

Town Hall meeting notes 10/6/19

Present: Fr. John, Fr. Ted, 7 council members, 21 parishioners

Meeting called to order at 12:30 by Fr. John.

Q: November is when we remember our beloved dead with candles, can we do this again, other churches do this; also I remember the red candle in Church – what was it for, and why?

A: This is not feasible because of fire safety (St. Pius X is an example), there is not a lot of physical space in the churches to accommodate this. There is a sanctuary lamp in each church.

Q: Why do so many Baptisms occur outside of Mass?

A: 6 of the next scheduled 9 Baptisms are during Mass; the Parish strongly encourages that Baptisms happen during Mass as it is a community event, but there are sometimes extenuating circumstances – travel, health of family members. The commitment of family to have their children receive the Sacrament is the most important thing. We want to be welcoming to individual families' needs.

Q: We need more ushers at 11 AM Mass (St. Mary's), asking in bulletin doesn't work.

A: Fr. John plans to address from pulpit.

Q: Political bias has no place in the Church, why isn't there more focus on abortion, specifically late-term abortion?

A: Fr. John said that he has been involved in a friend's politics, but if there is an immorality seen, he will speak about it from the pulpit. Abortion is something that is agreed upon as Catholics to be morally wrong, therefore we don't speak about it.

Q: Can St. Mary's be held accountable financially because we've been named in the sex scandal?

A: No. We cannot be held accountable because of the Diocesan declaration of bankruptcy.

Q: If we are running at a financial surplus, why are asking for an increase in collections?

A: The 2% requested increase amounts to the Cost Of Living Adjustment.

Q: Where do we stand with the remodeling of the Rectory at St. Mary's? Will parishioners have a say? Will we be getting Patrick Place money in return?

A: The desire has been, and is, to turn the Rectory into a non-profit counseling center. The timeline is undetermined, but the goal is that the interior is done in 2 years, and it remains the goal of Fr. John that the building will be used for that purpose. Parishioners will not have input into future use. No future money will be given from Patrick Place – the Ministry that we wanted is happening, it is not appropriate to ask for money back. Additionally, we have a maintenance person in place who believes that the work can and will be done.

Q: The desire exists for a place at each worship site to have a visitor to stay comfortably – visiting priest, missionary, will that happen?

A: That will happen.

Q: What is in place to deal with the abuse of rogue priests – discussions, prayer groups, healing and reconciliation services, book groups?

A: That will not further come from Fr. John, but from the laity. We have done more than any parish, we are the only one from the Diocese to have had a meeting like the panel discussion, Fr. John has been a leader at Diocesan level in teaching about how to preach on this. Fr. Barron's book is a good place to start. We have had reconciliation services prior to the opening of the lawsuit period, perhaps future ones will be more attended.

Q: What is the status of the windows refurbishment at St. Mary's?

A: We are waiting on the artist's availability, hopefully this will occur within a year.

Q: I'm concerned about Bishop Clark's presence on Alzheimer's Committee, will he have to testify about the abuse?

A: Bishop Clark doesn't and didn't work alone, he has others that can help speak to what happened.

Q: Can we have another panel discussion regarding the abuse scandal?

A: It can be done. Maybe more people will come now.

Meeting adjourned at 1:05.