

Pastoral Council Minutes
January 14, 2013
Parish Hall

Attendees: Jennifer Bovitz, Katie Conner, Rhee Fincher, Martha Kearns, Eric McArdle, Fr. Jerry Ragan, Fr. Scott Winchel

Excused: Steve Givens, Ken Maleck, Jim Purcell

Guests: Mike Lammers, Joan Purucker

The meeting opened at 5:32 PM with “A Family Prayer for the Year of Faith”.

Minutes from 11/26/2012 were approved with one edit.

Tithe budget discussion and recommendations – Fr. Jerry presented an update on the current discussions regarding how to allocate the tithe budget for FY 2013. Recommendations include

- The “Saints Overseas” mission work that Katie Conner is leading
- Habitat for Humanity – recommendation for supporting another house; recently received very nice note from current owner of most recently built Habitat house

“Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth” – presentation by Mike Lammers

The majority of the meeting focused on how optimally to emphasize effectively the foundational centrality of family faith and family faith formation on the lives (spiritual and otherwise) of children and teens. Mike Lammers and Joan Purucker recently participated in a national diocesan initiative based on “gold standard” research on “faith of your people”. The following presentation was excerpted from the meeting at St. Joseph’s parish in Macon.

- Study Results
 - Religious teens generally do better than others (in all areas of life); the more they participate, the better; but most do not. Reasons for lack of teen and parental participation include: people are busy, priorities, benefits of faith not immediate (like getting a good grade is)
 - Most teens were quite unknowledgeable about their faith; Catholics were #5 of 7 (In descending order: Mormon, conservative Protestant, Black Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, non-religious)
 - Parents single most important influence on teens’ faith
 - Teens are “family friendly”
 - When teens were asked what they would like to change about family, the most common response was they would like to be closer to parents, but don’t know how
 - Church support for parents – again, Catholics were rated #5 (Mormon, conservative Protestant, Black Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, non-religious); faiths that rely on parishioners to evangelize their faith (not deferring to priests, religious) feel stronger support
- Who is responsible for living faith between Sundays? PARENTS (also parish, youth ministry, Catholic school, religious education)
- Church has many teachings on subject of family faith formation

- Many documents preach the central role of parents in faith formation and family formation
- Family faith formation is fundamental for children/teen faith formation
- Recommendations
 - Short-term: Add parent meetings; make them interactive
 - Long-term: Assess parents' faith and family needs to coach them to grow their family in faith, but in a positive way so they don't feel criticized
- Actions that have been taken by other parishes and considered successful
 - Family faith weekend – each pastor gave homily; specific guidance for family faith formation
 - Parish leaders met with parents/children to discuss/model family prayer
 - One night/week when adult and children's faith formation programs meet together (instead of each meeting separately)
 - Asked teens what they would like to change about their family – they shared responses

During discussion, the importance of learning about national initiatives before focusing on one was made; e.g., National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. Are there parishes that are really "on fire" because any of these initiatives?

Next steps

- Consider inviting a diocesan leadership group to meet with local SMOTH team
- Invite effective national speaker – Joan and Mike recommended the person who spoke at the St. Joseph's meeting in Macon.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rhee Fincher