

St. Nicholas Catholic Church  
Minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council Meeting  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

Members present: Karen Allen, Nate Clark, Mary Dougherty, Maureen Fenty, Graziano Marcheschi, Ann Rhomberg, Leonor Rojas, Gerry Smith, Fr. Bill Tkachuk,

Members absent: John Kelsh, Susan Schaffrath

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Following the Staff Appreciation dinner, the Council meeting began at 7:45 pm the opening prayer offered by Karen.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the December meeting were presented to, and, unanimously approved by the group.

There was an additional revision made to the minutes of the October 26, 2010 meeting to more accurately reflect the comments of the Council. These revised minutes were approved with the changes. These minutes will be emailed to the group prior to the next meeting.

**Fr. Bill's comments:**

- Sunday, February 27 will be the Annual Youth Group Pancake Breakfast. This will replace the regular Coffee Cake Sunday. This was the Sunday that the PPC had offered to sponsor Coffee Cake Sunday which will now be held sometime before lent or after May. Fr. Bill will check with Laura Nutini and let the Council know of other available dates.
- The Parish Lenten Retreat will be held on Friday, March 25, 7:00 pm and Saturday, March 26. The focus of the retreat will be lay ministry and Susan Ross will reflect on "The Spirituality of the Laity."
- **Deacon Candidate/Deacon Formation Program:** Chris is about half way through his aspirancy year and his background in the seminary. His experience will help him with the newly revised program.

Fr. Bill (with the Steering Committee) recently sent a letter to Cardinal George, asking him to advocate for the inclusion of women as deacons and to bring this issue to his brother bishops in the United States as well as to the Vatican. The letter also asked Cardinal George for the opportunity to meet and discuss this in person. The Steering Committee, Fr. Bill and Lynne Mapes-Riordan (officially an "inquirer" to the diaconate, i.e. a person who is thinking of applying for the diaconate program) met with Bishop Francis Kane. This was a positive and encouraging conversation and Bishop Kane revealed that if the discussion were allowed to happen through the proper channels, i.e. not the public media, the Cardinal might be willing to bring it to Rome and into private conversations with fellow bishops. To date, the steering committee has declined offers to join with other groups and offers, and there has been a concerted effort to avoid the press. The steering committee has invited a speaker to talk to the parish during the first week in April on the topic of women in the diaconate (*Sr. Chris Schenk of FutureChurch*). The parish has also backed off the idea of sending letters to other parishes lest the letters get out to the press. Fr. Bill will talk to other pastors at their meetings, and the committee will talk to people in other parishes when they approach us, to help share what we

have learned. But we will not be seeking to form or build formal alliances. Lynne has clarified that she has no personal interest in ordained priesthood; she will pursue any studies within the context of what is available to all lay ministers in the Church.

Several education and formation sessions will be scheduled through the course of the year for parishioners. On the question of if there was anything that we could do proactively to bring everyone into the conversation it was felt that the education opportunities and conversations are a stepping stone in the right direction. Fr. Bill also said that Phyllis Zagano (Catholic theologian) has offered her expertise and the fruit of her studies to the steering committee to better prepare the members to engage in a productive discussion regarding the theology and tradition behind this issue, especially when the group meets with Cardinal George.

- Over the years money has been set aside for the poor in the community. These funds, from special collections at Thanksgiving and Holy Thursday, have been set aside for special needs and for circumstances that cannot be covered by Vincent DePaul Society funds. However, this fund has not been used much in recent years. Most recently, there was a little assistance given to fund needed updates to the online St. Nick's List. The parish gets regular requests for parish sponsorship but has not typically sponsored groups in the past. This year the Staff has decided to make a donation to the *Out of the Darkness* Community Walk, which benefits the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). However, the staff has recommended that in future years such decisions should be made by the PPC (i.e. parishioners deciding for the parish) not the staff. It is envisioned that a list of requests could be given to the Council on a yearly basis and a decision to either sponsor or not sponsor a group or groups could be made.
- Members of the Finance Council will petition parishioners to review their regular financial contribution to St. Nicks. They will speak at each Mass during the last weekend in January and the first two weekends in February and will introduce the new GiveCentral program, which will officially replace the ParishPay program in March. This program provides greater flexibility to establish a regular giving pattern and to manage and adjust contributions online.

### **Follow up on August Retreat Topics:**

The PPC Membership document that was published to the parish a few weekends ago has not generated any feedback or comments. There was a suggestion made to have a PPC table at the Pancake Breakfast to answer any questions. However, it was felt that the Council could host a Coffee Cake Sunday in the near future.

Fr. Bill asked the Council members to honestly pray about our preference of timing to end our term this June or next year. Also, to think about how much longer you would be willing to serve or not serve as best serves the PPC for next year. He asked that members send him their preference and thoughts via email over the next few weeks.

### **Other Business:**

- Maureen presented a bulletin from a different parish which was given to her by Sally. The bulletin included a short introduction by the PPC chair and an insert titled "Meet your Parish Pastoral Council Members (2010-2011)" which listed each of the PPC members with a short bio. The Council was encouraged to think if a similar communiqué could benefit our parish.

- A suggestion to have a joint meeting with the staff was well received. Fr. Bill will work with the staff to decide on a date.
- The Liturgy Council, an advisory group, is in the development stage that will meet monthly. The purpose of the Council will be to plan, advise, coordinate and evaluate parish liturgy and to make sure all aspects of the liturgy run smoothly. Lynne Mapes-Riordan will chair the group and David Philippart and Kate Bradfield will serve as the staff members on the Council.

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

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Upcoming Meeting Dates: Tuesday, February 22, 2011, 7:30 p.m., at the Rectory  
(Opening prayer: Graz; Closing prayer: Susan)  
Tuesday, March 22, 2011, 7:30 p.m., at the Rectory