

St. Margaret Mary Parish, Naperville, IL
Pastoral Council Minutes
February 2, 2010

Members Present: Brian Churilla, Tom Cordaro, Desmond Curran, Bob Hansen, Don Helgeson, Terry Kerr, Kevin Lynch, Susan Murray, Nancy Rutkowski, Barb Ryan, Terry Wagner (for Tony Mankus)

Members Absent: Fr. Paul Hottinger, Tony Mankus

Guests Present: Barb Fair, Joe Ferrari, Rick Peterson, Terry Wagner

Tonight's meeting was held in Room 8, with Pastoral Council President Barbara Ryan calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Terry Kerr opened tonight's meeting with Scripture and a guided reflection.

Barb Ryan introduced guest presenter Barb Fair, who would be speaking about SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education).

January Minutes Review and Approval: The Council discussed recommended changes written about the Parish Mission in the "Christian Education (CEC)" Commission Report Section of the 1/5/10 Minutes. The Council chose to approve the minutes as originally drafted without said edits. **Kevin Lynch moved and Desmond Curran seconded for approval of these minutes.** These will now be posted online in final approved form to the Council's web page. Barb Ryan indicated that the Parish Mission's cancellation would be readdressed at a later point in tonight's meeting.

Announcements:

Volunteer Appreciation Night Feedback: Council Members reported their having received numerous positive comments from attendees about this Appreciation Night (1/23/10). Barb extended special thanks to Brian Churilla for chairing this event and to all of the Council Members for their help. It was especially noted how this Appreciation Night fostered a very strong sense of community among attendees, with a large turn-out. Due to Brian's careful planning, expenses were also significantly kept down for this.

Parish Town Hall Meeting: Barb requested that main topic ideas for this annual Town Hall Meeting be submitted to her shortly. She anticipated that this meeting would then be scheduled in April or May.

Time and Talent Sunday: Scheduling is still needed for this.

Diocesan Assembly (St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center – 4/10/10, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.): Barb stated that she planned to attend the Diocesan Assembly, and assumed Fr. Paul would attend as well. She invited four additional Council members to attend the Assembly on 4/10/10. This

biennial Assembly begins with a service, and usually features a keynote speaker. Its theme is “Eucharist the Center of Our Faith.”

Presentation on SCARCE: At the invitation of the Peace and Justice Advisory Working Group, Barb Fair presented to the Council about SCARCE. In response to the recent discernment of the parish staff and Council to model and value environmental sustainability, the Peace and Justice Advisory Working Group recommended the following:

- Parish participation in a Sustainability Assessment or Green Audit, facilitated by SCARCE
- Parish enrollment in the Earth Flag Certification Program
- Process facilitation by the Peace and Justice Advisory Working Group

SCARCE is a non-profit organization funded in part by DuPage County, and has previously partnered with SMMP through the *THREADS* Program and other workshops focusing on the environment. The Green Audit would be conducted free of charge and would be tailored to the specific needs of the parish – Barb Fair also noted that it is “non-judgmental” and “teaches rather than preaches.” While staff would complete questionnaires, the actual audit would involve several people (including the pastor) for 1-2 hours. A follow-up workshop (1-2 hours in length) would then be presented to staff and commissions, with an additional follow-up workshop optionally suggested for parish committees. Additional follow-up could be periodically included in parish bulletins.

The Council expressed interest in having a Green Audit facilitated by SCARCE in May, with the educational follow-up program in fall 2010. While the Peace and Justice Advisory Working Group will head this up, Bob Hansen volunteered to represent the Council for updates about this Green Audit.

It was also noted that St. Thomas the Apostle Parish has participated in a Green Audit by SCARCE and that St. Raphael Parish’s Green Audit was currently in progress. Barb Ryan also expressed having much familiarity with SCARCE and Green Audits through her children’s schools. It was also recommended that, upon earning its Earth Flag, SMMP should dedicate this to former (recently deceased) parishioner Janet LeWald, who was one of SCARCE’s co-founders and who had remained very active with SCARCE for 26 years.

Catholics Come Home Campaign Update: Rick Peterson, Hospitality Committee, and Kevin Lynch reported that the initial six-week long Phase I (“The Invitation”) of this campaign is now completed, with Phase II (“The Welcome”) now beginning. Rick also thanked the Council Members for their help in staffing the “Welcome” table before and after the Sunday Masses for these past six weeks. While the “Welcome” table will no longer be staffed, it will remain near the main church entrance, with a sign-in book.

Phase III (“You and the Catholic Church”) will feature six 1-hour sessions, scheduled every other week, starting on 3/6/10 (7:00-8:00 p.m.) at SMMP.

Kevin Lynch is seeking presenters to help with each of these upcoming presentations – he requested receipt by e-mail of interested volunteers' names.

Newcomers/"Welcome" Reception (2/21/10 – 3:00-4:30 p.m., Upper Room):

Plans are now underway for a "Welcome" reception on 2/21/10, with invitations extended to the 20+ *Catholics Come Home* inquirers, along with 80+ parish newcomers registered since last spring. Rick then requested that each commission head review the word slide commission highlight summary that was used during last year's presentations, with Rick's requesting submission to him of any changes by 2/15/10. Rick will then use these word slides as part of a 10-15 minute parish overview presentation at this upcoming reception.

Information about this "Welcome" reception will be included on the parish website and will be publicized in the church bulletin for the next three weeks. Invitations will be mailed to the *Catholics Come Home* inquirers and to the parish newcomers. Rick also requested that he receive any additional names by 2/18/10 in order to invite them to this. All Council Members are also welcome to attend this reception.

Development Committee Update:

Brian Churilla reported on the Development Committee's meeting from two weeks ago. While 478 families out of 2,800 registered parish families have now filled out commitment cards over the past two years, only 457 of these respondents have actually contributed financially. Although examination by fiscal year indicates a 6% decrease in contributions, analysis by calendar year shows a more significant 11% contribution decline. Even with commitment cards and automated ParishPay donations, there continues to be a negative trend in giving. While the parish has also received a few significant larger donations at Christmas and Easter, the Development Committee strongly feels that the parish cannot count on continuing to receive these.

Commitment cards will now be included in new parishioners' packets – some newcomers will retroactively receive commitment cards by mail. Suggestions include periodic commitment card reminders in the church bulletin, along with reminders for parishioners to update their ParishPay giving.

Fr. Jonathan Foster's 50th Anniversary Celebration (5/16/09 – 10:45 a.m.

Mass): A special liturgy is now being planned by Mary Oliphant and Sr. Madelyn, (and possibly Deacon Ken) at the 10:45 a.m. Mass on 5/16/10 in celebration of the 50th ordination anniversary of Fr. Jonathan Foster, O.S.F. A simple reception will be held immediately afterwards, with Terry Kerr heading up the formation of a reception committee. Parishioners can also contribute toward a gift for Fr. Jonathan, founder of Mayslake Ministries and frequent weekend assistant and spiritual advisor at SMMP.

Fundraising Ideas: Joe Ferrari, SMMP Parishioner, presented two ideas for parish fundraising to the Council. One included holding a summertime outdoor concert night featuring the many talented parish musicians from the

Contemporary Choir, who had performed at the recent Parish Volunteer Appreciation Night. The Council expressed its interest in a “whip around” format for a summertime outdoor concert fundraiser, with Joe Ferrari appointed to head an Ad Hoc Committee for this outdoor concert fundraiser. Kevin Lynch noted that the City of Naperville requires an “amplifier permit” for this kind of outdoor venue, with this permit process frequently taking 2-3 months, although at minimal cost. Kevin encouraged the parish’s applying shortly for this outdoor concert’s “amplifier” permit, especially for a June date and June rescheduled rain-out date. While concert-goers could then potentially dine on the hill, additional permits and liability issues still need to be investigated if concert attendees bring along alcoholic beverages. It was also suggested that Joe contact parish music directors Brian Pelz and John Schlaman about this, with Joe’s also providing updates about this to Barb Ryan for the Council.

Joe’s second fundraising suggestion was for “Christmas Trees on the Hill,” inviting parishioners to sponsor lighted live Christmas trees to be displayed on the parish’s southeast hillside. While Fr. Paul had already stated that this idea was worth further exploration, the Council expressed its concerns about permits, security, impact upon neighbors, and electrical set-up.

Following this, the Council took a break from 8:30-8:40 p.m.

2010 Parish Mission: Council Members reviewed copies of correspondence pertaining to the initial engagement of, and subsequent cancellation by the planned speaker, Sr. Barbara Fiand, for the Parish Mission scheduled for 1/23-26/10. While the speaker was paid \$2,000 on 6/2/09, with an offer made to also pay for travel and board/room at St. Procopius Abbey, Barb Ryan, acting with fiduciary responsibility on behalf of the parish as Pastoral Council President, appealed to the speaker by letter for the return of at least part of this fee paid in advance. As a result, the speaker then returned \$675.00 of the original \$2,000 on 1/19/10 – this amount was for approximately one-third of the initial payment.

Based on this and other experiences, the Council recommended that a standard contract be developed for speakers, along with creation of a policy for speaker payment. The Finance Committee will include an audit letter with a suggested speaker contract. It was also noted that, while Parish Mission speakers are frequently booked approximately one year in advance, a retainer deposit should only be used rather than advance payment in full. Terry Wagner, Finance Committee Head, confirmed that speaker payment can be made from the following year’s budget.

Discernment Process for New At Large Members: Kevin Lynch and Brian Churilla outlined the discernment process that is now starting for new At Large Members. This includes the following: nomination of candidates and initial contact (February-March); candidates’ informational meeting (April); candidates’

observation of the 2010 May Council Meeting; May discernment, and Council installation (June).

Within the next 30-45 days, candidates' names need to be submitted to Desmond Curran or Susan Murray. A church bulletin article, to be run for three consecutive weeks, will also be appearing about this shortly. Sr. Madelyn should also be contacted for candidate suggestions, and spring meeting dates need to be cleared with Fr. Paul and Sr. Madelyn for this discernment process ahead. Council Members are encouraged to nominate candidates who offer a variety of perspectives, skills, and backgrounds – it is also recommended that the candidates be informed of their nomination in advance. Prayerfully, candidates will then successfully discern their own “best fit” as potential At Large Members through this several-month process ahead.

Commission Reports:

Administration: Council Members received and reviewed the Administration Commission's meeting report from 1/20/10, which was electronically sent in advance. Tony Mankus, Administration Commission Head, was represented in his absence by Terry Wagner tonight. Chuck Marquis has contacted the City of Naperville for a “v”-shaped signage permit, and will probably seek a variance for SMMP – otherwise the city limits the display of this type of signage to 4 weeks per year.

Christian Education (CEC): Bob Hansen, CEC Representative, electronically sent minutes in advance about the 1/14/10 CEC meeting. He noted tonight that Quest Program interviews are continuing with the teens in order to verify their own personal desire to be confirmed, rather than merely parental desire for their confirmation.

Christian Service (CSC): Nancy Rutkowski, CSC Head, had electronically sent a January 2010 report in advance summarizing activity on 22 committees under this commission.

Christian Worship (CWC): Don Helgeson, CWC Representative, had electronically sent minutes on the 1/26/10 CWC meeting prior to tonight's meeting. He stated that the ushers have paid for their own AED (automatic external defibrillator) and CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) training. Some concerns were raised tonight about the seating section near the choir area not having collection baskets passed at 7:30 a.m. Sunday Masses. The Council was also in favor of having baskets passed during the Mass for second collections rather than having a second collection basket on the floor in the Narthex – they recommended that the CWC further discuss this and decide about when the ushers could do this during Sunday Masses.

Budget Discussion: Having already met in a preliminary budget workshop format on 1/31/10, the Council resumed its work tonight with Finance Chair Terry

Wagner on the FY11 budget. SMMP's current financial situation is difficult for several reasons. First, collections are currently running 7% lower than in the previous fiscal year, and are 11% lower than in the previous calendar year. In addition, capital campaign monies raised for All Saint's Catholic Academy (ASCA) continue to be depleted each year with more of the annual school building debt payments being made out of the parish's operating fund versus the capital campaign fund. As a result of all of these factors, significant parish budget reductions are necessary in FY11.

Although the parish and Council still strongly support Catholic school education, the Council talked at length about the current level of financial support given to Catholic school families. It was decided that, based on the upcoming years' lower number of Catholic school attendees, and on the current budget situation, funding for Catholic school tuition assistance would have to be reduced. The Council also reviewed a letter, written by then-Pastor Bill O'Shea in 2004, which stated that SMMP would gradually shift its emphasis from "flat grant" to "needs-based" scholarship. It was also noted that SMMP was the only parish in the area that offers a flat grant to its Catholic school children--other parishes only offer needs-based tuition assistance. Needs-based tuition assistance is also endorsed and encouraged by the diocese. Therefore, Council decided that the parish would no longer be able to provide the same level of flat grant tuition subsidies, if any, to requesting parish families. The parish will shift its focus to needs-based tuition assistance during FY11 and in the future. Barb Ryan and Fr. Paul will be drafting a letter shortly to the families affected by this decision. It was also noted that, as one of three founding parishes, SMMP still provides much financial support to ASCA in the form of annual building debt reduction payments to the diocese. Despite the current economic downtrend, SMMP's terms of contractual agreement with the diocese for ASCA's building loan payments remain unchanged and unalterable.

After much discussion and consideration, Council agreed that cuts would have to be made to the Charitable Contributions budget. It was decided that instead of supporting two families through Daybreak, the parish would support just one. Unfortunately, it was learned at the meeting that SMMP had just signed a second 2-year apartment lease and had contracted with Catholic Charities to mentor and support a new family. The other apartment lease has a 15-month term. Therefore, SMMP is currently obligated to support two families through Daybreak. Nancy Rutkowski expressed an interest in offering a shared partnership with SMMP to any interested parish for the 15-month apartment lease, along with the mentoring of its guest family. She also noted that SMMP's Charitable Contributions Committee will now have an even smaller working budget in FY11 as a result of these two Daybreak apartment leases. Kevin Lynch recommended that the Council develop a new policy to be used with Catholic Charities for signing future Daybreak lease agreements.

The Council also recommended that Religious Education student fees be slightly increased for next school year, along with plans to also reuse this year's textbooks. Bob Hansen will contact Sue Davey, Director of Religious Education

(Preschool-Grade 5), with suggestions for recruiting volunteers to inspect and clean up future returned textbooks.

Another Council recommendation is for a one-year staff salary freeze, which could potentially save the parish up to \$11,000. It was also noted that the parish's phone bills seemed high. Don Helgeson will provide a referral source to evaluate the church's phone plan and service carrier, which could result in some cost-effective suggestions. It was also noted that the budget projections regarding replacement of the church parking lot might not be as high as was previously thought. Nevertheless, adequate repair/replacement funds still need to be maintained for ongoing physical upkeep of the parish facility and grounds.

Council also recommended the inclusion of monthly envelopes labelled "debt reduction" in parishioners' mailed envelope packets, along with an additional electronic entry line for optional parish debt reduction contributions to ParishPay (for those parishioners using electronic giving). The Council also stressed the importance of increasing awareness about parish debt reduction needs, including the Development Committee's running a monthly bulletin article about this.

As a result of tonight's budget discussions, Terry Wagner will electronically mail budget worksheets and timeline goals to each of the commission heads tomorrow, to be shared with their respective committee liaisons. Terry reminded the Council that the submission deadline for FY11 budget requests is 3/31/10.

Other: The Men's CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish) retreat program will not be offered in 2010-11 due to this year's very low number of men who were willing to be on the "giving team". Plans for its resumption will be reevaluated at a later date.

The Council will review staff assignment redefinitions as part of next month's agenda.

Final "Whip" Around: Comments included:

- "Thanks to everyone with tonight's meeting running so late, following Sunday's very late night meeting, too"
- "Very productive meeting"
- "Good meeting – very difficult budget work"
- "We worked very well together – great cooperation."

Closing: Terry Kerr offered a closing prayer. Susan Murray and Tom Cordaro were thanked for providing tonight's refreshments. The meeting concluded at 11:00 p.m.

The next Pastoral Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 2nd in Room 8 (St. Margaret Mary Parish), starting at 7:00 p.m.

March Prayer/Faith Sharing: Kevin Lynch

March Refreshments: Kevin Lynch

Respectfully submitted,
Marlyn Ligner Steury
Recording Secretary