

St. Monica Facilitation Team
Virtual Meeting 9/16/20

Attendance: Connie Chau, John Curran, Father Ray Fleming, Mary Fran Kolbuc, Meg Lute, Chibueze Onwunaka (guest) and Bob Passalugo. Absent: Best Batchateu.

Opening Prayer: Asking the Holy Spirit to bless the group followed by “*Glory Be to the Father*”

1. Introduction of Chibueze “Chib” Onwunaka: Chib is the new president of the Immaculate Conception - St. Bridget’s (IC-SB) Parish Council. He is a graduate student at the University of Rochester. The IC-SB parish council would like to bridge relationships with Emmanuel Church of the Deaf and St. Monica while sharing activities and worship services. Fr. Ray serves as the pastor for all these parishes. The Facilitation Team members introduced themselves to Chib.

2. Approval of July Minutes (there was no August meeting): Approved unanimously.

3. Immaculate Conception - St. Bridget input: Chib Onwunaka

Encouraging voter registration; increasing the use of virtual meeting technology for book club, Bible studies and other parish activities plus engaging with other groups to discuss societal issues are current IC-SB parish council goals. There is an interest in mutual participation in natural and organic ways among the southwest parishes for shared activities including Faith Formation, RCIA and worship. Jessica Tette is already working on youth faith formation with IC-SB.

St. Monica team members shared current activities for possible engagement including the Westside Farmers Market (to expand shopper involvement from the Plymouth Ave. neighborhood) and the 9/26/20 “Shred Fest” document-shredding fundraiser for Southwest Kiwanis youth projects held at the St. Monica parking lot) and community service landscaping volunteerism at Rapids Cemetery 9/27/20.

Father Ray related that both parish groupings (IC-SB and St. Monica - Emmanuel Church of the Deaf) have strong leadership, good financial management and active buildings & grounds stewardship. Parish audits for both groups have shown no problems for the past six years. Carol Wynne, Director of Finance & Administration for Westside Parishes coordinates both parish groups. IC-SB has developed a Five-Year and Ten-Year plan to guide the parish yet remaining flexible to change.

Chib suggested sharing Black Lives Matter topics collaboratively. He mentioned the IC-SB social justice involvement with St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality and Eastern Services Workers (gathering personal care items). Chib will forward additional information to John Curran who will serve as a communication link between the two parish councils in his role as Facilitation Team scribe.

Working jointly on increasing the parishes’ use of technology will be explored. Outreach and fellowship extended to University of Rochester students through joint community service was mentioned.

4. Father Ray’s Updates:

• **Diocesan Bankruptcy:** A recent letter from the bishop communicated that 500 sexual abuse claims against the Diocese have been submitted. All of the lawsuits are being channeled through the Diocese of Rochester. **The individual parishes themselves will not be sued.** The diocese is declaring bankruptcy, not the individual parishes. The diocese is gathering its insurance funds into one source. A judge will decide whether the funds are adequate. The proceedings will not take away from the annual Catholic Ministries Appeal, Catholic Family Services funding or diocesan Catholic schools support. It is important for the victims to receive what they need for healing. As matters stand now, individual church funds will not be touched. Refer to the diocesan website for its *Frequently Asked Questions* segment.

• **2020 Vacation Bible School:** Creative and innovative programming made it possible to conduct a highly-successful Vacation Bible School in spite of COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing needs. Highlights included an outdoor movie, a multicultural event held in the parking lot and a Black Lives Matter outdoor presentation followed by a neighborhood march of support. Planning for next year will combine all the southwest parishes. Jessica Tette is meeting with Precious Fontenette and Ms. Harry St. Pierre of the IC-SB youth program.

• **St. Monica Buildings, Grounds and Safety:** Current focus is on the less expensive items that need repair. September's committee meeting will look at deferred maintenance projects including church roof heat build-up, security systems updates, detached garage roof repair; rectory window installation and church window maintenance. Both St. Monica - ECOD and IC-SB exercise good stewardship of their former schools which are now leased to educational entities. The building preservation firm, Swiatek, deals with both parish groups.

• **Lease of the St. Monica School Building:** The Rochester Academy Charter School has signed a one-year lease with the parish. Under COVID-19 conditions, RACS is operating a hybrid model (some days on-site; other days remote learning) for educating its students.

• **Welcome Committee:** COVID-19 restrictions forced the cancellation of the springtime dinner and the parish summertime picnic. Efforts continue to return funds to persons affected by the dinner cancellation.

• **Parish Response to COVID-19:** Safety precautions and distancing are working well. Minor changes have been implemented. Mass attendance is increasing slowly.

Closing Prayer: Chib's reflection concluded with the prayer affirmation, "God is good."

Next Facilitation Team Team Virtual Meeting: Wednesday, October 21, 2020; 6:00PM

All future FT meetings will include an invitation to IC-SB's pastoral council to join.

The IC-SB pastoral council meets on the first Saturday of the month. St. Monica FT is welcome.

Draft Minutes written and submitted 9/17/20 jec

