

St. Damien of Molokai Parish Council  
May 12, 2025, 6:00pm St. Gabriel Church Hall  
Council Minutes

I. Call to Order & Opening Prayer

- a. Meeting called to Order at 6:00 pm by Steve VanGasbeck, President
- b. Father Daly led Parish Council in our opening prayer for our new Pope, Leo XIV.

Attendance & Ministry Affiliation – Michelle Kuhlberg, Secretary (see attached list)

II. Scripture Reading: Michelle shared a reading from the 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 12-18. Sharon volunteered for our September meeting.

III. New Business

- We thanked Abbey and Alex for their support of our Council and welcomed Lauren Heffelfinger as our new Student member.
- Lori Possum retired at the end of April as our Business Manager. She will continue to work as cemetery sexton.
- Reviewed & Approved January Parish Council minutes.
- Note Parish Council elections will be coming in the fall. Steve, Ellen and Michelle will work on that. We will confirm with Jim Welsh, but believe Steve's will be the only opening as we returned to normal terms following COVID.

IV. Standing Committees

Ministry outreach - Ellen had previously contacted all ministry leaders, reestablishing liaison with them. All are invited to share updates and attend and speak if able. While none expressed an interest in speaking, they can notify Cindy for any mass discussion and Ellen if they want to attend a Parish Council meeting. We will look at highlighting ministries at fall coffee hours.

Liturgy Committee: Father shared highlights:

- Attendance exceeded 1000 over Holy Week, including 330 at St. Joe's 9:30 mass and 20 families for food blessings.

- Upcoming masses – Pentecost Sunday, June 8th – wear red! Corpus Christi procession will be led with KofC walking with the canopy.

#### Building & Grounds Committee: Father Daly

- Steps to the back entrance of St. Joe's rectory have been repaired.
- St. Gabe's church steps will be fixed.
- Phil raised need to repair St. Joe's front steps and loose railing.
- Phil brought the town building records for St. Joe's property line and will contact the current neighbors regarding removal of dead trees on neighbors' property.
- Knox Box for firefighter entry for St. Joseph church is received and Katie Nasuta is working to install.
- Garden Ministry is looking for help – contact Phil Kirby.
- Note that there is still no news on the elevator as it goes through the Archdiocese.

#### V. St. Gabriel School: Father Daly

- St. Theresa of Calcutta Parish will take over running the school as part of the consortium as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Our parish will be responsible for the building. There are some major repairs that will be needed in the future – including a roof and HVAC repairs. Brianna noted her dad would be happy to volunteer for HVAC advice and other construction related advice.

#### VI. Faith Formation: Victoria Ascherman-Director submitted her update.

- 16 C2 students were confirmed on 3/8 by the Archbishop at the Cathedral with 2 other parishes. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, there was a mass for the confirmed, parents, godparents and families with a reception following
- The Archbishop is planning to move confirmation to 8<sup>th</sup> grade over the next 3 years as our youth need the grace of the Sacrament earlier. 2026 plan is to combine 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> for confirmation, in 2027, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, and then starting in 2028 will confirm 8<sup>th</sup> graders going forward.
- 12 received their First Holy Communion on 5/3.
- The 2024-2025 catechetical year ended on 4/6 with a family celebration on their last day.
- Vicky is working on more faith formation with a high school focus.

- Vicky has completed an Archdiocesan Seedlings certification for birth to 4 years old and a young family connection.
- Sadly, there is no interest at this time in Bible Camp. ½ day may be issue for working families.

#### VII. Knights of Columbus: Steve, Richard

- Easter Baskets were distributed.
- The Knights as a whole provided 10,000 coats this year – with our group providing 250!
- KofC golf tournaments is 6/6
- 8/3 Hartford Yard Goats game Sunday at 1:00. Parishioners may purchase tickets for \$20.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Degree is providing a statewide \$500 scholarship for Catholic High School students.
- KofC Building in Windsor was sold so meetings will take place in the church hall.
- If anyone is in need or has items for the lending closet, please contact Richard.

#### VIII. Pastor's Report: Father Daly.

- Noted buildings and grounds activity, the School and liturgy captured above.
- Father hired a group who has been working in the Archdiocese for a number of years to handle business management including annual reports and such. A member of the team comes in every 7-10 days but primarily works remotely. Donna Weeks had been working with Lori on reports and reconciliation and her activity will end at the end of the fiscal year, June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Sisters of St. Joseph will be moving out of the convent in the near future. The Archdiocese will assist with the sale of the building. The plan is to use the proceeds of the sale for repairs to the school.
- Coffee Hour attendance was lower in the last few months. The next will be held in the fall, may consider scheduling them less frequently – very 6 weeks.
- Many priests Father has been speaking with believe the election of an American to the papacy is a sign to us of the call to renewal and revival, personally and in church. Archbishop Coyne expects over the next few

weeks we are going to see people returning to the Church. Be even more joyful and welcoming! Note our attendance is growing! We've been seeing 640 at the 4 masses where we used to see 500 over 5 masses!

IX. Youth Outreach: welcome Lauren!

X. Next Meeting:

- St. Gabriel Church Hall on Monday, September 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

XI. Closing Prayer by Father Daly

Adjournment: made by Steve VanGasbeck.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Kuhlberg.