

The Community Pastoral Council

September 10, 2008

The inaugural meeting of the three-Parish Council (Sacred Heart, St. Martin and St. Mary's) began at 6:10pm in Sacred Heart Hall.

Present: Father Jerry, Deacon Richard Huber, Renuka Choo-Kang, Marge Hefner, Sandy Matthys, Tom McDonald, Tony Siegmund, Scott Schenone, Gordon Taylor (and Marge), Cathy Williams and Matt Zimmerman.

Father Jerry began the meeting with a prayer; Renuka followed with a prayerful reading from St. Paul. It was necessary to elect a Chairman and Recording Secretary – Tom motioned for Matt to be Chairman, 2nd Tony, all agreed. It was motioned for Sandy to be Recording Secretary, all agreed!

Much information was presented by Father Jerry: it is suggested that we meet quarterly; after the first year, one-third will be replaced but there must be at least one member from each parish represented at all times. We are members of the Porter, South LaPorte and Starke County Deanery. There are five parishes/four priests in Starke Co.

Hopefully, in the future, all three of our parishes will share our resources (manpower, equipment, etc.) for new projects; assist with the St. Vincent DePaul Society program, etc. There are many commissions in each Church and all three could combine their strengths; hopefully, more will volunteer with programs of their interest. (Maybe a note in the bulletin asking parishioners to share their talents)? All three parishes equal "One Catholic Community" and this is to be a Catholic service organization. There was much discussion as to the number of priests, parishes, priests' retiring in the near future, adult education, CCD, etc. Parish members must always be open to "constructive criticism".

Father distributed a survey form from the Diocese of Gary that must be completed by Nov. 10 by every parish in our Diocese. Many statistics such as number of families, envelopes returned weekly, Baptisms, Communion, Confirmations, nationalities, the Commissions, etc. Also, during the month of October, every member present will be counted at all Masses and documented.

We are in the process of developing a Web site for our three-Parish Community –the bulletin will hopefully be listed. We are also in the process of having the bulletin printed by "Diocesan Publications" in Grand Rapids, MI; there is no fee; it is supported by local advertisers; less paper will be used and we will save \$18,000.00/ year (which was the 2007 cost for our bulletin.) There was discussion as to having the minutes in the bulletin or web-site.

Hall rental – it is necessary that the renters clean up afterwards or their down payment will not be refunded. The halls should NOT lose money whenever they are rented. There was a suggestion to increase the hall rental enough so that the hall managers can be paid; and also that the Church will not lose money.

Tom suggested there should be a Business Manager for the three-Parish Community. He also is concerned as to the amount of postage spent and that bulk mail should be used. Cathy thought having the Advent and Lenten booklets in the back of Church would be more economical.

Catholic Education – the official mission of the Diocese is to support Catholic Education. When our students attend a Catholic School, we must pay the amount that the host Church pays for its' member students from grades 1 thru 8. It was again felt that the families need to be practicing Catholics and volunteer at their own Parish to help recover the cost.

We were all given a copy of the January 2008 minutes of the Priests' Council meeting which included lengthy articles on "Principles for Responsible Parish Leadership", the missions and "Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for Catholic Parishes".

All members are encouraged to attend the Pastoral Retreat at Camp Lawrence Nov. 14-15th.

Our next meeting will be on Wed. Dec. 3 at 6pm, Sacred Heart Hall. Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.