

St. Monica's Parish
West Wyoming, PA

Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2016 – 6:30 p.m.

Present: John Romani, Chairperson; Denise Ohl, Vice Chairperson; Lucyann Skvarla, Secretary; Fr. Leo McKernan, Darleen Zelinka, Joanne Austin, Howard Kelley, Joe Lisewski, Maria Parra, Carol Skalski, Frank Sobeck, Tom Tomsak

Absent: Deacon Bill Jenkins, Mike Bounsante, Maria Marianacci

John Romani led the opening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. He then welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a happy new year.

Roll was recorded. After a short time to review the minutes and after one correction was noted (the Pro-Life March is on January 22), a motion was made by Joanne Austin and seconded by Tom Tomsak to approve the minutes of the December 13 meeting. Motion carried.

Council continued its discussion of Sherry Weddell's book *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples*. Chapter 5 was written by Katherine Coolidge and is titled "A Parish Moves Ahead." The following points were noted:

- The chapter begins by describing the physical changes which occurred at this church that "presented a new orientation, toward the broader community." (p. 86)
- A church cannot be closed in on itself; there is a need to go out to the peripheries.
- A parish is very complex. To implement changes, large or small, in a parish is a delicate process. (p. 86)
- Every parish has a history; take into account what the experiences have been; long-time parishioners have a vested interest.
- Invite everyone to participate; it is very important to listen.
- Engage key leaders
- Change is not a quick process—it takes time.
- Must get the word out to the entire parish
- Although one outcome may be expected, something else may happen that is valuable.
- Use the wisdom of experienced people; a collective wisdom
- Use what you have—within already existing activities, small changes could help people encounter Christ in a more personal fashion. (p.89)
- Three parish efforts were used at the parish described in the chapter:
 - Small communities
 - "Renew" efforts years ago—some had a positive experience; some had a negative experience
 - Not everyone is at the same place in their relationship with Christ
 - Break the culture of silence, the reluctance among Catholics to speak personally about faith-related matters. (p. 90)

- The First Fifteen
 - Every committee meeting starts and ends with a prayer
 - Need to get Mass attendees more interested
- Parish-Based Retreats
 - Missions are generally not very well attended
 - Parents need to talk to their children about what they heard at Mass
- The parish described in the chapter developed a seven-word mission statement: “Love God. Love all people. Make disciples.” (p. 93)
- Overall, the chapter has good ideas, but it is not a blueprint for every parish.

Darleen Zelinka gave an update of activities flowing from the Family and Youth Ministry which included the following:

- Nine people signed up for the Pro-Life March on January 22.
- The Confirmation retreat will be held on Thursday, February 11, and will be conducted by Darleen and Fran Zelinka and the Capuchin Sisters. There are 55-60 students preparing for the sacrament.
- Family visits continue monthly as well as the Lord’s Day meals.
- For the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord next January, formal invitations will be issued to families who had a baptism in the family over the last 3-4 years. There will be a special blessing.
- This year, Valentine’s Day is on Sunday. Married couples will be asked to participate by submitting their names and wedding dates which will be read at the Mass they plan to attend that weekend.

The discussion continued regarding a review of the Parish Mission Statement and included the following points:

- Should the Mission Statement be condensed? Is it too long to remember?
- Although many parishioners do not know the Mission Statement, they do it.
- Discussion ensued regarding the words in the Mission Statement that should be kept and words that are missing.
- For our next meeting, Council members were asked to suggest revisions or re-write the Mission Statement.
- Parishioners will be asked for input on the Mission Statement and their vision for the Parish through a Bulletin insert. Replies will be requested by Sunday, January 31, so that Council may review responses for the next meeting.

John Romani reported that the Welcoming Committee assignments to meet new families are going well. Also, the Parish record update is still in the planning stage. There was discussion of U. S. Post Office bulk rate mailings and an effective way to obtain emails of parishioners. It was suggested to have computers available after Masses to allow input of email addresses. Darleen will assist in this endeavor.

Fr. McKernan led the discussion of the scheduling of parish programs and activities. Recently it seemed like we were competing with ourselves for participants to attend different programs. Going forward there will be one major event per week. This does not include committee meetings. Each event will be held for a specific small number of weeks, 1, 2, or

3-week programs. The Symbolon program is currently being scheduled in sections and plans are being considered to hold the Life in the Spirit seminar after Easter and the Called & Gifted program in the summer.

The following up-coming parish activities were noted:

- The Symbolon program will be held for 3 weeks beginning on Wednesday, January 20.
- Catholic School Week begins on January 31.
- The Road to Resurrection will be held on Wednesdays during Lent at area parishes. It will be here at St. Monica's on March 2.
- The Men's Conference will be held on Saturday, April 23.
- Ralph Martin will speak here at St. Monica's on October 22. It may be held Friday evening and Saturday morning. Fr. McKernan and Denise Ohl will work on getting the details for the event.
- A healing service will be held in April with Msgr. Esseff.
- The Parish will host Mother Teresa's Haven on July 4-17.

Brief updates and other business included the following:

- Several families with recently baptized children were acknowledged at the Masses on the weekend of the Baptism of the Lord.
- Eucharistic Adoration. For things to succeed in the parish, we need a good base of prayer. It was suggested to have a speaker to focus on Eucharistic Adoration.
- The Committee for Construction is being coordinated by Frank Yamrick and 17 people signed up for this committee. It was noted that it may be possible for 6-7 parishes to work together on this. Also noted was that there is an established organization in the area.
- Night at the Races. Tom Tomsak reported that \$1,840 has been raised to date which includes the sale of ads, horses, and admissions. Also the license was obtained.
- Joanne Austin noted that Bernadette Rudolph contacted her. Bernadette received a very good report from a participant in the recent bereavement sessions. The next session will be on the Diocesan calendar.

At the February meeting, John Romani will conduct the opening prayer and Joanne Austin will conduct the closing prayer.

The closing prayer was led by Carol Skalski. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucyann Skvarla
Secretary