

Joint Parish Councils Meeting
June 25, 2024
St. John the Baptist Social Hall

The Parish Councils of St. John the Baptist/Transfiguration/St. Leo's/St. Ann's, St. Paul's/St. Joseph's and St. Peter's of Rome met on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, in St. John the Baptist's social hall.

Father Paul introduced himself, welcomed the attendees and led us in an opening prayer.

Father O'Brien said that this meeting was a follow up to the May 21st Parish Council's meeting attended by St. Peter's, St. Paul's and St. Joseph's. He introduced Ellen Holt, a parishioner and trustee of Divine Mercy Parish in Central Square NY, and Father Christopher Seibt, Pastor of Divine Mercy and Sacred Heart Parishes. Father Seibt is also the Vice Chancellor of the Diocese of Syracuse. Father Seibt also has advanced degrees in philosophy, liturgical and sacramental theology and canon law. Father Seibt explained that he wanted to be prepared by knowing the canonical process of mergers, relocations and alienations that he knew were coming due to the declining number of priests, and people attending mass.

Ellen Holt spoke first about the process of the coming together of parishes. She talked about being a trustee and parishioner of St. Bernadette's/St. Mary's and spoke about the process of closing a church and then creating a new parish combining multiple worship sites. She discussed that if there is no clear plan in sight for the future, people become confused and angry at what is happening and not completely understanding what is coming next. Her advice to us facing our reconfiguration is to have open communication lines, build comradery and respectfully accept the reality of too few parishioners attending mass and not enough priests available to keep our churches open.

Father Seibt spoke about the canonical processes involved in parish reconfigurations. He said in these situations it is important to follow the procedure to the letter of Canon law. He encouraged everyone to stay positive about the future. He said, "We can either lament and stay stuck in the past, or we can recognize new ways of moving forward with the Spirit. Recognize the bigger picture. It's not about a building, but the mission of Christ and his Church." He also shared, "Keep your eyes on the Lord and in the end, it won't matter how things look. Just stay focused on our mission."

Everyone thanked Ellen Holt and Father Seibt for their presentation.

Father O'Brien spoke about the meeting with Bishop Lucia earlier that day. The Bishop said there would be transparency going forward regarding this reconfiguration. Father said, "No one will be left out of the loop."

Lastly, Father O'Brian asked the attendees to please sign up for the following subcommittees: 1) Naming subcommittee, (will explore process for naming the new parish) 2) Social subcommittee 3) Communications subcommittee 4) Finance subcommittee 5) Faith Formation Committee and 6) Facilities subcommittee (includes cemeteries)

Each subcommittee was asked to choose a chairperson and a secretary

It was decided our next combined Parish Councils meeting would take place after the first Town Hall meeting, July 16th, 10:00 AM at St. Paul's. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, July 23rd, 6:00 PM at St. Paul's.

Father O'Brien led us in a closing prayer. The meeting concluded at 7:30 PM.

Refreshments followed.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Marullo, Recording Secretary
St. John the Baptist/Transfiguration/St. Leo/ St. Ann