

Ave Maria Parish
Parish Pastoral Council

Date of Meeting: *May 10th, 2021* **Time:** *7:00pm – 7:30pm*
Minutes Prepared by: *Kate McGrath (ex officio)* **Location:** *Online ~ Zoom*

Present: Fr. Paul Ritt (*ex officio*), Eric Rich, Patty Glennon, Len Morrison, John Lozada, Maria Ruisi, Gina Kolenda (invited)

Excused: Fr. Tony Luongo (*ex officio*), Tony Della Piana, Moe Pratt, John DiBello

Absent without excuse: Michael DiSilvio, Thomas Elliott, Shayna Reeves

Agenda and Notes

- **Gathering and Welcome:** John Lozada opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

- **Opening Prayer:** Fr. Paul led the opening prayer.

- **Acceptance of Minutes:** Minutes from the April 12th Pastoral Council meeting were accepted.

- **Pastor's Report:**

- **Archdiocesan Updates: Protocols:**

Sunday Obligation: Sunday obligation will most likely be reinstated in September.

Safety Precautions: Social distancing has been adjusted from 6ft. to 3-4ft. between individuals of different households. Opening and Closing processions have resumed.

- **Clergy**

- Fr. Ben will be Full-Time chaplain at Salem Hospital. He will be residing at the parish (at OLA white house). He will be with us indefinitely, as there is no term on his service. He celebrated the 4pm and 9:30am Masses this past weekend.

- Deacon Dan will be ordained June 5th in Syracuse, NY. We hope to have him back after he is ordained.

- **Music Ministry**

Fr. Paul welcomed Gina Kolenda to the meeting. Gina has been our Music Director for a little over a year. Since assuming this position, her work with the choirs, cantors and musicians has been outstanding. She has done a superb job!

- **Music Ministry Updates:** Challenging year this year for music, as music groups have been unable to sing in-person; however, the choirs are alive and well. Under normal circumstances, Parish would have three choirs. This year, two choirs have been active (Children's Choir and Multigenerational Choir). The choirs have made many videos, which have all been a labor of love. Videos have been posted on our YouTube and Facebook pages as well as on our Parish website. Videos have reached over 1,000 views. With lifting of COVID-19 guidelines, singing is allowed; however, under strict directives.

Choirs will be waiting until September to return. It has been exciting, and an honor and privilege to work with everyone. There have been strange challenges with COVID-19, but challenges have offered an opportunity to expand and try out new music/repertoire.

- **Questions:** Question raised re: introducing new repertoire to community. Currently worship aid is available online for online liturgies, Holy Days and School Masses. Once worship aids are allowed, it is something to think about. Prior to COVID-19, plan was to eliminate worship aids and use Breaking Bread Books. Beginning on Pentecost, single sheets can be used/distributed. Missalettes still cannot be used, although the missalettes are ready to go and be placed out.

- **Welcome Back Event**

Fr. Paul noted striving towards having an event in the Fall to welcome back parishioners – a Mass of new beginnings for the Parish. Event would celebrate the unity of the two churches as one parish. Pastoral Council members were asked for feedback on thought. Feedback included that it is a great idea, terrific, etc. Idea for event included having a tree planting, dedicated to individuals who have lost loved ones through COVID-19. Discussed that with unknowns still present, it is hard to put something large together, though different plans could be made to accommodate situation in September. Committee will be lead by Donna Hegan and Kate McGrath. Maria Ruisi and Patty Glennon have been asked to be part of the planning committee as well.

- **Parish Ministries**

- **Faith Formation:**

- **SMG:** First Communion celebrations at SMG went well. Registration for Faith Formation is closed. Robyn and Jamie are working on catechist and facilitator volunteers and class lists, list for community service opportunities, and organizing a Think of Michael 5K in October. 1st Grade families that were unaware of registration for faith formation are being welcomed.
- **OLA:** First Communion celebration at OLA went well. Kate is wrapping up work with Faith Formation families.
- **Adult Faith Formation:**
RCIA: RCIA Team will begin working with a young woman who will later be received into the church. It is not too late for people who want to learn about the Catholic Church to join the RCIA. Parishioners will start seeing more information about RCIA.
Adult Faith Formation: Kate is looking forward to developing adult faith formation opportunities for the coming year.

- **Pastoral Ministries:**

- **Communion Visits:** In-home communion visits have resumed along with communion services at nursing homes. Volunteers who visit are fully-vaccinated.
- **Love Your Neighbor Ministry:** Through summer, love your neighbor ministry will be putting together care packages for various groups, including:

new parishioners, new parents, those facing serious illness, and newly bereaved. Packages will be available to parishioners (similar to prayer shawls).

- **OLA School:**

- **School Update:**

- **Overall:** Things are going well at the school May Procession was yesterday, with Grade 2 and 8 participating. Last weekend, First Communion celebration took place. Music at the celebration was unbelievable. Three weeks are left for 8th Grade students. Graduation is scheduled for June 4th.
- **Annual Fund:** Len spoke with Jackie Brennan re: annual fund. She sees there is no reason fund will not reach \$80,000 by the end of the year – which will provide for financial aid.
- **Enrollment:** Enrollment for next year is at 353. Kindergarten will have three classes next year, which is good. Kindergarten is a pivotal year, as families then choose whether to enroll their child for Grade 1 or transition to a different school.
- **Open House:** Virtual Open House is scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, May 11th. 15-20 parents will be attending.
- **School Board:** Board is working on value proposition – which allows for a clear statement re: why attend OLA School.

- **Safety Committee:**

Safety Committee continues to maintain security at churches. One individual will be stepping down to serve in role like usher.

- **Media Ministry:**

No notes; however, comment given that photos of celebrations are beautiful.

- **Open Items:**

- **Questions/Comments?**

Question re: Fr. Ben and connecting with the School. It's a possibility; however, his hours will be Monday through Friday at the hospital. Once school masses resume in September, he may participate.

Comment given that it has been good to see interchange of parishioners, attending both OLA and SMG – which is a good trend for the parish.

Question re: as things return to normal, will online masses continue. Online Masses will continue indefinitely. They have been beneficial in reaching a number of people. All the more reason to look into investing in equipment. WiFi is an issue at both churches and at white house. Audrey is working on this.

Audrey will be invited to next meeting in June for update on finance.

Date of Next Meeting: June 14th, 2021

Closing Prayer: Fr. Paul

Time of Next Meeting: 7:00pm

Location: Online - Zoom Meeting