

St. John Neumann Pastoral Council

April 15, 2015 @ 7:00pm

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer
2. Approval of March Minutes

3. New Business
 Synod of Families (Fr. Sunny)

4. General News and Status
 - 4.1 Update on Marian Chapel Campaign (Mike)
 - 4.2 Update on Archdiocese Pastoral Plan
 - 4.3 Family Formation & Outreach Ministries (Fr. Sunny)
 - 4.4 Report on first use of translation equipment at the Lenten mission (Donald)

5. Old and Continuing Business
 - 5.1 Spotlight Committee Report on Discipleship (Buihe)
 - 5.2 Comisión Hispana Report (Adela & Luis)
 - 5.3 Liturgical Council (Pat Hodges)
 - 5.4 Stewardship Committee Report (Tom)
 - 5.5 Update on changes in Parish website hosting & design
 - 5.6 Specific/Immediate Ministry Issues and Needs

6. Other Items of Concern or Interest to the Council
 - Update of candidates for Pastoral Council position
 - Update on letter to the Archdiocese

7. Prayer & Adjournment

Council Members

PRESENT: Fr. Sunny, Donald Cote (Chair), Cathy Karlsen (Chair-Elect), Ann Basile, Tom Studer (Stewardship Council Rep), Deacon Mike Hayward, Mike Evans (Financial Council Rep), Buihe Okenu, Adela Duran, Matt Champagne (Secretary)

ABSENT: Luis Cardenas, Pat Hodges (Liturgical Council Rep), Jeff Newman

PROCEEDINGS

1. OPENING PRAYER

We recited the Marian Chapel prayer together.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January minutes were approved. March minutes were approved.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Synod of Families

Father discussed the preparation being done for the upcoming 2015 Synod of Bishops on the Family. The ongoing work of the Synod is intended to be a rethinking with renewed freshness and enthusiasm of what revelation, transmitted in the Church's faith, tells us about the beauty, the role, and the dignity of the family. We will soon invite parishioners to participate in the discussion session described below.

Here is the content of the email from Dr. Carl Hug from Emory University:

"The Aquinas Center of Theology (ACT) at Emory University has presented discussion sessions (about 1.5 hours each) on weekday evenings and Saturday mornings at 3 Catholic parishes including Our Lady of the Assumption, St. Mary Magdalene, and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Additional ones are scheduled. Dr. Phillip M. Thompson, Executive Director of the ACT, leads off the session and is accompanied by another member of the ACT Board of Directors, usually a theologian or a Catholic ethicist.

The purpose of these Parish Synod discussions is to get feedback and then provide that feedback to the Archbishop. Pope Francis has advised all to **listen** first, then **reflect**, then **act**. We can discuss a range of family issues including some that were not discussed at the synod.

What is a Synod?

- A permanent **General Synod** of bishops, archbishops, Cardinals in charge of departments at the Curia and heads of religious orders was established in 1965 by Pope Paul VI.
- **Pope's role**-serves as president of an assembly or appoints the president, determines the agenda, and summons, suspends, and dissolves the assembly.
- **Synod's role**-the Synods make proposals on specific issues generally every three years given them by the pope and the pontiff takes their proposals into consideration and often delivers a "post-synodal apostolic exhortations" on the themes discussed.

Pope Francis called for an Extraordinary Synod (October 2014) followed by an Ordinary Synod (October, 2015) to discuss issues on the family. The goal of the synod is to define the "current situation" and to **collect the bishops' experiences and proposals in proclaiming and living the Gospel of the Family in a credible manner.**" And this is done in order to **respond to the new challenges of the family.**"

Some Key Questions or Issues for the Synod include:

- Problems of individualism, loneliness, poverty, powerlessness
- Need to deal with issues of polygamy, interreligious marriages, cohabitation, duty of fathers to provide for their children, violence against women, pornography, and prostitution.
- The elderly

Our Responses include:

- “Missionary conversion”
- Accompany those in less than ideal circumstances
- Priority of mercy, “tenderness of a mother and clarity of a teacher”
- Touch others with “comfort and attraction of God’s saving love”
- Constructive response, seeking to transform all situations “into opportunities for discovering the fullness of marriage and family in conformity with the Gospel.”

More information is found at www.aquinas.emory.edu and at the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/2014-2015-synods-of-bishops-on-the-family.cfm>

4. GENERAL NEWS AND STATUS**4.1 Update on Marian Chapel Campaign (Mike)**

As of April 22:

- Total Pledged is \$850K, with \$550K left to collect
- Unpledged collections are \$145K
- Total accumulated cash both pledged and unpledged is \$445K
- The Total pledged plus unpledged collections equal \$994K
- The debt balance remains at \$300K
- The total project cost including the remaining debt is estimated to be \$1.6M
- Proposals presented by 3 contractors on April 27th. Van Winkle Construction Company was selected as the general contractor.
- Marian Chapel ground breaking to be held after all masses on May 16 & 17.
- Construction to start sometime in June.

4.2 Update on Archdiocese Pastoral Plan

Fr. Sunny said that the Archbishop would promulgate the new Archdiocesan Pastoral plan in the coming week. More planning on implementation would follow after the promulgation.

4.3 Family Formation & Outreach Ministries

Fr. Sunny suggested that the Stewardship committee could coordinate with the Parish School of religion department and the Outreach ministry commission to plan on expanding the parish faith formation program and outreach ministries according to the new pastoral plan.

Father proposed Deacon Mike Hayward to oversee this coordination.

4.4 Report on first use of translation equipment at the Lenten mission (Donald)

Our eagerly awaited pilot test of the translation equipment was held March 30 & 31 during the Holy Week Parish Retreat with Fr. Vettuvellil. Much preparation was done to pick up the equipment in

Atlanta, manage the setup and distribution of the devices, and to secure a translator. Unfortunately, very few parishioners used the devices. Fr. Sunny had consulted Fr. Abel who weighed in on the reasons for the lack of Spanish-speaking parishioners needing the devices. After discussion it was decided to rethink this approach as a solution to uniting our Parish of Spanish and English speakers. Other avenues were thought to be more productive, such as the Fall Festival, which allows all parishioners to share food, drink and music of multiple cultures.

Kudos and deep thanks to Mayra Urias, a student at the University of North Georgia, who did a wonderful job translating at the Lenten Mission!

5. OLD and CONTINUING BUSINESS

5.1 Spotlight Committee: DISCIPLESHIP (Buihe)

Buihe gave a comprehensive report on news gathered from all ministry leaders, including “who we are”, “what we do”, “our needs”, and a specific testimony of the success of the ministry. All are encouraged to read the full report on pages 7-10 to see real example of Knowing Our Faith in this Parish.

5.2. Comisión Hispana (Adela)

“When the Risen Jesus arrived, He did not stress the denials, abandonment and doubts that He received from the people. Instead His greeting was peace, harmony, mercy and reconciliation. Peace is an invitation that is meant for us too. Let us not hesitate to think deeply and profoundly about the meaning this Lent left inside our hearts. And most of all, let us not hesitate to place our hand into His side, and touch His heart - it breaks and beats for us! He is our salvation.”

- Father Abel led a 3 days Mercy Lent retreat at our church which many parishioners participated on March 5th, 6th and 7th.
- Holy Triduum was a complete success for both communities.
- The live Passion of the Cross also well represented by the community.
- Mass of the Lord's Supper with the washing of the feet also.
- Easter Sunday event after mass had excellent results.

Events to come:

- Night Adoration anniversary is April 18th.
- Women's retreat April 24th to 26th.
- Keep collecting funds for BLF.

5.3. Liturgical Council (Pat)

Easter ceremonies went well. Here are the numbers of parishioners attending each Mass:

Saturday vigil - was full, but there were seats

7:00a - 271

9:00a - 950 - standing room only including the narthex

11:00a - 1100-1200 estimated

The 11AM was overflowing and we will discuss if we still need an overflow mass for next year. There are no numbers for the 1PM Mass. They used a wired mic for the lighting of the paschal candle, and this worked well. Camera work for the vigil seemed to work nicely also.

The Triduum numbers were:

Holy Thursday - 686

Good Friday - 908

Holy Saturday – 988

5.4 Stewardship Committee (Tom)

Our Stewardship Seminar will be held Tuesday, May 5th with light supper served FREE! Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Stewardship Council and Staff are all invited to attend.

April 25 is the FINAL Book Club of the Spring, discussing Ch. 35 & 36 on "Prayer". We have decided to extend the meeting to 9:30 (2-hour session), and a few have offered to bring breakfast munchies to celebrate our year together.

Our next Stewardship Meeting will be Saturday, May 9th.

5.5 Update on changes in Parish website

We discussed the need for changes and the offer from *Solutio* to revamp the site, but this conversation is now superseded by more recent decisions. See Minutes of May 13 for updated report on the Parish website.

5.6 Specific/Immediate Ministry Issues and Needs

Office Volunteers - help was needed to counter a slight drop-off of volunteers over the past couple of months. Word was spread through the SJN e-news and the Bulletin, and Skip Holland has received some calls he was hoping for.

Our SJN 20th Table of Fellowship Pot Luck Supper is Saturday, April 25 in Reynolds Hall, after the Saturday 5pm Mass.

SJN Family Promise ministry - We still need more helpers and donations to achieve our ministry goal of hosting 4 families at the Neumann Center May 31-June 7 and August 16-23. Website for volunteers: <http://goo.gl/wBxDRj>

6. OTHER ITEMS OF CONCERN OR INTEREST TO THE COUNCIL

- There will be one opening on the Pastoral Council (Donald's term will be ending). We are seeking parishioners to submit an application for membership via the e-News, bulletin and recommendations from current Council members.

- Donald asked for support from the Council for his letter to the Archdiocese regarding the rapidly declining enrollment at St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School. The letter expressed our concern with how this situation will adversely affect our parishioners.

7. PRAYER & ADJOURNMENT

Fr. Sunny led us in closing prayer. The next meeting is May 13 at 7pm.

Our Stewardship Prayer (thank you, Adela!)

SJN Stewardship Prayer

Heavenly Father,
You created all things and entrusted them to us,
your stewards.

As Christian stewards,
and disciples of Your Son, Jesus Christ,
help us to receive Your gifts gratefully,
cultivate them responsibly,
share them lovingly and justly with others,
and return them with increase to the Lord.

As we strive to become true servants,
place in us a desire to
know our faith,
live our faith, and
share our faith to build your Church.

Through our offerings,
and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
may we always glorify You,
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Oración Servidores de SJN

Padre Celestial,
Tu creaste todas las cosas y nos la confiaste,
tus servidores.

Como servidores cristianos
y discípulos de tu Hijo, Jesucristo,
ayúdanos a recibir Tus regalos con gratitud,
cultivarlos responsablemente,
compartirlos con amor y justicia a los demás,
y devolverlos con aumento al Señor.

A medida que nos esforzamos
para llegar a ser verdaderos servidores,
coloca en nosotros el deseo de
conocer nuestra fe,
vivir nuestra fe, y
compartir nuestra fe para construir tu Iglesia.

A través de nuestras ofrendas,
y con la guía del Espíritu Santo,
podamos siempre glorificarte,
por Cristo nuestro Señor.

Amén.

Ministry Reports - April 2015

* SPOTLIGHT* Discipleship: Buihe

1. Advent by Candlelight (Mary Lou Schwaner)

WHO WE ARE: This is more of an annual Discipleship event that I coordinated almost single handedly.

WHAT WE DO: Advent by Candlelight was held on the Sunday, November 23rd, the Sunday before the First Sunday of Advent. The various tables of 8 were hosted by one woman each, who decorated their table with an Advent Wreath, and beautiful Advent-related themes. The ladies who were guests at each table were asked to provide an appetizer or a dessert. We began by blessing the Advent wreaths, and lighting their candles, then dimming the lights in the Hall. The ladies enjoyed the appetizers provided and the fellowship. Shortly afterwards, the guest-speaker: Carol Cuviallo, gave a talk about finding "Radical Joy" in all things, especially those things that are unexpected... as the Blessed Mother did at the Annunciation. Following the presentation, the ladies enjoyed coffee and desserts, and there were a few door prizes to be given out. It was a wonderful Second Annual event!

OUR TESTIMONIES: Great fellowship and spiritual growth.

OUR NEEDS: None

2. Adult Evening Bible Study (Ann Hayes)

WHO WE ARE: Our evening study this year had 50 people registered and a consistent 30 people every week.

WHAT WE DO: We study church history. We meet on Monday nights, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in room 103. Our last session was last Monday with a potluck. Everyone shared how much they had learned, how they understand our history and why things happened the way they did, especially with the Protestant reformation, crusades, and inquisition. We will start back in late August with a study on Mary and then the book of Isaiah to follow. We will do part of Isaiah beginning in January and finish it the following year. Registrations forms will be available soon.

OUR TESTIMONIES: Better understanding of Church history.

OUR NEEDS: We are all appreciative of the Church's support of this ministry.

3. Catechism Café (Cath. Adult Faith Enrich.) (Mary Lou Schwaner)

WHO WE ARE: A group of 10 plus members who come at 10:30 am on Sunday mornings for 1 hour to learn about our Catholic Faith.

WHAT WE DO: We have watched a segment each week of the Catholicism Series, by Father Robert Barron, and used the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible to answer follow-up questions to help us understand the Catholic Faith better.

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have several parents of PSR children who used this time to grow in their own faith and knowledge. We have built a nice small faith community.

OUR NEEDS: Coffee, cream and sugar/substitute

4. Cursillo/Ultreya (Jeff Carr)

WHO WE ARE: Cursillo is worldwide organization that started in Spain. SJN has about 80 people who have been through the Cursillo weekend.

WHAT WE DO: We organize retreats that are basically short courses in Christianity and we advocate evangelization. The retreats start on Thursday night to Sunday night at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers. There are weekends for men and weekends for women. We are lay-oriented and have spiritual directors, and strive to promote leadership in the lay community. We meet every other month to think about and discuss what we learned at our Cursillo weekend at an event called Ultreya.

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have helped people have a structure to understand Christianity and their role in it.

OUR NEEDS: We do not currently have any needs, but would encourage the Pastoral Council members who have not been on a Cursillo weekend to sign up for one.

5. Divine Mercy Prayer Group (Laura Whittington)

WHO WE ARE: We have no members per se but Anne Feaster and I along with some support from Mary Lou have managed to keep the Novena going and have a holy hour on the Feast Day of the Divine Mercy.

WHAT WE DO: We are trying to spread the Divine Mercy message, organize the Novena and have a holy hour on the Feast Day of the Divine Mercy. In the past Linda Koerner involved the teens which worked out well. This year because of Confirmation and the first night with the new youth director it did not work out.

OUR TESTIMONIES: We are getting positive feedback about the Divine Mercy message from those who are becoming more aware.

OUR NEEDS: The biggest issue we have is a desire to have some input from the Parish Council/Liturgical Committee. Father Sunny actually brought that up last week. The past few years the planning has started during Lent and it has been difficult to find ways to reach out and share this devotion. Part of the problem is the busy season of Lent/Easter and the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation which usually take place at the same time. There are groups like the Marians who have programs and I have heard even will provide speakers. I have tried to reach out to the Cathedral as I have seen that they have programs of this nature. I have attempted to reach the Deacon in charge of this several times but never got any response.

6. Dynamic Catholic Book Club (Mary Lou Schwaner)

WHO WE ARE: A group of 20 plus members who come at 7:30 am on Saturday mornings for 1&1/2 hours to share about "good Catholic books."

WHAT WE DO: We have been studying the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults written by the USCCB. We have one session left on April 25th on Chapters 35 & 36 on the topic of prayer. We have covered chapters 1- 13 on the Creed, and chapters 14-22 on the Sacraments. Next Fall we will cover chapters 23-34 on the 10 Commandments... and we will have covered the whole Catechism!

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have grown in our knowledge of our faith and have built a strong small faith community.

OUR NEEDS: Coffee, cream and sugar/substitute

7. Prayer Chain/Warriors (Janet Adkins)

WHO WE ARE: We are a group of 46 (so far) women and men who pray for the prayer petitions that are emailed to me, that I compile and forward to the chain. Several of the members used to be SJN parishioners who have moved on to other parishes, but still remain on the chain.

WHAT WE DO: We offer up our prayers (Masses, Rosaries, Fasting, and Sacrifices) for the petitions on the email chain which are sent to our members and updated as requests come in.

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have had many healings - physical, mental/spiritual, and emotional, marriages saved, addictions overcome, near-miraculous healings of many kinds over time. There are too many to be specific.

OUR NEEDS: We have no current needs, but would like to begin receiving the names of those deceased who are buried from SJN parish each week to include in our email chain. **Send to Carmen.**

8. Rosary Cenacle Prayer Group (Anne Feaster)

WHO WE ARE: Our Rosary Cenacle is composed of about 15 people, mostly women who pray for the world in general.

WHAT WE DO: We meet on Fridays after the 9am Mass to pray the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary as well as the Divine Mercy Chaplet for various intentions such as healing of marriages, promotion of true marriage, cleansing of the entertainment ministry, fallen-away Catholics, those being persecuted for their faith throughout the world, conversions, repentance, healings, world peace etc.

OUR TESTIMONIES: Some of us have received miraculous healings when we pray for one another on occasion.

OUR NEEDS: We do not have any needs right now, other than encouraging people to join us on Fridays.

9. Seven Deadly Sins/Seven Lively Virtues: (Mary Lou Schwaner)

WHO WE ARE: A group of 10 plus members who come at 7pm on Tuesday evenings for 1 & 1/2 hours to learn the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Lively Virtues that offset the sins.

WHAT WE DO: We watch a video clip by Fr. Robert Barron on a new deadly sin and its counter virtue each week and spend time using the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Bible to further our understanding of their impact on our lives.

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have grown in our faith and knowledge about sin and virtue. We have built a nice small faith community.

OUR NEEDS: Coffee, cream and sugar/substitute

10. Small Faith Communities (Lenten Longings) (Mary Lou Schwaner)

WHO WE ARE: A group of 10 plus members who come at 10:00 am on Monday mornings for 1 & 1/2 hours to reflect on the Sunday scriptures during the season of Lent.

WHAT WE DO: We have used the Lenten Longings, Cycle B booklets from Renew International. We read and reflect on the Sunday readings and answer some questions at home, then bring them to discuss at our small faith gathering. There is also an "action" element each week, where we are each challenged to serve in some capacity for the greater good. The sharing about works of mercy has been incredible!

OUR TESTIMONIES: We have served the elderly, the poor, the homeless, the hungry, the orphaned, given to St. Vincent de Paul etc. We have built a nice small faith community.

OUR NEEDS: Coffee, cream and sugar/substitute

11. Women's Catholic Bible Study (Judy Butterick and JoAnn Stoddard)

WHO WE ARE: WCBS has 100 plus women who gather to study Scripture through a chosen study. We retain 90% of our members.

WHAT WE DO: We meet on Wednesday mornings 10:00am-Noon, August-April. Our Praise & Worship Ministry leads us in 2 songs chosen for reflection on the week's study. Opening lecture follows for 10 minutes. Lectures are given by women who are grounded in their Catholic faith and in the teachings of the Church. We break for small group sessions which are led by WCBS Facilitators, who have meet on Mondays prior to study Noon-2pm to go over the lesson for Wednesday's group. The small groups meet for 50-55 minutes, and then return to the Sanctuary to hear the Second lecture reflecting on the week's lesson and its application in a woman's life helping them develop a growth in their personal relationship with Christ. We end at Noon. All of the above is structured to embrace our Mission Statement which is to develop in women a living faith available through active participation and commitment to Biblical

Study based on the teachings of the Catholic faith, thereby, drawing them into a closer, ongoing relationship with Christ and His Church and, helping them experience and live out their faith in their daily lives.

OUR TESTIMONIES: These comments are from small group evaluations which have recently taken place: "So appreciate it!! I have grown as a Christian as a person and I look forward to it each week." "My experience has been very good. I definitely had a spiritual growth this year and couldn't have done it without the group of amazing women." "My feelings... I feel sad that it is almost the end of this study year. I am going to miss my ladies and their wise words. WCBS has always been a very important part of my growing as a better mom, wife, daughter, and sister and in general as child of God."

OUR NEEDS: None at present. WCBS is very grateful to SJN for the support they have shown us over the past 14 years and as we prepare for year 15.

12. Lord, Teach Me to Pray - Faith Groups (Terri Kucharzyk and Chris Rowe)

Enough people did not sign up.

No Reports

Adult Education Classes/Faith Formation (Deacon Greg Ollick)

Donuts & Discipleship (Mary Lou Schwaner and Frank Swider)

Support: Ann

Archives Photography - Jim Ollick was hoping for help to photograph all of this year's First Communicants. This need was advertised in the SJN e-news and the Bulletin. First Communion are already underway, and the flashbulbs were popping at the 9AM Mass this past Sunday!

Grounds Beautification - from Jane Trentin, a reminder that all are welcome to join us in our gardening efforts and feel the difference between working in your own yard and working at SJN. Working on the grounds of God's house is a blessing.

Office Volunteers - help was needed to counter a slight drop-off of volunteers over the past couple of months. Word was spread through the SJN e-news and the Bulletin, and Skip Holland has received some calls he was hoping for.

Outreach: Jeff

ESL classes are now over for the winter/spring semester. In addition to our wonderful teacher-ministers from the fall semester, we added 2 new recruits: Rhonda Klein and Maggie Zwettler. Our new fall semester will begin on Tuesday, August 25 at 7 PM. Registration will be on August 9 at 2 pm in room #1. There will be a teacher post-planning meeting next Tuesday at 7 PM in room 3.

SJN Family Promise ministry was officially kicked off the weekend of March 21 & 22. We had Chuck Ferraro, the director of Family Promise of Gwinnett to speak at most of the masses. A short video was presented to the parishioners and tables for info were manned in the church Narthex.

We have about 40 folks who signed up to help in hosting the families that will be at the Neumann Center the weeks of May 31-June 7 and August 16-23. At our Family Promise meeting this past Sunday, we learned that several teens have offered to help. We will have tables in the piazza and in the lower church this weekend to provide info to those that were not able to get it during the kick-off weekend.

Our next meeting will be May 3. Training for FP ministry will be held on Thursday, April 16th 7-9pm in the SJN Quad or Sunday, April 26th 12-2pm at All Saints Lutheran Church, 722 Rockbridge Road. We still need more helpers and donations to achieve our ministry goal of hosting 4 families at the Neumann Center. St. Vincent de Paul ministry will be helping with some food and item donations. Website for volunteers: <http://goo.gl/wBxDRj>

***We need more help, perhaps from a ministry that would like to host a meal or help with set up or provide donated items for families.**

Mickie Ferrante invites all women to join us on Sat., April 25 at 10 for El Cinguolo, in the rooms on the lower level of the church, to learn more about spiritually adopting a priest in this diocese as a spiritual son. Also, remember our military men and women in our prayers.

The Cancer Sewing Ministry will be taking time off for the summer break.

The Care Ministry may use an upcoming bulletin to help spread the word about what they do.

The children's RCIC program will end on May 2nd when 8 children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Six were Baptized and made their First Communion on Holy Saturday, two will receive the both sacraments in Mexico, two received them on Easter at another parish, and one will receive them at SJN in June. This is Cathy's final report and wishes good luck to all!

Eucharistic Ministry to the sick/homebound. Donald sent out a request to the ministry members last week that a parishioner needed communion and got no response. We hope this is a onetime incident and will make a plea to the EM's to consider becoming part of the ministry of EM's to the sick/homebound. He believes there needs to be a fall back plan where the deacons bring communion to those individuals when he cannot get a lay minister to volunteer.

Bereavement Ministry – responded but no news

Special Needs Ministry – nothing going on at this time as our next event will be in September.