

St. Maria Goretti Pastoral Council Meeting
November 24, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Kathy Grzybowski, Chair. Frank Peregrine led the opening prayer.

Present: Fr. Mike, Kathy Grzybowski, Mark Shapleigh, Frank Peregrine, Bob Bruni, Linda Eckstein, Jim Shunk, Eugene Mortensen, Mary Jean Patterson, Shannon Kramer, Ken Brown, Peter Mortenson, Deacon Dick, Deacon Jerome, Tim Endres, Mike O'Leary, John McClure and Susan Wilke. Absent: Fr. David, Kevin Streetar

October 2009 Meeting Minutes - The minutes of the October 27, 2009 meeting were approved.

Finance Update – John McClure provided an update on the Parish's actual financial performance versus budget for the period of July 1 thru Oct. 31, 2009. The full year budget is for income of approximately \$2.7 million, which is a 5% reduction from last year. Expenses are budgeted to be in line with revenue, and certain expenses were reduced to conform to the reduced revenue expectation. So far this year, we are performing very well and hope to maintain this kind of performance even in the face of a questionable economy. If things take a turn for the worse, the expense side may need to be addressed. Fr. Mike said that we are watching our finances each and every month in order to stay ahead of any unexpected changes. John noted that our parishioners have shown remarkable generosity during such tough times. The remaining principal on our debt is approximately \$360,000, not including future interest that may be incurred.

Reports by Commissions on their Strategic Plan Progress - Parish Life and Vocations are reporting tonight.

Parish Life Strategic Plan Update

An update on the Commission's progress toward meeting the Strategic Plan was presented by Shannon Kramer. The specific goals of beginning or maintaining food-based events and family social events have been met. Establishing and implementing protocols for the events is still a work in progress, with the smaller events being documented first. Developing a parishioner based project was accomplished with the 50th anniversary cookbook. Several independently operated clubs utilize the parish center, including scouts, book clubs, etc., and the need to develop new groups has not been established. Promoting and delivering information to the parish community is ongoing, with the Catholic Herald and website being primary communication vehicles. The need to foster volunteerism is seen as an ongoing challenge for the Commission.

Vocations Strategic Plan Update

An update on the Commission's progress toward meeting the Strategic Plan was presented by Mark Shapleigh. The plan's goals have generally been met, with most goals being ongoing in nature. In fulfillment of plan objectives, many activities were cited. Promoting "religious of the month", featuring both men and women, is being strongly considered. It would supersede "seminarian of the month", and would provide a broader view of available vocations. National vocations awareness week is coming up January 9-17. Prayer for vocations is one of the biggest focuses of the year, and provides a foundation for the Commission's efforts. A chalice program is used to bring attention to seminarians, as it raises awareness of vocations. The website will be utilized more extensively to reach people.

Education Commission Report

Ken Brown provided numerous updates. Regarding the school: we are halfway thru the 2nd quarter and things are going well; conferences for K-8 were very positive; Paul Trameri, our new maintenance person, has been a blessing; Dec. 4th will be the Gift Mass for students to bring gifts for children serviced by St. Vincent DePaul; Christmas concerts will be held Dec. 16th (Kindergarten) and Dec. 17th (grades 1 and 2). Because of our increased enrollment, concerts for other grades will be later in the school year (grades 6-8 in March, and grades 3-5 in May). Youth ministry programs are running really well, and enrollment is running at a high level. Middle and high school groups are focusing on service over the next two months. Grades 1-5 Religious Education (RE) programs are doing an Advent Angels program to earn money and food for families in need; are holding a Thanksgiving potluck dinner this weekend; and had a parents Reconciliation prep meeting that was well attended.

The middle school youth ministry program has 180 children registered, including 76% participation (96 out of 126) of our own middle school students. Parents and students are both contributing to the energy and faith in this program; many students are also bringing their friends. High school youth ministry held the first of 2 confirmation retreats over the weekend of Nov. 21-22 at Camp Gray. Twenty-six of the older high school teens have volunteered as catechists and leaders in RE and YM.

Adult Faith Formation (AFF) has upcoming Advent Sunday readings, cluster events for returning Catholics during January at Blessed Sacrament (in conjunction with Queen of Peace and St. Andrews), a catechism/creed presentation in the works, an upcoming film in January entitled "The Fifth Gospel, The Land and Sea of Galilee", and a tentative date of January 21 to discuss the importance of family meals and family prayer. The 9 RCIA candidates experienced the Rite of Welcome on Nov. 15th.

Parish Life Commission Report

Shannon Kramer provided an update on regular Parish Life activities. The spaghetti dinner took place the preceding Saturday. While it was well attended (approx. 460), the numbers were lower than in prior years. The opening of deer hunting, a close road game for the Badgers (Evanston, IL) and the beginning of Thanksgiving week were cited as reasons for parishioners to be potentially busy with other activities. The current thinking is to have next year's event earlier in October. The Christmas party will be chaired by Diana Peterson, and will take place on Dec. 6th. Movie nights are scheduled for January and March. Trivia night is in the planning stages, and Jay Wilson and Kristy Andringa have confirmed that they will be returning. Fundraising outcomes were provided, with \$92,350 coming from all 11 events. Some events are not geared toward fundraising. The top five fundraisers are Auction (\$41,000), Goretifest and Trivia Night (\$15,000 each), Golf Outing (\$9,000) and Fish Fry (\$7,000). The concern was raised again about the lack of volunteers for events such as the Spaghetti dinner, and how the few volunteers shoulder a disproportionate share of the work. It was suggested that members of the Commission attend the January council meeting to discuss.

Worship and Prayer Commission Report

Mary Jean Patterson and Linda Eckstein reported on upcoming year plans that include Lenten pro-life adoration for adults and children. Sr. Denise distributed information for the Commission to educate on the Roman Ritual for Holy Communion and worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass. The Commission also noted a marketing challenge for getting families here.

Vocations Commission Report

In addition to their strategic plan update, Mark Shapleigh and Eugene Mortenson provided some information on upcoming activities. Vocations week will include a Chalice Program, with a sign-up table to be available following Masses. A program that would feature "collector cards" continues to be pursued.

Stewardship Commission Report

Tim Endres reported that 560 pledge cards have been received to date, which is on par with prior years. The campaign will continue through mid-December, and will include follow-up mailings for those who have not yet replied. Starting in January, we will be promoting a different commission each month.

Human Concerns/Social Justice Commission Report

Bob Bruni reported that the commission discussions were focused on identifying new members and a new commission chair. St. Vincent dePaul activities include: a food drive, a toy giveaway, a matching program for donations raised to pay off debt on the new service center and a blanket drive at the end of January. It was also reported that the 40 Days for Life concluded successfully. There are numerous efforts going on this time of year to help people in need, including the SVDP activities mentioned, the Giving Tree, and a military service project, for which boxes were assembled in the prior week. Catholic Charities will attend the January meeting to train for Respite Care.

Evangelization Update

Kathy Grzybowski provided an update on our evangelization efforts. Feb. 27th will be the date of the morning workshop for parish leaders following the 8:00 am Mass. A book entitled The Evangelizing Catholic has provided an excellent guide for reviewing and improving our regular practices that help to attract new residents to our parish.

Pastor's Report

Fr. Mike Burke

Fr. Mike reported on a number of issues affecting the parish, including:

- Diocesan health insurance may change
- An increase in tax and assessment for Annual Catholic Appeal is possible
- Midwest Security has been selected for parish security and lighting. We needed to reduce the size of our designed system in order to keep the price tag near our \$50,000 budget.
- Parish debt was commented on previously by John McClure. Fr. Mike reiterated that it has been quite a feat to reduce our debt from around \$1 million at the beginning of this year to \$360,000 today.
- Additional bricks are available for the Commemorative Garden.
- Our church is being used by the Diocese for confirmation ceremonies of other parishes. Bishop Morlino is combining multiple parishes together in order to get larger numbers of participants, with May 9th at 4:00 pm being targeted.
- Fr. Mike commented that Martha Doherty is doing an excellent job in managing our website. He encouraged all Commissions to make full use of the website as a communications tool. Martha is also taking over the newsletter Gatherings.

The next meeting will be held on January 26, 2010. **Note:** The next meeting has been rescheduled to January 25, 2010.

Closing Prayer

Fr. Mike Burke