

Members present: Fr. Marty, Fr. Gregory, John Companik, Lee Ann Egan, David Gray, Linda Kinzer, Tom Molnar, Dan Price, Lynn Schmitt, Joe Tomaszewski

Fr. Marty began the meeting by reading from St. Fulgentius of Ruspe's sermon on forgiveness and leading those present in an opening prayer.

As has become custom, the council spent the first portion of the meeting reviewing progress on several action items. Dan and John will work with parish communications coordinator Steven Koontz to ensure the parish web page has posted the latest council and commission charters. The council plans to review the parish's strategic plan in early 2019 and plans to hold a commission night on February 6. The night's agenda, which will be reviewed and approved at the January parish council meeting, will likely contain a session for all attendees as well as sessions for individual commissions. The council also continues to work on forming a transition team for new council members and scheduling exit interviews for departing council members, but several other action items have been completed.

Dan reported on the first meeting of the re-established diocesan pastoral council, which now contains at least one member from every parish in the diocese. The September 29 meeting at St. Andrew in Merrillville began with Mass with Bishop Hying and gave those present the opportunity to share their synod implementation plans with others from around the diocese. Dan noted that St. Michael is way ahead of most other parishes in that endeavor and was interested to hear how other parishes are evangelizing in their communities. St. Mary of the Lake in Miller went door to door and increased the size of its parish. Parishes in Michigan City leave literature in hotels in an effort to attract those who may visit their community in summer. St. Peter and Paul in Merrillville hosted a concert and drew people to the parish that way. Dan is hoping the next diocesan pastoral council meeting on December 8 features the same zeal as the first meeting but also a deeper focus on what diocesan council representatives should hope to accomplish during their term.

On the synod implementation front, the test phase of Alpha is set to finish on November 20, and Alpha will be open to all parishioners in January. The parish plans to market Alpha during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Theology Uncorked is thinking beyond Advent and Christmas and plans to host two events in winter, including a February 12 event at Gamba featuring Bishop Hying, and other events in late summer or early fall. Theology on Tap is also planning events in winter. Fr. Marty and Fr. Gregory reminded those present that the church is called to evangelize to all age groups and that these events can be helpful in that regard. Finally, the parish continues to build its relationship with Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Haiti while thinking of long-term plans that will result in the best good for our sister parish.

The council has established a discernment timeline and is already planning for its 2019-2020 term. Those present were asked to submit to Fr. Marty the names of a handful of people whom they believe would be good parish council members. Fr. Marty reminded those present to ask people if they would at least consider going through the discernment process that will happen in the spring. Formal invitations will follow, and the council is optimistic it can return to its traditional number of 12 members starting with the next term.

Several current council members are planning to attend commission meetings on November 20 for education and formation, November 26 for peace and social justice, November 29 for stewardship and in December for parish life. Lynn noted that two parishioners attended a national stewardship convention recently, and Fr. Gregory commended the stewardship commission for providing particularly

inspiring and interesting stewardship challenges in recent weeks. Lee Ann attended a November 5 spirituality and worship commission meeting which finalized plans for Advent and Christmas liturgies. Advent evening prayer will be held December 3, December 10 and December 17. Masses for Immaculate Conception will be December 7 at 7 p.m. and December 8 at 8 a.m. Advent penance services will be December 11 and December 19. The parish thank you celebration for liturgical ministers and parish volunteers will be December 27. Mass on January 1 will be at 10 a.m., one hour later than in previous years. The music ministry concert will be January 6.

After Fr. Gregory led those present in a closing prayer, the council adjourned until its final meeting of 2018 on December 13 at 6:30 p.m. at the rectory. Meetings in the first half of 2019 will be held January 14, February 11, March 18, April 8, May 20 and June 21.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Cox