

**St. Margaret Mary Parish
Pastoral Council Minutes
June 4, 2002**

Present: Rick Burton Molly Fara Cathy Kaduk Fr. Bill O’Shea
Don Cronauer Tom Gavin Joe Kash Fr. Danny Soriano
Byron Eden Mike Hawley Tom Walz John Paul Lischon

Also Attending: Mike Prus Chuck Marquis Dan Ptak Sr. Madelyn Gould
Harry Dubnick Mark Oliphant Matt Johnson

Not Present: Diane Sellinger

Opening Prayer: Mike Hawley

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the May 7th meeting were approved without changes.

Welcome to New Members

Matt Johnson and Harry Dubnick were welcomed as new At-Large members, Dan Ptak as the new Youth Representative and Mark Oliphant as the new commission head for CSC.

Parishioner Input

Don asked for updates with his requests on behalf of the Christian Worship Commission from last month. The Christian Worship Commission has given its share of the approval of an automatic external defibrillator. The Administration Commission is gathering additional information for this piece of equipment before they make a decision. The Worship Commission has agreed that handicapped seating can be provided in the front of the church by the baptismal font for anyone who requests it. The greeters will make the necessary arrangements. The request to include a rack for volunteer opportunity brochures has been approved in the two entrance areas. CSC wishes that the rack would instead be located in the narthex, so CSC will make arrangements to install the racks in the entrances and communication will continue between CWC and CSC on this issue.

Discussion Items

A. Approval of FY 2002-2003 Gift to Diocese

Bishop Imesch has requested a contribution from all parishes in the diocese to the diocesan assistance fund. As discussed at last month’s meeting, the Administration Commission has suggested a voluntary gift of \$10,000, which will approximately equal our additional diocesan contribution next year due to our increased weekly collections during the current fiscal year. It was decided that this was a good cause for the diocese, and it can be contributed during the current fiscal year without causing a financial burden to the budget. It would be better to contribute additional funds this year rather than next with the uncertainty of future expenses and collections. In addition, Council requests notification of how the additional funds are distributed. The new Council president will submit a letter with the check to request this information. This will be considered a one-time gift and noted on the financial statements as a separate line item.

Consensus: Approval was given to donate \$10,000 to the diocesan assistance fund during the current fiscal year. In addition, the new president will include a letter requesting how the funds are disbursed. This will be a one-time gift with a separate line item on the financial statements.

B. Approval of FY 2002-2003 Parish Budget

Chuck Marquis presented additional information on the parish budget, including a chart of changes in weekly collections. Collections have been erratic over the past year, but overall have averaged an additional \$3K per week over the prior year. The budget has therefore been adjusted to a forecasted total

receipts for FY 2003 of \$50,000 less than previously submitted, or \$1,555,500. Most of the other data has remained the same. Council members appreciate the diligent work done by Chuck Marquis, Mike Prus and other members of the Finance Committee, and approve the revised budget.

Consensus: Approve submitted 2002-2003 budget.

C. Constitution Change for Election Process

Tom Gavin reviewed the Constitution in light of the experience with this year's election process and proposed no change to the provision for adult representatives. He did suggest, with supporting opinions, a new clause to Article V – Elections, Section 1:

“B. The Nominating Committee shall submit all candidates for Youth Representative to the Pastor and the Pastor shall approve each name before it may be placed on the ballot.”

Council members agree that there might be a need for a change to the Constitution for the Youth Representative and wish to review this issue at the PC/Staff Day and the September meeting, especially after gathering input from the new Youth Representative and Candy Rice. They agree that no change needs to be made to the Constitution for the adult candidates. Additional discussion is needed for the entire candidate election process, since there have not been enough candidates to require an election in recent years. This will be a topic to be discussed at the PC/Staff Day in August.

D. Feedback on Evening with Bishop Imesch

Almost 100 people attended this presentation, and 35 attendees returned commentary forms. Most participants provided favorable comments. They appreciated that the bishop was willing to present at this meeting and that they had the chance to verbalize their opinions and to ask the bishop questions. They appreciated the fact that our parish is addressing the sex abuse crisis. The Adult Education Committee has planned at least two sessions addressing this topic for next year's series. Communication from the Bishop will be posted in the bulletin in the near future.

E. Review and Respond to Bishop's Request for Guidance on Sexual Abuse Policy

Bishop Imesch is preparing for the bishops' meeting in Dallas this month and sent a list of thirteen proposals to all parish councils in the diocese regarding the issue of clergy sexual abuse that will be discussed at the conference. He asked for council members to discuss these proposals as a group and to provide him with comments and suggestions, as well as vote results taken for each proposal.

Proposition: No priest should ever be reassigned to any ministry after a confirmed or proved allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor.

- If it is a one-time offense, no reassignment, multiple times, yes. Zero tolerance is not desired.
- Concern with words “confirmed or proved allegation” – like the vague phrase “found to be credible”. Catholic Church should not be responsible to confirm or prove credibility. This should be the position of the district or state's attorney.
- Concern with time that may elapse between offense and disclosure. After a certain amount of time the criminal system may no longer be involved, but the offender might be still in a position that puts minors at risk.
- Doesn't feel that an offense from prior years (even decades) without repeat offense should cause the priest to be removed from ministry.
- Feels that sexual abuse allegations should be reported to civil authorities, not to the church. The fact that this hasn't been done over the years has caused the current crisis.
- Zero tolerance isn't always the best solution when a person hasn't repeated the offense.
- The words “no priest should ever be reassigned” are very strong and not always appropriate.
- “Ever” is too strong – some allowance should be given for less serious cases.
- A return to a non-parochial ministry would be more acceptable, since putting them ‘out on the street’ without supervision could be worse.

VOTE – 1 yes, 9 no, 4 abstain

Proposition: No priest should ever be reassigned to parochial ministry after a confirmed or proved allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor.

- Important to look at allegations as being just that. Again, should go through proper justice system channels and not the church.
- Sometimes putting a priest back in parochial ministry has been a proper solution in the past, but probably will not be in the future with all of the current problems.
- Worry about “ever” – too definitive.
- Those who are accused usually admit their guilt. Those who don’t are often either repeat offenders who don’t want to stop or are in denial. Too often priests are named who have been later cleared.
- If confirmed, they should not return to parochial ministry, but be assigned to a ministry that will not involve minors.
- Agrees because there is less risk for the children when the priest is assigned to another ministry.
- Worry that loss of priests will mean that there will be more priests serving alone in parishes, which will take away from accountability and control.
- Look for other valuable ministries where priests could work, but still worry about word ‘ever’.
- The Church can profit when these priests are reassigned to a ministry that is a better match.
- Look out for the children first, the needs of the priest second.

VOTE – 10 yes, 2 no, 2 abstain

Proposition: If there is widespread disagreement with either proposition, reflect on this statement: Any reassignment to any ministry after a confirmed or proved allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor must be accompanied with full public disclosure, and in consultation with parishes, victims, and other concerned parties.

- Like concept of full disclosure.
- Feels that disclosure is important for the parish.
- Doesn’t feel that disclosure is advantageous since parishioners will not feel comfortable.
- At times disclosure reverses parishioners’ reaction – recently one accused priest in Chicago area was called back by parishioners.
- Disclosure is healthy for parish but not always for priest.
- Disclosure is important and valuable.
- Support disclosure.
- Information is already public record through the court system and might as well be provided by Church instead of someone looking for it for reporting purpose.
- “Full” public disclosure – is it important for everyone to know or just those part of the situation. Some revision needed on this.
- Allows beginning of healing and reconciliation.
- Agree with full disclosure.
- Too often lately decisions have been made without full or even partial disclosure and has caused problems.

VOTE – 11 yes, 3 abstain

Proposition: Any reassignment to any ministry after a confirmed or proved allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor must be approved by a diocesan fitness review board, which includes lay persons and experts not in the employ of the diocese.

- Totally approves – worked on such a board and it worked well.
- Approve
- Approve as long as findings are public.

VOTE – 13 yes, 1 abstain

Proposition: All allegations involving sexual misconduct with a person still a minor should be reported to the civil authorities whether required by law or not.

- Agree
- No comment

VOTE – 11 yes, 3 abstain

Proposition: All new allegations involving sexual misconduct with a person who was a minor when the alleged abuse occurred but is now and adult should be reported to the civil authorities.

- No comment
- Concern that when things are reported, the civil authorities don't do anything.
- Whether or not civil authorities do anything, it should still be reported.
- Agree as long as the reporting is made with the consent of the victim.

VOTE – 4 yes, 1 no, 9 abstain

Proposition: The names of all clergy against whom any allegation of sexual misconduct with a minor has ever been made should be released to civil authorities.

- This is current practice.
- Not sure that public wants this.
- With current issue, feels this is appropriate.
- Concerned that 'public' is not the public at large but rather someone looking for a story.
- Feels that victim, as an adult, should have a right to decide if it is disclosed.
- Feels that in the interest of getting this behind us it should all be disclosed, and agrees that the victim should have input.
- Feels that all offenses against minors should be reported.
- Feels that all should be reported.

VOTE – 9 yes, 5 abstain

Proposition: The names of all persons who have made allegations of sexual misconduct against a priest should be released to the civil authorities.

- Not sure of legal implications.
- Should not report to authorities unless reporting victims are aware of this.
- Names of victim and perpetrator should be released to authorities.
- Feels that victim should be notified and approve any reporting.
- Doesn't agree – depends on context of how person made allegations. Victim should decide if it goes to authorities.
- Encourage people to report, but not sure that person wants name released.
- Church should not be the one to decide what should be reported to authorities. All should be reported so repeat offenders can be found.
- Approve
- Not sure at this time

VOTE – 4 yes, 10 abstain

Proposition: Dioceses should advise all persons making allegations of sexual misconduct against clergy to report the same to the civil authorities.

- Agree

- Agree and hope that reporting would be done.
- Not sure, but know that support system should be in place.

VOTE – 14 yes

Proposition: The lack of consistent implementation of personnel policies contributed to the current situation.

- No comment
- Agree
- Contributed, but isn't whole reason.
- Not sure if personnel policies were contributing factor.
- Not a predominate factor.
- This is what has been the main problem in Boston.
- Looks like this is what they are looking for to identify as the reason, but this isn't a reasonable question/proposal.

VOTE – 13 yes, 1 abstain

Proposition: The adoption of “zero tolerance” and “full reporting” policies by some dioceses requires the Conference to do the same.

- No
- Yes, to encourage nation-wide consistent policy.
- It should be consistent through the dioceses in the country, but wonder what accountability process will ensure this.
- Not sure about the terms of this proposition.
- Feels there should be consistent policy and it should be mandated.
- Feels that this section is a ‘dodge’.
- Wonder what Vatican will mandate and support.
- These are really two different issues and should be separated for voting.
- Feel that this statement is flawed and should be two separate issues.

VOTE – 3 yes, 7 no, 4 abstain

Proposition: Bishops should commit themselves publicly to be accountable to each other and to their people for the implementation of their policies regarding sexual misconduct.

- Agree
- Feels it should be global policy.
- Feels it should be done and done strongly.
- Wonder what “to each other” means – does it mean that bishops are required to follow national policy?
- Very important to support this, but what is the vehicle to do this?
- Confusing, with “accountable” and “to each other”
- Agree
- Silly proposition – they should be accountable to the church and the people.

VOTE – 13 yes, 1 abstain

Proposition: The Bishops should seek the necessary Vatican acknowledgment for a national strategy for accountability.

- Agree

- Vatican often leaves it up to bishops and doesn't follow through.
- Key word is necessary – if so, what is the issue?
- This is crafted against the few bishops who disagree that there should be a national strategy.
- Difficult statement.
- Vatican can acknowledge but will not follow through.

VOTE – 10 yes, 4 abstain

Council members would appreciate information after the conference of the bishops' votes on these topics.

Molly attended a Cluster Five meeting last week, which addressed these same questions and others concerning the sexual abuse crisis and shared this information with Council.

F. Agenda for Pastoral Council/Staff Day in August

Kathy Schmitt has been hired to facilitate this day. The agenda items will include reviewing the building expansion and regional school issues, especially to update the new members. It will also include getting to know each other better, continue the development of the theme of Hope and Trust for the parish, look at getting more people involved with Council as well as other leadership and volunteer roles within the parish, and parish stewardship.

G. Building Expansion and Capital Campaign Update

CRD is progressing on schedule and would like to meet with Council the second week of August for an update and to allow Council to review their progress. This meeting will be scheduled and members will be notified. Focus groups are meeting as scheduled, and Council will be informed of the results.

H. Regional School Update

No further information is available at this time.

Commission Reports

Administration Commission

The HVAC system is being replaced at the rectory. Dick Backer is working with the company who was awarded the contract for this job. As mentioned earlier in the meeting, they are gathering additional information on the defibrillator before making a decision.

Christian Education

They will meet in 2 weeks, and many activities are scheduled during the summer and into the fall. Plans have been submitted for the theme of Call to Hope. The official kickoff of the Adult Ministry will be on September 11th with a memorial ceremony for last year's tragedy.

Christian Service

All committees will publish their year's accomplishments in the church bulletin during the next weeks. They are looking at coordinating with Christian Education Commission with some joint activities. Mark Oliphant is the new commission head. Tom Cordaro will hold a session on anger management next year. All contributions have been allocated for the fiscal year. PADS's new coordinator is Pat Bush. The Flea Market is scheduled for July 6th. Mary Ann Cronauer is one of the recipients of a Lifeline award from Illinois Citizens for Life.

Worship

There was much discussion on the requests from the Christian Service Commission (as noted earlier). The Newman Center Choir Event has received positive feedback and the donations totaled approximately \$3,700, which were all given to the choir.

Youth Representative

The Mission Trip will take place on the last week of June, and the participants are looking forward to it. The Youth Conference is in June and the World Youth Day in Toronto is in July.

Election of Officers

The following Council members were elected as the new officers:

- Tom Gavin, President
- Molly Fara, Vice President
- Joe Kash, Secretary

Farewell to Members Who are Leaving

All members who are leaving Council – Mike Hawley, Diane Sellinger, Byron Eden, Don Cronauer, and John Paul Lischon will be missed and always appreciated for their diligent and faithful work.

Pastor’s Comments

A Prayer Service will be held on June 12th for victims of sexual abuse crisis. It will focus on apologies and the need for healing.

Final Whip Around

Very successful meeting, especially considering the major issues that had to be discussed. Thanks to all who have been on Council and are moving on. It’s been a good year – not everyone sees what hard work goes on during these meetings. Will miss those who are leaving, look forward to getting to know those who are new, and appreciate the chance to learn from everyone. Welcome to the new members. Thank Mike for being the right person at the right time to take on the role as president. Appreciate the ability to work hard and chuckle at the same time. Will miss the chance to continue to participate as a member of Council.

Closing Prayer
Meeting adjourned 10:45

New/Continuing Action Items:

| Person Assigned | Date of Origin | Item Description | Due Date |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Tom G. | 6/4/02 | Prepare letter to accompany donation to diocese | ASAP |
| Tom Walz | 4/2/02 | Coordinate details for Pastoral Council/Staff Day | 6/4/02 |
| Tom G. | 6/4/02 | Reply to Bishop Imesch concerning Council’s comments and votes on proposals | ASAP |

Completed Action Items:

| Person Assigned | Date of Origin | Item Description | Due Date |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| All members | 5/7/02 | Review budget data and refer questions to Chuck Marquis | ASAP |
| Tom G., Joe | 5/7/02 | Review Constitution’s wording for process of candidacy, offer suggestions to changes via email to Council members | Prior to 6/4/02 |
| Sr. Madelyn | 5/7/02 | Provide Council with participants’ feedback from Bishop Imesch’s presentation | 6/4/02 |

Respectfully submitted by Katrina Meder