

**St Michael Catholic Community
Sterling Heights, Michigan
Parish Council Minutes
May 12, 2015**

Attendees: (see completed chart immediately below)

A	Brown, Deanna (Alternate) (Excused)	P	Quaine, Rev. Michael (Mike)
A	Chadwick, Kayla (Alternate)	A	Reid, James (Jim) (Excused)
P	Chadwick, Virginia	P	Ricciuti, Renato (Secretary)
P	DiNoto, Karen (Vice Chairperson)	P	Rizzi, Phyllis
A	Eddins, Jamey	P	Sandelich, Michael (Mike) (Chairperson)
A	Galos, Rev. Artemio (Tim) (Excused)	P	Sukes, Shirley A.
P	Hall, Laurie	P	Waddell, Susie
P	Lucas, Sr. JoAnn		
A	Murphy, Robert (Bob)		
P	Nevens, Lester R. (Les)		
P	Peckham, David (Dave)		

P = Present, A = Absent, G = Guest, (Excused) = Excused absence

1) MEETING OPENING

- a. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Mike Sandelich.
- b. **Reading of the Mission Statement** – Attendees read the St Michael Catholic Community Mission Statement.
- c. **Opening Prayer** – Attendees joined in an opening prayer led by Renato.
- d. **Approval of Minutes** – The April 7, 2015 minutes were approved by Dave and seconded by Phyllis.

2) ENRICHMENT REFLECTION FEEDBACK

Dave led the enrichment, sharing a book titled “God Is in the Small Stuff and It All Matters”, by Bruce (Bickel) and Stan (Jantz), and read a section on what the book is about. Parish Council (PC) was provided with Chapter 9 titled “Church: Where God’s People Gather” to read, reflect upon and share thoughts on in session. Members shared that church is often referred to as an institution, and a building where people gather, but that church is really a personal relationship among Christians, an interactive relationship between people with Christ as their common bond. Some members shared personal experiences they’ve had at a church building. Dave went on to briefly share another interesting chapter in the book that discusses when you find a leader, follow. And when you identify a follower, lead. Shirley added regarding teaching a Sunday School class at least once a year, that you yourself will learn so much.

From Chapter 9, “...In The Small Stuff

- Get involved at church.
- Here's how to make Sunday worship more meaningful: Think of yourself as a participant rather than a spectator.
- If God hasn't called you to be a church leader, be careful how you criticize those who are.
- Express appreciation to your pastor.
- Don't leave the sermon at church.
- Give money to your church regularly.
- Teach a Sunday School class at least once a year.
- Next time you're in church, sit in the front row. You'll be amazed how much more you'll learn (not to mention how it will affect the pastor).
- If you tend to fall asleep in church, sit in the back row. You can lean your head against the wall so it doesn't snap forward when you doze off.
- The measure of a good sermon is the listener's response, not the pastor's speech.
- It is true that Christianity is good. More important, Christianity is true."

Fr. Mike volunteered to lead PC in an enrichment exercise next meeting.

3) PASTORAL TEAM REPORTS

- a. Fr. Mike: There have been a lot of funeral services lately. After one of the funerals, both the mother and grandmother signed up to join the parish. Regarding one of the parishioners who passed on, while he was still in the living he had a great sense of humor. Both he and his wife would sing hymns in the car while driving that they were not afraid of dying. We have some real jems in this parish, some wonderful, wonderful people. Dave mentioned he has seen a lot of crosses on the wall in the parish. Susie stated there were 21 funerals in the past month, and 18 the month before. Shirley shared an experience where in another parish the pastor said he was too busy and he had 2 funerals in the past month. One parishioner in that parish asked that same pastor for assistance on a Monday, but he said that was his personal day to spend with friends and denied the request. Fr. Mike added that he does not put judgments on others and that there have been some wonderful ministerial situations here. There are a lot of good things going on here he added. Mike added funerals are intensely personal, and to have attendees come to you and especially to join the parish afterwards says a lot about Fr. Mike. Fr. Mike added the family allowed him to talk about a sensitive issue, which made things easier.
- b. Fr. Tim: No report (absent). Fr. Mike said Fr. Tim will be back from vacation this Friday (May 15, 2015).
- c. Pastoral Associate, Laurie Hall: Laurie thanked us for the kindness extended to her family, as her father recently passed on. Laurie stated she has not been here lately accordingly.
- d. Vicariate Report, Phyllis Rizzi: Per written report submitted and then spoken upon,

"Central Macomb Vicariate Meeting Monday, April 13, 2015 at St. Peter Catholic Church

Questionnaire was sent via email to all Pastors regarding CMV Ministerial Meetings. Questions posed: 1.) What day of the week works best to attend meetings, 2.) From your own personal view, why do you

think priests are not attending the meetings. Of the over 20 emails sent out, only 3 responded. Of the responses the general theme is that priests are overworked. There is a sense of isolation in the vicariate, as well as from the parish to the AOD. There is also a sense that priests feel “railroaded” and not supported by the AOD. It is observed that decisions on the AOD level are made without their input or consideration so what is the point in coming to a meeting. A comment was made that the priests feel, “used, abused, and screwed over by the AOD.”

Up-coming year goals are to 1.) Healing, 2.) Seek ways to bridge the gap with honesty, compassion, and truth between the Archbishop, priest, lay ministers, and laity.

Presentation & Action Items for Future Meetings.

Communal Penance Services. It was brought up at the Ministerial Meeting earlier that it was a lot of work going into it and organizing the service. Due to the priests and parish schedules, a goal was set to have the dates given to parishes within the vicariate for the Advent and Lenten Communal Penance Services for the upcoming year. These dates are hopefully to be given to the parishes in time for the fiscal calendar planning.

David Grobel from the AOD Office of Marriage and Family gave a presentation on an up-coming opportunity. He would like to get a number of couples on a vicariate level to work with married couples. They would provide training to help with this new ministry. It is to help enhance parish programs and not replace what is presently working in the parish.

Again the intention for building fraternity among the priest through a couple luncheons in the upcoming year was stated. These luncheons would not have minutes or agendas. It would be a time for priests to come together to support each other, voice opinions, and build stronger ties.

In the Open Forum of the meeting the question came up of the major issues you see in your parish and/or the vicariate. This question will be discussed at the June meeting and work on these issues with the up-coming fiscal year 2015-16.”

Phyllis added there is one more Vicariate meeting remaining coming up in June. And there are 23 parishes in the Central-Macomb Vicariate which is one of the larger ones.

4) CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

No report.

5) OLD BUSINESS

- a. Fr. Larry Jackson Youth Center: Fr. Mike provided an update. There are still outstanding issues to be resolved regarding the construction. The April 27th cleaning activity of the Center was a success.

- b. Dedication Ceremony for the Fr. Larry Jackson Youth Center: Virginia stated there's plenty of time left for planning but she needs to know when the dedication ceremony is going to be. Fr. Mike informed us that Fr. Larry Jackson will be away for most of September. After discussing options, we agreed to have the dedication ceremony on Sunday, September 6, 2015, after the 11:30 Mass (Labor Day weekend). Shirley suggested we put up a lovely photo of Fr. Larry and recommended a photographer, and Phyllis informed us that we already have a lovely photo from before.
- c. Constitution/Policies Update Committee: Renato provided and spoke upon the following written report:

"May 12, 2015

Constitution and Policies Update Committee

Status Report

Goal (from March 10, 2015 PC Meeting): "Compare the following 3 sets of documents to each other and to make recommendations: 1) AoD Handbook, 2) SMCC Parish Council Constitution & Bylaws, and 3) SMCC Parish Policies."

The Committee members met on 4/21/15 and:

1. Reviewed the Committee's goal from the March 10, 2015 PC meeting (see above),
2. Briefly reviewed portions of the AoD Handbook and saw the Handbook's recommendation to create and develop operational procedures,
3. We agreed prior to meeting again that we would each independently compare the 3 documents to each other looking for and noting areas of apparent discrepancy, while focusing at least minimally on the AoD Handbook Part I Chapters 1-3,
4. We agreed to make a presentation to PC at the September 2015 PC meeting, and
5. We discussed the need to run the following items past PC for guidance at this May meeting:
 - a. Is it Church Canon Law that we are to follow the AoD Handbook?
 - b. Is it required that SMCC's Parish Pastoral Council have a Constitution and Bylaws?
 - c. Does SMCC have a AoD requirement to have operational procedures? And
 - d. Does our timeline to present recommendations at the September meeting satisfy PC's desires? If we strive to complete it sooner, we may need to call a Special Meeting over the Summer months of July or August."

In regards to item 5.a. immediately above, Council discussion was that it is not Canon Law that we follow the AoD Handbook, but we are aspiring to follow it. Fr. Mike added that it is Canon Law to have a Finance Council. Regarding items 5.b. and 5.c., per the AoD Handbook, SMCC's Parish Pastoral Council is to have operational procedures, and the intent is to replace our Constitution and Bylaws with operational procedures. Fr. Mike commented on an example topic, of attendance at meetings, and satisfying your obligations, and having procedures helps with what to do regarding topics such as those. Mike provided comment that the operational procedures will be our interpretation of the AoD Handbook. Dave commented that the AoD Handbook contained sections of discerning questions that are to be decided upon by Council, but then there are also required sections that we must adhere to.

Laurie commented that our Committee will then make recommendations to the entire Council, and then it's up to Council whether or not to accept them. Regarding item 5.d., that timing works, to present at September's meeting.

d. New Member Selections: Mike brought up the forthcoming selection of new Council members, and Fr. Mike commented it would be on Pentacost Sunday, and that a youth from the attendees that Mass will be chosen to then select names from the lot.

6) BREAK

A break was taken with refreshments provided by Renato.

7) NEW BUSINESS

- a. Orientation of New Members: Karen stated she needed more copies of the "green books" (green binders with select sections from the AoD Handbook), and discussed thoughts of contacting new members by phone and asking to meet prior to the Council's June meeting for an orientation session. Feelings were shared regarding new member orientation received June 2013, in that it felt like a crash course received the same evening as a Council meeting just 1 hour prior to the meeting, and that with the commissions objectives report-outs being provided that same Council meeting, it felt a bit overwhelming. If a new member is not available to meet on the set date prior to June's Council meeting, then alternative plans would be needed, possibly up to their receiving orientation the same day as the June Council meeting. Sr. JoAnn offered that she'd be happy to work with Karen on providing new members orientation, and the offer was accepted. Sr. JoAnn asked if a date could be set, and stated when she's provided it in the past it was a 6-hour session. Karen stated one possibility is to have it on Pentacost Sunday when the new members are selected as they may already be at church then. Renato asked whether orientation would be provided by Karen and Sr. JoAnn, or do they want other Council members there too. Karen stated she has no problem with it, and asked Council what was done in the past. Karen asked whether they formally need any more people than the two of them (Karen and Sr. JoAnn). Mike stated he had a similar orientation to Karen's received just prior to a Council meeting. Virginia shared that when they did orientation it was the six-hour session, but that they all showed up though, and that they divided years. There was a third year, one per table; there was a first year, one per table; there was Fr. Tim at one table and Fr. Mike at one table, and Laurie was at one table, and they divided the new people. And it was done the day of the Council meeting. Virg shared that her's and Bob's years were the last ones to be the 6-hour version. Laurie, Virg and Dave shared they thought it would be better to do the orientation earlier in the week instead of the day of the Council meeting, to allow new members time to process it all sooner. Renato gave Karen his "green book" and stated he no longer needed it since he printed out the entire AoD Handbook. Dave shared that when he started he received a "white binder" and asked Renato if he got one when he started, and Renato stated that if he did he would not have pitched it and he'd have to go look at home for it [Note: after the meeting he found it at home].
- b. Final review of Commissions' progress against goals (June meeting): Mike provided a final reminder that at our next Council meeting there will be a review of each Commission's progress against goals.

8) ROUND TABLE

Fr. Mike shared he was pleased to announce that a full-sized pool table was donated to the new Youth Center by the estate of Mr. Kenneth Kuefler, Laurie Hall's father. Council members rejoiced.

Renato shared a comment for Fr. Mike after announcing he needed help from the Holy Spirit in choosing his words properly. He went on to share that recently he attended his Godson's First Holy Communion ceremony at St. Therese of Lisieux (in Shelby Township), a parish he formerly belonged to, and that it reminded him as to why he is no longer a parishioner there. Aside from parishioners talking throughout the ceremony, the priests spoke with no passion and in a way that seemed more like orating, which was highly annoying and boring. Renato went on to share that he's never, ever, heard another priest that speaks to parishioners like Fr. Mike does, in a normal, conversational, straight forward style, and with passion. Renato gave Fr. Mike "kudos" and stated that other priests seem superficial and clueless, and that he's never felt that way about Fr. Mike, and that Fr. Mike immediately connects with parishioners upon the first time speaking to them and that other priests and those studying to become priests could stand to learn a great deal by watching and studying Fr. Mike in action. Renato stated he has no doubt in his mind that if other priests learned from Fr. Mike's style and followed it, that many parishioners would come back to church and churches would thrive, and he provided the example of the 2 new parishioners who recently signed up after the funeral service.

Fr. Mike commented back that he really thinks that he does not have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit; that the Holy Spirit does work; not so much as he's talking, but rather as you're listening. What that means is as you were making connection in your mind, that the Holy Spirit was at work. It was not so much him, it was them. For example, sometimes he can be saying something and the other person's thoughts will go to where Fr. Mike is talking and that someone may say 'I was just about to say that and thinking that', which is the Holy Spirit at work. Fr. went on to say that he feels a lot of people need to appreciate that the Spirit God does work in all of us, sometimes in what is being spoken, and sometimes in what is being heard. Fr. Mike went on to share that in terms of passion, that's just him, and that sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, for better or for worse. And that he does not have real polished speech. And that it's not language laced with a lot of really heavy stuff, and that sometimes it's just heart.

Renato then commented that the heaviness is turning off a lot of parishioners. Renato then asked the rest of Council what do they think, and if they feel the same way to back him up.

Mike shared then that he's shared with Fr. Mike before how he feels, that he's noticed a change, and that his sermons especially within the past couple years, are very much just normal speaking.

Sr. JoAnn and Virginia commented how wonderful this past Sunday's sermon was.

Phyllis (jokingly) said she didn't get to hear it at all (due to all the talking going on around her due to a fellow parishioner's medical incident during Mass).

Dave commented he feels the same thing, and has noticed that for some reason, during the sermon, he doesn't see anything around him while Fr. is talking.

Phyllis added that when she notices it more, is during the week when she goes to church, especially funerals, in that every one (funeral) is unique to that person and family, but that she's been to other parishes and you can almost recite what they're going to say, going with either option A or option B. Phyllis' neighbor stopped going to church because of that. Every week they (neighbors) would go to church and sit in the first row, for years, at the same Mass, and yet when he passed away he was a stranger to the priest and the priest did not know her. It was really sad. Even fellow parishioners commented on that. And since that date she has not gone back to church.

Laurie then commented about her recent funeral experience with Fr. Mike regarding her own father's passing, and that Fr. Mike has heard her story about this before, that she believes there's a gift.

Regarding funeral services, usually things are said by the families and Laurie records them all. And from them, Fr. Mike is able to pull out those one or two most important things and get them right. For example with Laurie's father's funeral, Fr. Mike picked out his sense of duty and his sense of duty to provide, and that's the gift. Laurie's father was many things, but he was always a provider, and Fr. Mike picked up on that even though Laurie doesn't believe her father ever said that to Fr. Mike.

Fr. Mike commented that he's learned from women, regarding using intuition. For example if you walk into a sick person's room and the room is dark, and the drapes are drawn, and there aren't cards and photographs up, you listen very carefully to the little, small details, as they are incredibly important and they often tell you a whole lot. And usually he's pretty blunt about this, in asking them where the land mines are, as you don't want to step on one and affect everybody. You know normally you can always pick up on the good in *everyone*, and *always* look for the good in people and you will find it.

Laurie said that you'll meet with these families and get ten people in a room, and they're all very different people, but one of them will say one thing and you'll get all ten people nodding their heads. Laurie thinks it's definitely not magic, and it's definitely not a formula...it's a gift.

Fr. Mike commented you have to remember one thing that theologian Rosemary Ruether said, that sometimes we read the Bible, and sometimes the Bible reads us. And Fr. thinks that's probably true. People live the Gospel. And when people are living the Gospel you can very easily pick out how life is compared with them, their values, their priorities, and what not. For example, occasionally when he's gone over Virginia's house, the house is just mobbed with kids, and as he would watch kids being dismissed she would know what they ate, what they didn't eat, what they pooped, what they didn't poop, what medicine they're on, etc., and he's thought oh my.... There is a passion there, and all you just do is watch. He's learned to just keep his mouth shut (laughter in the room). And then of course when it comes time for the Homily, he turns it on and it all comes out.

Renato commented that he's not brown-nosing, and he's wondering what's going on in the seminaries, and not to say that people will be just like Fr. Mike but if they could only watch him in action they could maybe aspire to learn from Fr. Mike's ways, which would increase church membership and engagement, cause right now people are just falling asleep.

Fr. Mike commented that today, church is a very different place. And that he has a completely different orientation in that for him, church is people. It's not an institution. It's not a hierarchy. It's people. That's what brought him to the church. That's what he learned about the church. That's what he loves about the church. And he will live that until he dies. It's very different than the kind of emphasis that's getting in to doctrine. And he doesn't want to say anything against how it's done, and he can appreciate and get into a theological sermon into how it's done. But the fact of the matter is you're going to talk to people. This is something he's come to appreciate. The people he talks to he does not think are dumb people. He thinks they are smart. He thinks they have far more intelligence than he does. He thinks they're involved in a myriad of different things with experiences that he will never, ever have in his entire life. And he stands before them and thinks, what he has to say to them, and then he gets to work. He listens very carefully, and he tries to bring things up. And he prays all the time. And it's cumulative, of 30 years. That's how it works.

Karen commented that she'll listen to some people who will brag about what short homilies their priests will give, and think, she's never mindful of the time, ever.

Renato commented then that people in the seminaries need to watch Fr. Mike and learn from his example.

Dave commented he doesn't think they can, that it's just something that's inside of you. That he was a teacher. And there were many teachers in the school. And when he was a Principal, he got to see how each teacher worked. Some were very mechanical. They just did the teaching. There was no understanding of the children, that's because not all of us have that. Some people have that ability to understand how to talk to people, how to take care of people. And that's very difficult to teach.

Renato asked is it at least discussed.

Dave answered we're discussing it right now. And he doesn't think you can ask someone to come watch Fr. Mike and ask him to talk like he does. That doesn't work.

Laurie commented that you have to remember that peoples' egos are a part of who they are, and that you could put all of those people in a room and not one of them would be interested in hearing what anybody has to say. It's a sad state of affairs. It's competitive, right? It's no different than you going into your corporate office and saying "I have the answers" and them replying "No, you don't." How do you get past that?

Dave commented he would explain to teachers what he wanted to see in the classroom and he could tell by their faces which ones were listening and which ones were thinking about shopping or what they were thinking.

Laurie commented yes what Fr. Mike brings is different, but what works in one place may not work in another.

Virginia commented there was a parishioner once who stepped away for 90 days because of one of his sermons, but he's now back, and realized it was more him than Fr. Mike. So people do get the opposite.

Mike commented there's no guarantee that you're not going to get upset.

Laurie commented if the homily does not reach you, then you got nothing out of it. But if you do get something out of it then you think wow that was great.

Virginia commented to Fr. Mike it's all on Facebook if he would only get on (jokingly).

Virginia provided a [Christian Service commission update](#), stating that the last Community Supper was on April 17th and they ended up with 70 people showing up. So it turned out very successful. And their next one is on July 16th, and they are teaming up with St. Vincent de Paul to do it. Offering of Letters is this weekend. And they had nominations last weekend and she knows that we will have a new Parish Council representative. Virginia was nominated but after she confirmed somebody else was also nominated she declined so that we could get new people. Virginia confirmed she would still be the Education representative (to Council). Also, Christian Service decided to go through in May all of the activities in the upcoming year that begins in September, and they created committees for the activities along with Chairpersons and Co-Chairpersons for mentoring purposes. That way they could begin planning over the summer months prior to September. Also, the Senior Prom was "the bomb". They are definitely doing it again. They had a Prom King and Queen, and they danced. And people were so dressed up. It was like a cardio workout and they were so exhausted from dancing. It was a lot of fun and they had a great time.

9) MEETING CLOSING

a. Closing Prayer – Attendees read a closing prayer led by Renato.

b. Next Meeting – June 2, 2015

c. Meeting Adjournment – 9:07 PM by Mike Sandelich.