

St. Noel
Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Minutes for Monday, January 19, 2009

Convened 7:00 pm

I. Opening Prayer – reflection of John 1:35-42

II. Financial Report

A. Summation: Overall collections are down ~ \$45,000 from same period last year.

- Fr. George handed out a summary report.
- Christmas donations were approx. \$11,000 higher than last year (this was not included in summary report).
- Must note that, as was discussed in the last meeting, the parish is in a non-growth mode in terms of new parishioners (i.e., total numbers have been flat).
- There is a strong possibility of cuts if financial trend continues.
- There was common agreement among council members that the shortfall should be made public to parishioners. Included in any statement, however, should be an emphasis on how the church has thus far practiced fiscal responsibility.

B. Tuition Assistance Program

- Fr. George handed out a plan from the Finance Committee on an approach to address financial and membership inconsistencies in the tuition reimbursement program to local Catholic schools.
- The report noted that there are several families receiving tuition subsidies who do not donate to the parish either fiscally or in terms of service.
- The Pastoral Council was in full support of the Finance Committee's plan to meet with all families in the program to set some financial and/or service standards.

III. Youth Group – “Youth Group is doing just fine.” – Fr. George

IV. Social Justice – Alice gave a reminder of the “Just Dessert” program on Feb. 18. A reminder will be placed in the bulletin. Participants can bring a dessert to share, but should notify Alice ahead of time.

V. Banquet Center

- Banquet Center has a new link on the St. Noel web site.
- “Shout” was very successful. About 350 people attended! Similar events are being planned.
- There was a suggestion for possible speaker series. It was thought musical events bring in more money for the center.
- Another wine tasting is being planned for March. Everyone was very excited!

VI. Liturgy Adaptation – There has been a request from the bishop on the preparation of the gifts: chalices are to be filled prior to mass. Carafe brought during presentation will be used for the priest’s chalice only.

VII. PPC November Retreat – Members shared their reflections on the retreat.

- There was a sense that the Divine Word PC did not have a similar spiritual preparation as St. Noel’s; not as “spiritually connected” as St. Noel’s members.
- Family and passing along faith was an obvious important aspect of both councils.
- Strong sense of cooperation during retreat.
- Feeling that both councils were alike in many ways.
- Some looked forward to more sharing during retreat. The format was okay overall but did not always promote constructive discussion.
- A sense that Divine Word PC was very committed to building their parish and the mission of the church overall.
- Feeling that they were also eager to cooperate with St. Noel.
- In general, it was a successful first meeting and will help to build our working relationship for the future.

VIII. Evangelization – The PPC shared in a Liturgical Reflection on this past Sunday’s mass as a possible model for evangelization. Fr. George emphasized that there is great power in our liturgy, but only if people have a chance to “unpack” their thoughts and feelings. The goal of evangelization is to create those opportunities for all parishioners.

Some of the reflections included:

- Homily – Power of the story and people’s personal connections to Tommy. How it is remembered and referred to by people afterwards.
- Music – Different cantors; participation of parishioners; Sr. Kathleen’s excellent performance.
- Gospel – The power of names; confirmation reflections.
- Physical nature of mass – Ritual movement of people; children’s participation; going to mass at a different time; sitting in different pew or section of church impacts perspective; outside environment (darkness, snow, etc., enhances reflection).

Evaluation of Liturgical Reflection:

- It is useful to hear others’ insight.
- Leads to feeling of empowerment: capitalizes one’s participation in and understanding of liturgy.
- It encourages contemplation.
- It was noted that it should be a charge of the PPC to try to find ways to create these opportunities for all in the parish.

Next Meeting: February 16, 7:00 pm.

Prayer – Diane

Refreshments – Tom

Minutes – Sr. Kathleen