



**ST. JOAN OF ARC CHURCH  
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
JUNE 1, 2021**

**Members Present:**

Rev. Gabriel Baltus, OSB  
Mike Budd  
Maureen Cunningham  
Andrew Hackley  
Mary Beth Kerner  
Mathew Klody  
Tom Kmieciak  
Mary Agnes Laguatan

Dave Mankowski  
Bob Miller  
Tracy Szalek  
Andrea Uribe  
Leanne Van Gronigen  
Dick Webb  
Rich Weigel  
Matt Zurek

**Absent:**

Dan O'Connor  
Mary Beth Sobolewski

**Guests:**

Bill Munch  
Michelle Picchione  
Jim Susic

**I. OPENING**

Evening Prayer was held in Room 22 of the Parish Center at 7:00 p.m.

The Meeting began at 7:13 p.m.

**II. OLD BUSINESS**

April minutes were approved by Bob Miller and seconded by Mike Budd.

**III. PASTOR'S ADDRESS**

**Restless Children at Mass**

Fr. Gabriel said that the issue of restless children causing a disruption during Mass emerges with some frequency. Father asked Bill Munch, longtime parishioner, parent of adult children, and volunteer in our liturgical ministries, to share his perspective on the matter, as outlined in Bill's recent email to Fr. Gabriel.

Bill said that momentary disruptions are unavoidable, but children who are having prolonged outbursts should be taken out to the Narthex. This is a difficult issue, as there are people at Mass with competing and legitimate interests: parents who want to attend Mass as a family and expose their children to the Mass, and the priests, musicians, and other congregants who are trying to be prayerful and attentive to the Mass. Both groups should be sensitive to one another: other congregants can help by being tolerant of a reasonable amount of distraction, empathetic to the challenges parents face when bringing young children

to Mass, and remembering that children are the future of the Church. Parents should choose their seating thoughtfully, and use the Children's Chapel (ie., cry room), or take their upset child to the Narthex when necessary. The parents of the disruptive children are the only ones who can actively control the situation.

Father thanked Bill for his input and referred to a handout Father had developed two years ago to write a bulletin article on this subject. The handout outlined the various individuals involved in the Mass and their concerns: parent worshippers, worshippers without children, the celebrant/homilist, musicians, and the children themselves. As all the baptized have a right to be at Mass, all those involved need to be mindful of one another.

Father also handed out a bulletin article from Nativity Church in Timonium, Maryland, which is the parish featured in the book *Rebuilt*. In the article, the pastor opines that children who are not old enough to understand the Mass are not likely to get much out of it, and desires that children learn to love God through "age appropriate messages and worship" in programs that take place elsewhere during Mass. It has been difficult for families to not have access to the nursery, Children's Chapel, Children's Liturgy of the Word, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, due to Covid.

In response to Father's request for their input on this delicate subject, the Council proposed ideas such as having an announcement at Mass reminding those with young children to please move to the Narthex if their children become disruptive, or having the ushers ask the parents to do so. However, such an announcement at Mass is bound to be perceived as unwelcoming, and the ushers will likely be uncomfortable about approaching the parents. Other suggestions included periodic Masses specifically for small children and/or those with special needs, or a note in the pews with a gentle reminder about taking restless children to the Narthex or Children's Chapel. The Council agreed that families with young children are welcome and wanted in church, and respect has to go both ways. We don't want to discourage anyone from coming.

The Council members expressed confusion as to why parents allow their children to have prolonged tantrums during Mass; common sense and courtesy would seem to dictate taking the child to the Narthex. Father also emphasized that taking a restless child out of the nave and into the Narthex is not "leaving the church", as the Narthex is still part of the church.

## **School Subsidy**

Principal Michelle Picchione explained that she wants to reinstate the out-of-parish tuition rate (which has not been enforced for a few years), as the tuition we currently charge (approximately \$5,600) does not cover the cost of educating each student, which is approximately \$7,700. Fundraisers and the parish make up the balance. 13 percent of our school families are non-parishioners. Mrs. Picchione believes that it is only fair that families who are not contributing parishioners pay a higher rate of tuition, since they are receiving a subsidy from our parish for their child's education. The out-of-parish tuition rate is also common among local Catholic schools.

Director of Finance Leanne Van Gronigen said that she recently confirmed with the Diocesan Finance Office that parishes without a school no longer subsidize the education of parish children who attend another parish's school. Currently, parishes without a school give a percentage to a general fund for schools in need. (Our parish does not qualify for this).

Mrs. Picchione asked for feedback from the Council Members on reinstating the out-of-parish tuition rate. The Council members agreed that this seems fair. Also, we should ask that those who wish to be part of the parish community register as parishioners and then participate in the life of the parish through time, talent, treasure, and regular attendance at Mass.

There is also the issue of school families who are registered parishioners, but do not contribute. Father said he has a list of registered parishioners, whose children attend our school who have made no monetary contributions in two years, and yet are enjoying the benefits of a school supported by those who do contribute to the parish. Suggestions from the Council also included requiring a particular amount of giving, as St. Isaac Jogues Parish/School does, or offering a rebate at the end of the year to school families who contribute to the parish, the amount of which would be determined by their level of giving. Fr. Gabriel added that school families who need financial assistance are never turned away.

Fr. Gabriel stressed that even more importantly than the financial aspect, we want those who register at our parish to regularly worship here. Sunday worship is an obligation. We are a Catholic school who worships together.

Father shared an example of a parish school elsewhere in the country where those who attend Mass on a regular basis may request a tuition subsidy from the parish. The family must be registered in the parish and have a year of regular participation in the parish before applying for a subsidy (new families must provide the contact information of their former parish). At the parish in question, the objective measure of Mass attendance is the use of the parish offering envelopes, but the amount of the contribution has no bearing on the decision whether to grant the subsidy. Even an empty envelope could be returned, as in the case of those giving electronically. Envelopes put in another parish's offertory are sent back to the proper parish. Participation as a volunteer would not replace Mass attendance. The pastor then makes the final decision on the tuition subsidy.

### **Re-Opening Committee**

Fr. Gabriel explained that Bishop Hicks has requested that each parish form a Re-Opening Committee to prepare for when the Covid-related restrictions are lifted. The Committee, chaired by Jim Susic, also includes Kim Clements, Alex Gervacio, Marie Bixenmann, Anna Kucaj, Dave Cascarano, Jennifer Roake, and Leanne Van Gronigen, each of whom also oversees a subcommittee. Suggestions for the Re-Opening Committee can be sent to Jim Susic.

The Diocese hired a company to help parishes energize and galvanize their community for this time of a full return to Mass. They emphasized regular and ongoing communication from the pastor to the parishioners, and welcoming people to a future large event. To that end, the committee is developing a logo for communications to the parish and planning a parish picnic for the Fall.

There is concern that many have become accustomed to not attending Mass during the last year. In response, Fr. Gabriel plans to offer liturgical catechesis on the Mass. We need to reclaim the idea of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, and explain why God gives us this commandment.

### **Art & Environment Committee**

#### **Church Renovation**

Fr. Gabriel displayed the color renderings of the possible renovation of the church interior from liturgical designer Ken Brooks of St. Paul Fabricating Company, who met with the Art & Environment Committee in late May.

The of the areas of the church noted by Mr. Brooks and also by Sr. Sharon Stola of the Diocesan Office of Worship include:

- Too many spotlights in the center section of the church, and poor lighting in the side “wings” of the church. Replace with better lighting, possibly LEDs.
- The wood paneling on the ceiling and along the front of the church interior, since being painted white, shows all the flaws, and the large number of vertical lines is distracting. We would like to sheetrock these areas, use a neutral paint color at the front of the church, and since the ceiling needs to be painted anyway, perhaps paint blue with stars.
- Strip/refinish the pews with a darker stain to match the overall color scheme of the altar appointments, repair the kneelers, create more space between each pew, and move the hymnal bookracks to the underside of the pews.
- The faux marble flooring in the sanctuary and carpeting in the nave need to be replaced with hard flooring, perhaps stone in the sanctuary and tile or terrazzo in the nave.
- Restore and make sure that the current stained glass windows are stable and in good condition.
- Option of installing stained glass windows along the rear of the church.

Mr. Brooks estimates the project will cost \$2.5 million and take 4-10 months to complete. Father would like the work to be done in time for our parish centennial in 2024.

### **Bell Tower/Arch**

Fr. Gabriel hopes to relocate the bell tower/create a bell arch further from the church entrance, so that it would not be so loud, and so that the bells will swing. The Lisle Heritage Society has an additional bell that they would give us, as well. This would be a separate project from those listed above, and would need to be funded by a donor. This project would cost approximately \$200,000.

### **Parish Staff Updates**

Our Parish Nurse/Outreach Ministries Coordinator, Sandy Razka, and her husband Deacon Gregory Razka, have moved out of state. Matt Zurek has filled the position of Outreach Ministries Coordinator. Kathy Ford has been hired as our Parish Nurse. She has served in the same position at two other local parishes.

Liturgy Coordinator Scott Fox will also be leaving the parish staff this summer. As Scott also oversees the parish website, Alex Gervacio will be taking on this responsibility. Jack Hayes will train and coordinate the ushers, lectors, greeters, and extraordinary ministers. Fr. Gabriel and Lauren Nelson will train and coordinate the altar servers.

School Office Manager, Jeanne Maday, is also retiring.

### **Adoration Chapel**

Father would like to re-open the Adoration Chapel soon, at least with a limited schedule. Chapel Coordinator Lynne Passarella sent a survey to the parish last month, in which the majority of respondents

indicated that they prefer to come the Chapel on Tuesday or Thursday. The next step is to determine the hours that the Chapel will be open and obtain enough adorers to fill them.

#### **IV. MINISTRY AND BOARD UPDATES**

##### **Finance Update**

Leanne Van Gronigen reported that the Finance Council met at the beginning of May to go over the preliminary budget for next year, which is a work in progress and will be completed by June 7<sup>th</sup>.

As of the end of May, the Sunday offerings are up 8 percent over the budgeted amount, and are down 6 percent year over year, bearing in mind that last year we had 9 months unaffected by the pandemic, in contrast to the current year.

Expenses have been kept down considerably, thus we hope to finish on budget for this year.

Mary Agnes Laguatan will be joining the Finance Council in August, and Susan Cassa will be stepping down.

#### **V. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Fr. Gabriel thanked Rich Weigel, who is stepping down in order to serve on the School Board, for his service as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be on Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm in Parish Center Room 22.

#### **VI. CLOSING**

The meeting ended at 8:55 p.m. Closing prayer was the Salve Regina.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Kerner  
Recording Secretary