

St. Monica Facilitation Team
Meeting Minutes June 17, 2020 v.2

Attendance: Best Batchateu, Connie Chau, John Curran, Fr. Ray Fleming, Mary Fran Kolbuc, Meg Lute and Bob Passalugo

This was the second virtual meeting of the Facilitation Team during the pandemic.

1. Father Ray's Updates:

School Lease: The current lease ends this month. Negotiations are underway between the school administrators and St. Monica to prepare new lease arrangements.

Parish Reopening Status: Fr. Ray and staff met in person with social distancing for the first time since COVID-19 restrictions. Felt encouraging.

St. Monica and Emmanuel Church of the Deaf church will **reopen for Mass** following social distancing and COVID-19 safety protocols on the weekend of **June 27 - 28th**. Immaculate Conception / St. Bridget's will open likewise. The process is expected to be a gradual reintroduction assuming that some parishioners may elect to delay actual participation. The parish will follow Gov. Cuomo's guidelines if there is a need to restore restrictions.

Following COVID-19 guidelines for NYS, socializing should not take place either inside or outside church. Need to respect social distancing.

The church has been mapped-out for entry, seating and sanitizer stations. Persons must wear PPE masks. There will be no music at this first public service which will last about 30 minutes with an immediate departure (no face-to-face socializing afterwards indoors or outdoors). Bathrooms will be locked. Every-other-row will be blocked off and 6-ft. distancing labeled. Families may sit together. Celebrants enter and exit from the sacristy. There will be no traditional Kiss of Peace but Fr. Ray and Jessica have developed a brief video showing an alternative St. Monica exchange. Please view it using the parish website. Communion will involve the host-only with a single aisle. There will be a demonstration at Mass how to consume the Eucharist under COVID mask conditions. The church will be sanitized afterwards prior to the next service.

Parishioners who are not feeling well or are unsure about returning to large social gatherings should feel comfortable *not* joining us in person until they feel ready.

Fr. Ray is excited about coming together again as a community. Hospitality has an important consoling role to play. He is completing the document to submit to New York State outlining parish plans for reopening gradually under the NYS guidelines. This is important for insurance reasons also.

2. Ministry and Activity Updates:

- The **Welcome Committee** is reviewing how to respond to the cancellation of the spring dinner gathering. Pre-paid tickets need resolution.

- **Westside Farmers Market** has concluded its second week with very successful social distancing and food safety guidelines adhered to with very good cooperation. There was positive newspaper coverage. Attendance rose from 175 shoppers the first week to 335 shoppers the second week. Additional vendors are coming.
- **Wednesday Prayer Group** virtual meetings continue under parishioner leadership.
- **Vacation Bible School** planning is underway and will reflect COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Buildings, Grounds and Safety Group** met at the school building last week to inspect the projects requested by the school administrators. The Group will act within its budget (based on parish investments income) to meet the repair, updating and safety needs of the parish buildings.
- The **Finance Committee** is working on its next budget. The parishioners have been most generous continuing plate collection donations by mail or other means. The contributions are down compared to what was anticipated previously but the generosity is remarkable in light of current pandemic conditions.

3. New Business:

- **19th Ward Community Association's parade on Juneteenth 6/19/20**: Fr. Ray was asked by a 19th Ward leader to include the parish in a peaceful car procession demonstrating neighborhood unity to counter racism. It will assemble at the Thurston Road 19th WCA Office and will observe social distancing. Father Ray will reply affirmatively. There has been positive response from parishioners and neighbors to the St. Monica Genesee Street sign that proclaims "*Black Lives Matter*".
- **Technology**: Jessica Tette is researching live-streaming and recorded Mass options for broadcasting over the internet.

The meeting closed with the parish *Vision & Mission Statement*

Next *Virtual* Facilitation Team Meeting: Wednesday, July 15th at 6:00pm