

**ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC COMMUNITY (“SMCC”)
PASTORAL COUNCIL (“PC”)
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 16, 2024 @ 7:00 PM**

Present (*In person*): Fr. Vargas, B. Choquette (Chair), M. Tapuska (Secretary), A. Bitter, S. Gaela, L. Iovinelli, T. Klassen, N. McIntosh, T. Novecosky, B. Popp, K. Renger, P. Van de Mosselaer, M. McGee (Chairman, SMCC Finance Council)

Absent: Fr. Bustalino, G. Brand, P. Tan*, A. Valdez

Observer: MN

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Welcome

The meeting observer was welcomed and introduced to members of PC.

Approval of minutes from February meeting of PC

Moved that the minutes from the February 27, 2024, meeting of PC be approved. The motion was approved.

1. Communication Coordinator (Update)

The Diocese is considering our application to hire a Communication Coordinator. We are still awaiting approval.

The recently hired Bookkeeper for SMCC passed away, which is impacting the availability of financial information and decisions dependent thereon.

2. Diocesan Renewal (Update)

The Parish Renewal Team had two meet and greet sessions prior to Easter. There are no recent updates.

3. Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit (“EME”) (Update)

4.

The EME is a series of panels cataloguing Eucharistic Miracles that have occurred around the world. Blessed Carlo Acutis compiled the work which has been approved by the Vatican. The EME will be on display at SMCC from May 24 to June 2 (Mezzanine Level). The purpose is to promote a greater awareness that Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist; less than 30% of Catholics believe this.

Sacred Heart Parish in Calgary developed the panels and Operations Manual to host the display. The panels are on loan to SMCC for a cost of \$600. They are available to any parish in the Diocese wishing to host the EME.

Fundraising will be done to cover the cost of hosting the display. The EME Planning Committee is still working on ideas for fundraising. It will include sales of the book *This is My Body* by Bishop Robert Barron. So far, \$1500 has been spent on the EME.

Advertising started after Easter. Members of the EME Planning Committee have been giving brief presentations after all Masses and have been distributing brochures. Also, a page on the SMCC website provides information. Other avenues of advertising will include the bulletin, pre-Mass slide show, advertising with Diocese and in the publication *Faithfully*.

68% of the volunteer requirement has already been met. Training sessions will be held on May 8 & 11. There is also a training manual.

Students from Calgary Catholic high schools are expected to visit, probably outside of exhibit hours.

5. Offertory Basket (Update)

Offertory baskets were reintroduced at some of the Easter weekend Masses (Good Friday and Easter Sunday) to address some of the financial challenges at SMCC. The Hospitality Ministers who had volunteered for the Easter weekend were informed that basket collection would take place, but there was no specific training program in place. Some of the Hospitality Ministers were uncomfortable with handling the baskets. Two collection bags were used to differentiate between monies collected by way of basket and by way of the three acrylic boxes at the back of the Sanctuary and in the Narthex. However, due to the recent passing of the bookkeeper, the results were not officially tabulated. Clear information to compare basket and box collection amounts is needed. Easter Masses may not be reliable indicators. Fr. Vargas informed PC that approximately \$13,000 was collected on Good Friday (collection for the Holy Land) and \$3,000 in loose change on Easter Sunday.

Feedback was collected from the Hospitality Ministers on the reintroduction of collection baskets. PC was provided with a summary ("Summary) of same. Please see pages 5 – 7 of these minutes for the Summary. A brief review of the results:

- Handling of Baskets – discomfort among parishioners to handle the baskets
- Number of Baskets Required – minimum of 6
- Sound Booth Safe – location of sound booth and altar to place the collection bag during Mass is problematic due to noise and security; the safe in the office is preferable. The sound booth safe could be used at a point in the Mass when the sound is covered by music or congregation response
- Masses to Collect with Baskets – Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving
- When to Perform Collections – After Prayer of the Faithful, during the Offertory

- Glass (acrylic) box vs. baskets vs. both – debatable
- Easter a good test trial – not a good indicator
- Parishioner Comments – general discomfort
- Other Ways to Generate Income – in addition to suggestions provided in the Summary, members of PC suggested the following:
 - Hospitality Ministers hold baskets as parishioners enter the Sanctuary
 - Ask for more volunteers, inform them as to why additional income is needed, the difference it makes, what funds are used for
 - Promote a culture change at SMCC
 - Include a request in the pre-Mass welcome script
 - Promote basket collection as part of the Diocesan renewal initiative

It was generally agreed that PC must decide if SMCC move forward with the collection of baskets.

Thanks for preparation of the Summary.

Moved that SMCC move forward with the use of collection baskets. The motion was approved.

6. May PC Meeting Date May 21

The next meeting of PC will be held on May 21 to avoid conflict with the EME.

7. Divine Mercy Celebration (Update)

The Divine Mercy Celebration was beautiful and successful thanks to the work of Fr. Vargas and Peggy & Thomas Tan. PC's appreciation was shown by a round of applause.

8. Finance Council (Update)

Year-to-date reports are not yet available due to the passing of our bookkeeper. SMCC is not getting timely monthly reporting from the Diocese of Calgary ("Diocese"), something over which SMCC has no control. Better compensation for a bookkeeper at SMCC may be required due to the size of the parish. Weekly collection numbers could be published in the bulletin, but that is not the entirety of what the Diocese requests. It was noted that some parishes do publish their weekly collection numbers.

Moved that PC recommend that weekly collection results are published by SMCC Finance Council until such time as the Diocese provides more complete financial information. The motion was approved.

NEW ITEMS

9. Promoting Planned Giving at SMCC

The transfer of generational wealth is an area of opportunity for our SMCC. Parishioners could be informed and encouraged to consider planned and legacy giving. Our current website is inadequate and perhaps could be developed in a more comprehensive fashion to include topics such as insurance policies and transfers of securities. There are plans to expand this area under the new Diocesan CFO.

Action: A new website page will be developed for SMCC.

10. Use of SW area of the Parking Lot

Since the January meeting of PC (see item 11 of Minutes of Meeting held on January 23, 2024), it has been learned that there is a parking agreement between West85th and SMCC for the use of the SW corner of the parking lot. There is an easement registered on title. A recommendation was made that employees of W85th be given parking tags for their vehicles to avoid confusion. It was noted that as part of the agreement, SMCC also has parking rights in the underground parkade at W85th.

It was also confirmed that special permission has been given to the employees of 4 businesses along Broadcast Avenue to park in the NW corner of the parking lot during construction.

The parking lot is used as an off-leash area by dog owners who often do not clean up after their pets. Fr. Vargas is considering asking the city for designation of the parking lot as a park or cemetery under Municipal Bylaw 23M89, a bylaw regarding the care of dogs.

CLOSING PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT at 8:30 pm.

NEXT MEETING OF PC

May 21, 2024

Hospitality Ministers Feedback – Easter Collection Baskets

Below is feedback received from Hospitality Ministers regarding revival of the Collection Boxes at St Michaels during Easter Weekend. I asked each to comment on the nine (9) topics below.

1) Handling of Baskets

- need time to practice basket passing
- no issues handling baskets
- Many people didn't even want to touch the baskets. One hospitality minister had to walk through an entire row because no one wanted to touch the basket.

2) Number of Ministers Required

- recommend 8 to cover sanctuary, common area was not discussed.
- Sunday at 11:00 AM need a minimum of 7 ministers, otherwise they are missing too much mass
- When someone misses then it's a big strain to collect appropriately and effectively
- Six ministers
- We had about six or eight ministers at 11 am on Easter Sunday and it went very well. Four would be the absolute minimum. Even then, the baskets would still be passed around when everyone is standing, which is awkward. Perhaps we should just have a policy that each hospitality minister engages one other friend or family member, prior to the mass, to help with the collection. Most people are happy to do that since they are at the mass anyway.

3) Sound Booth Safe

- All good
- Place bags in safe during mass while there is singing
- I am a bit nervous about the placing of the money bags at the altar because it is an insecure location. I think that the practice of putting the bags right away in the safe is much better.
- I would prefer we use a different safe. It can be distracting to people in the sound booth. Also, with the current safe, you're rushing to try and get the deposit done before the consecration. Perhaps we throw all the money into the glass containers and deal with it after mass.

4) Masses to Collect with Baskets

- Christmas/Easter/Thanksgiving/Main Church Events
- Christmas/Easter
- During our most celebrated masses of Christmas, Easter etc. The reason being we attract Catholics that normally don't attend on a regular basis and might be unaware of our glass donation boxes (miss it coming into the church) 'Yes, it happens!' I have even had people ask where they can leave their donation while they are standing beside the donation box.
- It does make sense to me to collect at Christmas and Easter, visitors and the C and E catholic. The weekly parishioners that give will do via the envelopes, text or the automatic withdrawal.

5) When to perform Collections

- Normal time is good
- During Offertory
- Same as before COVID
- Basket collection should be done after the prayers of the faithful

6) Glass Box versus Baskets versus Both

- Both is fine, those looking at others offering are insecure – not representing congregation
- Glass Boxes every mass and baskets at special events
- If we do collections every Sunday, I recommend taking away the boxes. In this way, people would know when to donate rather than guessing where they should deposit their donation.
- I think that the collection boxes need to be taken away and we should do the collections as per pre-covid.
- I believe that doing basket collection would generate more revenue as people are more apt to drop something into a basket as it is handed to them, than if they can just walk by the glass boxes as I see the boxes as a more impersonal way of collecting.
- I have been thinking about the Boxes vs. The baskets and I think we should use only the boxes. It is a system that the church has gotten used to. I see people contributing to them at various times - before mass and after mass. It affords people the opportunity to stop and think about their giving and provides some flexibility. Passing around the baskets may catch people off guard and then they are not prepared to contribute at just that time. It requires too many more volunteers to use the baskets. It's not broken so don't fix it.
- I would like to see basket collection only for special occasion masses. Basket collection is old fashioned, we need to encourage people to do automatic deposit or texting. By going to modern methods, it should make it easier for people to donate.

7) Easter a good test trial Time

- Ministers needed more coaching – training –
- I do not feel Easter was a good weekend to do a test trial for basket collections if the intention was to reflect donations for regular weekend masses.
- Placing of the money bags at the altar during the adoration of the cross was insecure.

8) Parishioners Comments

- hesitancy to touch the baskets
- a lot of folks don't carry cash anymore
- shame about not being able to contribute due to financial hardships.
- some volunteers, who may be experiencing financial hardships, contribute their time and talents to our parish community - in lieu of a financial (treasure) contribution - isn't that worth something?
- shame as others seated around them did not know that they donate via other avenues (automatic monthly withdrawals, text to donate, online donations).
- Many parishioners I talked to were not happy to see the baskets return.

Many people were uncomfortable on Good Friday or embarrassed and apologized for putting in normal containers. I believe people don't want to touch a common container - I am amazed how many people use the 'handicap' button to open doors with their elbow!

9) Other ways to Generate Income

- 50/50 draws
- Chase the Ace draws
- have ads in bulletins at cost for local businesses for parishioners to support
- put on a very nice dinner for the parishioners who have "deep pockets" and ask for further support
- make organizational staff chart and salaries to a minimum
- charge a bit more for marriages, funerals, and events at the church
- Mention in the homily that aums giving is in all of us to give - Giving \$1-\$5 a week is not meeting our financial obligations as a parish - esp. when people are spending double that amount at Starbucks and Tim Horton's
- Our youth need to step up to the plate and do some fundraising- car washes are fun and fund raising and selling hotdogs and pop at such an event can be done too to fund raise (they do this at their schools) and have Shine FM cover the event and attract people from around the city to go to the church for this fundraiser
- I think we definitely need to make more announcements at Mass with our parishioners and remind them the ways we can donate-envelopes, debit etc. Just like we did this pass weekend.
- The only thing I can think of are silent auctions. Usually, parishioners are willing to donate things such as hockey tickets and various little gift packages from parishioner small businesses. It would need some supervision so that the prizes have a significant value (i. e. not junk).
- Bringing the baskets back is not going to increase donations. People have left the church. The answer is to start renting out space in the church. We have that huge commercial kitchen that is never used. You can't keep asking parishioners to increase their donations. I don't understand why renting out space hasn't been considered.
- I'd like to see us rent space in the church to outside groups. Perhaps we can rent space in our garden.