

St Mary on the Hill Catholic Church
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
5:00 PM
November 10, 2008

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

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

The minutes from the October 20 meeting were approved as amended.

New Corinthians curriculum - Family Life Program – Rhonda Wallace

- Felt this program was best suited to our school because of balance of responsibilities for school and home with respect to sexuality/life decisions. Program supported by workbooks for teachers and parents, and handouts for students; topics carefully selected and presented for K-8.
- 5 sessions/year (could be 5 sequential days; 5 days over 5 weeks; once monthly for 5 months)
- Presented to parents and staff for review and discussion. Staff and teachers' response was "lukewarm", largely because of concern about the types of questions that might arise and how they could be appropriately handled in classroom setting. Parents concerned about students age-readiness for the lessons.
- Conclusions from school feedback
 - Tempered feedback, more negative than positive
 - Cost: \$~20,000/year considered a negative
- Rhonda attended family honor program with her son last year, which she found positive and recommends. She thinks the current school program would be strengthened by sharing more information in a controlled environment
- Fr. Jerry talked with the Catechism Office of U.S. Bishops- though dated now (1995) –NC seems to be the best program of its type; the present trend for Catholic publishers is to integrate family life values into religion books. Fr. Jerry will check with Sister Jeannine regarding diocesan guidelines about the subject
- New Corinthians and Family Honor could be complementary; not mutually exclusive
- Discussed concerns that teachers are likely to have – principal and other school leaders will be asked to help
- Steve Givens is working on a "Conquest" program for boys and Angie McBride is working on a "Challenge" program for girls. These are after school virtue programs produced by Regnum Christi. Good programs, but like Family Honor, they are optional, so in a sense you are preaching to the choir and not reaching everyone.
- Next steps

- After checking on the guidelines from the Office of Schools and the Florida Catholic Conference who accredits our school, the Pastoral Council will be asked to make a recommendation for school curriculum.
- Jim Purcell recommended phasing it in over 8 years, beginning with kindergarten (endorsed by Council)
- Recommend requiring purchase of book as part of school curriculum
- Ensure “in service” for teachers on subject before

Stewardship Renewal

- Interim report (Tommy Rose)
 - 700 commitment cards received to date compared with 715 at same point last year
 - Prayer and ministry commitments essentially same as last year
 - Offertory commitment - \$56,000 increase over last year
 - 275 increases of > \$100/year
 - 200 about same
 - 225 < last year (Many of these included handwritten notes about why they were decreasing pledge)
- PC asked Stewardship Commission to assess how to reach out to the many parishioners who do not participate in stewardship. Steve suggested calling the families that do not participate and offer to visit them in their homes - “just wanted to follow-up with you and see if there is something in which you want to be involved”.
 - Steve Givens: About half of the members of the parish participate in stewardship; need to encourage more
 - Jim Purcell: Analyze data and trends more completely
 - Do school families continue stewardship at same level when children are no longer in school?
 - Analyze households with child in 8th grade and determine if their commitment remains the same the following year
 - Emulate “best practices”
 - Reaching out to Catholics who are not active or marginally active
 - Get-togethers at private homes – invite those who did not submit commitment card (group did not think this would be successful)
- Lay witness speakers
 - Consider asking young couple without children in school to speak
 - Liked having two couples speak; Fr. Jerry was concerned it would be “too much”, but it wasn’t
 - Both couples enthusiastically complimented
 - Suggestion to include a single person (single, widow, widower) next year as a lay speaker – some feel the parish has become so family oriented that “singles” may feel left out

Stewardship Commission

- Rhee requested feedback regarding Oktoberfest/Appreciation Dinner. The SC was pleased with the event, but plans to end next year at 9:00 rather than 10:00

- Will complete first cycle of monthly ministry displays in a few months and need to reassess. Rhee requested suggestions (continue the same monthly display system, annual display with Oktoberfest)

Goals for FY 2009

- Continue to support perpetual adoration
 - Catherine Tribby willing to help with leadership of perpetual adoration
- Year of St. Paul
 - Alvin just published album of gospel music – well acclaimed
 - Youth will hike to two parishes – Melkite Catholic and Greek Orthodox
 - Plan to do something ecumenical with St. Paul's Episcopal church
- Commissions: Identify those that are strong and those that need
 - Evaluate where we stand with the Commissions – consider a leadership formation program for the parish to “grow” new leaders for Commissions and other leadership opportunities
 - Eric asked each person to bring their assessment of the commissions the Pastoral Council members are involved with
- Approving a family life program for the parish
- Living stewardship
- Need to identify pastoral focus after the Year of Paul; reliance on “The Word”
- Create smoke-free campus
- Fr. Jerry will e-mail the Web addresses of the Holy Father's Address to the U.S. Bishop's at Catholic University last April and the Summary document from the Synod. These two resources will help the Council prepare for our next meeting when we will nail down our goals for the Year of Grace 2009 and move towards a process for establishing our next Pastoral focus.

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher