

**St. Monica Facilitation Team
Meeting Minutes July 15, 2020**

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

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

Opening Prayer: Fr. Ray relayed the prayer used at a recent staff meeting to express gratitude for each other's presence. "Bless us O Lord and these thy gifts ...". A gift simply to be together.

1. Approval of 6/17/20 Facilitation Team Meeting Minutes:

The second version, approved by Carol Wynne, was accepted unanimously.

2. Father Ray's Updates:

- He has been slightly "under the weather" for the past two weeks but is now feeling well.
- Parish operations slowly getting back to normal. Hope to open the office at the end of July. Most staff are working from home with checking-in occasionally at the office. Activities are generally quieter during the summer. There is one person covering the office for communications.
- Following Gov. Cuomo's guidelines will drive the pace of the reopening process. Need to remain diligent following COVID-19 prevention practices.
- Emmanuel Church of the Deaf will continue its sign language Mass on YouTube for the present. It has been getting good feedback.

3. Parish Reopening:

- Mass attendance has been steadily increasing since reopening but the numbers remain below typical attendance. Social distancing features working well.
- Communications to parishioners during pandemic: Jessica remains in touch with her Children's Faith Formation students and has done some social-distancing activities with them including flower planter preparation. The parish staff is focusing on keeping in contact with frail or isolated members. E-mail communications are increasing and phone calls made to provide support. There is an active effort to reach out to persons not seen in awhile and to ask other parishioners if they have status information about parishioner neighbors. Keeping in touch with parishioners is an important area of concern.

4. Vacation Bible School: Planning sessions already underway with youth input following social distance procedures. The planning for daily events is established. There will be both virtual daytime and actual evening activities. A series of evening activities will include an outdoor movie, participation at the Westside Farmers Market, a celebration of multiple cultures within Rochester, a Black Lives Matter dialogue opportunity and a Splash Party.

5. Rochester Academy Charter School:

The planning for returning to school will be complicated and will involve a hybrid of virtual and actual schooling following social distancing guidelines. The current time frame is

being used to address several of the building repair and updating projects determined by the Buildings, Safety & Grounds Group which visited the school building in June.

School Lease: Negotiations are underway between the school administrators and St. Monica to prepare new lease arrangements. The school faces strong economic pressures and has asked for a decrease in the lease fee. St. Monica parish will not ask for a traditional 3% increase this year. This will help relieve some pressure. There are no firm figures set at this time. Repair and updating projects for the school building will continue yet still provide the parish with leasing funds to help with operational expenses.

6. Parish Response to Black Lives Matter and general feedback:

The parish is making an authentic response to the Black Lives Matter movement with public support (Juneteenth rally participation by Fr. Ray; church outdoor sign and educational inserts in the parish bulletin). Diane Dinkins Lourette and Jessica Tette will work with co-parish Immaculate Conception / St. Bridget's parishioners to explore outreach and discussion opportunities. Progress will be noted in the bulletin.

Face-to-face feedback has been positive to the parish's engagement in the Black Lives Matter topic. The single negative comment has been treated with a respectful and sensitive conversation underway.

7. Technology Update:

Jessica Tette is proceeding with efforts to develop a live-streamed Mass from St. Monica. Need to purchase cameras. The intent is to replace the current YouTube recorded Mass and make the religious service more broadly-available.

8. Ministry and Activity Updates:

- **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults:** Five new members (adults and children) were received into the Church this past July 12th. There were three First Communions and three Confirmations. Deacon Matt Dudek is coordinating five upcoming Baptisms.

- The **Welcome Committee** has not met during the current restrictions. Will still pursue the process of returning funds, if requested, for the cancelled spring dinner. The group does not know at this time whether the September parish picnic will be held.

- **Wednesday Prayer Group and meditation group:** virtual meetings continue.

- **Buildings, Grounds and Safety Group:** Needs to set its next meeting date. There are projects that need monitoring and follow-through.

- **Westside Farmers Market** continues its successful season under the COVID-19 social-distancing and health guidelines. Market staff greet each visitor with an opportunity for hand-sanitizing and getting PPE masks. Getting exceptional cooperation from shoppers.

3. New Business:

There was an informal request made by a separate church group to use the St. Monica parking lot for a twice-monthly Saturday activity. The requester was informed of the process to contact the parish office and to submit the insurance and hold harmless documentation. St. Monica religious services (Mass, weddings and funerals) hold precedence.

Next *Virtual* Facilitation Team Meeting: Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 6:00pm

- refer to Connie Chau's e-mail invite to FT members 7/15/20

Draft written and submitted 7/16/20; (jec)