

St. Monica Facilitation Team

March 9, 2022

Attendance for the Virtual Meeting: Connie Chau, John Curran, Fr. Ray Fleming and Meg Lute
Excused: Mary Fran Kolbuc and Bob Passalugo

Opening Prayer: Fr. Ray asked for the Lord's protection and for insights benefiting the parish.

- **Review and Approval** 2/2/22 meeting minutes: Accepted and approved unanimously.

Father Ray's Updates:

- **Immaculate Conception - St. Bridget's**: There will be an intensive 3-week period of listening sessions followed by discernment among IC-St. B. parishioners as they consider a pending request for the sale of their school building to the University of Rochester. This would significantly affect the flow of rental income that supports parish operations. Parishioners will envision their future and will look for positive opportunities. Powerful decisions with important repercussions will be made by the parishioners.

- There is no further parish office space at Immaculate Conception. The office at St. Monica now combines the services for Immaculate Conception, St. Monica and Emmanuel Church of the Deaf with a single receptionist.

- **Financial**: Bishop Matano is merging the financial services involving St. Monica-Emmanuel Church of the Deaf - Immaculate Conception with the northwest parishes including the Cathedral Community.

- St. Monica is approaching the 80% donation level for the Catholic Ministry Appeal

- **Staff** is working cohesively and welcomes the lessened COVID restrictions. Good start to the Lenten Season with the drive-through Distribution of Ashes. Good TV coverage including an interview with Fr. Ray. Stations of the Cross take place at Immaculate Conception on Fridays at 6:00pm with St. Monica members already participating.

- Father Ray will be speaking to parishioners at Mass soon to inform them of his upcoming 3/21/22 medical procedure. This is part of his ongoing transparency with parishioners.

Ministry and Activity Updates:

- **Creation Stewards**: With the permission and approval of the parish, the Creation Stewards environmental ministry hosted the local parking for participants proceeding by bus to the Albany *Climate Change* rally.

- **Rochester Black Coalition**: (Diane Dinkins' initiative). No update at this time.

- **Faith Formation**: Children's faith formation and sacramental preparation move forward under Jessica's direction. First Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation continue.

- **Deacons' Preaching Session at St. Monica 2/28/22**: Very good turnout by parishioners and larger community to listen to the preaching examples by deacons-in-training. Supportive and constructive feedback.

- **Social Justice Committee**: Unable to meet actually under COVID limitations.

- **Welcoming Committee**: No information at this time.

- **Buildings, Grounds & Safety:** Will be resuming in March the on-site review for church window masonry and metal framework repair plus window insulation updating. Church doors will be inspected again to determine repairs. School windows will be repaired and rug / flooring issues undertaken as scheduling permits. Detached garage roof under review.
- **Westside Farmers Market update:** Planning is underway for the 2022 Westside Farmers Market held at the St. Monica parking lot. The Westside Market was highlighted with a virtual presentation about market goals, demographics, operations and incubation of urban food production by minority businesspersons. St. Monica's Bob Boyd was the featured speaker for the presentation focusing on inclusiveness and diversity within New York state farmers markets.
- **Storage of 7th Day Adventist church materials:** Continues in the detached garage. Photographed regularly to document undisturbed conditions.

New Business:

- **Safety Issue:** Unwelcome panhandling in the St. Monica parking lot creates worrisome and unsafe conditions for parishioners and their families. Evening-time choir practice and Faith Formation activities are vulnerable. In spite of efforts to discourage this behavior, the problem persists. A thoughtful, caring, compassionate and Christian response is needed. Henceforth, parish staff and members of the Buildings, Grounds and Safety group will respond to instances of panhandling with a respectful request to stop and to leave the parish premises immediately. Step away from the situation and allow the person to decide to leave. If this proves unsuccessful, then contact **3-1-1** and specify the nature of the activity and the **need for a response team that can address connecting the individual to existing agencies** providing food, clothing and shelter.

Deacon Brian McNulty will share insights dealing with persons with mental illness, trauma and addictions with members of the Buildings committee at its next meeting. This problem is affecting other parishes, including the Cathedral which is undertaking professional but compassionate monitoring. Prior to the close of the 9:00am Mass, John Curran will do a walk-through of the parking lot to check conditions. Choral group members are discussing their proactive response also among themselves.

- **Synod:** Parishioners Gerry and Kathy Murty requested information from the Facilitation Team about the Synod (literally, "walking together") proposed internationally by Pope Francis. A recent virtual Synod session about historical Church hierarchy by St. Monica parishioner Lourdes Perez-Albuerne was publicized (late notification) in the parish bulletin. The zoom session, sponsored by St. Mary's Church downtown, had some favorable references to St. Monica as being a synodal church. Further discussion needed for St. Monica input for the local Synod efforts.

- **New Candidates for Facilitation Team:** Father Ray has already started a conversation with a potential member and will make contact with a new suggested candidate.

Closing Prayer: The *Hail Mary*

***Next Facilitation Team Meeting: Wednesday, April 6 in person at the Rectory
(subject to change)***

Draft minutes written and submitted 3/9/22 jec