

November Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for Council Meeting on November 10, 2004

7:00PM at OLR Hall

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present: Helen Baumann, Phil Coates, Veronica Duluk, Tom Foy, Chris Lundin, Walt Lundin, Jim McLaughlin, John Uebbing

Absent: Arnoldo Alcazar, Mikey Hoag (Scheduled to be appointed by Fr George the next time they are both able to make it to the meeting)

CLERGY AND STAFF: Fr. Eddy Obero, Chuck Tully

LAITY: Susan Adams, Pat Briggs, Ruth Chippendale, Gerard McGuire, Micky Martin, Marguerite Purcell, Mike Veuve

Meeting Highlight Notes: The office is making progress with the **Census** data. The HCC will be inspiring the parish on issues related to **Catholic Social Justice Teachings** this coming year. The PC is on track to implement the reorganization of the parish. The new **Bylaws** have been reviewed by the PC and will probably be voted on at the December meeting. The **transition** is currently slated to take place in early 2005. **All Ministry Boards are requested to get their Charter Documents completed as soon as possible.**

The meeting was called to order by John Uebbing
Minutes for October were approved as submitted
Opening Prayer by John Uebbing.

Comments from the Council and Community:

Micky Martin asked that the council fully discuss Fr. George's email report to the PC. Veronica noted for the record that the Liturgy Ministry Board is currently attempting to work two months out so that there is plenty of time for planning and consultation.

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Chuck Tully provided update info on the Parish wide census, the Time and Talent survey and the "exit interview" with Caryn Brady. His written report is attached as Attachment 1 to these minutes. A summary follows"

1. The parish picture directory form requesting information has been circulated in the parish, and the forms that have been returned are being input into the parish computer database by Cathy Miller. The upcoming census is a huge project that will consume a fair amount of time for a while. It is essential for future planning, and has not been done for several years.
2. The Time and Talent forms were gathered at the Ministry Fair Sunday in the Stewardship campaign. The numbers of forms received is down considerably from recent years. The Stewardship Committee has a meeting on December 1, 2004 to review and evaluate the Campaign.
3. Chuck, Laura Chiu and Walt Lundin talked to Caryn Brady. Walt summarized Caryn's responses to a number of written questions. See Attachment 1 hereto. This was not what the council was requesting. There were several comments on what an exit interview and how they work and the fact the process pursued with Caryn, while possibly enlightening, was not an exit

Edited on Nov 23, 2004

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interview. Jim Mc brought some information describing the nature the process of a real exit interview and proposed that it be included in a procedures manual for the parish. There seemed to be an informal consensus on the PC that we need to get some better procedures in place. Veronica is working on creating a policy manual. She reminded us that only Fr. George can set policy, and she is trying to arrange a meeting with him. She has a list of potential policies on office procedures and staff policy. She needs input from Fr George. The PC expressed a hope that the info that was gathered will be appropriately communicated to the Catechetical Board. No one agreed to make sure this happened. The PC again expressed a desire to hear from Susan Clingsmith on the progress toward establishing the catechetical boards and to get her response to the info from Caryn.

MOTION RE: HHC EFFORTS RE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING (CST)

Mike Veuve made a presentation to the PC outlining an action plan for the parish created by the HCC for the purpose of organizing an outreach and education effort aimed at educating the parish regarding current Catholic Social Justice Teachings. The HCC is asking the PC, as the lay leadership of the parish, to formally support this effort. The initial presentation of this request was at the October meeting. At this point each member of the PC was given an opportunity to respond to this request. The PC uniformly supported the efforts of the HCC.

The formal motion was negotiated to finally read as follows:

MOTION: for the Pastoral Council to adopt and endorse the proposal by the Human Concerns Committee to implement its action plan for the year 2004-2005 to educate the parish on CST and to engage the parish in active ministry. A copy of the action plan is attachment 2 hereto.

The motion carried unanimously with the caveat requesting that the HCC use special care to be sure that statements from the HCC do not imply that specific practical actions that the HCC may propose are the only ones that can derive from Catholic Social Justice Teachings.

NEW BYLAWS:

Chris Lundin has been making required revisions to the bylaws, and has circulated the draft document. There followed a lively discussion of the Bylaws, and some changes were noted. Chris will make the changes as agreed and will circulate the updated document to the PC and the Strategic Planning Org Committee for continuing work.

COUNCIL REORGANIZATION:

1. Consensus Decision Making Class: There was general agreement that the class was well done and welcome. It answered a lot of questions people had and opened up some exciting new possibilities. Jim M. asked if we could have another training where we actually got to do it to see how it could work on a real issue.

2. NEW PC STRUCTURE: Veronica voiced a concern about the role of the representatives from the various ministry boards. Chris Lundin clarified that the reps on the PC are there to represent the parish as a whole...they are NOT lobbyists for their board. Veronica is also concerned about having spaces on the PC for people who aren't serving on a committee...not everyone has time to go to all these meetings. Query: If they aren't on a committee, what will they bring to the PC? What voice would we be trying to hear by creating such spaces on the PC?

3. PASTOR'S EMAIL REPORT: Fr. George's written report to the PC, due to the fact that he is gone on vacation this week, is attachment 3 hereto. The PC agreed that we

need to talk to the Pastor about his comments, and we all agreed to have an executive session of the entire PC with Fr George on December 3, 2004, when he is already scheduled to meet with the executive committee. Veronica will confirm that Dermody Center is available and will order the pizza. We will meet at 7:00 p.m. to review the issues raised in the email report.

4. TIMING OF THE TRANSITION: Chris Lundin reported that the Org Committee is targeting us to be ready for the transition by February, 2005. Everyone currently on the PC should be thinking about what role they would like to play in the new structure. Since we have now reviewed the Bylaws at a PC meeting, we can vote on them at the December meeting. In theory we could then implement them at the January PC meeting and have a big kickoff in February. The new bylaws are the sort of thing we should decide by consensus. John expressed concern about any sudden transition. We all need to be thinking about what this will mean, and how it can work.

5. BULLET POINT CHARTER RESPONSES: Helen reported that about half of the ministry teams have actually produced draft bullet point charter documents and are in the process of getting their people in place. Helen has not heard from Susan Clingingsmith on the status of the Catechetical or Youth Ministry Boards, or from Arnoldo on the Hispanic Ministry Board, although Sr Chapa has always had such a board, so this is probably just a formality. Helen will follow up with each of the Ministry Boards and try to have a written statement on the status of the creation of their charter document for the December meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Chris will make the agreed changes to the draft Bylaws and will circulate the revised document to all interested parties well before the next PC meeting.
2. Helen will contact the ministry board liaisons and request completed Charters for the boards.
3. Veronica to organize the meeting with Fr George and the PC on December 3, 2004.
4. Veronica will follow up and continue to try to get together with Fr. George on questions she has about the draft parish policy manual.

DECEMBER AGENDA:

1. Report on Stewardship Campaign by the Stewardship Committee
2. Bylaws and Status of Organizational Transition Process
3. Report by Liturgy Board on Survey of Environmental Needs of All Three Sites
4. Report from Veronica on status of production of policy manual.
5. Quarterly Financial Report
6. Report by Susan Clingingsmith on status of her efforts in the parish.

Next Meeting: December 8th at OLR

Attachments:

- 1 Tully report
- 2 HCC Action Plan on CST for 2004-2005
- 3 Fr. George's Report to the PC for 11/10/04
- 4 HCC Activity report for October

Attachment No 1 to Minutes of Pastoral Council Meeting November 10, 2004
Update Report
By Chuck Tully

Census:

Preliminary work is being done to clean up the database before a census is to happen. The major changes that are being made to the parish database come from the return of the parish picture directory forms. Those that are not delivered and returned back are also helping to update the database. Meanwhile Betty Gildea is working on the “inactive” parishioners in the database. Cathy Miller said at one time the total was as high as 500 but now it is down to around 250. This is being done at the same time two new events, the Rectory Revival and the Opportunity Center Campaign occurred. The Catechetical program has a large number of unregistered parishioners to enter as well. At the start of the new year, when things settle down, is probably the best time to regroup and send a census form out.

Time and Talent Preliminary Results:

Total number of Time and Talent sheets returned as of November 9th is 140. The number of Time and Talent sheets seemed to be much lower than last year’s number. The Time and Talent sheets that are still coming in at this stage are mostly all renewals. Micky Martin said of the total, 45 are from OLR with 27 renewals, 7 are renewals with a new box checked, and 11 are new. Micky was concentrating on the parishioners that checked the new box and letting the various ministries know of the new interest expressed. An observation made was that even though the numbers were down from around 78 or so, there was still about the same number of “new” people for OLR. There will be another announcement for the forms to be returned.

The main goal of the six-week Stewardship Education Program was to inform and educate parishioners regarding Stewardship. I think this was accomplished through Fr. George’s weekly column, the Stewardship box (Reflections & Responses) in the bulletin, the six weekly bulletin inserts, and the various speakers at the Masses over several weeks.

I have solicited some comments about the program from some parishioners and more are always welcomed. The Stewardship Committee will have a wrap up meeting on Dec. 1st to review the whole program.

Caryn Brady Exit Interview Summary:

THE DROP-OUT BETWEEN SACRAMENTS

There has been a decline in registration and attendance following First Eucharist/Reconciliation until preparation for Confirmation. Caryn believes this is common nationwide. She feels that to keep young people involved, something must be said to their parents so that parents will be witnesses that church membership is 7 days a week, ongoing and participatory. The message must be that the reception of sacraments is not a rite of passage from one milestone to the next, not a cultural custom and not a fulfillment of family expectations. It is when families show their united support by volunteering and when the entire church community (clergy, staff, and parishioners) is

demonstrating its quiet support, that children come to accept religious practice as a norm. Later, in adolescence, reinforcement of this comes when our youth keeps interacting with like-minded peers.

HELP WANTED

There has been a persistent difficulty in getting catechists and aides. Caryn suggests that prospective volunteers might feel too inadequate in their own understanding of their faith to be able to pass it on. (Apparently there is a commonly -accepted belief that the post-Vatican II generation is one of "uncatechised adults".) Caryn leans toward an inter-generational catechetical model in which different age groups, each at their own level, participate in learning. (Walt says 11 parishes in the diocese - St. Athanasius is one - have started "Generations of Faith" based on inter-generational learning. One benefit is that the entire community displays a common interest.

Contemporary life-styles, fast-paced and over-committed, are another reasons for our difficulty. But until there is a stronger and more commonly-demonstrated sense of our baptismal calling and a more common sense of our union in faith, priorities will always compete and the parish needs may come in second.

RETENTION OF CATECHETICAL VOLUNTEERS

This, too, has been a persistent problem. Caryn feels adults may not feel competent to lead as a "catechist", but they are capable of handling a table activity in an inter-generational setting. They would want an "expert" to whom they can refer deeper or theological questions. In time, they will gain competence and confidence. (See below TEACHER EDUCATION)

TEACHER EDUCATION

We know there has not been much eagerness to attend training opportunities that are available from time to time. Caryn recognizes the problems for parents with children and their reluctance to attend training, especially out of parish. In addition to "easing-in" (see RETENTION above) she suggests trying to offer training on the most user-friendly basis we can manage: possibly in-parish video presentations [Faith beyond 2000], small-groups, etc. Made more comfortable, this process might lead participants, when family needs are easier to fulfill, to seek adult education.

CONFIRMATION OUTSIDE PARISH

To some extent (no attempt has been made to quantify this) some parish families have chosen to take Confirmation candidates to parishes where there is a 1-year rather than 2-year Confirmation process. (Our diocese has not standardized the time requirements nor the age for Confirmation.) When Confirmation is received elsewhere, there is a weakening of ties in the parish community and a weakening of ties to peers in the parish. The result, to some extent, may be a shallower faith commitment that results in separation during adolescence and the early adult years when family example and influence are less effective. Caryn: ". . . confirmed youth, but not necessarily disciples." "To remain faithful, it takes an owned faith."

PARENTAL AND PARISH SUPPORT

Caryn recognizes the difficulties, but would wish for a much more united front (clergy, staff) in working toward broad support.

BUDGET

Given the means, Caryn would have preferred less workload. Among her duties during her time with us: Youth Minister (high school and junior high) ,Catechetical Director, sacramental preparation (1st Reconciliation and Eucharist), RCIC and "Take Another Look".. This with two sites and one site coordinator. There is considerably more staff at the two parishes where she now is working - a total of seven full-time and two part-time.

Call To Disseminate The Catholic Social Teachings

Pope John Paul II

"The Church's social teaching is itself a valid instrument of evangelization."
Centesimus Annus, 1991

"Faced with the grave social problems which, with different characteristics, are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in **the Church's social doctrine** an answer which serves as a starting-point in the search for practical solutions. **Spreading this doctrine is an authentic pastoral priority.** It is therefore important "that in America the agents of evangelization (Bishops, priests, teachers, pastoral workers, etc.) make their own this treasure which is the Church's social teaching and, inspired by it, become capable of interpreting the present situation and determine the actions to take" (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World)."
Ecclesia in America, 1999

U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops

"Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind"(Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with "the least of these," the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the eucharist."
Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, 1998

"For too many parishioners, our social teaching is an unknown tradition. In too many parishes, social ministry is a task for a few, not a challenge for the entire parish community. We believe we are just beginning to realize our potential as a community of faith committed to serve those in need and to work for greater justice."
Communities of Salt and Light, 1994

"The ministry of justice and service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and **a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice** by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts."
Renewing the Vision, 1978

Bishop Patrick McGrath

"Strategy A: Develop a knowledge and understanding of Catholic Social Justice Teaching through worship, catechesis, direct action and advocacy. Provide opportunities for every Catholic to participate in living the social justice teaching of the Church."
The Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of San Jose, 2002

How Will We Respond?

Human Concerns Committee St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Proposed Action Plan for Year Ending June 30, 2004

Background

Catholic Social Teachings (CST) have roots in Hebrew testament (esp. Prophets) and Jesus teachings and example and are expounded in modern Church teachings including documents of US Catholic Conference of Bishops

Diocesan Pastoral Plan includes Social Justice as one of four primary goals

CST have been primary focus of public discussion over past few years
War in Iraq
Election issues

CST provides a way to extend the Stewardship campaign & further strengthen our parish community's spiritual base

Overall objectives of HCC in FY2005

Implement the Diocesan Pastoral Plan by helping to educate parish concerning CST

Expand opportunities for parish involvement in social justice actions

Specific actions

Insert brief (50-100 words) article in bulletin each week

Quote from CST document (plus possible reference to week's scripture)

Suggestion on how to take action or implement in life

Place posters describing CST at each worship site

Work with Director of Liturgy to incorporate CST/social justice issues into Prayers of Faithful each week

Work with Director of Youth Education/Catechesis to incorporate at least once during the school year discussion of CST

Work with leaders of major volunteer groups (e.g., St. Vincent de Paul) ways in which more extensive use of volunteers can be made and then assist in publicity of those opportunities.

One targeted source of volunteers would be families

Human Concerns Committee St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Proposed Action Plan for Year Ending June 30, 2004

Source documents of Catholic Social Teachings (available at www.usccb.org) include:

Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility
Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions
A Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty
The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response
Living the Gospel of Life
A Place at the Table
Jubilee Call for Debt Forgiveness
Renewing the Earth

CST in a nutshell: Below are key themes from Catholic social teaching.

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Caring for God's Creation

Dear Executive PC Members,

This is my e-mail report, since I will not be present for the next PC meeting.

My reflections emerge out of the Consensus Building meeting we had last Sunday with Sr Pat Mitchell. Besides affirming all that I have known about consensus decision making, I seemed to understand better the role of the PC. We have been grappling with this issue for a while, especially since so many have left the PC.

What I gathered from the comments that I heard on Sunday was the reasons why our PC has not been effective in the past and will not be strong and valuable in the future unless we are humble enough to start all over again (the other expression could be: humble enough to plan our own funeral). I liked the jubilee idea of giving rest to the land to allow it to be fertile before we plough it once again for a new harvest.

1. It was strongly stated that the PC needs to have a clear Mission. I don't think we as PC members know what our mission statement is, and neither does the parish. How can we move into the future without a clear mission statement? I recommend that the January retreat be dedicated only to the process of coming up with a clear mission statement. Jan 9 is a Sunday and the feast of the baptism of Jesus. I would suggest spending that entire afternoon and evening to verbalizing a clear mission statement. Sometime in the spring, right after Easter, we could have parish site assemblies to communicate this mission to the entire parish. By Pentecost, each site, clear about the parish mission statement could nominate 3 or 4 parishioners, so that we could have 9 or 12 members in the newly formed PC.

2. Sr Pat Mitchell does not think, and I agree with her, that we should have a representative PC. Is the PC a place to hear reports from different ministries? Is the PC a supervising board for staff members and parish boards? All the good work done till now by the reorg. committee can help us have groups and boards that make the work of the parish and its mission happen. Like, for instance, the recent Stewardship education organized by the stewardship committee.

3. The PC should not consist of elected members (as our current bylaws state) who desire to be elected because they have a specific agenda: improve the sound system, change the pews, start a children's choir etc. Those whose faces are well known in the community tend to be elected. What we need are leaders, who by consensus, will help us grow into a stronger faith community. I also heard Sr Pat Mitchell say that the PC is not always a gathering of parish leaders that takes a unified stance on political issues. That is not the role of the PC. It would be the role and the task of the Human Concerns Committee, for instance, to educate and challenge the entire parish to take a unified stance on political issues. It would be the role of the Catechetical and Youth boards to educate and challenge the entire parish to take a unified stance on religious education issues for our children and our youth.

We have done a lot of good work recently as PC members. But the current system is not working and will definitely not sustain a consensus decision making model.

We need to start afresh. I am challenging all of us to walk humbly with our God and with each other.

Sincerely,

Fr. George

Attachment No. 4 to Minutes of Pastoral Council Meeting for 11/10/04
Human Concerns Committee Report for November 2004
(HCC, PIT, JF, Svdp, PIA)

HCC:

We have the first fruits of Time and Talent Sunday - a new member.

Our committee is hosting a meeting with Pax Christi on Monday, 11/22, OLR Hall, 7:30pm. All parishioners are welcome.

Some members met 11/6 to plan the parish forum on the death penalty moratorium on Sunday, 11/21, OLR Hall, 1:30pm. Fr. Rubio will be the moderator. **WE URGE COUNCIL MEMBERS TO ATTEND, BECAUSE THIS IS A (DEFERRED) COUNCIL ISSUE.**

The parish liaisons to the diocesan Human Concerns Commission will attend a breakfast meeting on Tuesday, 11/16, to share reports on their activities and strengthen a diocesan network.

We learn that opening of the Opportunity Center has been set back to Summer 2006 - some issue about school tax impact funding [don't ask me] and concerns about the effect of piledriving on delicate instruments next door at PAMF.

PIT:

Deanery advisory groups to the diocesan implementation team will meet 11/15 to learn details about the 1/13/05 meeting with Bishop McGrath to review progress made on the diocesan Pastoral Plan. (Council members, clergy, staff and leaders of parish groups will receive invitations to attend this meeting.)

JF: We have three parishioners in JF IV

SVdP: Nothing to report.

PIA: Nothing to report.