

MINUTES OF THE October 5, 2015
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

In attendance: P. Moses, M. Colombo, D. Murphy, B. Sawyer, L. Ouellette, D. Ouellette, D. Rouselle, D. Kreppien, B. Flynn, and C. Hickman

Staff in attendance: Deacon Darrell, C. Houston, and R. Smith.

Visitors: Marla Blackwell and Sandy Masi

Deacon Darrell opened the meeting with a prayer.

Evangelization: (Note: this item was moved ahead in the agenda for the convenience of the presenters.) Mary introduced our visitors, Marla and Sandy, who talked about ideas for evangelization that had come out of their small faith-sharing group, which had just finished the book “Joy of the Gospel, A Group Reading to Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*”. The group asked the question, “If people didn’t know we were Catholic, would they know?” and then decided that we needed find ways to share our faith. They suggested that they would start with baby steps. They presented fifty-two suggestions for “Stepping Out in Faith,” which they suggested could go into the weekly bulletin a few at a time to help people understand that we can all do something to evangelize. These suggestions provide resources to help Catholics learn about their faith and could be done at home, with no need for meetings. This list could also be available in the Narthex. Carolyn suggested that this list also be placed on the Parish Facebook page and the website. There is a need to weave evangelization throughout all parish events and programs. Another recommendation was to have children’s books available in the library and to establish a children’s corner. Marla explained that Lynn Grimaldi was updating the library at St. Mary’s. Leo proposed these ideas be announced at Mass to spread the word. Mary asked for volunteers to help Marla and Sandy create a plan to be presented at the next meeting. Leo and Diane volunteered and will give an updated report. Carol Hickman proposed that all council members attend the Parish Social Life events to meet new parishioners as an evangelization action.

Approval of Minutes: Brian moved and Paula seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the September meeting. Unanimous.

Communications: Paula notified the council that the Facebook page was up and working. Two young parents, Renee Robinson and Beth Hewitt, assisted Mary Colombo in creating the page. The group will work with Dave Guthro on a few Facebook technical issues. There followed a discussion on last month’s proposal to hire a communication person to manage the website and Facebook. To support this proposal, an example was given. Last Saturday there was an event where a group of people were sewing dresses for children in the Dominican Republic and there was no coverage of this wonderful endeavor. A communication person would cover this type of story.

It was the consensus of the Council that a recommendation be made to Fr. Tom to hire a part-time communication person. It was also suggested to have volunteers help the communication person, and to establish a Communication Committee to oversee this process, rather than the Pastoral Council.

A discussion followed on e-Catholic as our Web Site provider. Mary, Paula and John will meet to write the recommendation proposal to present to Fr. Tom, that will include information on salary ranges and responsibilities.

New Parishioners: Carol Hickman informed the Council that the Parish Social Life Committee is working on welcoming new parishioners events. One of the suggestions is to dedicate a Sunday Coffee for new parishioners, maybe once a month, and have a designated table for the new parishioners. She informed us that the parish registers about 5 new parishioners per week.

Young Adults: Carolyn announced that she had to resign as chairperson of this group. Mary will ask Renee Robertson and Beth Hewitt if they, or someone they know, would be interested on serving on this committee.

Cash Calendar: Fr. Tom has asked for a recommendation from the council on the Cash Calendar, based on the concerns of some parishioners. Some points in the discussion include:

1. Pragmatically, we are suggesting a new position be added to the staff, so this may not be a good time to cut back on a successful fundraiser.
2. People expect it now and even ask for it.
3. The over-selling that occurred in the past, and which was a concern of many, has been corrected.
4. It takes place only one month, in August.
5. On the flip side, many are concerned that the cash calendar is gambling, which is seen as inappropriate for a church.
6. People tire of the repeated announcements about the cash calendar at the end of Mass.
7. We may be better off increasing giving rather than depending on this means to bring in more funds.

In the end it was the consensus of the council that the cash calendar falls under the parish fundraising criteria, therefore we should continue the calendar, but cut back on announcements at Mass.

Jubilee Year of Mercy: There is not a lot of information for the upcoming Year of Mercy. A committee was formed consisting of Paula Moses, Donna Murphy, Rosanne Smith, and Carolyn Houston to come up with suggestions for the coming year. Recommendations will be discussed at the next meeting.

Support for Caregivers: Mary told the story of a parishioner who told her of a man who approached her to have someone sit with his sick wife so he could run errands. A discussion followed on how we can ask someone to coordinate and pull together a group of people who would be willing to provide some relief for caregivers so that they could accomplish tasks outside the house. Mary emphasized that this is not “respite care” as she had presented the idea at a meeting in the spring, which would suggest a trained person. Mary will check with Ginny Putnam, the chair of the Social Justice and Peace Commission to see if this may fit under their commission’s charge, and will report back to the Council in November.

Agenda Planning: Besides the regular agenda items. The next agenda will include tithing, the Year of Mercy, and website proposal.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8:00 p.m.