

# PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, March 4, 2025 - 6:30 PM**

**St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish Hall**

**Attendees:** Gabrielle Andrea, Father James Belogi, Terri Bouchard, Christine Cioffi, Justine Crevet, Bob Dicostanzo, Joan Duda, Deborah Fontes, Betsy Glasser, Anna Hartz, Richard Leet, Nancy Moscheo, Rev Anthony Onu, Julius Pasquariello, Thomas Pozanski, Kathleen Riordan, Donna Simone, Kelly Sloan, Joanne Tuchovsky, Christopher Wertman, Thomas Cronin (guest), Shirley Belouen (guest), Edith Bray (guest), Alessio Fasullo (guest).

**Excused:** Teshia Gutchell, Fran Mitchell, Alyssa Sarrosa, Arthur Foo, Joanne Russell, Gloria Towle-Hilt

**Unexcused:**

**Debbie Fontes presided over the meeting which began at 6:30 pm.**

**Welcome - Debbie Fontes**

**Opening Prayer-** Terri Bouchard and all.

**1.) Introduction of Guest Speaker,** Tom Cronin, Diocesan Director of Evangelization & Strategic Planning - Father Jim

**2.) Presentation by Guest Speaker, Tom Cronin**

- Father Jim introduced Tom Cronin the Bishops Advocate for Evangelization and Strategic Planning.
- Tom said that we are reaching the 2 year anniversary of the diocese's bankruptcy.
- There are currently 14 counties and 126 parishes within a 10,419 sq mile radius
- The churches are currently in crisis.
  - Why?
    - 5 areas of perfect storm
      1. Aging demographic
      2. Decrease population
      3. Challenges with clergy (wellness, health etc)
        - a. Numbers are an issue—currently 50 ACTIVE priests.
        - b. Down 5 priests in 3 months and orders of priests have been lost (3 in past years).
      4. Challenging financials
        - a. Decades of decline.
        - b. 22 of 126 churches saw an increase in revenue.
        - c. The rest took money out of savings.
      5. Culture

- a. Secular post christian.
  - b. Culture of convenience.
- Strategic planning→2 primary things to focus on
  - 1. Where is the redundancy?
    - a. 53/126 churches are in 6 municipalities
    - b. 14 churches in Schenectady
  - 2. What are parishes struggling with in getting into savings.
    - a. Look at information—look at how many churches do we need.
- The Bishop says that the parish is the families of families.
- He wants closures of parishes to be organic and for the community to be able to make the decision.
- SGA—currently running at 31% of its seating capacity.
- SMS—currently running at 24% of its seating capacity.
- Currently the numbers for SGA and SMS are unsustainable and both churches could close if a decision is not made.
- SGA current debt—\$400,000 according to Tom and Sherley (SGA finance committee)-->together if SGA closes and SMS remains open the debt becomes  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million dollars.
- Tom said that the situation is critical.
- Stated that OLQP has reserves for now.
- Tom said that the arrears are being called, and noted that the debt and assets go to the successor church.
- Tom said that a recommendation needs to be done, and that the terms need to be defined and that a clear decision needs to be made.
- SGA and SMS are two of 14 churches that make up The Twin Rivers Vicariate. There are 7 Vicariates which make up the Diocese.
- Anna stated that the bible study Mohawk Catholic meets in SGA's basement and SMS has Family promise in the basement of SGA as well, Anna said that if SGA were to close we would have to figure out where both groups could meet.
- Tom said that Saint James of North Creek made the decision and closed in 6 months.
- Tom said that he will be meeting with Father Jim and other parishes in Schenectady.

### **3.) Review of February 4, 2025 meeting minutes**

Motion to approve minutes by Anna Hartz second by Gabby Andrea.

### **4.) Ministry Updates**

**\*\*Motion to table the rest of the Agenda until the April meeting to discuss the Tom Cronin presentation made by Anna Hartz second by Gabby Andrea.\*\***

- Music Ministry - (Justine SMS- Tabled for April Meeting)
- Family Promise- (Anna Hartz- Tabled for April Meeting )
- Additional reports:
- The annual Crop Walk will take place May 4th at Saint Cateri.
- Fundraising working group ideas- Tabled until April meeting

### **5.) Old Business**

- Diocesan Appeal Funding Update (Father Jim).
  - In pew solicitation in the Spring.
  - Addition of thermometer in the lobby displaying fundraising efforts thus year.

### **6.) New Business**

### **7.) Community Events**

### **8.) Pastor's Comments- Father Jim**

- Father Jim had no update but stated that SMS has a thermometer for the Diocean appeal and that a pew solicitation would be in the spring in May or April.
- Father Jim also stated that a conversation needs to be expedited and that a facilitated meeting be had with a smaller group of anyone who wanted to sign up to discuss planning/future of the two parishes.
- Father Jim suggested the 2nd Sunday of Lent to discuss, and that in 2-2 ½ weeks to meet again with the small group of those who signed up.

### **9.) Reminders for next meeting- Debbie Fontes**

Christian service reports for the April meeting and any reports tabled from the March meeting.

**10.) Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Betsy Glasser, second by Richard Leet.**

**11.) Closing Prayer was read by Betsy Glasser and everyone.**

**Meeting conclude 8:44 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Wertman

