

St. Nicholas Catholic Church
Minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 24, 2009; 7:30 p.m.

Members present: Gerry Smith-Chair, Nate Clark, Mary Dougherty, Maureen Fenty, John Kelsh, Ann Rhomberg, Susan Schaffrath, Leonor Rojas, Fr. Bill Tkachuk.

Members absent: Karen Allen, David Haracz, Graziano Marcheschi, Brian Michalski.

Guests: Dan Vicencio

As Chair, Gerry Smith called the meeting to order and introduced Dan Vicencio from the Race and Ethnic Unity Committee (REUC). Susan offered the opening prayer – a Hebrew prayer of Thanksgiving.

Race and Ethnic Unity Committee (REUC): Dan Vicencio gave the PPC a brief history of the formation of the REUC. The ministry was formed in the late 1990's in response to issues relating to racial justice in the community. The committee initially included groups from other parishes within the Evanston community. The mission of the REUC is to bring together the various ethnic and racial communities in a spirit of sharing and fellowship. The Committee also serves as a resource for the Parish and wider community to maintain a multicultural/multiracial sensitivity in day to day decisions, functions, and activities. However, in recent years, there has not been much activity within this ministry and Dan's objective at this PPC meeting was to more clearly define the role of the ministry. The question raised was if this ministry had achieved its goal and whether it would be beneficial to have a free-standing consultancy group instead? The outcome of the ensuing discussion was that there is still a definite need for a group/ministry within the parish. It was felt that the group should reorganize and focus on a limited, well-defined mandate versus the broader mission of the ministry. The group could appraise how we as a parish respond to the needs and sensitivities of parishioners of varying ethnic backgrounds and how do we embrace our cultural and ethnic differences. Identify activities and resources that are available to help increase our sense of community and better know our fellow parishioners. The group should continue to act as a resource for other parish ministries as needed. It was decided that Dan would follow-up on these suggestions with other members of the ministry and the larger parish community.

Gerry, on behalf of the Council, thanked Dan for joining the meeting and report on the REUC, as well as his commitment to the parish. He left the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 27, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

Pastor's Comments:

The agreement between the School and St. Nicholas and St. Mary Parishes is almost finalized. There is one major issue still under discussion, which is how the school portion of capital expenses will be funded. St. Nicholas Parish has agreed to cover half of the school portion of capital expenses in addition to the parish share; the St. Mary Finance Council is hesitant to make this commitment given their current financial situation. However, he does not anticipate any problems with finalizing the document before Bishop Kane's January 1st deadline.

In connection with the “Catholics Coming Home” initiative, Fr. Bill informed the Council that there will be several commercials airing over a six-week period leading interested people to contact their local parish or diocese. These commercials will feature people sharing their stories of coming back to the Church. On a parish level, in addition to existing brochures and other written materials, we will be developing cards to raise interest in the program. Information and contacts will also be added to the website. Sr. Christina has a program called “Fundamentals of Faith” which will be offered in addition to several programs from the diocese. Homilies will also call on parishioners to become evangelizers in simple ways. The funding for the commercials and the program comes from fundraising and other sources and not from the assessments that parishes are charged.

Other Business:

- Leonor updated the Council on a new initiative by a parishioner to learn more about the Hispanic community and way of life. The idea is that there will be a one-on-one partnership with a member of the Hispanic community to learn about each other’s language and customs. This could be a start of a new ministry on a more personal level.
- The Holiday Festival is scheduled for the weekend of December 5-6 and all are encouraged to attend.
- Annual staff appreciation party: The PPC will host the party in late January or early February. It was suggested that perhaps Brian and Karen could plan the event – Gerry will contact them to confirm their availability.
- The schedule of meetings for the coming year was distributed and Gerry will check with Joan in the office to confirm that these dates are on the calendar. Also, members were asked to email Maureen with their preferences for the opening and closing prayers.

Gerry offered the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Rectory
Opening Prayer: ; Closing Prayer: