

**December PSC Meeting Minutes**  
**Minutes for the Pastoral Stewardship Council Meeting on December 14, 2005**  
**7:00 PM at St. Albert the Great**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Present: Fr. George Aranha, Susan Adams (SAG Site Committee), Helen Baumann (STA Site Committee), Laura Chiu (OLR Site Committee), Tom Jaworowski (Human Concerns Committee), Mary Beth Lefebvre (Youth Ministry), Micky Martin (Liturgy), Gerard McGuire (Spiritual Development), Bud McKenna (Finance Committee & Facilities Committee), Jesse Rueza (Hispanic Ministry), Mary Sullivan (Communications)

Absent: Administration, Catechetics, Fr. Eddie Obero

**OBSERVERS:** Marguerite Purcell, Walt Lundin

**Meeting Highlights:** Item 5 of the Pastor's Report described the criticism of the diocesan Environment and Art Committee about the installation of the altar and ambo at OLR during the Sanctuary Upgrade. Item 6 revealed the hostility that exists between a few parishioners and the STA Staff and the steps taken to ameliorate this problem.

The deficiencies at the STA Site and the upgrades required to correct them were listed in the Business Manager's Report. The issues connected with the rental of the Homer Street apartments were also noted.

**Prologue**

The meeting was called to order by Gerard McGuire. Susan Adams offered the opening prayer. Jesse Rueza volunteered to lead the opening prayer at the January meeting.

The minutes of the November meeting were approved. The Agenda item scheduled for 8:30 (Contract with Maureen Clark) was deleted. The remaining Agenda items for tonight's meeting were approved.

**PASTOR'S REPORT**

- . The second collection for the earthquake victims in Pakistan and India garnered at least \$8,700.
2. Two parties to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Fr. George's ordination are scheduled for this weekend:
  - a) Saturday, December 17th at SAG after the 5:00 PM Mass
  - b) Sunday, December 18th at OLR after the 10:30 AM Mass
3. A celebration was held on December 11th for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The hall at OLR was filled to capacity. Over 1,000 tamales were served.
4. The schedule for Christmas Masses and events have been distributed. The Reconciliation Service will be held on December 21st. Two Christmas Pageants will be held in the parish on Christmas Eve:
  - a) The OLR children will participate in this pageant at the OLR 5:00 PM Mass during the homily.
  - b) The children of SAG will give their performance of the pageant at the SAG 5:00 PM Family Mass, also during the homily.
5. The diocese called him (Fr. George) about the altar and ambo installation at OLR. The Environment and Art Committee of the S.J. Diocese is very concerned, almost requiring their removal.
6. A 'free-floating' hostility has arisen between a few parishioners and the parish staff, because the staff has reported 'abusive behavior' from these parishioners. John McNeil has begun leading sessions with members of the staff to improve this situation. Mr. McNeil is a parishioner, convert, therapist, and former Presbyterian minister. Fr. George and Mr. McNeil decided to start with the staff because there are ongoing issues and staff needs coping skills. Fr. George acknowledges that he has a good staff which is coming together effectively, from the point of view of 'ministry'. He intends to create a safe environment for staff to meet and assist parishioners.

**Comments on Item #5:** Susan Adams sent a 5-year plan for the SAG site to Fr. Chris Bennett, and she received a formal response from the Art and Environment Committee. They want an EIR (Environmental Impact Report). Fr. George stated that he thinks this may be a fallout from the OLR situation. Their requirements are to avoid problems. Susan said there is a plan to get together with diocesan personnel after Christmas to discuss this issue.

Micky emphasized that OLR did nothing wrong in this matter. The OLR Upgrade Group requested input from the diocesan Environment and Art Committee and received no response or very delayed replies. In one phone conversation, Fr. Eugene Benedict advised he was stepping down as Chair of the committee as he was working on an advanced degree in Berkeley. At another point, it was not clear to three members of that committee, with whom we met, whether Fr. Benedict was still Chair or not, nor did they know who were current regular members. Our experience was that this Committee was in a state flux; thus, unfortunately, we did not find them very helpful, cooperative, or timely in responding to our communications. We feel we made every reasonable effort to work with them.

Micky alerted the PSC to proceed with caution in dealing with this A & E Committee. She committed to document the history of our committee's experience, if needed,

to provide guidance to other parishioners who might be involved in similar projects. It is Micky's understanding that this committee does now have a different Chairperson, so hopefully, future contacts will find a much more organized and efficient committee to serve parishes.

**Comments on Item #6:** This harassment of the parish staff has been on going since the time when Fr. Barry was pastor. Nothing was done to improve the interaction between the staff and parishioners until recently. Now there seems to be considerable progress since this first session led by Mr. McNeil. More sessions will be conducted in the future.

Helen volunteered to attend the therapy sessions so that she won't hurt anybody's feelings when she comes on strong. Marguerite observed that some people are very timid and sensitive. Mary Beth said this is typical: An employee has a problem; a good manager will ask, "What have you done to deal with it?" We want to empower our staff to resolve conflict productively. Gerard stressed that interpersonal skills can be learned and that Susan C. feels persecuted.

**Old Business:** Maureen Clark met with Chris and Chuck, but no contract was signed. Chuck will follow up on this matter.

## **Business Manager's Report**

Bud McKenna presented the Business Manager's Report for Chuck Tully. The Maintenance Committee has reinstated the inspection process. The following inspections occurred recently --- SAG in October, STA in November, 2005.

These actions are necessary to correct the deficiencies discovered by the inspections:

1. The roof of STA needs to be replaced.
2. The exterior of STA needs painting.
3. The interior of STA needs to be touched up or entirely painted.
4. The current status of the Homer Street apartments --- The upper apartment is vacant; the lower apartment will be vacated on January 1st. Upgrade of the plumbing and electrical systems in these apartments is a possibility. The rental/lease environment in Palo Alto is softer now than it was a short time ago. No ads for these apartments have been placed yet.
5. The stove at SESS needs to be replaced.

Fr. George pointed out that from 40 to 60% of the income for the parish comes from rentals. This relieves some of the pressure on parishioners for various funding requests.

Micky referred to a previous Pastor's Report that the International School is considering looking for two portables for use as temporary classrooms. She pointed out that they rarely are temporary and suggested that we talk to someone who has experience in this matter before such installation is approved. They cost about \$100,000. each and typically are used for 10 years or more.

Bud noted that SESS wants to put a trailer in the yard to be used as a science laboratory. They will be providing a plan and information about this proposal. Facilities will be monitoring this possible project.

Gerard asked if Facilities is looking creatively about future uses for the parish real estate holdings. Bud remarked that Facilities would like ideas of this type to come from the site committees and community groups in the parish..

## **MINISTRY TEAM QUARTERLY REPORTS**

**Facilities Committee:** Jim McLaughlin has pneumonia. He will be inactive for some time until he recovers. Bud is representing Building and Maintenance in Jim's absence, as can be seen in his report on the previous page.

**Communications Committee:** Mary announced that the parish directories have been completed and distributed. Special thanks for their work on this project are due to Rachel Alvelais and Gerard.

Posters have been created to announce and publicize special events in the parish. In early December, for example, posters were installed at the three sites to encourage assistance to the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan and India.

The parish calendar is now posted at the Pastoral Center. It is also posted on the parish website. Chuck is assisting in this phase of calendaring.

Kay Williams and Mike Flynn composed and arranged flyers listing the schedule of Masses and times for Reconciliation in our parish. Five hundred flyers were distributed among the members of the Communications Committee who each took responsibility for delivery to the group of hotels assigned to them. The hotels have expressed gratitude to receive this information. This action will be repeated in February.

Mike Flynn would like to train ministry teams to post information concerning their ministries onto the web site. Putting items relating to the Youth Ministry is a high priority goal. Also forms for parish use will be posted on the web to allow down loading as required.

**Human Concerns Committee:** Tom described four actions that this group initiated or participated in to oppose the death penalty and also to support a two-year moratorium on the enforcement of capital punishment in California. The film *Redemption* portraying the life of Stanley "Tookie" Williams was shown to 33 people from this area at SAG.

The HCC coordinated the assistance furnished to the earthquake victims in Pakistan and India by means of funds collected at the Masses on December 3rd and 4th. Over \$8,700 was sent to Catholic Relief Services to provide relief to these victims.

HCC members, in a joint effort with PIA, will be supporting the Children's Health Care Initiative during the first three months of 2006. Signatures will be collected after Sunday Masses and also at local shopping centers and malls

Susan thinks that we should follow-up with more discussion opportunities for the parish. Walt replied that he expects HCC to put on a how in February. Fr. George described the way the High School where he is chaplain has developed a "Theme for the year --- Focus for a year" Last Saturday he read the bishop's letter on the death penalty. This is part of an "ongoing conversion". The parish could focus on the death penalty following the lead of the bishops in 2006 to try to change people's minds. Micky asked, "What about abortion?" Walt replied that action on this issue will take place in January.

A detailed report on the activities of the HCC these past three months appears in the attachment to these minutes. The HCC will probably decide at its January meeting which one or two issues to focus on during 2006.

**Youth Ministry:** Mary Beth reported on the following topics ---

1. The top candidate for the job of Youth Minister withdrew. They are now looking for candidates at Stanford University, SCU, and the San Jose Diocese.
2. The religion classes for Middle School and High School students on Sunday nights are taught by Susan Clingingsmith at OLR. These classes for Middle School students are taught by volunteers at SAG.
3. The Youth Ministry Board discussed the issue of youth going to other parishes for Confirmation and decided to support Confirmation for 8th graders and above in 2006 and 2007. This decision was prompted by the disturbing statistics revealing a huge decline in numbers of youth from First Communion to Confirmation.
4. Fr. George described the Youth Ministry Event *Godspell, Jr.* which was attended by 42 youngsters. The Youth Tickets and pizza for all the attendees were paid for from the Youth Ministry budget.

Micky asked whether the preparation for Confirmation was going to be a one year

or a two year program. Mary Beth responded, "If a youngster meets the requirements, he/she will get confirmed." We should encourage participation of youth in parish life plus one year of preparation for Confirmation. Nobody checks when a student started a program. We lose students when we offer Confirmation at the 10th grade level, since this hear of high school is very problematic --- there is too much going on. A rollback to 8th grade for Confirmation is desirable. The first year of the new program will involve a transition from a two year program of preparation to a one year program.

Fr. George related information from Sandy at the Diocese of San Jose: Teens are maturing

earlier now. Also, after Confirmation they leave for college. Hopefully, Confirmation received during 8th grade will allow them to participate in parish life for a longer period of time.

Susan asked about the RFI curriculum. Mary Beth responded that this has not been worked out and that there are diocesan resources and rules. A short discussion ensued about tactics to be used in the Youth Ministry. Gerard asked if "Jaywalking", a program advocated by the JustFaith team, has been considered. Walt wondered, "Are we offering too much bread and circuses?" Mary Beth emphasized that we need a strong social program to engage youth.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Liturgy Board:** Micky described the problem of providing a celebrant for the three daily Masses --- 7:15 AM, 8:15 AM, and 12:15 PM. The Liturgy Board has recruited presiders for the 7:15 AM Masses, and there have been no Communion Services at that time. There have been 22 Communion Services at the 8:15 AM time slot during a four month period. There have been nine Communion Services at 12:15 PM during this four month period, but zero Communion Services in the last two months. The Liturgy Board is considering having only two daily Masses since there are only two priests in the parish. The 12:15 PM Mass serves mainly out-of-parish people, so that it may be cancelled. The time for the 8:15 AM Mass will be moved to 8:30 AM.

Fr. George mentioned that Fr. Carew, who lives in East Palo Alto, can help with the 12:15 PM or the 8:15 AM Mass for a while. On July 1, 2006 the parish is scheduled to have a Spanish speaking priest assigned.

Gerard noted that the 12:15 PM Mass is an outreach to the surrounding community and attracts people who might become regular parishioners.

The 25th Anniversary for the establishment of the Diocese of San Jose will be celebrated at SAG on February 4, 2006. Bishop McGrath will be the celebrant at the Mass here on that date. There was some mention about displaying a special cross at OLR on that time.

**Stewardship:** Recent stewardship activities in the parish include the Advent booklet, the posters created by Mary Sullivan, and homilies on participation in parish life. Nest Sunday will emphasize stewardship for/by children. Gerard has suggestions for topics for homilies.

The Stewardship Booklet will be mailed to all parishioners in January. Time and Talent will be the theme for Sunday, January 22, 2006.

**The Faith Connection:** The effectiveness of this bulletin insert was discussed. Bud has found the flyers to be helpful. There is a worthwhile follow-up in *The Faith Connection* to the readings for that particular Sunday. These are similar to Fr. George's introductory

comments before the readings at Mass.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Feedback on the worth of *The Faith Connection* is required. Each Parish Community should provide an evaluation of this weekly insert.
2. How much will *The Faith Connection* cost if the parish subscribes to receive it? Susan Chilingsmith should check this out.
3. The following ministries are scheduled to report on their activities at the January PSC Meeting:
  - Finance Committee
  - Hispanic Ministry
  - Community Life Board
  - Catechetical Board
4. The Annual Diocesan Appeal (ADA) campaign is scheduled to begin on the weekend of 28-29 January.

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2006 at 7:00 PM at SAG.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

**Human Concerns Committee Report - December 2005**