

St. Nicholas Catholic Church
Minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 27, 2010; 7:30 p.m.

Members present: Karen Allen, Mary Dougherty, Maureen Fenty, John Kelsh, Graziano Marcheschi, Ann Rhomberg, Leonor Rojas, Susan Schaffrath, Fr. Bill Tkachuk,

Members absent: Nate Clark, David Haracz, Brian Michalski, Gerry Smith

In Gerry's absence, Ann, as Chair, convened the meeting at 7:40 pm and John offered the opening prayer.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 23, 2010 meeting were presented to the group. Mary moved to approve the minutes. Graz seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Deacon Candidate/Deacon Formation Program: The follow-up to open discussions in the parish will be the four-part series of presentations in May. The topics and presenters are as follows:

1. Priesthood of the Laity since Vatican II- Susan Ross
2. Women and Ordination to the Diaconate - Susan Ross
3. Permanent Diaconate since Vatican II - Deacon Bob Puhala & Anne Chrzan
4. Tradition and Role of Prophets in the Church - Sr. Patricia Crowley

The plan is for Chris Murphy to enter into the aspirancy year of the program in the fall. We will have until then to make a decision whether to support and sponsor Chris and Bren Murphy through the entire process. If, at that time, we decide that we are not ready to support Chris in this program, Fr. Bill will work with Chris to identify another parish to sponsor his candidacy. Fr. Bill said that his feeling from the listening sessions is that the parishioners who were engaged in the sessions were split in the decision, most of the indecision being fueled by painful and emotional feelings surrounding the role of women in the Church. He feels that the issue of the role of women in the liturgy can be addressed in other ways. This decision should not be made by a simple majority but rather from a sense of consensus on the matter. This led to a discussion on how we can engage the younger generation into the conversation. It seems that the average age of the voices that expressed concern on this issue is more middle aged; young adults have a different view of the challenges. If left alone, it might be likely that in twenty or so years, these issues could not be relevant anymore. The research indicates that youth of today are supportive and engaged in social causes but do not relate these with religion. It was recommended that it would be fruitful to have these conversations with the youth and have Aaron lead the discussions with his group.

It was also felt that the need for a deacon within the community has not yet been addressed. Fr. Bill responded that he felt that after the presentations in May, there might be more understanding of the process and the needs of the parish. Also the question of if the parish is “ready” is also unclear. The next PPC meeting, which will be after the presentations, will focus on this subject and the hope that the opinions of the parish will be represented thru the Council members.

Another expressed opinion was that there is discomfort with the fact that this decision to send a person to the deaconate program is being deferred even until June or September. This is what the Church does and it does not feel right to postpone the decision. Fr. Bill reiterated that this decision is not being deferred indefinitely. He felt that by the fall the parish will know where we stand on the issue. Also he felt that, since Chris is such a strong candidate, he has advanced the timeline for this conversation earlier than what Fr. Bill would have done without a strong candidate. Not every person who feels called to enter the program can do so, for various reasons. The series in May could bring more clarity to the issue and perhaps a discernment evening after the series could help us come to some consensus. Fr. Bill also stated that the paperwork has been filed and Chris is scheduled to enter the aspirancy year in the fall.

On the topic of how we would be handling the call of a second deacon from within the Hispanic community, it was felt that the process would be completely different and not so intensive since there is already a precedent with Mario Tamayo.

PPC Ad in the PJXXIII Gala Book: In the past few years, the PPC has taken out a full page ad and the Council felt that this year should be no different. However, it was felt that members should give what they could, and the size of the ad would be determined on what was collected. Maureen would be responsible for collecting the money from the members and work with Gerry to get the ad in the Gala Book.

It was also felt that any financial obligations connected with being on the PPC should be explicitly indicated to members before they decide to become a member.

Pictures of PPC on the Web: It was felt that a group picture of the PPC should suffice.

Retreats: On the Diversity Workshop/Retreat, Fr. Bill is continuing to work with a few members of the parish to make this happen.

On the topic of the PPC Retreat/Working Session, it was decided that we should have a half day working session to discuss the questions: Where do we see the Parish going? What are the issues facing the Parish? And how does the PPC (as a group) tie into this? Maureen will send out some dates in late August or early September, asking for availability. It was felt that this session could be on a Friday evening or early Saturday morning.

The next Welcoming Gathering is scheduled for May 16th after the 9:00 a.m. Mass. Mary and John said that they would plan to attend to greet and answer questions.

UPDATE: Following the PPC meeting, this date has been rescheduled for a weekend in June.

Other Business:

- Fr. Bill asked, on behalf of the staff, if it was important to have a float in Evanston's Fourth of July Parade. Considering that this could be an opportunity to market the parish, it was felt that this would be a good effort. The application deadline is June 13th. Fr. Bill charged the Council members to think about a few names of parishioners who might be interested to coordinate this project.
- The 11am mass on Pentecost Sunday will be a bilingual mass with a reception following. There will also be a 1pm Mass for Spanish-speaking parishioners who cannot attend the 11:00 (as there is the 9:00 Mass for English-speaking parishioners).
- There is a slight change in the Mass schedule for the Sunday of the Parish Picnic – June 27th. In addition to the 11am picnic mass, there will be both a 9am and 1pm mass in the Church to give parishioners an option.
UPDATE: Since the meeting the Mass at the picnic location has been cancelled and the starting time of the picnic has been moved to 1:00. There will be a condensed Sunday Mass schedule both on June 27th and July 4th to accommodate the Parish Picnic and the Evanston 4th of July Parade. The Sunday morning Masses will begin at 9:00, 10:30, and Noon (Spanish).
- There was a short discussion on having a Golf Outing for the parish as an additional fundraising event. This led to the idea of having a strategic fundraising team in the parish. However, this would be a longer term discussion.

Susan offered the closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. at the Rectory
Opening Prayer: Graz; Closing Prayer: Ann