

**PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 12, 2013**

ATTENDEES: Father Jeff Goeckner, Becky Bradley, Maria Carrion, Deacon Dan Corbett, Bill Doerr, Mimi Hunter, Georgann Lautner, Marisa Nieto, Sue Papajcik, Bob Ribbing, and Mary Westerhold.

ABSENT: Andrew Serfas, Adam Milburn and Janet McCarthy.

We welcomed our new members to the council--Marisa Nieto, Maria Carrion and Mary Westerhold. Marisa and Maria come to us from our Hispanic community. Maria teaches Spanish at our parish school. Mary has served various roles with the parish over the years and is currently our communications coordinator.

Bob read the short version of the gospel for the First Sunday of Lent. Sue read the reflection. We did not discuss the reading since we had much territory to cover and some wanted to get home to watch the State of the Union Address.

The only report requested was from Deacon Dan and the Social Justice Committee. They were supposed to meet last Thursday night, but, because of the memorial service for Ken Trebing, they rescheduled.

Father Jeff mentioned that Father Robert Barron was interviewed this morning on NBC in regards to the announcement that Pope Benedict XVI will resign on February 28th. Father Barron was asked what the Catholic Church will be looking for as they consider the Pope's successor. Father Barron's answer was, "Someone who will evangelize."

That was our springboard to our homework assignment. Evangelization. We went through the *Descriptors* section of *Evangelization in Parish Life*.

1. Adults and children are given opportunities for evangelization formation.

We mentioned PSR, the different liturgical opportunities for both adults and children. We are confusing ministry, education and worship with evangelization. Marisa mentioned that Catholics need to learn to evangelize. I remembered something Father Jeff had said a while back. "We've (the Catholic Church) has never had to sell ourselves." In a way, we can equate evangelization with marketing. Baptisms at mass are a form of evangelization as we pass our faith from one generation to the next. How much of the message is absorbed? Evangelization must be profound to cause change and a deepening of faith—much like you would see in instances of severe illness or in the passing of a loved one.

How do we respond to people when they give excuses for not coming to mass or being active in their faith? How do we answer when people cite incidents such as the priest scandal for their not practicing their faith? It was said that many of us practicing Catholics don't approach evangelization because we are afraid we

1. Adults and children are given opportunities (continued).

won't have the answers. Becky stated that it amazes her how our Protestant brothers and sisters are able to talk the talk. "How do they do that?" Maria mentioned that when St. Boniface opened the doors to the Hispanic community, their congregation was very few. That was a bit of a shock having come from a country where everyone is Catholic. Father Jeff gave them cards to pass around to others who may be interested to get newcomers. Some of these were seeking out the Spanish Masses elsewhere—like the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. St. Boniface gave them an opportunity to worship closer to home.

2. Newcomers are welcomed into the parish.

Currently, we mail a welcome packet to newly registered parishioners. Office staff handles this function. There is no personal contact. It was suggested perhaps when we have a new parishioner that we should plan to attend a mass with them—show them around. Give them a tour and show off our campus. Show some hospitality. We need to be more welcoming. We need to re-establish our Welcoming Committee.

3. Efforts are made to reach out to the alienated, the inactive, and the unchurched.

Father stated that there hasn't been any feedback on the pew cards for drifting Catholics. Mimi mentioned Bishop Paprocki's column in the Catholic Times in regards to woman who asked, "Why should I return to the Catholic Church?" The Bishop gave her three reasons: Christ gave us the church to forgive sins; the Church holds the keys to salvation, and; the church needs you."

Father asked, "Why don't people participate?" Again, the priest scandal was mentioned. Bill reminded us of something Father Dahlby showed us years ago. He took a blank sheet of paper and drew a tiny dot and instructed us not to look at the dot. But we looked at the dot. Everyone will focus on the dot—the bad—and ignore or dispel the good that exists around it.

There will be much talk and speculation among people and in the media in the coming weeks as a new Pope is chosen as to the possibility for major changes in the church—women in the priesthood, an easing up on contraception and life-style issues. Then reality will set in and people will see that these are politically charged issues, and the Church's stance on these issues is pretty much written in stone. However, we have an opportunity to evangelize. There will many questions, and we should do our best to answer them. Google if you must.

4. Opportunities are provided for small groups to gather and share faith as it relates to their everyday life.

The Martha and Mary Study Group meets once a week. Some of the old *Why Catholic?* groups still meet, but there's not much cataphesis. Deacon Dan stated

that the St. Vincent de Paul Society is a very spiritual group of about twelve people from three different parishes—St. Boniface, St. Mary’s, and St. Cecelia’s.

4. Opportunities. . . (continued)

Father Jeff stated that there are basically three levels of time commitment in our parish—those who can commit to weekly sessions; those who can only commit occasionally due to family or work issues, and; those whose time is so limited they are unable to work anything extra into their schedules. Whatever the situations may be, we need to devise ways to catechize everyone so as many as possible are equipped to participate in the evangelization process.

I restated that a big reason we (Catholics) don’t evangelize is because we don’t know how. I presented some articles that I had printed from the internet for everyone to read. These included an article from October 2012 concerning the Vatican Synod addressing the issue of lapsed Catholics; an article from St. Anthony Messenger from February 2009 on How to be a Dynamic and Evangelizing Parish; information on *Just Faith* ministries which is a follow up to *Why Catholic?* and is recommended reading for parishes that are planning to twin as well as teaches how to Become Good News People, and; information from 99.1 Joy FM regarding the Serve St. Louis Project.

Bob suggested having some kind of catechetical program for the parents who bring their kids to PSR. They can learn while they wait for their kids.

Mary suggested starting a closed group on Facebook--cyber-evangelization. And although we got a little chuckle out of that, Deacon Dan mentioned that Father Robert Barron states that his YouTube presentations are very popular and have a pretty impressive audience.

5. The parish has a plan for regular personal visits with parishioners.

Deacon Dan mentioned that we have an outreach to those in nursing homes and the homebound—those who cannot attend mass—and for the sick. He said that it is a beautiful, quiet ministry with about 20 parishioners involved. Otherwise, there are no regular personal visits. It was mentioned that we could do mailings or phone blasts....

Father talked about his experience with St. Lawrence Parish in Greenville. He has been appointed Parochial Assistant there since the passing of Father Victor Kaltenbach. He stated they are a small parish—about 300 people—and everyone knows each other. They are a close knit group, an eager community, and do things together. They stay in touch.

Maria mentioned how the people that go to the Spanish Mass work together to make sure everything is prepared and set up properly for their Mass celebration. They, too, are close and know who is missing and reach out to make sure all is well.

6. Parish renewals, evenings of prayer and/or retreat days are planned to enliven and deepen the faith of the people.

Father Jeff reported that he feels we can move ahead now with hiring a Pastoral Assistant. He has someone in mind that he wants to interview for the position. We need someone for adult faith formation, to organize and coordinate the various activities we have been tossing about tonight, and visiting parishioners.

7. The public image of the parish is one of hospitality, invitation, compassion where no one is excluded.

What is our public image? How do we present ourselves to the community? Mary stated that Bonifest is our biggest public image. Becky said that with all the improvements around the campus we look more inviting. Mimi stated that she has heard non-parishioners comment on the beauty of our church. It was mentioned that maybe we need to be in the community with more than fund raisers. I pointed out an article in the handout I had prepared concerning the Serve St. Louis Project. I noticed a list of participating churches and found it interesting that there wasn't a single Catholic church on the list.

In wrapping things up for the evening, Father Jeff stated that what we were doing tonight was preparing the job description for the Pastoral Assistant. We need to think about how we can incorporate all our groups of the parish. We will continue with our homework assignment at our next meeting.

Father also mentioned that the ASCA progress will now be printed on the front page of the bulletin. There was, again, a reminder that parishioners should make their ASCA payments directly to the Springfield Diocese—and not to St. Boniface.

Our next meeting will be March 12th at 6:30.

We concluded the meeting with a prayer to our Holy Mother.

Respectfully submitted by,
Georgann Lautner

Holy Spirit, teach us the best way to witness and share your faith!