

**DRAFT**  
**OLPH Parish Pastoral Council Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 17, 2022, 7:30 Flavin Room**

**PPC members present:**

Fr. Jerry Boland	X	Patti Lawler	X	Mike Wycklendt	X	Brian Callahan	X
Tom O'Brien	X	Bridget Baumstark		Gretchen Zagzebski	X	Tom Huffman	X
Mark Cullum	X	Steve Schmidt	X	John Simons	X	Sandy McBreen	X
Sara Carsten	X	John Nicolau	X	Mick Bajakian	X	Ben Parma	X

**PPC Mission:** OLPH is a family of believers in Christ who strive to live according to His teachings. We take as our mission in the world the living out of the Gospel of Jesus.

**Opening Prayer offered by Gretchen Zagzebski**

**Approval of Minutes**

The September meeting minutes were approved.

**Pastor's Update**

Father Boland reviewed the Archdiocesan survey from May 2022. The Archdiocese received a grant from the Lilly Endowment foundation. Findings showed that from 1990-2019 there was an overall 35% drop in the October counts in weekend Mass attendance based on the annual count taken the first four weekends in October. This contrasted with a 41% pandemic decline in counts from 2019- the May count in 2022! These numbers held up across other dioceses as well- not just the Chicago Diocese. Putting this in context, it was noted that there has been a devastation of families in the Western world. The pandemic has contributed to less people having social connections and more being isolated from community with their work from home. Many under the age of 30 are without a religious identity and at ages 14-15 many people decide if faith will be a part of their lives.

Highlights from the survey showed broad shifts away from pre-pandemic Mass attendance observed across all segments (weekly Mass goers, monthly Mass goers to infrequent Mass goers.) While health concerns were cited as a top reason for decreased in-person attendance, "less convenient" and "being out of habit" play a role in behavior shifts across segments. Pre-COVID Mass attendance is not a good indicator of present behavior. We are not returning to a pre-COVID reality. It will require different thinking to encourage future Mass attendance. Also, digital offerings have a silver-lining, enabling some people to engage more regularly. Is this working against us? Many people are nurtured by the digital Masses. Cardinal Cupich's 28-minute Mass on Sunday is the most watched Sunday AM program locally! Father noted though that those people are missing out on the Eucharist as well as "Community".

The study delved deeper with focused 21 1-on-1 interviews revealing that for many individuals, life's difficulties framed their relationship with God and many of the interviewees had gone through significant life trauma. Most people still prayed as their current connection with God. They prayed directly to God not Jesus. People are drifting away from Mass but stated they were not "pushed away." Father Boland feels that our upcoming summit should be approached as a welcome invitation to all in our parish. Let's meet people where they are- welcome baptisms, weddings, funeral with less inflexibility. This is supported by the Cardinal. Our

challenge is to get people in the door. We need to adapt a more listening posture and less of a judgmental posture.

The next step is the Catholic Leadership Initiative. 1) How can we equip our priests to be more effective. The Diocese wants to do an extensive survey to gain understanding of how to deal with the post-pandemic church. 2) The Diocese wants to study the parishioners in the pew and those out of the pew. What are they looking for in their faith and try to get a picture of parish life including its strengths and weaknesses.

Catch-up Sunday: Letters have gone out to parishioners and many people are responding though with the decreased numbers of those actively engaged in the parish, it puts a greater stress on those who are engaged.

Church Security: Two gentleman are working 6:30a –

6:30 pm. Next step is to enhance the surveillance cameras on campus.

### **Parish Summit Planning**

All plans are going well. The summit agenda was presented and facilities and refreshments are being handled well. Tom O. reported that we are getting good publicity and already 75 people are registered.

### **2022-2023 PPC Goals**

Ideas thrown out for consideration include- continued engagement of parish members, a goal related to Renew our Church and possible a goal related to the diversity of our parish. The goals will be finalized at our November meeting.

### **Religious Education Update**

The Board is excited to present their first Mass and Movie night on 10/29. All will meet at 5 pm mass to be followed by a movie and snacks in the parking lot.

### **Other Business**

Tom O. asked what happened to the initiative Renew our Church? Father Boland stated that we are letting the dust settle and the next step will include building our new reality.

### **Closing Prayer offered by Brian Callahan**