

ST. NICHOLAS PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
October 23, 2018
Minutes

Present: Fabiola Alfonso, Damian Barta, Nora Bondi, Sheila Hebein, Cynthia Judge (via phone), Suzanne Lefevre, Arturo Medina, Michael O'Donovan, Betsy Quinn, Fr. Joe Tito

Absent: Jose Juan Moreno and Yvonne Smith

Opening Prayer: The meeting opened with prayer at 7:10 pm.

Report on Renew My Church Meetings – October 2 and 3, 2018

Parish members attended the Archdiocesan meetings held at the Rosemont Convention Center and provided their report of their experience. Present were Don Miro, Tom Lenz, Mary Burke-Peterson, Sheila Hebein, Chris Murphy and James Chuckas-Holzhauser who provided the following observations.

Impressions

- Meeting was well organized with 2,500 attendees.
- It was an opportunity to see in person the diversity of the Archdiocese in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and political views.
- There was a lack of women, people of color, and young people among the presenters for the first day.
- Priests meeting in small groups separate from the laity was not a good message.
- There was nothing new for those who went through Encuentro process. Very disappointing that there was so little diversity and presence of young people. Summit was missed opportunities. Was hoping for more based on what Cardinal Cupich had promised to those who work with youth.
- I really liked that we prayed together, very intimate. We need to call on Holy Spirit now.
- I felt a bit uncomfortable but in a good way about being uncomfortable.

Content of Presentations

- The presenting team shared a model of church renewal that was successful in Nova Scotia, Canada and challenged the audience to consider how it could be adapted in Chicago.
- Main presenter came in with message of hope despite downsizing, scandals and broader church issues. He focused on the call to return to the fundamental experience of hearing the Good News and how it affects you. If you have been enlivened by the Good News, then you can evangelize. The need to hear the Good News, be formed and go out and tell the good news was stressed. It was an authentic call to return to our essence and roots.
- Introduced the idea that when the rate of change is greater outside the institution than inside the institution, then the institution will become irrelevant. Thus the question is, can we find a process or change before we become irrelevant?

- Priests need to build a diverse team and move responsibility away from priest-only leadership. A more collaborative and relational model, not just delegating is needed.
- Are we going to throw resources to ministry or buildings? Cupich said he would appoint lay administrator if parish needs priest.

Remaining Questions

- How can we evangelize when a lot of people are leaving?
- Question of whether I can bring someone to Christ. If I cannot do this, the church will die.
- How do we adapt this for our location, diocese, how do we use this model?
- Not sure I came away with what are the next steps.
- Are we going to throw resources to ministry or buildings? Cupich said he would appoint lay administrator if parish needs priest.

Summary

- Would encourage the parish staff and Pastoral Council read Divine Renovation as a group to begin process.
- St. Nick's does not need to wait for the formal process of Renew My Church to begin. We should start working on making connections with neighboring parishes now. We can start working on models of shared leadership now and not wait for a mandated process.
- Build upon knowledge that many priests are open to shared leadership.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 25, 2018 meeting were reviewed and a motion to accept the minutes was made by Michael O'Donovan and seconded by Damian Barta. Minutes were approved unanimously with no amendments or changes.

Pastor's Report (Fr. Tito):

- Faith Direct - 60% of Give Central participants have moved to Faith Direct.
- Mark Kearns is working with Maureen Connelly on preliminary design of new parish website.
- Children's program material is with Malachy Cross and Alex Lule-Rivera for finalization. Nursery people would be happy to host young families in the nursery after 9 am mass on a Sunday. Would need some teen babysitters to help with this. Sean Lucas and his wife offered to help. Nora Bondi will reach out and encourage them to set a date.
- Women in the Diaconate group met and some will continue and will meet again on Oct. 24.

Report on Listening Sessions held on October 13/14 after English masses:

Sheila Hebein and Cynthia Judge reported that:

- Good feedback on process. People were glad that it happened. Pope Francis calls for the church to be a listening church. That's why raising our voices is still a good idea. Listening sessions are about healing.
- There was a lot of love for St. Nick's in the sessions. We should not forget about that.
- Next step is to prepare report and publish it soon. Suggest short report with actual data attached.
- Sheila Hebein has spoken with Susan Schaffrath and she will help to draft a report.

Next Steps were discussed:

- Listening sessions for those attending Spanish masses have not happened yet. Hispanic leadership will meet Oct. 24 to discuss best method or time to discuss.
- How do we bring up some of the suggestions that were made in the listening sessions?
- Lots of concerns about financial giving to church and indirectly to the Archdiocese as a reaction to the abuse scandal. Suggest that we try to explain how finances work for the parish. Suzanne Lefevre will speak to Maureen about reviving a previous presentation on how parish donations are used and money spent.
- Suggestion: Host additional listening sessions with other area parishes on other next steps.
- Fr. Tito: Would there be a delegation to go to USCCB meeting in Baltimore? No decision was made.

Meeting adjourned 9:08 pm.