**May 2017 Pastoral Council Meeting**

- Attendance was taken. Aaron Pannone, Barb Cassidy, Ed Walendowski, Greg Gerling, John Battiston, Mary Peyton, Matt Blumenfeld, Michael Marshall and Father Joseph Mary were present. Absent was Alix Paget-Brown

- Chair Barb Cassidy led the opening prayer.

- Music Minister Daniel Kirkland provided a presentation on his ongoing work. He described Holy Comforter as having a "beautiful musical tradition" and is "exceptionally blessed" to have a long history of a strong music ministry. One of Mr. Kirkland's top orders of business is building up the cantor base. He currently has two committed cantors for the 5pm Vigil Mass but is frequently "flying solo" at the 8:30 am Sunday Mass. He asked members of the Pastoral Council to inquire with their connections to see if they knew anyone who could cantor at 8:30 Masses.

- When it comes to the choir, which performs for the 11 am Mass, he has one person for "every part" in the existing choir but wants it to continue. Mr. Kirkland indicated he will be making bulletin inserts to solicit more adult members for the choir. Folks now know his face, but recruitment in the choir is something that he's focused on. The main group, however, is pretty stable. They are looking for more women choir members though.

- Mr. Kirkland has tried to attempt a children's choir on a couple of occasions, something the parish has not had in almost a decade. The first 8:30 Mass of each month is a children's Mass so he wants to find a way to get the kids into singing that Mass. He described finding children to sing is "One of the bigger challenges we have right now."

- Mr. Kirkland fielded inquiries as to whether Belmont Mass setting might be too difficult for the congregation, and what kind of reception it is receiving overall. He said that the reviews have been "mixed" and said that he does not plan to use that setting all the time going forward. It was noted that he has already moved away from that setting's Gloria. Mr. Kirkland said that it might be appropriate to change the Mass setting throughout the year, especially since the parish had gone several years using the same setting at every Mass.

The idea of using Folk Mass settings was brought up and Mr. Kirkland indicated that such settings were not particularly well received in the past.

After Mr. Kirkland's presentation and the Q&A session ended, Father Joseph Mary provided a handout on liturgical music. The idea of once again singing the Our Father at Masses was brought up as well.

- Chair Cassidy said that Holy Comforter had a "very successful" baby bottle campaign. Final total of nearly $2,400 was contributed. Chair Cassidy hopes to replicate this effort each year, calling the initial campaign "a very good start."

- Brian Beard and Darlene Hilton were said to have done an "outstanding" job with the Stewardship Fair. There were 14 tables in the Commons during the Fair, though there will be more manpower needed in the future as there were insufficient representatives at each Mass. An effort will be made to try to find out the total number of people who had signed up for a ministry during the Fair.

- Basement renovations are absolutely complete. Floors have been stripped and cleaned. Father noted that we really need someone who can **clean** as opposed to just picking up. He said that he will attempt to schedule for once a quarter on having the basement floor professionally cleaned and polished.

- The Living our Mission return is 15-25% below where it should be, unfortunately, according to the Finance Council, which does not expect the parish to achieve better than an 80% rate of return on pledges. The Renovation Committee will wait until there is more actual money turned in, as opposed to merely pledges, until we move forward with any changes with the renovations upstairs, such as the chapel and the office area.

-As there had been questions regarding the future renovations to the Chapel, Chair Cassidy read an email from Steve Cady, emphasizing that the renovations to the Chapel and to the back office space were always included as part of the initial approved use of the Living our Mission funds.

- There was significant discussion about how the budget process should go both for this year and the future. Should the various ministries send budgets to the pastoral council first or is that excessive? Father believes the ministries should send proposals to this body for advisory input in February and March and then move it to the finance council. Aaron Pannone noted that, in the past, members of the ministries gave presentations. Chair Cassidy pointed out that the various ministries would probably like to highlight what they do! The hour limit on the Pastoral Council meeting has made these presentations difficult to schedule but attempts for the next year will be made to increase the ministries involvements during the meetings.

- Chair Cassidy wrote a write-up for the bulletin on soliciting folks to serve on the Pastoral Council. It was asked that the 3 departing members take each Mass time to answer questions the first weekend in June.

- A brief mention was made as to why the question/suggestion box disappeared. It is likely to be returned.

- Father has asked Steve Cady to look into the front walk situation due to injury to a parishioner. The parish at some point might decide to create a courtyard out of this area and block off the cut-through. Issues arose regarding the use of the space to accommodate the lighting of the Easter candle.

- A very brief discussion was held on whether parishioners who give online should have their envelopes discontinued. Some parishioners were also getting duplicate envelopes mailed from the previous company and the new company. Chair Cassidy would speak with Mary Fran regarding this issue.

- Susan Neal is going through a history of the parish for the centennial and requested changes to the mission statement. Some discussion was held on this matter, which was then continued via email after the meeting.

- Parish Life will be hosting a celebration after each Mass on Pentecost and will start to promote this effort shortly.

- Outreach served 742 meals in April and distributed food bags to 196 households. St. Thomas Aquinas donated 2,000 lbs of food to our pantry during their "40 Cans for 40 Days" Lenten campaign.

- Matt Blumenfeld offered to do the closing prayer for our next meeting. Chair Cassidy offered a final prayer for this meeting, which was then adjourned.