to increased activity at the churches along with evangelization, they have increased their membership and are one of the few Archdioceses that can claim that.

We were reminded that the term, Catholic means Universal.

Brian mentioned that Bishop Robert Baron is one of the leading evangelists and was quite inspiring. The head of the Sisters of Mercy and at least 25 parish priests including Mgr. Clancy were also in attendance.

The one “take away” term that prevailed was that of hospitality.

It was suggested that Fr. Devine share a recap of the synod experience with the parishioners.

Tom Quinlan, another well-known evangelist spoke in Southington and gave ideas on how to be successful with evangelization efforts. He said that you have to reach people where they are and it begins with doing something small.

Interesting facts shared were that only 7% of Catholics are active in the church. 7-12% are “middle of the road” with their participation. Focus for evangelization was the youth and “fallen away” Catholics. Everyone was encouraged to pick one group and try to make inroads with them. They discussed the intellectual versus emotional connection and the quote shared was “if you aim an arrow at the head, you miss the heart”.

Discussion ended with the decision to schedule our next Meeting scheduled for Monday, February 10, 2020 which will be held at St. Mark’s Pastoral Center.

The meeting closed with a prayer and adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Norma Spadola

Secretary