

# Tri-Parish Pastoral Council

*Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish - St. Mary's Ridge ~ St. Augustine of Hippo Parish - Norwalk  
Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish & School - Cashton*

## Pastoral Council Core Members:

Fr. Michael Klos - Pastor  
Dcn. Sam Schmirler - Deacon  
Lisa Steger - DRE  
Jayme Klinge - Lead Teacher  
Nate Klinge - SH Trustee  
Nan Harris - SH PCCW  
Paul Klinkner - SM Trustee  
Anne Klinkner - SM PCCW  
Beth Brown - SA Trustee  
Theresa Lehner - SA PCCW  
Nate Klinge - KC's  
Eric Leis - Home & School

## Report

7 September 2021

The Tri-Parish Pastoral Council met Tuesday evening, September 7, at St. Mary's church. Opening prayer was led by Fr. Klos.

The meeting began with a run-down of the efforts at providing the Mass and other sacraments to the people of the Tri-Parish community. Significant efforts included:

- Churches were kept open every day by direction of Bishop Callahan.
- Offering Mass in the parking lot of Sacred Heart for several weeks including Holy Week before being shut-down by the diocese.
- Offering Mass in private homes when asked.
- Hearing Confessions regularly in our parish churches, especially during the shut-down during the times for Sunday Mass.
- Bringing the Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, and Confession to the home-bound when ever possible and when asked, especially in cases where the person was in a final illness.
- Bulletin was published weekly including resources for spiritual nourishment.
- Facebook and tri-parish website were utilized to draw people's attention to the above and other spiritual resources / opportunities.

Father pointed out that advantage was taken of having multiple churches in that masking was strongly encouraged at the two Masses each weekend at Sacred Heart, while at St. Augustine's (Saturday) and St. Mary's (Sunday) it was left up to those attending. While a small handful of people at Sacred Heart objected to having to wear masks, and a small handful of people at St. Mary's were angry that it wasn't being enforced, most went to the church that suited their position on the matter. During the Triduum, which was held at Sacred Heart, masking was expected and strongly encouraged. Many who felt strongly about not masking went to one of the parishes in the area that weren't enforcing this. Father reported that he was "turned in to the diocese" at least once that he knew of and after hearing his explanation of what he was doing it was accepted by the diocesan official who called and left at that. This was, in fact, the

practice in a number of our seven population centers - that is, there was always one parish people knew they could attend if they didn't want to mask. Most, here, were grateful for the opportunity to follow their conscience on the matter even if it wasn't in their preferred location or time.

As the shut-down began to ease other efforts included:

- A Eucharistic Procession through Cashton on Corpus Christi
- A Rosary Procession through Norwalk

Father observed that many expressed their appreciation for the kneelers positioned at the front at Sacred Heart and St. Mary's and have taken advantage of the opportunity to receive our Lord while kneeling. Indeed, several at St. Augustine's have asked for the same.

Another liturgical option that was exercised during Advent was *ad orientem* worship, that is, the priest facing the altar at the head of the people, in the manner of a shepherd. This was so well received that this option was exercised again at Lent. Some have expressed a desire to do this permanently, though Father explained that we would stick with the penitential seasons for the time being as well as the usual times when this option has been exercised in these parishes over the last several years: Fridays at Sacred Heart and Wednesdays at St. Mary's. Members of St. Augustine's were particularly interested in exercising this option more often. When asked why they desired this they explained they felt more focused on the Mass, less focused on the priest; this drew them into the mystery of the Mass more deeply.

After a period of Eucharistic Adoration and opening ourselves to the promptings of the Holy Spirit the following conclusions were shared:

- How do we build community, especially in the wake of the pandemic?  
This should become a focus at each meeting.
- There is healing needed in our parishes. How can this be approached and accomplished?  
Is it possible this could be a focus for Thanksgiving and Advent/Christmas?

Conclusions:

All agreed that building community should become a focus as we continue forward. This should be consciously addressed at each meeting of the pastoral council.

Father and Deacon Sam will discuss the issue of "healing" and how it might be approached liturgically and pastorally. This should also be a central topic at our next pastoral council meeting. The pastoral staff will explore if there are any written, audio, or audio/visual resources which would be of help in this regard.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, November 9, @ Sacred Heart parish hall, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.