

**St. Maria Goretti Pastoral Council Meeting
September 22, 2009 – Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Shannon Kramer led the opening prayer.

Present: Fr. Mike, Fr. David, Kathy Grzybowski, Mark Shapleigh, Bob Bruni, Linda Eckstein, Eugene Mortensen, Shannon Kramer, Ken Brown, Peter Mortensen, Deacon Jerome, Tim Endres, Mike O'Leary, Sue Wilke, Martha Doherty (guest)

Absent: Frank Peregrine, Jim Shunk, Mary Jean Patterson, Kevin Streetar, Deacon Dick

The minutes of the meeting of August 25, 2009 were approved.

Parish Website – Martha Doherty updated the Council. Traffic is rising. Last month, the website had more than 2,500 unique visitors, 25% of whom were on the site for the first time. The most commonly used pages include the main page, the “teacher web” pages, and information pertaining to the school faculty and staff. Schedules are up for the various liturgical volunteers and a form is now available for electronic funds transfer of parishioner pledges and gifts. We want to promote the new member log-in, and Fr. Mike indicated he would like the website expanded and to use Martha as much as possible. Future plans include more volunteer sign-ups for events and an “Ask the Parish Council” feature,

Parish Strategic Plan – Mark Shapleigh reported that he and Kevin developed a short guidance piece to assist each commission in summarizing their progress towards reaching each of their goals in the current plan. This short list of questions will be given to the commission chair a month ahead of that commission's report. We start in October with the Education Commission and the Worship & Prayer Commission. We will devote reports for the first half of the year to progress on the current plan, which was written in 2006. Where we go with the development of new future plans will be more the focus in the second half of the year.

Education Commission – Ken Brown reported on developments. At the school, enrollment is up in both K-8 and pre-school. A new curriculum is being introduced in science, art, and music. The school newsletter is no longer printed, but is now on-line; this saves money and has been well received. Teachers in grades 5-8 are now using the Teacher's Ease software for grades and performance. Both open houses went well. In other areas...RCIA started this week; there have been eight inquiries thus far. A team is in the process of forming to conduct Adult Faith Formation this year. Youth Ministry is still in need of some volunteers. They have appreciated all the help provided at Camp Randall Stadium with the seatbacks.

Parish Life Commission – Shannon Kramer updated the Council. Kristin Pilgrim and Michelle Robinkurch have volunteered as co-chairs. A new agenda format for meetings has gotten the group off to a good start this year. Key objectives for the year are: Assisting at events, documenting the events, and looking for incentives to increase volunteer pools. Upcoming events include a movie night, a fish fry, and the auction. The Christmas Party committee is still in need of a chair. Parish cookbooks remain in good supply and continue to be for sale.

Worship & Prayer Commission – Linda Eckstein reported the group is examining a number of issues. Among these are the relevancy of their goals in the strategic plan, the areas where they tend to overlap with the Education Commission, and where their focus should be for the coming year. A number of things are under consideration, including Advent Holy Hour, prayer for priests and vocations, and the benediction.

Vocations Commission – Fr. David acknowledged Kathy Grzybowski's help over the years and welcomed the new commission liaison, Eugene Mortensen. The group has been working on revising its presence on the SMG website; a final draft will be heading to Tim Endres soon. Work continues on the plan for the seminarian-of-the-month board. Recruiting new members has become an important priority, so each current member will bring a

suggestion to the next meeting - ideas from Council members are welcome. The Traveling Chalice program is doing well, as a robust list of family volunteers has developed.

Stewardship Commission – Tim Endres reported that the group is doing the final edit for the information on the annual pledge campaign. A flyer in the bulletin and a commentator announcement will be the initial publicity the weekend of Oct 31-Nov 1. The following weekend, Finance Chair John McClure will speak on our financial status. The next weekend, Nov 14-15, is Commitment Sunday, and details of the coming year's budget will be shared. Finally, the concluding weekend will be Nov 21-22, when the traditional presentation of the yellow pledge boxes will be made. The commission will consider getting some basic information about the campaign on the parish website.

Human Concerns Commission – Bob Bruni shared developments. The availability of the chair and co-chair for the coming year is uncertain. A goal is to re-contact and re-energize the membership. Forty Days for Life begins tomorrow. Our parish's time slot is Sunday, October 11th, from 1-7 pm, when two individuals per hour will be present to pray. A few brochures were passed around on this event. The St. Vincent de Paul food drive was just last week, so the exact nature of the outcome isn't known yet. The group is considering a bulletin insert with a survey to assess the parish's needs and perceptions.

Evangelization Committee – Kathy Grzybowski shared a number of programs the group has been examining. "Best Practices for Parishes" is an assessment of seven dimensions of parish activity with a focus in invitation and hospitality. "Envision" is a comprehensive, three-year process which stresses living faith more fully, inviting and sharing with others, and fostering gospel values in society. "Proclaiming Christ 2009" is an on-line resource available to parish leaders and includes 17 focus sessions. "Awakening Faith" uses conversation-based groups and structured dialogue to bring individuals back to or into the faith. Another good resource has been St. Gregory Parish in Milwaukee, and the committee is considering inviting their contact person to come talk with us. Council members suggested a number of questions for such a meeting. The planned tasks that remain ahead are: 1) Exploring available resources; 2) determining our evangelization goals; 3) deciding what we wish to gain from the process; 4) establishing a timeline; 5) developing key focus areas; and 6) conducting a comprehensive analysis of our structure.

Pastor Update – Fr. Mike distributed "Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council", asking members to read it and return it by the conclusion of their term on the Council. Bishop Morlino asked for inclusion of the bulletin insert on influenza this past weekend and in the coming weekends. There remains concern among some for the taking of the Host by mouth. Monsignor Ken Fiedler is seeking help for the meal program at the multi-cultural center. In the absence of a finance report, Fr. Mike stated that envelope giving remains strong, though the offertory is down a bit with the poor economy. We are evaluating surveillance and lighting options to improve security on parish grounds. Some other local churches are trying to refurbish a few nearby apartment buildings through Habitat for Humanity. Deacon Jerome and Deacon Dick are leading the Adult Faith Formation program this year; we'd like to do more with our fellow cluster parishes in this area. Fr. Mike emphasized the need for widespread support of the Parish Auction late in October; it's a big event that helps us pay down the debt on the buildings. Fr. Mike asked for the Council's prayers for the upcoming assembly dealing with the priest shortage. There is a high number of potential retirements that could occur in the next couple of years in the diocese. We would like to see the planting of the landscaping for the Commemorative Garden yet this Fall, so we need to keep going with our funding efforts. Finally, Fr. Mike expressed his concern for the need to further support the ministry areas of Marriage & Family Life and Divorced & Widowed in our parish.

Voice of the Parishoner – Various topics were noted or discussed including use of the parish center by outside groups (there is a detailed policy), the anonymity of questions directed to our website (they are anonymous), and assistance to parishioners in crisis, either directly by parish staff or referral to the right resource.

Fr. Mike led the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned. Next month: October 27 at 7 pm.