

**ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY (“SMCC”)
PASTORAL COUNCIL (“PC”)
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 @ 7:00 PM**

Present (*In person*): Fr. Vargas, Fr. Chukwurah, B. Choquette (Chair), M. Tapuska (Secretary), G. Brand, T. Klassen, N. McIntosh, M. Nasse, B. Popp, P. Tan, P. Van de Mosselaer
Absent: A. Bitter, D. Helton, L. Iovinelli, M. McGee (Chairman, SMCC Finance Council), K. Renger, A. Valdez

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Welcome to Fr. Kelvin Chukwurah

Approval of minutes from May meeting of PC

Moved that the minutes from the May 28, 2024, meeting of PC be approved. The motion was approved.

ITEMS TO REVISIT FROM THE MAY MEETING OF PPC

a) Communication Coordinator

The Diocese has not yet given approval for the hiring of a Communication Coordinator.

b) Offertory Baskets

Collection baskets are still not circulated at Masses. It has already been advertised in the bulletin that basket collection would start a few months ago. The consensus of the group is that basket collection should commence as soon as possible. The process will be started at the upcoming weekend Masses.

c) Weekly Prayer Basket

The Prayer Intention binder has been introduced and all intentions listed are remembered collectively in the Prayers of the Faithful at weekday Masses. The intentions are meant to be placed anonymously in the binder.

d) Elements of the Catholic Mass Videos (Update/Results)

The feedback from parishioners has been positive. The link to the video was nicely incorporated into the bulletin. All agreed that it is important to pass on Catholic information, and the significance of various elements of the Mass.

e) Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit (“EME”) (Update/Results)

The EME went well and was successful. There were 134 volunteers. The Saturday morning Masses were well received. The announcements at the end of weekend Masses were appreciated by the parishioners and impacted people. Approximately 2000 people went through the exhibit, from as far away as Newfoundland. Some of the middle and high school students that went through the exhibit had profound experiences. Two copies of the graphic novel on the life of Blessed Carlo Acutis were given to each of the visiting schools.

There was a surplus of \$1100 dollars that was given to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and to sponsored refugee families.

It was good to have the Coffee Ministry provide refreshments for people who wanted to rest and reflect after viewing the exhibit.

The web page featured some excellent resources. It is hoped that the website will be maintained.

The Chair, on behalf of PC, extended thanks and appreciation to Kris Renger and Pam Van de Mosselaer and to the members of the EME Planning Committee for the exceptional work they have done to bring the EME to SMCC.

f) Finances

Fr. Vargas, M. McGee and B. Choquette attended a Diocesan-wide meeting with Fr. Wilbert from the Diocese of Calgary who was concerned about the general state of parish finances throughout the Diocese. It is expected that there will be improvement at SMCC as a part-time bookkeeper, M. Gregory, who was previously on staff, has been hired. A presentation to SMCC regarding the state of our finances is planned for October.

NEW ITEMS

g) Parish Renewal

Our team has been busy! In May, we prepared for the launch of the Diocesan-wide Parish Renewal Survey, which happened over 3 weekends in June (1/2, 9/10, 15/16)

St. Michael's had a 70% response rate (of average Mass attendance) which was much higher than the 20% “acceptable” response rate.

We participated in a team building exercise, facilitated by the Diocese, on June 22 which helped to identify communication styles among team members.

We re-gathered on August 22 to start planning for the Parish Renewal Gathering on September 29, the Feast of our patron, St. Michael the Archangel. Planning efforts have been going well, with weekly meetings to date. We have been focusing on the 3 Pastoral Priorities (Pillars) of Parish Renewal identified by the Diocese over the last 3 weekends, including in the weekly bulletin newsletter and in the after-Mass pulpit announcements. Members of the team have been present at our table in the Narthex after each Mass to

answer questions and to hand out postcards to parishioners, a different post card each week.

In addition to this, the team chair, M. Tapuska, attends monthly zoom meetings with the Diocesan Leadership Team and other renewal teams across the Diocese. We attended a webinar, as a team, on September 14 where the overall (not parish-specific) survey results were presented by the Bishop. The link to this webinar can be found on page 6 of these minutes.

Another webinar is planned for October 5, “Conversation in the Spirit” for clergy and Parish Renewal Teams. On October 26, there will be an in-person gathering of parish renewal teams “Understanding your Parish Survey Results”.

Watch for the Diocesan Advent Mission, December 3 – 5, where all parishes are invited to attend via zoom. Parish pastoral renewal planning will begin in the new year. In March and April, Deanery-wide celebrations with the Bishop are being planned.

Thanks to the members of the St. Michael’s Parish Renewal Team (“PRT”) – a wonderful group of very resolute and enthusiastic parishioners who are willing to do what is needed for the success of renewal at SMCC. Their skill set is amazing and complementary. The Spirit was actively working when the team was brought together.

The PRT asks for your patience as we begin the process of planning; the Diocesan leadership team has emphasized the importance of listening to all parishioners as much as possible to discern what renewal will look like at SMCC. Please pray for the success of our parish renewal gathering on Sunday.

h) Adoration Ministry

Many parishioners have been asking for more time for adoration with the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Note the Encyclical Letter of the late John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, paragraph 25 (Please see page 6 of these minutes for the full text of paragraph 25.)

It was noted that at SMCC, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel is open from 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days a week. We are the only church in the Diocese that offers this. There is also Holy Hour after Friday weekday Masses, with Benediction. There are many opportunities for adoration at SMCC. It is not necessary for the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed for adoration.

Experience at SMCC and at other parishes has shown that it is difficult to ensure that there is always someone present when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

It was suggested that 40 Hours of Adoration (with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament) could be offered on various special occasions throughout the year. Fr. Vargas recommended that if adoration is to be offered with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, it should be organized as a ministry with an educational component for all volunteers so that there is an understanding of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament. He suggested organizing a brain-storming session of willing volunteers about organizing an Adoration Ministry.

Action Item: A brain-storming session with potential Adoration Ministry volunteers will be organized.

i) Host a Movie Event

A recommendation was made that SMCC host a movie event for the new release *Jesus Thirsts – The Miracle of the Eucharist*. A special screening can be organized for the parish.

Action Item: A volunteer from the EME committee will be asked to explore this idea.

j) Healing Prayer Ministry

P. Tan and B. Choquette attended a healing prayer service at Ascension Parish that was hosted by shalomworld.org, featuring Fr. Roy Palatty and a priest from the Diocese of Calgary. It was very powerful to witness healing through prayer. It was recommended that a similar event be hosted at SMCC. Fr. Vargas is strongly in favor.

Action Item: The possibility of hosting a similar event at SMCC will be explored, possibly on February 11, World Day of the Sick or in Lent, and possibly with other parishes.

k) High School and Young Adult Programs

A question was raised about available programs for high school students and young adults. SMCC will be having “Immerse” nights with Face-to-Face Ministries for grades 6 – 9 and Michael Chiasson has been engaged for two upcoming events at SMCC. The Francis Xavier Chaplaincy, aimed at faith formation and fellowship for young adults in the Diocese of Calgary is very active; Mass is celebrated on Sunday afternoons at 4pm at St. Mary’s Cathedral. It was suggested that a liaison to SMCC be appointed from the chaplaincy.

l) Alpha Program

It was suggested that an Alpha program be offered once again at SMCC. There was strong consensus for this idea, as it is an excellent program of renewal and a powerful means for evangelization and conversion. Members of the PRT are in support of this and it will be considered going forward.

m) Name Tag and Sunday Potluck Dinner

A committee is in place to organize a monthly potluck dinner on the first Sunday of the month, after the 5 pm Mass. The first dinner is scheduled for November 3. This would be coincidental with “Name Tag” Sunday. There was brief discussion about the merits of potluck dinners, but it was agreed that they are excellent community building events.

Moved that SMCC proceed with potluck dinners. **The motion was approved.**

n) Parish Events and Fundraising Possibilities for 2024-25

There is a variety of possible events to be hosted in the coming months, including, Oktoberfest, Seniors' Christmas Luncheon, Lenten Retreat and a Garage Sale Weekend. All activities would be subject to approval by Fr. Vargas. It was noted that a lucrative fundraiser is to organize a sale of frozen meats, with a percentage of funds raised being donated to SMCC. This could be done prior to Christmas or Lent.

Action Item: B. Choquette will meet with Fr. Vargas about organizing a fundraiser.

o) Pastoral Council Resignations and New Members

The following members have resigned from PPC: Sheila Gaela and Tom Novecosky. The following parishioners have been appointed to PPC: Deana Helton and Marilyn Nasse. On behalf of Fr. Vargas, PPC would like to thank Sheila and Tom for their service to PPC and to wish them well in their new endeavors.

CLOSING PRAYER

Diocesan Prayer of Renewal (please see page 6 for the full text of this prayer).

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

October 22, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:50 pm

Link to webinar referred to in item g of these minutes.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WPnev-9kv1NQAnpXKWlqjUYuIeXDsbLK/view>

Excerpt from *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* referred to in item h of these minutes.

25. The *worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass* is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass – a presence which lasts as long as the species of bread and of wine remain⁴⁵ – derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual.⁴⁶ It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.⁴⁷

It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the Beloved Disciple (cf. *Jn* 13:25) and to feel the infinite love present in his heart. If in our time Christians must be distinguished above all by the “art of prayer”,⁴⁸ how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament? How often, dear brother and sisters, have I experienced this, and drawn from it strength, consolation and support!

This practice, repeatedly praised and recommended by the Magisterium,⁴⁹ is supported by the example of many saints. Particularly outstanding in this regard was Saint Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote: “Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us”.⁵⁰ The Eucharist is a priceless treasure: by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. A Christian community desirous of contemplating the face of Christ in the spirit which I proposed in the Apostolic Letters [*Novo Millennio Ineunte*](#) and [*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*](#) cannot fail also to develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship, which prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord.

Prayer of Renewal

Father in heaven, may the *faith* You have given us in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of Your Kingdom.

May Your grace transform us, into being more faithful missionary disciples, capable of sowing the seeds of the Gospel in our families and our parishes.

May those seeds transform humanity and the whole creation in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil overcome, Your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Renewal in our Diocese reawaken in us, the call of our baptism to be Pilgrims of Hope, and in the witness of our faith, to seek always the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To You our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.