

St. Augustine PPC Meeting
January 6, 2020

Present: Nancy Tim, Ellen Edelman, Norma Felix, Angela Howard, Tim Hurly, Gladys Jusino-Cruz, Jim O'Callahan, James Palmaro, Rosario Pelaez, Marie Corkhill, Deacon Joseph Bichotte, Deacon Dean Dobbins, Vanessa Peña, Fr. Rueger, Anna Puente, Msgr. Grimaldi.

Excused: Ina Pannell-St Surin, Reneida Reyes, Yvette Taylor

Opening Prayer: Msgr. Grimaldi

Meeting with Msgr. Grimaldi

- Bishop has no intention to close St. Augustine Church. Diocese is reaffirming its commitment to St. Augustine. It may look different due to staffing issues, but it will go on. Laity will continue to play an important role.
- Fr. Rueger's retirement is coming up at the end of January.
 - We will continue to have a shared pastor with St. Francis.
 - The Diocese has a priest in mind, but he is on sabbatical and won't be available until after Easter (June at the latest). His name will be announced once he has returned and agreed to the assignment.
 - In the meantime, Msgr. Grimaldi will be the temporary Administrator of both St Augustine and St Francis.
 - Deacon Dean Dobbins will continue in his role at both parishes.
- We need to work together in partnership with St. Francis. This partnership will most likely lead to a merger at some point in the future.
 - A joint pastoral committee will be formed with ~6 members from each parish.
 - If interested in being a part of this committee, let Deacon Dean and Fr. Rueger know.
 - First meeting will be sometime in February.

St. Augustine Overview (see handout we were given)

- Mass attendance has declined over past 10 years, as has participation in the sacraments, and the number of children in religious education.
- Collection income does not cover our yearly expenses.
 - Cutbacks have been made in salaries, insurance, in number of staff – but even with the resulting reduction of annual expenses, we still can't cover our costs with collections.
- The Convent property is in the process of being sold. The income from that sale will allow us to pay off our debts to the Diocese with about a half million dollars left over.
- Plans for the rectory building:
 - Rocklyn Asset Corporation is a real estate company incorporated under the diocese. They will look at the rectory with a mind to doing a land lease. They hope to lease the building and it is feasible.
 - This would bring in a stream of rental income that will help us to meet our expenses.

Questions:

- Who will we go for day to day business (mass cards, arranging for sacraments, etc.)?
 - It was mentioned that people have had trouble getting in touch with the office to do business. There will eventually be one central office at St. Francis. For now Vanessa will be at St. Augustine three days a week (days should be posted and/or published in bulletin). Jonathan will on the grounds on other days. Friday will be the only day when no one is around.

- Why are these meetings closed? Why can't there be a Town Hall format?
 - It is too difficult to do business and accomplish anything on a regular basis with that large a group. The PPC members have the responsibility of bringing the concerns of parishioners to the Council and informing the parishioners of the Council's work.
 - That being said, there is a place for Town Hall meetings on occasion. There will likely be one when the new Pastor is installed.

- As relates to sacraments and other business issues – is there any plan to use technology so people can access forms and other information on our website?
 - That is a great idea and we are welcome to develop this on our own. We need to find someone with the computer know-how to create a page with this information that can be linked to on our website.

- Who does the long range planning for our facilities? Who is looking at what will need to be done in 5, 10, or 20 years, so that a plan is in place and we are not just dealing with emergencies as they arise?
 - Rockland will help, but we can/should form a committee to work on this.

- What will happen to ministries here at St. Augustine?
 - Nothing. They can continue – it is up to us to keep them going.
 - Food pantry will be moved into St. Monica Hall.
 - Most people in the parish will not necessarily notice any difference in what is happening here for the time being.

- What can we expect between now and the arrival of the new pastor? Office hours? Pastoral needs of people?
 - Msgr. Grimaldi will be our temporary administrator. He will stop by if possible, but he won't be here on a regular basis, as he is Vicar for all of Brooklyn and Pastor of St. Bernard's, so his schedule is already quite full.
 - We have priests who have been taking care of us and they will continue to tend to our pastoral needs.

- How are we going to get this information out to the greater parish?
 - A summary of the main points would be best. This should be posted on the website and a print copy could be posted in church.
 - Anna Puente suggested making these points:
 - Parish will be in an official partnership with St. Francis which may lead to a merger down the line.
 - Church is not closing – it will be a worship site – diocese has allowed \$7 million to be spent on the building in recent years, they won't close it after that.
 - The bishop and diocese are behind us.
 - Bill Cahill made the point that this is a time for re-imagining what our parish will look like. We need to step up, as it is on us to rebuild it. We can set the tone of what will happen here and this is actually liberating.

Closing Prayer: Fr. Reuger

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Corkhill