

**ST. DAMIAN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017, 7:00PM**

- 1. 2016-2017 PARISH COUNCIL OFFICERS:** President - Dave Kassen, Vice-President - Kathy Gonsalves, Secretary - Geri Varel
- 2. COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fr. Anthony, Deacon Glenn, Dave Kassen, Kathy Gonsalves, Geri Varel, Clay Lynch & JoAnn Koerkenmeier.
- 3. COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Anita Arentsen, Gary Arentsen & Tina Tonnies
- 4. OTHER ATTENDEES:** Sr. Ellen Orf, NC Vicariate Hispanic Minister; Arlene Korte & Virgil Jansen, Parish Trustees.
- 5. OPENING:** Fr. Anthony opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 6. MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 13, 2016 MEETING:** The minutes from the December 13, 2016, meeting were approved by council members via email and published to the congregation on January 14-15, 2017.

**7. PARISH ADMINISTRATION:**

- Joint Parish meeting with Bishop Braxton was held on Saturday, January 28, 2017, at 9:00am at the Chancery Office in Belleville. Representatives from St. Damian & St. Bernard were in attendance. A joint-parish Pastoral Renewal and Restructuring Plan dated January 28, 2017, was presented to the Bishop. It laid out the existing partnership list of activities that has grown by leaps and bounds since the two parishes were assigned as partners in 1996 (20+ years). Bishop Braxton shared the “big picture” in the Belleville Diocese so we could better see the challenges from the perspective of the Diocese regarding priest assignments. There are 114 parishes and 49 active priests. Of those active priests, more than half are 50 years of age or older. 22 of those 49 priests will be eligible for retirement in the next 10-15 years. The diocese ordained 1 priest in 2016, and is scheduled to ordain 1 in 2017. The math speaks for itself. What does this mean for St. Damian/St. Bernard as a joint parish? Fr. Anthony is assigned here for a period of 1 year. His assignment will be re-evaluated in July 2017. Attendees from both parishes overwhelmingly supported Fr. Anthony as our priest and would like to see him stay for much longer. The congregations are asked to share their feelings of support with Bishop Braxton and also with Fr. Anthony who needs our support. The Bishop shared that a St. Damian/St. Bernard merger would help for a visiting priest, should the need arise. The Bishop did not say that there were plans to merge the two parishes...he simply pointed out the benefits of doing so. Particularly if we found ourselves without a resident priest in the future, and a visiting priest was needed. He could celebrate one combined mass at one parish. He also stated that catechists/parish laity will be asked to help out more often in the absence of a priest. Bishop Braxton said a new lay ecclesial ministry program will be launched next year. The bottom line is that our Diocese will face a shortage of priests in the next 10-15 years and it is our responsibility as a joint-parish and as parishioners of the Diocese to do our part to plan for the future, including being open to change. For the sake of our future, everyone is asked to encourage young men in our parishes to consider the priesthood and to continue to pray for vocations. The Bishop also discussed our respective goals for the annual Catholic Services & Ministry Appeal. Meeting the parish's annual goal is considered a measure of parish vitality. St. Damian has met its goals in the past and we will continue to strive to do so in the future.
- The Bishop had a few requests during the meeting:
  - 1) He asked that the parish councils from both parishes try to meet together more often to discuss our future (5-year/10-year plans).
  - 2) He recommended that each parish consider forming a Bereavement Committee to help families through the grieving process in the days, weeks & months after a family member dies.
  - 3) He asked that the parish office send information to the Bishop's office when a parishioner passes away (i.e. include the name of the deceased, date of death, location of death, date of funeral mass, attending priest, and the mailing address of a family member) so that the Bishop can send his condolences to the family.

**8. PARISH LIFE:**

- Nominations for St. Damian Parish Council were accepted through Feb 12. A total of 4 men and 3 women agreed to accept their nominations (Steve Horstmann, Bill Innes, Garry Kalmer, Al Varel, Shannon Fuehne, Tammy Schrage & Gwen Toennies). Parish Council elections will take place at both masses on March 4-5. Parishioners will be asked to vote for 2 men and 1 woman. The terms of Dave Kassen, Virgil Jansen & Geri Varel will end on April 1. New parish council members will be invited to attend the April meeting along with the existing and outgoing members. New officers will be elected at the April parish council meeting.

**9. HISPANIC REPORT:**

- Sr. Ellen reported that she spoke with a representative at the Home Nursery about the Illinois Extension Community Garden project. After that meeting, she received new information that the garden will be established in Breese at Community Link. No further action required.
- The Traveling Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe was displayed at St. Damian Church on Sunday, Jan 29, 3:00-4:30pm. Attendees learned about the history of the image, shared prayers and songs in English and Spanish, had time for silent adoration and veneration of the miraculous image, and consecration to her care. It was a very inspirational event.
- On Saturday, Feb 25, there will be a presentation in the gym by a lawyer from the Hispanic Ministry Office to discuss how the local hispanic population can deal with immigration laws and law enforcement. Please keep the local hispanic community in your

thoughts and prayers as they deal with anxiety associated with recent government changes regarding immigration. Sr. Ellen asked if everyone could think of the immigrants as brothers & sisters and their children as ours, just as our own descendants were immigrants from other countries.

#### **10. FINANCE:**

- The financial reports for December 2016 and January 2017, were reviewed and approved.
- Info regarding ACH Deposits - The parish will move forward with setting up an ACH account for St. Damian. Parishioners are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to make once or twice a month automatic deposits. The ACH deposits are set up to automatically transfer contributions from a checking/savings account and deposit directly into the St. Damian account at FCB Bank. No checks are issued which alleviates the chance of the check being lost in the mail. The money goes straight to the parish checking account as a direct deposit. FCB provides a monthly statement to Jeanne so that she can record the donations for each parishioner. Making donations via ACH is a simple & dependable process. Those who have signed up will begin seeing the ACH deposits in March 2017. Jeanne will contact those who signed up to see if they want to continue receiving envelope sets since there are additional envelopes in the sets that are not affected by the ACH deposits (i.e. Messenger Subscription, Christmas Flowers, Easter Flowers, MD Foundation, Religious Retirement Funds, etc).

#### **11. LITURGY:**

- Lent will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 1. Mass & Distribution of Ashes schedule will be 7:45am at St. Damian, 7:00pm at St. Bernard, 7:00pm Mass in Spanish at St. Damian. All masses during Lent will begin in silence (no entrance song).
- Lenten Reflection booklets will be distributed Feb 25, 26 and March 1.
- Lenten Outreach will be conducted with Rice Bowls. All proceeds will be donated to Catholic Relief Services.
- The second collection in March will be donated to Food for the Poor program.
- A box or basket will be available in the church gathering space for parishioners to dispose of old palms that they have at home.
- Lenten Way of the Cross will be held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm on a rotating schedule (St. Damian on March 2, 16, 30 & St. Bernard on March 9, 23 & April 6). St. Bernard Faith Formation will host the Way of the Cross on April 12 at 7:45am.
- Eucharistic Adoration will be held every Wednesday during Lent beginning March 8 (St. Damian 9-11am; St. Bernard 1-2pm). Please sign up in the gathering spaces.
- Anointing of the Sick will be done at all masses on March 25-26. More info will be published in the bulletin.
- Joint-Parish Sacrament of Reconciliation will be on Sunday, April 2, 1:00pm at St. Bernard. All are welcome!
- Holy Week Mass/Service schedule is as follows:
  - Palm Sunday, April 8-9, Regular weekend schedule, 5pm Sat & 10am Sun at St. B; 8:30am Sun at St. D. If weather permits, we will gather in the gym at St.D and in the parish center at St. B and process over to church with palms.
  - Holy Thursday (Feast of the Lord's Supper) April 13, 7:00pm at St. Bernard
  - Good Friday (Passion of the Lord) April 14, 2:00pm at St. Damian; 7:00pm at St.B; Evening Hispanic service at St.D (Time TBD)
  - Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil), April 15, 7:00pm at St. Damian
  - Easter Sunday, April 16, Regular Sunday schedule, 8:30am at St. D; 10:00am at St. B; 11:00am Mass in Spanish at St. D.
- First Communion at St. Damian will be on Saturday, May 6, 2017, at 5:00pm (regular Saturday evening mass).
- First Communion at St. Bernard will be on Sunday, May 7, 2017, at 10:00am (regular Sunday morning mass).

#### **12. CATECHETICAL MINISTRY DIRECTOR REPORT:**

- CYM - Annual Soup Supper will be held at the St. Bernard Parish Center on Sunday, Feb 26, 3:30-6:30pm.
- St. Bernard Ladies Sodality is hosting a Hardees Night in Breese on Tues, Feb 28, 4-8pm. Proceeds benefit the St. Bernard/St. Damian Needy Fund.
- Lenten Bible Study - Every Wednesday beginning March 8 at 7:00pm in the St. Damian Parish House. Everyone is welcome!
- The Faith Formation classes will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on March 27 (StD) and March 28 (StB). Mass will be at 8:30am on those two days.
- Searching for 2 Catechists to serve the FF program at the parish when we are in absence of a priest. If interested, please contact Deacon Glenn at 248-5134.

#### **13. HOLY NAME & ALTAR SODALITY REPORTS:**

- The Holy Name recently approved donation of \$14,000 to be used for a new sound system in church. A check for \$7000 was presented to the parish and was used toward downpayment to AAA Swing City Music. Huge "Thanks" to the Holy Name organization for their generous donation.
- The annual Holy Name Wurstmart will be held on March 26, serving from 10:30pm - 5:30pm in the gym. Please check the workers list.
- The Holy Name requested the parish provide them a list to give an idea of what the parish needs are. The council provided a consolidated list of items.
- The Ladies Sodality will host a Euchre Tournament on Friday, March 3. Doors open at 6:30pm. Play begins at 7:30pm. \$10 per player. Water & soda available for purchase. Snacks provided. BYOB.

#### **14. BUILDING MAINTENANCE:**

- New Sound System in Church - After complete review of bids, AAA Swing City Music in Collinsville was awarded the contract for \$15,189.99. Downpayment of \$7500.00 was delivered to Swing City on Feb 8. Equipment is on order and will take approximately 3 weeks to get if it is all in stock. When all equipment is received, installation dates will be coordinated.
- Cemetery trees & flag pole: Removal of tree and replacement of flag pole are in progress weather permitting.
- New laminate flooring was installed in the rectory laundry room. Thanks to all who spearheaded and completed the job!
- There was a discussion regarding electrical issues upstairs in the parish house. Recent bid included rewiring and installing new outlets. Other options are being considered. Item tabled pending further inspection of the issues.
- Kathleen Hodges was hired as the housekeeper for the parish house. **NOTE:** Any groups holding meetings or activities in any room of the parish house are responsible to dispose of their trash in the dumpster and leave the room & bathroom clean when they leave.

#### **15. OLD BUSINESS:**

- The joint-parish holiday meeting/dinner was held on Sunday, January 22, 2017, 6:30pm, at the Albers Legion. Thanks to Dave Kassen for organizing the joint-parish event. Thanks to all council members who brought desserts to share.

#### **16. NEW BUSINESS:**

- Procedures for disposal of parish property were discussed. When a parish is no longer in need of an item, the parish should check if there might be another parish in the Diocese that could use it. PC members looked at an old pump organ which sitting in the living room of the parish house. Organ does not work. A note will be put in the bulletin to see if anyone is interested in submitting a bid for it and hauling it away. Recommendation was made to do an inventory of all existing parish property so that any useful items can be reused somewhere else in the Diocese when they are no longer needed at St. Damian.
- Fr. Anthony requested the parish council seek information regarding a joint-parish calendar that would include Holy Days, parish photos, contact info, website info, addresses for both churches, mass schedules, and any other pertinent info that could be used to help publicize our parishes and help visitors locate our parishes when they are looking for Catholic churches to attend in this area.

#### **17. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:**

- Results of Parish Council Elections. Introduction of new PC members. Farewell to outgoing members. Election of new officers for 2017-2018.
- Update on ACH
- Update on date for new Church Sound System installation
- Update on search for 2 more catechists
- Hispanic report
- Wurstmarkt results
- Euchre Tourney results
- Thoughts regarding Joint-Parish calendar for 2018
- Update on old pump organ

**18. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm. Fr. Anthony closed the meeting with a prayer.

**19. NEXT MEETING:** Next parish council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11, 2017, at 7:00pm in the parish meeting room. Newly elected parish council members will be invited to attend. Outgoing members are also invited to attend their last meeting.

**As always, all parish council meetings are open to the public. Please inform the parish secretary (588-4323 or 979-5933) if you would like to speak to a topic or voice a concern, so it can be added to the agenda.**