

HOLY FAMILY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – January 28, 2009

PRESENT: Father Dennis, Father Robert, Phil Behling, Mike Lynett, Mike Beuche, Mark Hirschmann, Harriet Lazinski, Dave Schulz. Pam Ringsred, Paula Hogan, Claire Wycklendt, Penny Kelsey, Greg Kelsch, Andy Vaughn plus several others with particular interest in the Mass attendance topic, **ABSENT:** Kevin Long, Tom Gaeta, Lucia Korom, Tony Monfre

PRIOR MINUTES: The Dec 2008 minutes were approved with minor edits.

HOUSEKEEPING: Dave S and Mike B will coordinate hospitality after the 2/8 8am Mass. Harriet will send some thank you notes on behalf of the PC. March begins annual discernment process. Next PC mtg is 2/24, joint with St Roberts, at HF. HF Dinner dance is 2/14.

MEET THE STAFF: ANDY VAUGHN MINISTER OF LITURGY & MUSIC: Andy described the multiple ways he oversees this ministry, ranging from the more visible responsibility of being the main accompanist for the parish, to less visible responsibilities, including for example preparing and directing the choirs, preparing the order of worship, coordinating the physical preparation for each Mass, and other coordinating tasks, especially as the parish goes through this transition period. Father Robert offered public appreciation for Andy's generous and effective service. Phil B noted how well the music fits each Mass.

FINANCE UPDATE: Not offered by Tony who was absent. Key information folded into other parts of the PC meeting.

REVIEW OF 2008-2009 PARISH COUNCIL GOALS: *Stewardship Committee:* a 2/26 meeting will gather together those who responded to a letter from Father Dennis asking them to take a leadership role in the newly reconstituted stewardship committee. *Evangelization:* This initiative will likely be incorporated into a possible new collaboration subcommittee, consisting of two staff people and two PC members from each parish. *FIOF:* \$670k pledges so far from about 290 families. A final letter will be sent in March to those who have not responded. *New shared pastor arrangement:* Father Dennis commented it is helpful when his part in committee meetings is at the beginning of the agenda. Father Robert mentioned that the administrative hassles are present but are far outweighed by the gift of being in touch with so many people.

MASS ATTENDANCE DISCUSSION: The PC heard recaps of prior committee work, developed a list of 11 potential actionable ideas to consider at a later date for potentially increasing Mass attendance, and engaged in thoughtful discussion. The 11 ideas include:

1. Harriet as liaison to the stewardship committee will convey the idea of combining the appeal for time, talent, and treasure back into one consolidated campaign.
2. Greg will put a note in the bulletin asking that anyone who offered to volunteer but has not been contacted to be in touch with him.
3. Add a multi-part series in the bulletin reviewing each part of the Mass
4. Extend the prayer for the faithful, e.g. with a Mass intention book
5. Encourage the use of name tags, perhaps as a routine at Mass and committee meetings
6. Encourage people to bring a friend to Mass
7. Start a children's choir (with the caveats that resources are lean, it should not be performance based, and would it in fact help increase Mass attendance?)

8. Have readings available for each Mass, with discussion questions in the order or service or bulletin although Father Dennis comments that the Word is meant to be proclaimed. (See below.)
9. Address sound system problems
10. Have prayer basket with petitions brought up with the gifts
11. Change to one Mass on Sunday, starting with an experimental trial run in the summer.

Discussion included wide-ranging comments, for example:

Some people report not attending because they don't find the Mass relevant or meaningful. Are we trying to improve the numbers or improve the community? Community comes from connections; the most likely way to improve attendance is to reach out to people on a one-on-one basis who are currently not attending church. Lately Mass seems more disjointed than usual. Is this a part of the parish getting to know the priests and vice versa, and so will self-resolve or would a full-time liturgist be helpful? Too many announcements is distracting.

Father Dennis put the conversation in context by offering the following points:

Mass is ritual prayer. What is important for ritual prayer is to listen and to participate, which implies a continuing need to teach more about the Mass. Ritual prayer presumes a community, which implies the need to focus on building community. Also, "as Catholics we are not all on the same page". People feel differently today about the Mass attendance obligation, and people who come each week have a different experience from those who come less often. We must not only deal with diversity but see it as a blessing and encourage "more talking". Everyone knows someone who does not go to church. It takes courage but asking someone like that to go with you to church and perhaps out to breakfast afterwards builds community through the personal connection. The Word is meant to be proclaimed, not read. Instead of listening to each word, let the Spirit open up a new part of the reading for you each time you hear it, through a phrase, one line, or even one word. When you hear the reading in a new way, "that is God touching you." Participation is active, not passive. Consider the difference between a ho-hum Amen and a strong Amen. People come to church to feel a connection with God. Liturgy should offer that. Be cautious about adding gimmicks. Ritual speaks for itself. For every new idea, ask what would that do to the Mass, to people's connection with God?

BOOK DISCUSSION: HOLY LONGING Ch 3: Postponed

COMMITTEE LIAISON UPDATES: *Bldgs & Grds:* Has plans to put FIOF funds to work, esp. for organ and heating system. Church doors need careful locking to not trigger expensive fire/police response to a false alarm. *School Bd:* has raised \$43k towards \$50k goal, with 50% of families participating. HF hosts 2/5 WFB spelling bee. Mission statement is being updated. *Staff:* Phil commenting on the scale of activity in church reports "lots is going on" and being handled. *P&W:* is planning upcoming holidays and revisiting mission. .

PASTOR'S REPORT: Father Dennis will be on vacation 2/8-20, with Father Robert substituting.. Stewardship is off to a good start. School boilers have to be replaced. For Holy Week each parish will have its own services each with one priest. Father Robert will be at HF this year and Father Dennis at HF next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Hogan

BLURB FOR THE BULLETIN:

The Parish Council heard a description of Andy Vaughn's responsibilities as Minister of Liturgy and Music and thanked him for his multiple services and commitment. In addition to hearing various committee reports and checking on progress towards this year's Council goals, the Council spent considerable time discussing the topic of encouraging Mass attendance.