

Minutes
Saint Thomas More Pastoral Council
January 8, 2009

PRESENT:

Yvonne Hanson, Katie Otto, Peter Ries, Barbara Thomalla, OSM, Gretchen Tieder, Darwin Williams, Gloria Wilkie.

Pastor: Fr. Joseph Weiss, SJ. Staff: Peggy Junkin

PRAYER:

We prayed the Sunday gospel and offered intentions. Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Pastoral Council members received the minutes of the December 4, 2008 meeting via email on December 12, 2008. Minutes were approved via email.

Discussion on Pastoral Priorities

Council members discussed the plans to engage the parish in choosing from among the seven proposed pastoral priorities, revised since the December meeting as follows:

- X. Our St Thomas More Community will promote the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. *
- V. Our Community will be known as an inclusive and welcoming community of faith.
- L. Our Community will be recognized as a Catholic parish centered in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
- S. Our Community will foster vibrant parishioners who are generous in their parish and their greater community.
- T. Our Community will be thoughtful and careful stewards of the gifts given to us from God.
- M. Our Community will work to change public systems and laws to meet the basic needs of all.
- J. Our Community will support the faith journeys of all parishioners by offering relevant forums for faith formation and education.

*Note: The U.S. Bishops have named seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching including: life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community and participation; responding to the needs of the poor and vulnerable; solidarity of the one human family; dignity of work and workers; care and stewardship of God's creation.

We want to give parishioners an opportunity to respond to the priorities at liturgies on January 17-18. Our hope is that the parish will grow stronger as a community, and that the sense of special cliques with favorite projects will diminish. Many of the actions in the community are done by small groups; embracing these priorities is a way to say they are "ours". Parish input is an opportunity for spiritual development because the priorities take us to the next level of action, of living the gospel. Every time we provide an experience like this, it is an opportunity to grow as a community.

We will present all seven priorities to the parish and ask for their support and comments, in a format similar to the response to the proposed Mission and Vision statements in May, 2008. We trust the Holy Spirit will speak through the people, without using a process of voting or ranking, to assist in making decisions about use of human and financial resources.

Darwin and Gretchen agreed to receive the response forms and pull them together to present to the Councils.

VISION AND MISSION CELEBRATION

Peggy reported details on advertising the event, getting volunteers, and activities for children. The evening will include Liturgy at 4:30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., program about 7 p.m. and socializing at 8 p.m.

In the past, when this event occurred at the former Immaculate Heart of Mary, committees and Pastoral Council spoke about plans for the parish and recognized accomplishments. The pastor gave a “state of the parish” address. It was quite informal and included dialogue. Every year it was a little different.

Based on discussion of many ideas, the following format was developed for the program on February 7:

- A slide show with photos of sacraments, celebrations, ministry events, etc, emphasizing the message that we are community. This can run as continuous loop.
- State of the parish. This will include report on Stewardship campaign for time, talent and treasure.
- Financial Picture
- Affirming the Vision, Mission, and Pastoral Priorities
- Recognize the ministers and ask people to stand who have participated in specific events, including the school

Approximately fifteen minutes will be given to each of the four sections. Yvonne will coordinate doing the slide show. Peter will be the MC. Steve Thomas will present the Vision, Mission and Pastoral Priorities part; Barb and Katie will do the draft of that portion and Steve can revise and energize the presentation. Tom Boehm of John Peterson could present the Financial Picture. We want the finance portion to have a positive slant, while being honest. Steve Thomas might talk about Laura Jeffrey Academy.

UPDATES FROM FR. JOE

- Census forms are arriving in the parish office in greater number than the stewardship commitment forms. Renee will organize another round of phone calls to those who haven't responded to the stewardship campaign. The School Advisory Committee is willing to call school families. Finance Council members will make calls to other parishioners.
- The Finance Council met last night to work on the 2009 budget and did not discuss plans to address the consistent shortfall in income.

- Fr. Joe presented a list of significant questions related to financial issues. Fr. Joe plans to have small groups of council members and parish members research and discuss these questions.
- The Finance Council will need information from the Pastoral Council about priorities and ways to live the Vision and Mission given the consistent shortfall in revenue. Gene Mason, chair of the Finance Council plans to attend three of the Pastoral Council meetings in the next three months. The Finance Council plans to communicate weekly via email to the Pastor, Pastoral Council, and Pastoral Staff. Finance Council also plans to communicate to the parish via the parish bulletin three times during the budgeting process.

REGULAR PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting is February 05, 2009 the first Thursday of the month. The Council may need additional meetings for financial discussions and budget recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. We prayed the Prayer of St Thomas More.

Barbara Thomalla, OSM