

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
Saturday, September 15, 2007

The meeting opened with a reflection on the Parable of the Talents led by Fr. Brewer. Father asked Council members to reflect on the parable throughout the year. He expressed his hope that as a group and as a parish we'll be able to do greater things and that everyone in the community might come to know Christ better and lead others through Christ through the efforts of the Council. He asked us all to prepare to help the community take the next step and to take the risks that we're called to take by the Gospel, especially the risk of sharing who we are with others.

Christine Caron Gebhardt opened with the first agenda item, approval by the Council of the school's new mission statement. The current version dates from 1997, and the faculty and administration suggested modifications as part of the regular process of self study leading to the annual school improvement plan. After brief discussion, the mission statement was approved unanimously. Andy McKenzie thanked Christine for the faculty's dedication; Sam Francescon added thanks not only for the work involved in rewriting the mission statement but in living it out every day, working with our children.

Father Brewer opened up a discussion about liturgy. He offered his vision of liturgy as strengthening community in a way that no other work or activity can. Ninety-nine percent of our community gathers in Church for the Eucharist, and we must feed all those who are present. Everything we do should flow out of the liturgy itself; we gather as community to pray and be strengthened to build up not only this parish community but all other communities of which we're a part. Enhancing the liturgy needs to be our main priority. For example, people may not realize that our altar servers have sat in the same place on the bench in the sanctuary for years without ever being able to hear anything that's going on. They haven't heard the readings, the Gospel, or a homily. This is symbolic of the attention we need to turn to the liturgy; we need to feed everyone who comes to the liturgy, and this in turn will feed everything we do, whether it be new facilities or new ministries. We plan to create a liturgy committee to assist with planning and improvements.

Father next turned to discuss the school. Alice Valiquette and Christine Gebhardt have done a marvelous job; the school has grown and prospered, but it now needs a gym to continue its growth. He said that the first time he saw the current gym, his immediate reaction was, "Wow, this is really small. Where do people sit? How can this serve the needs of our older students?" Even such facilities needs flow through the Eucharist, though. All of our efforts are animated by what takes place when we gather for Mass.

Liturgy will be central to what we do. Father asked all who have problems or issues with the liturgy or who have ideas for improvements to come forward and offer advice and feedback, and we'll look for effective ways to allow for this communication. Each liturgical celebration has its own special character, but liturgy needs to be a place of life, the words and music need to move us. If there is no life to our liturgies, then everything else we do will just be whistling in the wind.

In response to a question about increased opportunities for daily Mass, Father said that he would like to serve the community's needs and do what the community needs and wants. There was some discussion about realigning the existing schedule, and of the possibility of the Ultreya gathering moving to Wednesday evenings. Some discussion ensued about the best way to ask for people's opinions (bulletin insert, survey, pastoral assembly, school Friday folder flyer.) The discussion did not come to a clear resolution, but the staff agreed to work on the best way to sample opinions of parishioners.

As a carry-over from the social justice discussion of the last meeting, Dave Kuhlman introduced the topic of the resolution on a moratorium on executions in the State of Tennessee. Jim Bryan was contacted by a diocesan group working on the moratorium and asked that the Parish Pastoral Council consider the adopting the resolution on behalf of the parish as several other parishes in the diocese have done. The text of the resolution was sent to council members in advance of the meeting.

In the ensuing discussion Barbara Nanni offered the opinion that the statistics provided in the resolution were open for discussion and asked the question whether the council should speak for the parish on this issue. John Nanni pointed out that there is evidence which would contradict several of the points made in the resolution. John wondered whether the issue would be a good topic for a Wednesday night adult education series in which all sides of the issue could have a hearing. Father Brewer stated that church teaching is actually more nuanced than it would appear to be from the text of the resolution, and while there is no universal prohibition of the death penalty, Pope John Paul II did offer the opinion that he did not see how it could be justly applied in our day and age. Paz Haynes echoed John's earlier thought that some discussion would be needed before the council could move on the resolution. There was a brief discussion about levels of jurisdiction (State vs. Federal.) The discussion moved the group toward a consensus that there was a need for some education on the issue and that the council should not act before a broader discussion took place. The motion to approve the resolution was tabled.

After a break, the discussion turned to a more general discussion on social justice issues. Dave Kuhlman returned to the issue from the last meeting and asked if we needed some more formal group or committee for social justice issues. Bob True asked if part of the problem was due to our inability to know for sure what we mean when we use the term "social justice." Dave responded by offering a number of issues, ministries and activities, including Room in the Inn, capital punishment, immigration, homelessness, Sant'Egidio, which fall under that general umbrella. Kathy Skinner asked if we needed a more organized venue for people to use to put their faith into action. Barbara Nanni responded by asking whether what we needed was perhaps a way to collect information and report on what's presently going on. Father Brewer asked if there was presently any kind of social justice committee that coordinated involvement and provided information (there is not such a group presently.) Marge Tamberino indicated that it's very difficult to get good information about what is going on in the parish; Father Brewer responded that it was his experience that this is a problem at all parishes.

After further discussion about the value of committees and the need for coordination, Dave noted that the present version of the parish pastoral council does not have subcommittees on special topics or issues. Previous versions of the council did have this more traditional committee division of labor, but those structures did not succeed in either delivering the needed coordination or communication and the versions of the council based on those structures were ineffective. Father Brewer indicated that a coordinating group need not be a part of the PPC itself.

Some discussion followed as to whether or not a coordinating group's function would be duplicated by the already existing annual Ministries Fair. Dave wrapped up the discussion by indicating that the council would work with Fr. Brewer to follow up on the issue.

John Nanni then presented the work of the hospitality committee on the design of new information stations for the entrances. These stations are an attempt to provide bulletin board space and storage for promotional materials and bulletins to improve the availability and readability of publications. Three identical units are proposed for the back and side entrances of the church. Cost would be in the neighborhood of \$6-7000.

Dave mentioned that procedurally, the council doesn't approve expenditures but we could consider whether this idea would be worth pursuing. Mary Anne Collins noted that building and grounds issues need to go to the Campus Committee, chaired by Brett Wesnofske, so they can be evaluated and prioritized. Fr. Brewer said that he thought that if the council were to decide something should happen, then we should then go do it. Some questions about location ensued. Jane Greene recommended that we speak to Carl Gebhardt about getting an estimate from him on the work. Dave acknowledged that there seemed to be a consensus that this was a worthwhile project, and a motion to advance the discussion to the next stage carried.

Bob True next opened a discussion about adult education. We've tried to develop programming around Wednesday evenings after the parish dinner in order to promote community, but we've met with mixed results. One of the more popular presenters was Jim Williams who has offered his parenting seminars both here in town and across the country. Other series were less successful in attracting crowds. We've had good presenters but have had limited turnouts. Child care is always an issue and a challenge. Bob asked whether the group thought we should continue to try to program Wednesday nights for adult education or should we try to use the time slot on Sundays between Masses instead?

Kathy Skinner noted that we can't just assume that child care will be there on Sundays as the nursery is limited to age three and under and separate provisions would need to be made for older children needing child care. Additional space would be needed for older children, and classrooms are already in use during this time for PREP classes. So while Wednesday nights seem not to work for people with kids, child care on Sundays will continue to be an issue. Marge Tamberino urged the group to also consider faith sharing groups along with adult education needs; faith sharing groups are in need of more

resources to help support their efforts. Kathy noted that in the past we've done a good job of reaching out to the more educated segment of our population, and we should consider whether we need to improve or extend our offerings for people in need of more basic educational programs. Dave Lybarger indicated that there will be a renewed emphasis on small faith groups. While the discussion seemed to touch on a number of areas of need, it seemed not to yield any conclusive opinion on Bob's opening question. He asked all to communicate with him about what we should do with regard to Wednesday evenings and who the target audience should be for programming on those evenings.

In closing remarks, Father Brewer mentioned that we'd likely meet on a quarterly basis going forward rather than the former three times per year. Major parish decisions would be discussed at these meetings. He said that he prefers to share deliberation and decision making in the parish, and that he felt that his authority as pastor is not diminished by sharing decision making. Jesus chose to send seventy-two disciples out for good reason. He said that he intended the council to share in that same form of delegation. He stated that he saw this group as helping him to understand what the community wanted to see happen. Sam Francescon observed that the best way forward might be to take a wait and see attitude for the short term, and with the added energy invigorating the liturgy and the community, change and progress will naturally follow.

Jane Greene asked that parishioners help start the new Room in the Inn season on November 7th by greeting our guests with a smile and a hello. She brought a plaque acknowledging Christ the King Parish as a participant in the program since 1989 and asked that we hang the plaque in the Parish Center lobby.

The next regularly scheduled meeting was set for January 12, 2008. The meeting concluded with a prayer at 11:45am.