

# Parish Pastoral Council Minutes

March 7, 2024

Attendance: Heather Duggan, Matilda Owolagba, Peter Brimacombe, Tim Coonen, Anthony Zoccoli (left before elections), Matthew Iwueze, Sheila Foy-Connolly

Regrets: Grace Bruno, Chad Glendinning

## 1. Prayer and Welcome

2. **Agenda:** Add: **6.6** Christina and David as members of the Refugee Settlement Committee will be asking for approval for the parish to sponsor a family from Yemen. Approved by all.

3. **Minutes:** The minutes from January 2024 were approved by Sheila and ?

## 4. Election of chair, vice chair, and secretary for 2024

Anthony resigned from PPC before the elections.

Chair: Peter: nominated by Sheila and approved by all.

Vice Chair: Sheila: nominated by Peter and approved by all.

Secretary: this position remains vacant.

Sheila suggested finding a couple more parishioners to join PPC. She will ask a parishioner who has been recommended to her.

## 5. Business arising (Action items)

Notes from the retreat in February were circulated to PPC members before the meeting. No discussion happened.

## 6. New Business

**6.1 Update Constitution:** deferred to next meeting.

**6.2 Schedule Annual Parish Meeting:** A date in May or June will be chosen once Heather has compiled and distributed the Annual Parish Report for 2023.

**6.3 Pastoral Plan update:** deferred to next meeting.

**6.4 Reach out to chairs from committees/ministries to see how things are going, invite Finance to present at future meeting.**

**Action items:** Heather will invite Joseph Duggan, chair of the Finance Council, to the April meeting. Each PPC member will contact 2 or 3 committees to check in. Heather will share a list of the parish committees and teams.

**6.5 Volunteer Appreciation:** it was decided to recognize volunteers at Mass on the Grass.

## **6.6 Presentation by members of the Refugee Settlement Committee: Christine and David**

### **Proposal for the Parish Council by the Refugee Sponsorship committee by Christine Andress and David Gilmour**

We have the opportunity to sponsor a small refugee family from Yemen: A couple and their three-year-old son. They have been referred to the Catholic Centre for Immigrants Ottawa (CCI) by the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS). The family has a brother living in the USA who is prepared to provide \$30,000 towards the family's sponsorship. The CCI is looking for a parish that can provide volunteers to do the settlement work. We should also be prepared to provide some funds towards the settlement if it is needed, though the \$30,000 provided by the refugee's family may be sufficient in and of itself.

The CCI is the organization that the Archdiocese uses to organize and support refugee sponsorships in parishes. Our contact at CCI is very confident in JRS's ability to vet candidates for sponsorship, so is not foreseeing issues with the paperwork, other than the usual soul-crushing speed the process takes.

**We, on the Refugee Sponsorship committee, are looking to the Parish Pastoral Council for approval so we can take the next steps - specifically find a few more volunteers for our committee and give the CCI the go-ahead to start the paperwork.**

#### **The Family:**

The family consists of a young couple and their 3-year-old child. They have taken asylum in Jordan, and currently live in Amman.

The father: Aaleem Al-Akwaa born in 1990, male one year of high school, worked as a carpet washer from 2013-2015. Has been living as a refugee in Jordan since 2015. He speaks intermediate English.

The mother: Entesar Al-Zuhairi, born in 1994, 4 years of university (Bachelor of Biology). Worked as a teacher in Yemen for a year (2018-2019), before taking asylum in Jordan in 2019. She speaks basic English.

The child: Born in 2020 in Jordan.

#### **Volunteer Resources:**

We currently have four members of the Refugee Sponsorship committee willing to help with this sponsorship: David Gilmour, Christine Andress, Linda O'Mara and Bruce O'Mara.

**We would like to expand the team by 2-4 people to take on this sponsorship.**

#### **Timeframe:**

The CCI can start the process of getting this family sponsored in May, when they get information from the government about how many refugees the Archdiocese can sponsor. It is important to get the process started as soon as we can, but it is a "hurry up and wait" situation. It can be very unpredictable how long getting the sponsorship approved can take. It can be a matter of a year or two.

#### **Finances:**

If calculating the amount of money needed for a family of three for a year, I would calculate around \$35,000. As the father is said to already speak intermediate English, he may be able to find work after a few months, thus reducing the amount they would need from the parish. If their financial support needs turn out to be less than \$30,000, we should return the excess to the family in the USA. (Note: The \$30,000 from the American brother is kept in a separate account in trust for the sponsorship, it is

not a general donation to the parish). If the sponsorship requires more than \$30,000 (possibly due to escalating rents or unforeseen circumstances like illness or additional children being born), we need to be prepared to fundraise for it. However, I do not think any overt fundraising needs to be done until we have some indication more resources will be needed. In the past, we have had no problems finding generous donors in the parish for refugee sponsorship.

My calculation of \$35,000 for a family of three (2 adults, 1 toddler) is based on the following Cost breakdown:

Housing: \$1500/month + last-month's rent = \$19,500

Phone: \$90/month (two \$45 monthly plans for the adults. Assumes donation of old unlocked cellphones) = \$1080

Internet: \$50/month (+ \$100 setup fee) = \$700

Public Transportation: \$125/month x 2 = \$3000

Dental: Estimate somewhere between \$2000-\$3000, so say \$2000

Basic Needs Allowance (food and incidentals): (welfare rate of \$494/month upped by 15%):  
\$568/month = \$6816

Startup Costs: Government mandated level of \$5740, reduced by \$3640 worth of "in-kind" donations (food, clothing, household items) from parish = \$2,100.

The Refugee Sponsorship Committee needs the approval of PPC to go ahead with this sponsorship. The above presentation was sent via email to all PPC members and was approved by all via email on Wednesday, March 13.

## **7. Pastoral Team Report**

Inter-Parish Lenten Mission: Four parishes involved. Service at the Canadian Martyrs on Tuesday, March 12.

The Lenten Retreat with Fr. Peter Bisson that was arranged by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee was well attended.

The Youth Mass on February 25 was enjoyed by all who attended.

Solidarity Sunday is on the weekend of March 16/17: Talks at Saturday March 9 and Sunday March 10 Masses by Development and Peace members. Lunch and Learn program on March 17: Kiegan Irish, the Animator for Development & Peace - Caritas Canada (DPCC) for Eastern and Northern Ontario, and Marina Bonin, the DPCC Youth Ambassador for Ontario will share with us a little bit about the Share Lent campaign and how our work helps to create hope for the communities we support in the Global South.

Holy Week Triduum and Easter celebration: Liturgy Committee planning meeting is scheduled for next week.

*Laudato Si'* Stations of the Cross by the Youth will be on Tuesday, March 19 at 7pm.

## **8. Next meeting: April 4 at 7pm**