



## General Minutes from Lake/Geauga District Meeting

May 9, 2022

Divine Word was hosting parish

### **Prayer/Lunch/Welcome from Gina Rensi, District Chair**

We had 35 members attend.

Gina introduced Anthony Camino, Pastoral Associate from St. Noel who will share about a few programs being offered at St. Noel.

**LEAF Ministry-** Listening, Empowering, Assisting Families. A non-denominational ministry where relatives and friends of those who are incarcerated can join with others in conversation and fellowship. Started by Sr. Rita Mary. Mission is to support those whose loved ones are incarcerated. It is to show them the love of Christ and point them to other resources that they might need. The program exists throughout the diocese. Is being reactivated after the pandemic. Back in 2012, Sr. Rita Mary was talking to someone who had a loved one incarcerated and pretty much said, "there is nothing for me." That inspired Sr. Rita Mary to look at starting a LEAF program. First one started at Holy Angels in 2014, St. Noel started in 2015. Sr. Rita Mary is retired but is still in charge of the Prison Ministry in the diocese.

Typical sessions involve a lot of listening. An opportunity for people to talk about some of the triumphs they might have and some of their frustrations. It can be very difficult to communicate with those who are incarcerated, depending upon the county. There are rules regarding visitation times, dress code, etc. So the support group is beneficial. All sharing is voluntary in the groups.

Anthony will be sending out bulletin information regarding LEAF program at St. Noel. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday from 7-9pm at St. Noel. No registration required. People can offer whatever they want. You can help by promoting our program. We have been meeting throughout the pandemic (virtually) and we have room for more people to join.

**Adult Education Resource Center at St. Noel-**A GED Program at St. Noel, just restarting this program after the pandemic. Meeting on Mondays and Thursdays from 6-8pm. Some students just come one day and some both days. All tutoring happens 1-on-1. There are no fees and childcare is available. Right now there are 2 students in the program. There were other GED programs in the county, but not sure if they are still going. They do have a small graduation ceremony when the students pass. Will also send out bulletin announcements regarding this program.

**Newman Foundation of Northern Ohio-** a diocesan wide program that supports secular university campus ministry in the Diocese of Cleveland. This organization was started in 1969 to support Campus Ministry. Fund started with \$100 K investment and is now up to \$1 million. It is a lay-run foundation. Campus Ministry was revitalized by Bishop Perez when he named Vince Hawk as the Director and he gave him money to employ full-time Campus Ministers on the campuses in the Diocese. Current Director is Dr. Joann Rymarczyk-Piotrkowski. Full-time Campus Ministry presence at University of Akron, Ashland U., Baldwin Wallace, Cleveland State, Case Western Reserve U., Oberlin College and The College

of Wooster. There is not a campus ministry presence at the two universities in our district (Lakeland and Lake Erie College). Over the past 3-4 years the Foundation has granted about \$50K to these campuses. Will also send bulletin blurb and would appreciate your assistance with promoting the good work of this foundation. [www.newmanfoundationcorporationofnothernohio.com](http://www.newmanfoundationcorporationofnothernohio.com).

Fr. Damian Ference, Vicar of Evangelization will present next on the Synod and evangelization.

Introduced himself- was parish priest for 4 years, at Catholic U. for 2 years and taught at Borromeo for 9 years. Went to Rome to study and when he came back, he thought he would teach at Borromeo for another 10 years but the Bishop wanted to make him Vicar of Evangelization. Bishop wanted him to create the position. He still teaches one class at the seminary but his focus is to work downtown with the four new employees (Miquel Chavez, Mike Hayes, Francine Costantini, and Terri Yohman) and develop evangelization programs for the diocese.

Bishop says that in Cleveland more so than in Greensburg, when people say “downtown” they do so with their teeth gritted. The Bishop wants to change this and wants the new employees to get out of the office a lot more and to be in the parishes. There is a hierarchical structure but the church is also synodal. The bishop wants what is happening at the grassroots level in the parishes to connect with what is happening downtown.

This has worked really well recently as is illustrated by Francine Costantini because she worked as a Youth Minister and then came to work downtown, so she was already connected with the Youth Ministers in the area. So it is working well that way.

Bishop wants the downtown offices and parishes to work together. Sr. Rita Mary retired Aug 15<sup>th</sup>, and after a national search, hired her replacement but after a month that person had to resign for personal reasons. So they have decided not to rehire that position, but to use their existing talents to work together to meet the needs of the diocese. For example, Fr. Damian is good at preaching, teaching and evangelizing, but can't do budgets. Fr. Damian is the new Secretary for Parish Life and Special Ministries and Vicar for Evangelization. He is not afraid of moving forward and making mistakes-even Jesus fell three times on the way to Calvary.

Fr. Damian shared story about Evangelizing on the street during NBA All Star Weekend in Cleveland. Things that they learned:

- a) Need better signage in front of the cathedral that is more welcoming especially during the construction.
- b) Need better way to communicate what is happening inside the church to those who are walking by outside the cathedral.
- c) Public didn't expect Catholics to be out evangelizing because usually on that corner there are only panhandlers and protestors.

So now the signs are much more welcoming at the Cathedral. A big part of our job is trying new things and learning from our mistakes.

What blueprint are we following in the Evangelization office? Starting with the Gospel. On the third Monday of the month we meet to discuss the *Joy of the Gospel* by Pope Francis. We are reading the documents together so we get the church's mission for evangelization. One of the big themes in this

document is that we are ALL called to be Missionary Disciples. Anyone who is baptized needs to be a Missionary Disciple--not just the professionals but all the baptized. Both disciple and missionary at the same time—anyone who has experienced Jesus’ love. Whatever it is that we are doing at the parish level should be focused on making missionary disciples. If there are things that are no longer focusing on making missionary disciples, maybe we should let those go. Parishes should all be missionary-oriented. Parishes should be in the *Key of Missionary* vs. *Key of Maintaining* what always has been.

Synod- Diocese has received over 150 reports as of last week which has been a great response. Participation has been over 7000 individuals and almost half of the participants have been under the age of 18. Lynette Sines, co-director of the Synod with Fr. Damian will be taking all of the reports and compiling them into a 6-8 page long working document that summarizes the reports. Each parish will also be asked to send 5 delegates to the Presynod Gathering on June 11, 2022 at Cleveland Public Auditorium from 10a-4p. At the gathering, small groups will discuss the document and give feedback. Others will be asked to partake in fasting and prayer during this time. Closing Mass for the Synodal Process will be at 4:30p at the Cathedral followed by a Eucharistic Procession. More information will be coming out from the Bishop’s Office about this event. After this event, the Bishop will create a 10 page document summarizing the diocesan synodal outcomes and send this to the USCCB and then to the Vatican. We will also get a copy of that 10-page document that we can reflect upon and see where the Spirit has been moving and see where the Spirit can be working in a better way.

At the end of the Synodal Mass will begin the Eucharistic Revival which goes from 2022-2024. The first year will focus on the diocese and the second year will focus on the parishes. At the end of the Mass will be procession to St. Peter on E. 17<sup>th</sup> and have a Festival of Praise (Exalt) and a big social. Hoping to have a strong young adult presence at this event.

Recent efforts from downtown regarding evangelization:

- 1) Nine Nights of Night Prayer. Will be happening 9 times in total. So, will be opening 81 parishes to invite people to come out and see parishes they may not have been in. Selected smaller parishes using Pope Francis Model-spreading the intention around.
- 2) St. Anne and St. Joachim Workshops to teach Grandparents how to evangelize their grandchildren. So far have had 4 sessions and over 400 attendees. On July 25<sup>th</sup> will gather the grandparents to see how the missionary discipleship is going. Encouraged grandparents to take their grandchildren to Nine Nights of Prayer.
- 3) Training Street Evangelizers on July 6<sup>th</sup> at St. Emericks (Hungarian Church) from 2-5pm. Parish is right behind West Side Market in an area where there are a lot of young adults. After training and Mass, they are going to send the young adults out to evangelize and then get together to see how it went and bring people back to prayer that night.
- 4) Aug 4, 2022- *Hillbilly Thomist* giving a concert. They are a Bluegrass Band that is made up of 8 Dominican Friars. Concert will be at St. Wendelan. After the concert, will invite concert goers into the church for Night Prayer.
- 5) Aug 7, 2022 The Fest is back at the Seminary. Street evangelizers will be at the Fest.

Two dreams of Fr. Damian:

- 1) Blessed Carlo Institute for Youth Ministers is happening this summer. Trying to improve the longevity of Youth Ministers beyond the current 9-18 months. A chance for the Youth Ministers to be supported and connect with one another.
- 2) 2024 will be the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of JP II Letter to Artists. Plan to have an art show with the Theme of the Virtues. Give out a cash prize and have all the artists come together to create something with the theme of virtues. Have the art museums come together to jury the show. Also have artists come together for prayer and let them know that the church supports arts.

Announcements:

- 1) Kathy McKiernan representing Catholic Cemeteries Association. As of June 2021, she is the Marketing and Communications Manager for CCA. She brought along the information for the Memorial Day Masses at the Cemeteries, the Grief Support Groups that are available at the Cemeteries, and access to the e-newsletter. She has also begun some Rosary podcasts with the Legion of Mary available on CCA website (CCA.org).
- 2) Mark Crawley, President at Lake Catholic wanted to thank all of the priests who helped at the school this year.
- 3) Gina- thanked the district members for all of their support this year.

**Next Lake/Geauga District Meeting is Monday, September 12, 2022 11:45 am – location tbd.**