

Saint Mary Parish
Franklin, MA
Parish Pastoral Council
Sacred Heart Hall

Minutes, Monday, April 29, 2024

Present: Father Bob Poitras, Pastor; Father Jack Sullivan, Parochial Vicar; Karen Ackles, Religious Education Director; Terry Kerr, Music Director; Patricia Murphy, Finance and Operations Manager; Leo Racine, Pastoral Associate

Council Members: Paula Coughlin, Ed Croak, John Determan, Jim Lane, Paula Marano, Lisa Oxford, John Ristaino, Lorraine Schratz, Mike Swan, Pandora Carlucci

Open Meeting: Pandora Carlucci welcomed all to the meeting.

Prayer: Fr. Bob led the Council in reading together the opening prayer from the Book of Blessings

Review and Approve Minutes of March 2024: There was a brief discussion concerning the Sacrament of Confirmation. St. Mary Parish youth receive the sacrament during the fall of their junior year in high school. The minutes received unanimous approval.

Welcome and update of the Parish: Father Bob shared an informative, positive update.

- St Mary Parish had a Beautiful Holy Week and Easter. Good attendance numbers.
 - The Easter Sunday Mass schedule went smoothly, although, the transition time between the 9:00am Mass and the 10:30am Mass was a bit tight.
 - Wednesday evening services during Lent were well-attended.
 - There were all ages at the Wednesday Confession services.
- 80 young people received their First Communion
- The Parish has positive energy and people are sharing positive comments.
- Baptisms are up again after a brief decline during Lent.
- Parish finances are good. The Finance Council is working on a budget for next year.
- The new windows in the rectory are great! Beautiful!

Sunday Mass Schedule: The Parish Council continued its discussion of the Mass schedule. Some general comments included a fondness for the 9:00am Mass and low attendance at the 12:00 noon Mass.

The 12:00 noon Mass is a catch all, almost last Mass of the weekend. Some of the neighboring parishes have a 5:00pm Mass.

Two factors began to surface: Attending Mass at the best time for oneself and/or one's family for worship and faith building, and Resource costs ... the costs in terms of the energy of the priest, cost of fuel to heat/cool the church versus revenue through donations. Difficult decision.

Questions raised ... How many Masses do we need on a weekend to meet the faith-based needs of parishioners? How many weekend Masses can the Parish finances support? Have we reached out to parishioners for feedback? Have we studied the schedules of surrounding parishes?

After a lengthy discussion we agreed that the 12:00 noon Mass would end on May 12, 2024. Rather than resuming the noon Mass after Labor Day, as has been past practice, we would continue without it, monitor attendance, and track feedback. We will continue to study the Mass schedule to identify the needed number of Masses and the resources available to support the Masses.

PPC Elections: Mike Swan updated the PPC on the first weekend of Council nominations. 14 nomination cards were returned with 34 names in nomination. After reviewing to eligibility and removing those who are already serving on the council, there are 29 new names.

The second week for nomination ballots is this weekend, May 3 and 4. There will be an announcement on the website banner, there will be information in the bulletin, and there will be identified time before the start of Mass to complete the nomination ballots.

Pandora asked those who volunteered to organize the completed ballots to meet after this meeting for a few minutes.

Fr. Jack's 50th Ordination Anniversary Mass and Reception: Fr. Bob announced that the 10:30am Mass on May 19 would be a Mass offered in honor of Fr. Jack's 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood. The Parish Council will host a reception in Sacred Heart Hall following the Mass. All interested in helping with the reception are asked to stay after this meeting for a few minutes for an organizational meeting.

Lightning Round: This is an opportunity for PPC members to share thoughts. No responses are given.

- The sound in the church is much better.
- The center aisle during communion is too congested.
- First Communion was very nice. It was a positive return to the traditional format.
- Grateful for the K of C's generous support of the ministry of SVdP
- There were a lot of young people at Lenten services.

- We all need to evangelize and share what is happening at our church through RCIA, religious ed, youth ministries, and more. We can use the Facebook page to share out opportunities to engage and be a part of the parish.
- Lots of positive energy.
- It would be good if those streaming Mass could be more included in the service. Specific reference to the prayer at Communion for those not receiving.
- Ambassadors have been very well-received.
- Visitors to our Parish have mentioned that they will be sharing the Ambassador program with their parishes upon their return home.
- CYO – two champions this year. Great!
- Thankful to Fr. Jack for his service to the archdiocese all these years.
- The floors of Sacred Heart Hall will be professionally cleaned.
- Is it possible to have a gathering for young families who have had a child baptized to enable them to meet other young families?
- Three of the Ambassadors will be graduating. There will be a thank you in the bulletin.

Closing thoughts: Father Bob reminded us that the next PPC meeting is Monday, June 10. This will be a joint meeting with the Finance Council. There will three areas of focus:

- Parish 150th anniversary ... establish a committee.
- Finances ... establish a fund-raising committee.
- Ongoing ... discussion of Mass Schedule

Closing Prayer – Father Jack

Next PPC meeting: June 10, 2024