**PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**ST. THERESE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**September 14, 2021**

**Call to Order**: 7:00 pm by Wayne Savage

**Opening Prayer**: Tim Brown

**Attendance**: Fr. Gregory, Wayne Savage, Tim Brown, Greg Vuyovich, Diane and Anthony Cappola, Charles Patullo, Walter Priest, Jim Trist.

**Vision Statement**: The Council read the Parish Vision Statement in unison.

**Called and Gifted Report:**  Nadine McGrady presented an update on the Called and Gifted program. The program has been successful and will be ongoing. There were 10 individuals at the initial meeting, a pilot group. There were 3 individuals at each of the 2 follow on sessions. The first meeting was held on Zoom, while the second meeting was a hybrid of Zoom and in-person attendance. The programs consists of 2 sessions. The first session presents an overview of the program and the second is a discernment session with one-on-one discussion. A result of the program so far has been one person stepping up to become a community coordinator for parish events. Participants in the program find that some charisms they had earlier in life have shifted in importance or relevance as they mature. Also, they find that if they don't employ their charism they chance losing it. In some cases it is important to explore the possibilities of charisms that are ranked lower on their charism score sheet. They should always be aware that the Lord is in control of our lives. Another session is planned in mid-October. Participants do their self-assessment at home, with family as support to their discernment process. Resources to assist them include Lives of the Saints, to reflect on how the Saints employed their own charisms. Best results for individuals is to practice or apply a charism for about six weeks before deciding if it is the right way for them. Mike Foster plans to speak to our Knights of Columbus council about the program and see if there is interest among the members.

**Pastor’s comments:**

Fr Gregory and the council expressed disappointment that due to the pandemic the parish was not able to hold the Parish Picnic/Welcome Back social event August 21, 2021. There is still hope that such an event can be held soon or that the theme can be combined with another event in the near future.

Father Gregory recapped current Mass attendance and finance data. Compared to pre-pandemic data, Mass attendance has reached 94% of previous levels and financial support has risen to 94% of previous contributions. Specifically, there has been a recent increase of 13 attendees at Mass and an increase of $7800 in collections. e-giving has become a dependable source of revenue.

**Formation**: The Council read and discussed paragraphs 41, 42, and 43 of Pope Francis’ Encyclical “The Joy of the Gospel.”

**Old business:**

**Approval of minutes: The June 8, 2021 minutes were approved with unanimous consent.**

**Parish Picnic:** The October 3, 2021 Parish Picnic remains on schedule. Marianne McCloskey, Ana Barranco, and Kathleen Trist are planning this. We will not ask parishioners to bring food. The Knights will cook the hamburgers and hot dogs. Coleslaw, beans, potato chips and individual packages of cookies or sheet cakes will be purchased. The Theresians are being asked to help warm the beans,(cut and plate cake if that is the dessert) serve and clean up. Several prizes have been donated for raffle prizes. We need people to man booths and games. Signup sheets are in the Commons Area. There was discussion on whether to postpone the event, but consensus among the Council was that we should continue to strive towards having open parish functions that provide opportunities for the congregation to gather as a group. Fr. Gregory will approach Marianne McCloskey to see if she is willing to maintain her efforts on coordinating the picnic. Western Night, with 120 attendees, was a successful first step towards that goal.

**Staff Changes:** Fr. Gregory announced that Deb Knarr has stepped in to replace DeDee Rice in the staff office. Ann Martin will be departing November 1, 2021 to be closer to her grandchildren. There were four applicants for Ann's position. Fr. Gregory is interviewing them at this time and will make a decision soon. Fr. Gregory asked the Council to suggest some criteria for his decision. The consensus was that he should look for someone who is friendly, personally out-going, organized, and able to multi-task. There was a suggestion that an intern be found who could assist the new employee as they adjust to the workload.

**New Business**

**Council Retreat:** The retreat is scheduled for Saturday, September 25 on the Meaning of Parish Council. The retreat will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It will be held in the Adult Learning Center. It will be conducted by Melanie Coddington. Council member Charles Patullo will provide food for the retreat.

**Leadership Discernment:** We will have Discernment for the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary at the October 5, 2021 meeting.

**Parish Repairs:** Fr. Gregory mentioned that the flat roof over the chapel has been experiencing standing water that has damaged the roof. Consultation with the Diocese and recommended contractors has resulted in one contractor, at the lowest bid, willing to do the work for $55,000.

**New Council Member Pictures:** New members were reminded to email a picture of themselves (selfies are great) to Chriss Lawrence if they have not done so already. These will go in the Commons Area with the other member pictures.

**Eucharist Bread:** There was discussion concerning the use of real bread rather than the wafers currently used. Fr. Gregory wanted to council to explore the idea and implementation process of this change in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is used in many parishes. Discussion centered on how to make it (there are approved recipes), how the Eucharistic ministers and the priest would distribute it (torn in long strips and then pieces of the strips distributed from them), the logistics of making it, such as a bread ministry. Discussion narrowed down to using it in the weekend Masses, but continuing to use the wafers for the weekday or special Masses. Fr. Gregory will do more research on how it could be implemented in our parish.

**Prison Ministry:** Anthony Coppola, Greg Vuyovich, and Walter Priest lead a discussion on the possibility of a prison ministry within the parish. The ministry would be to provide spiritual support to inmates at the Gloucester County Jail, which is near the Gloucester County Courthouse. Contact would need to be made with the County Sheriff's office to gain permission and to discuss how the ministry would operate. Additional information will come later on this proposal.

**Announcements:** Thanks to Tim Brown for opening and closing prayers and Walter Priest for refreshments.

**Next Meeting**: The next meeting is Tuesday October 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Adult Learning Center, located across the parking lot from the church. This is where the September 25 Pastoral Council retreat was conducted. Greg Vuyovich will offer opening and closing prayers, Charlie Patullo will bring refreshments, and Kimberly Wood will bring drinks.

**Concluding prayer:** Tim Brown led the council in closing prayer.

**Adjournment:** Wayne Savage adjourned the meeting at9:00 p.m.

Parish Vision Statement

The Church of Saint Therese, a Roman Catholic Community in Gloucester, Virginia, will be a place where love, compassion and mutual understanding are present.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a place where families will grow in their faith.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a place which will encourage youthful interaction with the church.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish which reaches out to the broader community and brings hope to our neighbors in need.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a safe and inviting community that warmly accepts any who come to it.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish that provides an environment that fosters fellowship.

The Church of Saint Therese will be a parish community with a vibrant sacramental life.