

St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
Parish Hall
5:00-6:00 PM
February 9, 2009

Present: Fr. Jerry Ragan, Fr. Mark Van Alstine, Eric McArdle, Steve Givens, Lisa Murray, Jim Purcell, Mike Hamilton, Rhonda Wallace, John Fisher, Mary Davis, Deacon Al Sullivan, Harmony Prestifilippo, Alicia Ramage, Rhee Fincher

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM.

Fr. Jerry opened the meeting with reading next Sunday's Gospel, followed by reflection.

The minutes of the 1/12/2009 meeting were approved.

Immaculate Conception funding – School is funded substantially through the deanery (\$125,000/year; SMOTH contributes ~\$36-37,000/year). Last year SMOTH reached the conclusion that the school did not seem viable, and Fr. Jerry informed the bishop. He indicated the need to meet defined benchmarks of enrollment and fundraising, neither of which has been met. Fr. Jerry presented a letter he has drafted to the bishop for the Pastoral Council to discuss. One suggestion was to move the school from its current location to the Most Holy Trinity property, but such a move would probably not result in increased enrollment or gifting. Fr. Jerry recommends the possibility of the school closing and reallocating the contributions from the deanery for two purposes:

- (1) Establish a scholarship fund for African-American students to attend SMOTH School, Our Lady of Peace, or Aquinas High School
- (2) hiring a director to form a community board to distribute scholarships and determine the future use of the Church's property on Laney Walker Blvd. The director could report to the bishop about recommendations in keeping with the history of the ICA and efforts of the community to revitalize this neighborhood.

The recommendation is congruent with the bishop's and Fr. Jerry's goal of maintaining a presence in and supporting the African-American community. Fr. Jerry will seek a consensus with the other 3 pastors in Augusta regarding next steps.

Fund raising – The parish has a policy that the parish has few fund-raisers; those it has were grandfathered when the parish became a stewardship parish. Alternative plans tend to result in ministries vying with each other for donations from parishioners. It has been determined recently that there is no written policy regarding fundraising.

- 3 recent requests include:
 - Sell popcorn for Boy Scout uniforms – turned down
 - Raise money for a first grader with leukemia – family wants community support more than monetary support; e.g., holy hour daily from 8-9 AM
 - Request for rummage sale for Conner family and international adoption; Fr. Jerry has discussed this with Rene McCabe, who is spearheading this

effort. Announcements can be made in the Announcements section of the bulletin. The rummage sale will take place at the Knights of Columbus or Brynwood. Will allow fundraiser for Conner family to occur in school parking lot.

Nearly all of the requests for fund-raisers are for laudatory purposes. When considered superficially, we would like to support them. However, it creates an untenable situation for the pastor to consider each separately.

Discussion was rich and included: We do not want the parish to be perceived as not reaching out to individuals in need, simply because it is a stewardship parish; consider whether or not the request will help build community. The Pastoral Council agreed there should be a written policy and it should reflect the parish's commitment to stewardship.

Lisa reported that she receives calls constantly from various ministries that want to have fundraisers. She needs a policy that enables her to make a decision about how to respond. Two perspectives: Requests to help those in need are different than requests to fulfill "wants".

Plan: Jim Purcell, Mike Hamilton, and Harmony Prestifilippo will prepare a policy draft. The policy should consider other non-monetary mechanisms to support our parish families and the community.

Business Roundtable – Eric will lead a discussion at the next meeting, focusing on the first part of the DVD (administration)

Living in Love weekend – Fr. Jerry encouraged couples to participate; 11 couples are signed up

Mayor's prayer breakfast will be on 2/24/2009 at 8:00 AM. It will begin in the church and then move to the parish hall. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate.

Pancake supper will be on 2/24/2009 in the parish hall.

Lent

- 3/8-11/2009 – Lenten mission
- 3/10/2009 - Lenten penance service.

New business and brief updates

- **Proposed Website changes** (Mike Hamilton) – Proposed Website speech for Fr. Jerry distributed and comments requested.
- **2009 Renewal Report** distributed, with numbers of commitments of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

- **Family Honor Program** – 30 families registered and paid for this month's program.
- **Interfaith Hospitality** – Harmony mentioned that the volunteerism was strong
- **Gathering** – Deacon Ken has an effective advertisement on the radio.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher