

**Minutes of Parish Council Meeting/Retreat**  
**September 8, 2009, 5:30-9pm**

In attendance: Alexandra Murphy; Chris Olofson; Eileen Estilo; Fr. Patrick Goodwin; Rick Arellano; Thomas Sullivan; Sharon Chipman.

Absent: Paul Canales; Barbara DeLuca; Mary Kate Hollock

Sharon Chipman and Fr. Patrick led us in prayer and defined the role and mission of the Parish Council.

Nametags were distributed. Council members are asked to wear them at parish events to make us more accessible to the community.

We were asked to reflect on two questions:

1. How do you feel the Holy Spirit is calling you in your own life to deeper conversion and transformation, and
2. How do you think/feel the Holy Spirit is guiding our parish for deeper conversion and transformation?

Afterwards, we shared comments and insights on these themes which included:

- St. Theresa is a fortunate, abundant community that seems to be seeking ways to reach outside of itself; ministries and groups such as the Parish Outreach Committee, the Make Oakland Better Initiative, and the Genesis Service are all seeking ways to assist and nurture our larger community – how can we support these efforts? How can we help our neighboring Catholic communities in Oakland? How can we improve Oakland as a whole?
- There seems to be a need to more closely align the school and the parish as a single community:
  - How can we use the talent and resources within these two communities to unify and strengthen us?
  - How can school parents get more involved in the Parish? Sports? Kinder Retreat?
  - Can we reach out to our neighbors on Clarewood and Mandalay and invite them to events at St. Theresa?
  - As a Council, we need to help create community amongst divided groups – groups that ought to experience community together – our neighbors, public school children, parish families and school families. We want to prevent marginalization of non-school families.
  - Some people view St. T's as a cheap private school, not a Catholic school; how can we create responsibility for every family to be involved in making the school and community work. How can we plant the desire to become more involved in our faith community?
    - Increase efforts for a church choir?

- Have a mass once a month where each grade is responsible for the liturgy; all children participate in the mass.
- How can we make involvement in the parish more accessible to all?
  - Perhaps by extending a personal, direct and simple invitation is all that might be required. When you invite people to get involved you show your confidence in them and encourage them to take ownership on whatever level. We need to bring in those people who may be on the fringe and get them invested in our community. How can we plant those seeds on a grass roots level every day?

Tom passed out an information packet that included our roster, meeting schedule, and potential duties. (December 8<sup>th</sup> is a holy day, but we are still meeting. Fr. Patrick encourages you to go to liturgy elsewhere as there is no mass at St. T's that evening).

The Council members offered to attend meetings or functions in place of Fr. Patrick should health issues arise. Sharon Chipman offered that Fr. Patrick should feel comfortable dismissing himself from a meeting, and simply communicate a point a view or direction for the meeting.

Fr. Patrick reinforced the message that being on the Council is an important role, and emphasized our level of responsibility. We are bridges, communicators, and stimulators. We come to the meetings to share information with others, offer ideas and feedback.

Fr. Patrick asks that we always cc Debbie on email to him in the event that there may be things that need to be addressed immediately – especially for time sensitive information that may need to be put in the bulletin, etc...

We will revisit our roles on the Parish Council at the next meeting, but Alex, Rick and Eileen gave a short update on their areas:

**Welcome/Hospitality:** Our primary goal this year is to more fully integrate parish and school functions. There was a combined Newcomer Potluck over the summer, and there is a larger social event on Sunday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> for Newcomers and their Buddy Parish and School Families. All new school and parish families have been assigned a Buddy Family. The Hospitality committee has put forth several other ideas which include, but are not limited to a Singles group and a Funeral Services committee. Alex and her committee in cooperation with Eileen and Chris will explore these ideas. The general consensus was that if we have enthusiastic volunteers, almost any activity is appropriate as long as we bring it back to the faith community – this could be as simple as beginning every event with an opening prayer.

**Stewardship:** Rick and Fr. Patrick talked about the new Stewardship Director for the Diocese. Rick will set up a meeting. Rick and Tom also felt we should use a focus group to explore a different model for the church and school communities

at St. Theresa using Holy Trinity as an example. This model requires the entire community to support both the church and school with volunteerism and financial tithing.

Fr. Patrick asked that we identify schools that are successfully integrating their church and school. What can we learn from them? What are they doing differently than St. T's? How can we reinvigorate families and get them excited about coming back to ministry.

Adult Faith Formation: Eileen updated us on the upcoming Kindergarten/New Family retreat taking place this Saturday, Sept. 12. Her team is working hard to create an interesting and varied program that includes student speakers. Eileen, Stephanie and Alex are revisiting the Welcome packet and the materials in it, especially the ministry directory. Because this information changes so regularly, we will likely use Debbie as a conduit for answering inquiries about that. Whether or not there will be another Ministry Fair this year is questionable. We need to discuss a timetable for the frequency of this event. Eileen also suggested we promote ministry by "featuring" a different ministry in the bulletin and/or at mass each week.

Tom reiterated that as a council we should focus on the 2-3 items we've identified above this year and not spread ourselves too thin.

Fr. Patrick asks that we re-visit the mission statement of the Parish Council at our next meeting. At the moment, it is a long paragraph. It should be 1 sentence.

Chris is interested in integrating school and youth group.

Our next meeting is on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

Sharon said the closing prayer. Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm