

NATIVITY PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday – April 27, 2010
6:30 P.M. – Nazareth Room

At 6:33 p.m., Duane Koble led the Pastoral Council in Evening Prayer.

At 6:46 p.m., Chairman Leon Senn called the meeting to order, pursuant to notice.

Council Members Present:

Fr. Kevin Boucher, Fr. Gary Luiten, Duane Koble, Laura Alderman, Bonnie Faller, Betty Hund, Brenda Lang, Joe Miranowski, Greg Schmalz, Leon Senn, Ed Schwind, Lisa Suda and Corporate Treasurer Michael O'Leary.

Council Members Absent: Mykal Nester, Ken Jablonsky and Chenise Nesler.

Minutes from the 02/23/2010 Parish Council meeting were provided prior to the meeting and accepted by unanimous consensus.

Old Business

(2) Open Positions on Pastoral Council for 2010 – Leon Senn reported that the Youth Minister and Member at Large Positions are still open on the Council. He had contacted one person who was not interested at this time. The Executive Committee was directed to fill these positions by the end of May. Please contact Leon with your suggestions as soon as possible.

Nativity Anew II – Fr. Kevin reported that Anew II dollars continue to flow in. Almost \$1.2M is currently in the bank drawing interest. This summer, the Anew II Committee will consider the phase of contacting people who are not a parish member, but have students at Nativity school. Will also consider another parish phase.

In this same light, the Bishop approved a stewardship campaign company to conduct a mail driven fundraising campaign to increase Sunday Offerings for the entire Diocese. Nativity will participate in the campaign this fall. This type of campaign usually results in a 20% increase. The campaign will acknowledge Nativity Anew II and Nativity's 50th Jubilee Anniversary. If the Offertory campaign has significant results, any excess could be applied towards Nativity Anew II, as another \$1M is needed before reconstruction will begin.

The question was raised, that with Cardinal Meunch Seminary closing and the Bishop's plans to assess all properties in the Diocese; would it affect Nativity's plans? Fr. Kevin replied "potentially", in relation to the opening of another Parish and Catholic grade school in Fargo that would affect Nativity's school enrollment, even though the plan will be to not build too close to Nativity.

Nativity Long Range Plan – Fr. Kevin reported that Nativity is "living the plan". Nothing new to report.

Other Old Business – No other old business to report.

New Business

Nativity's 50th Anniversary Planning Update – Duane Koble reported that the Steering Committee has met twice to date. Duane shared some of the ideas the committee had discussed:

- A search team interviewed four pictorial directory companies and chose a local company who will start the process this fall. More information to follow later.

- A memorabilia sub-committee will be deciding on items for sale.
- An event each month during the Jubilee Year will be planned.
- A Jubilee song and theme has been chosen, “Jesus Christ, Yesterday, Tomorrow and Today”.
- Will hold a Logo contest for designs to be submitted that the committee will judge for a \$100 gift certificate. The logo will be used on all correspondence, banners, etc. Watch the bulletin for more details.
- The Jubilee Year will begin December 24, 2010 through December 25, 2011.
- A formal dinner will be organized and the FM Symphony will perform.
- Are looking for some theatrical people to direct a play and parishioners to participate as actors.
- Bring back the Courtyard Party and invite the surrounding campus neighborhood.
- Possibility of a movie night for each decade that relates to our parish.
- Closing the Jubilee Year will involve looking into the future and what will Nativity look like in 2060? Many ideas are being considered. Contact Fr. Kevin or Duane with additional ideas.

Duane will take ideas provided from the Council to the Steering Committee, which is comprised of three groups: Events, Memorabilia and Art Environment. Each sub-committee is looking for members to assist. Contact Fr. Kevin or Duane with your ideas and your participation is encouraged with the Jubilee planning.

Article Discussion – “How do I get more people to come to church?” by Mullins & Reamer - Duane found this article in “Today’s Parish” and thought it was relevant to Nativity. As Fr. Kevin pointed out, the question is still applicable. He noted that Nativity already does much of what was noted in the article and instead, he altered the question to; “How do we encourage people to be involved in the parish life?”

Our ministries, fundraisers, donations and reputation as a community benefactor are strong elements of Nativity. Being church to one another involves personal face-to-face invitation, which Nativity also embraces.

Fr. Kevin also posed the following questions for discussion. Are we giving witness to Christ, particularly in the Liturgy? What is our identity as a parish? In the past, the school was our identity. What might it take to increase attendance at Masses? How do we foster a desire in people’s hearts to attend? Even though this is a societal problem, what more can we do as a parish?

The article noted the three “h’s” –hospitality, hymns and homilies. Fr. Kevin stated he has heard time and again that we, at Nativity, are very hospitable; and from his perspective, there is a strong participation from the assembly with hymns. Our Liturgy must be the most important thing we do as parish; as church reform is through the Liturgy. He expressed his concern that Sunday worship is not a value for many under 40 years old in our society.

Discussion followed and the council added their thoughts and suggestions:

- Would reviving Christ Renews His Parish help with increasing parish involvement?
- What about a “Bring a Friend Sunday”?
- Reaching the “low hanging fruit” as was discussed by committee right now that Greg Schmalz reported on next.

- So many people are strangers to their neighbors in their own neighborhood, so it was suggested to hold small neighborhood group gatherings in neighborhoods geographically throughout our parish community to promote small Christian community concept. Can use software to map this out. Conduct a personal phone invitation to neighbors.
- Do we as Christians at Nativity really have a personal relationship with Jesus? As so many people are missing this. How can we stir in people's hearts? Change it from a one-sided relationship of Jesus loves me.
- Are Catholics "guilted" into attending church? Are we "hospitable" enough? Are we speaking to the stranger after church or just to those people we know?
- Maybe have a "question of the week" when you greet someone near you at the beginning of church. Have question and name tag once a month.
- When church is restructured, will help with people not leaving out the side door.

Sub-committee work report – Focus on talents, renew your parish – Greg Schmalz reported that an Ad-Hoc committee was formed consisting of Joe Miranowski, Bonnie Faller, Laura Alderman and Greg Schmalz. They met to discuss one of the tools in the book, *Forming Generous Hearts*, a stewardship planning book which includes a strength finder that helps people focus on their strengths & talents and how to apply those talents anywhere. They discussed the importance of stewardship that included time and talent and not just financial.

The book addressed how to engage people in the parish, foster a sense of belonging and the many ways to do this. The strength finder is a tool published by the Gallup organization. To use it, you must buy the book, get on the website, participate in the survey that will then rank you in 34 different themes or talents and identify your top five strengths.

The committee thought this would be an excellent tool as one section of the "big plan"; to tie into other parish involvement ideas such as face-to-face and invitation to discernment for more impact on parish involvement. The committee discussed ideas like the council did tonight. The hope would be that parishioners would feel they are of value to this parish and that their soul is being fed. We need to look at the 20-40 age group since they come to Nativity, baptize their children, and then we no longer see them. How do you keep them coming back and being involved? The young are searching for meaning in their life and here it is available right here with Jesus in their parish. It is essentially marketing what Christ has to offer in this parish community. The committee is asking the Stewardship Committee yet to be formed, to brainstorm this further. Was mentioned that a parish in the Cities tried "Turn up the Flame". The strength finder would be a great supplemental tool. Being that it is costly to purchase the book, maybe buy a few could be available for those who are "searching". The book is \$21.95 new; but can be purchased through Amazon for \$9.00.

The key is to just start; and to start with baby steps; and then grow it from there. Need success at each step to be encouraged to move forward.

Time & Talent for Fall 2010 – Duane reported that the priests have been involved for several years and tried various processes. The question now is, "Who will do this work?" Eventually, the Stewardship Council will be split into two groups. In the meantime, Duane questioned if the Pastoral Council would bring this "time & talent" to a new level?

Chairman Leon Senn noted that changes need to be made to the Time & Talent survey. Was discussed to quit doing the survey and use personal invitation instead. Lisa Suda noted that people sign the time & talent survey, but do not follow through with participating. Leon recommended a

committee from the Pastoral Council, Stewardship, and staff be organized to review the current process.

The Council provided several ideas such as more personal one-on-one invitation in a small group setting such as during a summer neighborhood gathering. What do other parishes do regarding this issue? Duane commented they are doing things similar to Nativity and that some hold a time & talent fair. Duane questioned who would chair an initial group and call people together?" Leon Senn volunteered to initially chair this Time & Talent issue. If interested in helping or if you have more ideas, please contact Leon and reach out to someone to participate.

The neighborhood suggestion intrigued Fr. Kevin. Organizing it will require one person in each neighborhood to facilitate the gathering and questioning the neighbors. What do we want to accomplish? Leon Senn, Joe Miranowski, Betty Hund and Ed Schwind volunteered to assist with this project. Duane Kobe added that he and Chris Steffan would also help. Leon will set a meeting date.

Constitutions & Bylaws for Parish – Last year a lot of time was spent reviewing our Parish Council Bylaws. Duane reported that Bylaws from two of the other committees and commissions would be reviewed each month at the Pastoral Council level for informational purposes. The following Bylaws were provided at this meeting and discussed briefly:

- The Parish Stewardship-Finance Council Charter takes Canon Law and Civil Law and pulls it into one charter.
- Parish Faith Life Commission is responsible for faith formation of the parish.

Per Duane, each commission and committee is to review their bylaws every two years.

Other New Business –

Leon Senn announced that the Pastoral Council's social gathering is scheduled for June 22nd. Leon volunteered to host the social at his home and will email the Council members with confirmation on time and date.

Pastor's Comments

Fr. Kevin reported on the following in his portfolio:

- Has been actively attending various board meetings; i.e. FCSN, Holy Cross Cemetery.
- Is meeting monthly with 13 couples for Teams of Our Lady, a married couple spiritual support group, which has been an affirmation of marriage and priesthood.
- Has presided at seven funerals and seven baptisms this past month.
- Melissa Woinarowicz joined the staff March 1st as Coordinator of Liturgy and Music.
- Has had many requests for spiritual counseling, which is a reflection of the spirit moving within Nativity parish.

Associate Pastor's Comments

Fr. Gary highlighted the following from his portfolio:

- Has been designated as the spiritual director for the men's prayer breakfast that meets twice a month.
- Fr. Davis will be at Nativity this coming weekend from Chimbote, Peru.
- Fr. Gary, Fr. Kevin and Sister Sharon have been busy in Pastoral Ministry visiting parishioners at hospitals and nursing homes each week. Please contact the priests if you know someone to add to their visiting list.

Stewardship Council Report

In the absence of Corporate Lay Secretary Mykal Nester, Corporate Treasurer Michael O'Leary reviewed her report. The first quarter financial reflects income at 22.55% of the budgeted 25% and expenses are down. Have had very few additional expenses this past quarter.

Decrease in attendance continues to be a challenge. Easter weekend Stewardship offertory was at \$18,000 and the past weekend just over \$12,000. Would like to see weekly offertory at \$15,000.

Director of Administration's Report

Duane Koble reported on the following:

- The committee for the Fall Festival met a month ago and Duane was assigned to review the raffle and form a sub-committee to address the development phase of the raffle.
- Campus update – The heating plant worked well this winter. Had to replace the motor and pulley system in the kitchen's 50 year old ventilation system a 50-year-old building. The claim has been submitted to Catholic Mutual.
- God's Gift Appeal is at 63% of the \$120,000 goal, which is slightly behind last year.
- Frank LaLonde has been building a new website, which should be ready next fall.
- Offertory during Holy Week was sent to the Diocese of Fargo for restoration and upkeep of the Holy Land; to the Presentation Partners in Housing and Nokomis Child Care Center.
- Duane commented that he has contacted Olivet to discern if they are willing to lead the Easter Party, as it is a project that Nativity Church can no longer participate in with the lack of volunteers.
- Michael O'Leary reported on the resolution by the Knights of Columbus who chose the "Walk In Freezer Expansion Project" as their fundraiser. Everyone should have received their raffle tickets by mail. The KCs are committed to guaranteeing \$10,000 for this project. Please inform others about the positive reasons for this project and its importance.
- Fire prevention inspection was conducted by new officials in the City of Fargo who outlined the code violations that will be corrected.
- The administrative team attended a technology seminar at Microsoft and reviewed the parish's Internal Management System.
- Nativity's Annual Spring Salad Buffet is on May 5th.
- Summer maintenance of the campus grounds is being scheduled. We acknowledge the Knights of Columbus for their continued assistance with this project.
- Fr. Kevin added that Michael O'Leary was selected as the North Dakota Knight of the Year and will be highlighted in the bulletin. The Family Knight of the Year will be presented soon.

Committee & Commission Reports

Buildings & Grounds Committee – Liaison Bonnie Faller reported that the rectory's flowerbeds need additional mulch. Michael O'Leary said that he would pull together a group to add mulch and dirt. Michael O'Leary will check when the city has mulch available to pick up. The trimming and paving done last year still looks good. Windows will be easy to clean since they are all on one level. Discussed scheduling this maintenance work for Saturday, May 15th. Betty Hund added they would not be planting flowers until the first week in June.

Deanery Representative – Jean Hannig will have a report after the Deanery meets in May.

FCSN – Liaison Laura Alderman reported that this is a busy time of year for the schools. Finished enrollment in March with projected numbers for 2010-2011 at 1,093. The budget has been

completed and balanced. Check the FCSN website for the schedule of the various musicals. Annual Drive will be completed in June with letters going out to the alumni. The TRIP Program will be expanded into the parishes starting at St. Anne & Joachim. Laura has asked the TRIP Program be brought to Nativity this fall.

The calendar is set for 2011. Laura extended a “Thank you” to those who attended the auction that funded enough technology equipment for 15 classrooms.

Health Advisory Commission – Liaison Betty Hund had no additional information to report from her report.

Liturgical Commission – Liaison Lisa Suda had no report since they did not meet last month.

Parish Faith Life Commission – Liaison Joe Miranowski reported that Mary Jane and Jim Foley spoke at their meeting about marriage enhancement and brought ideas to the commission such as holding a couples movie night. Are inviting newcomers to a KC breakfast as well as delivering bread and information cards. Spoke about assembling a picture board of all the veterans from our parish that are serving overseas to remember them. Youth softball team, Valley Fair trip and Belcourt mission trips are being planned by the youth.

Social Justice Commission – Liaison Ken Jablonsky had no report. Fr. Kevin shared an update on the Cooper House. They are working on securing household items. Open house and dedication is scheduled on May 6th from 2-4 p.m. The “Nativity Rooms” are together in one area. Fr. Kevin suggested that we continue to provide the items Nativity originally provided to keep an inventory of supplies available as needed.

Youth Ministry – Liaison Chenise Nesler was absent but provided her report by e-mail to Chairman Leon Senn. April 27th is the last day of Faith Formation that includes WOW and LinC. Vacation Bible School will be from June 6-10 with the theme Son Quest Rainforest. Watch for an article about the Youth 2000 in the May New Earth. Have purchased H.E.L.P. Curriculum by St. Mary’s Press.

Announcements

Chairman Leon Senn announced:

- the next Pastoral Council meeting would be held on Tuesday-May 25, 2010
- the Pastoral Council’s Social Gathering would be held on Tuesday-June 22nd at his residence as noted earlier

There being no further business, Chairman Leon Senn led the Council in closing prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Lang

Recording Secretary