

Parish Pastoral Council
Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2010

Present: Father Tom Nestor, Adele Hamblett, Frank Lombardo, Michael Angotti, Jan Dolan, Bob Hillis, Bob Lagace, Marge McGlone, Larry Murray, Stephanie Rogers, Joan Sweeney, Betty Vittoria, John Worden, Moira Brady, Dick Briand, John Russo

Absent: Kathy Doyle, Mary Pongratz, Dolores Mullen

Frank Lombardo opened the meeting with a scripture reading from John. A brief meditation and discussion followed.

The November 18, 2009 PPC Meeting Minutes were accepted as amended. Adele Hamblett will add Joan Sweeney's name to those absent from the November 18, 2009 PPC meeting.

Commission Reports

Finance Council-- John Russo reported that the parish maintained two separate fiscal years—a calendar fiscal year for OSR and a fiscal year running from July 1 to June 30 for parish income and expenses. The shortfall for the fiscal period running from January 2009 through December 2009 was \$71,634.

A comparison of OSR pledges from last year to this year shows that as of January 8, 2010 there have been 737 pledges made totaling \$586,700 while last year at the same time there were 675 pledges totaling \$509,800. The total pledges recorded for 2008 were 1,298 and 1,251 pledges were recorded for 2009. The next spike in pledges is likely to come at the end of March/early April as that is when families are asked to sign up for Religious Education for the next year. The cost of Religious Education is substantially reduced if a family participates in OSR.

An increase in pledges for this year over last year left one wondering what was done differently last year. There are approximately 2,300 families in the parish with 25 – 35 percent participating in OSR. It was noted that we are now a more mature parish with very few young people able to afford to move into Winchester.

A discussion ensued as to how the parish might increase its revenue. The following suggestions were put forth:

- There could be a collection taken up at the Christmas Masses. This would not help the parish as all contributions at Christmas are earmarked for the Priests' Healthcare/Retirement Fund.
- There could be mention made in church of including the parish in one's estate planning. There have been some parishioners over the years who have done this

but not many. Annuities were mentioned as well. The parish has received some income through memorial contributions when someone has died. St. James Parish had a Memorial Fund and Masses were periodically said for its members. There is a designated priest in the archdiocese who would come and do a presentation on including the parish in estate planning. A mention in the bulletin and the archdiocese could also be helpful to encourage bequests. Mentioned, too, was the fact that the archdiocese can help with estate planning. If you specifically mention that you wish a portion of your estate to go to your parish, then the archdiocese holds the funds and the parish can draw on them. It's best that the funds are not designated for a specific purpose.

- It was suggested that Frank Fiorentino, a member of the PFC and an accountant, should look at the possibility of the parish operating only on the basis of the fiscal year and not the calendar year. It was commented that we should have the same fiscal year as the archdiocese—July 1 to June 30. Perhaps the PFC could report back to PPC as to the advisability of this suggestion.
- Periodic updates on finances should be reported in the bulletin.

The finance council representative assured the PPC that everything was being done to keep expenses to a minimum while not cutting back on services. Some examples included using programmable thermostats, leasing copy equipment rather than purchasing it, changing pipes in the parish center and the McGann conference room so that just the smaller boiler will run, and changing the dumpster schedule from every week to every two weeks. PPC also received the assurance that money is being set aside every month for improvements.

Annual Christian Service Report-- Dick Briand reported that a total of 1,490 bags of non-perishable food was collected for 2009, an increase of 648 bags over last year. The monetary collection amounted to \$14,610 which includes \$5,900 from OSR. This was a decrease of \$520 from last year. The organizations that benefited from these collections were: Bristol Lodge in Waltham, Project Soup in Somerville, Haley House in Boston, Bread of Life in Malden, Woburn Council of Social Concern and St. Matthews in Dorchester.

Liturgy Commission-- Moira Brady reported that there were between 10 and 12 new Eucharistic Ministers and approximately 9 altar servers being trained.

There was a proposal made concerning announcements after Mass. Would it be better to have them made before Mass began? While announcements before Mass might be helpful to remind parishioners to turn off their cell phones, it might also encourage people to arrive late. This will be an agenda item for next month's meeting.

There will be an effort to acquire the e-mail addresses of Eucharistic Ministers and lectors so that their schedules can be sent electronically and thus cut down on mailing expenses.

PPC members congratulated Moira on her December 1st engagement.

New Business

January 10, 2010 Meeting on Parish Planning-- The following comments were made in regard to the presentation made by Father David Couturier, OFM, Cap. to the combined parish councils of St. Eulalia's and St. Mary's:

- The presentation was superb and appeared to be very well received. Members were grateful for the invitation to share and discuss views.
- There should be a follow-up get together with St. Mary's soon.
- Those in attendance appeared comfortable with each other.
- There was a challenge issued to us as to how do manage with fewer priests.
- We need to be considerate of the Arlington parishioners as we plan. Their needs may be different. St. Mary's may need to be sensitive to their bordering communities as well. The archdiocese has not actually drawn official parish boundaries since 1927.
- The parish needs to take some time to discuss its "vision." Where does our church community want to be in five or ten years?
- There was a lot of information presented in a short time. There is a lot of information on the archdiocese's website on planning. It might be helpful to review it.
- Father David at his presentation suggested looking at our demographics and explore where we want to go. A workshop on this might be helpful.
- Father David at the January 10 presentation said that PPC meetings should be on vision and mission. Every meeting should devote some time to mission and vision.
- What do we need to do to determine mission? Father David will be sending us some materials to help us in our planning.
- Father David, at his presentation, complimented us for taking the initiative to invite him and not waiting for the archdiocese to request a meeting. His feeling was that parishes need to own it and make it happen.
- Because of the priest shortage, change is inevitable.
- How do we evangelize to get more people to come to church? There are a lot of non Catholic young people who are excited by their faith. Could we get information from college-age students about when and where they lost enthusiasm for their faith? There should be some models out there that we can

look at. As it happens, Jared Blake has already put together a questionnaire to send out to find some possible answers.

- Young people are participating in social justice projects but not in the context of the faith community.
- There are some people who can't understand how people have faith. People of faith cannot understand how people could not have faith. It is thought that there is a larger group who believes but who are not connected to a faith community.
- Young people tend to be too busy to be in relationship with God. Faith is a deeply personal relationship.
- Should we remind people in church of the consequence of choice— heaven/hell? Is it realistic to think that we have no responsibility in life?

Prior to the February PPC meeting, the notes on planning from Father David will be sent electronically to all members for review so that the PPC will be better able to discuss its vision at the next meeting. "Where do we want to go from here?" is a question that needs answering. Another meeting should be planned with St. Mary's to discuss concrete ways we can share mission.

Renovation Report-- The Renovation Committee is making progress in its efforts to put in an elevator at the side entrance nearest the parking lot. The PFC raised the question as to whether this is the right time to undertake this project. The response was that the elevator is not a luxury but a safety issue.

The Light Is on for You-- Father Tom announced a Lenten initiative whereby there will be confession every Wednesday evening during lent from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. in every parish of the Archdiocese.

Arise—Season Four-- The theme of ARISE for season four is also on reconciliation—New Heart, New Spirit. Most of St. Eulalia's small group leaders will be attending the ARISE training session at St. Joseph's in Wakefield on January 28 with a few attending the session at Our Lady Help of Christians in Newton on January 20. Sign-up Sundays at St. Eulalia's will begin January 24th and continue until February 14th, and the new season will begin the week of Ash Wednesday. There will be a bulletin announcement the weekend of January 16/17.

St. Matthews Food Pantry-- The following is a continuation of the discussion from the November PPC meeting.

As was stated earlier the parish volunteers are getting older. In the beginning the volunteers were the right age to do the work. Sr. Damien herself, who heads the food pantry, is holding on because a replacement cannot be found for her.

What can we do to bolster the food pantry at St. Matthews?

- Maybe we should have Sister Damien out to talk at all the Masses.
- Maybe it's time to let it go.
- Maybe a bulletin announcement could be made with volunteers signing up for specific assignments rather than leaving the sign up open ended.

Reminder Dates

Haitian Prayer Service—Saturday, January 16, at 10 a.m. at Epiphany Church in Winchester

Appreciation Night—Saturday, January 30, 2010. Wine and cheese reception at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m.

ARISE Season Four—begins the week of Ash Wednesday, February 14

End of Life Series—Sunday, January 31 and Sunday, February 14

The Light Is on for You—the sacrament of Reconciliation every Wednesday during Lent from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Sign-Up Sheets

1. Mass coverage for the February 10 meeting
2. Appreciation Night Cash Bar Coverage

Comments and Concerns from Parishioners

The comments and concerns reported through e-mail were the following:

- There was a request made that there be two choir song boards, one for each side of the church. Response: Another matching song board needs to be purchased or made.
- The color of the advent candles was not distinguishable from a distance. Response: Perhaps next year the parish may go back to hanging the advent wreath from the ceiling so that everyone might see it.

The comments from parishioners given to PPC members after Mass were as follows:

- A parishioner expressed annoyance that there were no seats available at the four o'clock Christmas Mass as people were saving seats for others. Response: Maybe a policy should be set that seats cannot be saved. On the other hand if you want people to feel welcome, such a policy would not be appropriate.
- There are several crying children in the foyer at the 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday which is very distracting. Response: Since we want to encourage families to come to Mass, we would not want to close the foyer doors as that sends an unwelcoming message.
- Why don't we have a cry room? Response: Segregation is not a good idea. Families should remain together.

- There were continued complaints about the sound system. Response: It is being worked on.
- A parishioner inquired as to the status of the renovation project.
- The music at the 5 p.m. Mass is too loud.

There was a suggestion made by a PPC member that there be a column in the bulletin devoted to PPC news and responses to parishioners' comments and concerns.

Remarks by Father Tom

Father Tom commented on what a wonderful staff we have at St. Eulalia's and what great contributions they make at staff meetings.

Father Tom closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Connell
Substitute Secretary