

St. Mark's Parish Council Meeting Minutes

May 30, 2006

(Our next meeting will be on June 27, 2006 at 7:30 PM.)

Council Members:

***Non-voting Members**

Msgr. William Carton*	Present	Peter Abitanto	Present
Deacon Dennis Saake*	Present	Mary Ellen Ballou	Present
Frank Prettyman*	Present	Tom Hayes	Present
Nelda Ragan*	Present	Frank Sharp	Absent
Karen Pappas	Present	Carlos Zuna	Absent
Gary Cademartori	Present	Diana Zuna	Present

Highlights:

Karen opened the meeting by thanking everyone who helped with the recent wine and cheese social on May 20. We had about 75 people who attended. Mary Ellen suggested that we consider having socials occasionally after each of the Sunday Masses as well. Monsignor reminded everyone that we have monthly Holy Name Society socials after the 8 AM Sunday Masses that all are invited to. In addition we have 6 – 7 events annually after the 10 AM Sunday Masses following specific Childrens' Liturgies.

Karen had reviewed the videos of a Mission that was recommended for consideration at our last meeting and concluded that this did not appeal to a broad enough audience. Our preference would be more for an event that would appeal to all age groups. Monsignor had also reviewed this video and found it not to be in conformance with the rules for the Sacrament of Penance in our Diocese. The general Confessions practiced at this Mission are not allowed in the Diocese of Trenton.

Monsignor reported that we are continuing to make progress in recruiting candidates for the Intergenerational Faith Formation Director. Interviews will be starting next week and we hope to have the position filled this summer. Our CCD program was successfully completed for this school year. Monsignor also reported that our Rosary Makers at St. Mark's have now completed over 128,000. Rosaries.

We finished discussions of the remaining suggestions made on the first two questions from our Oct. 25 Meeting. These are listed below for reference with associated comments:

1. How can St. Mark's Parish foster Adult Catechesis?

Priority 1:

Offer discussion groups for young adults

Determine what areas of interest in the Church the parishioners would like to pursue with Adult Faith Formation

These will be considered further after our new Intergenerational Faith Formation Director is onboard. In addition it was suggested that we announce in our Bulletin an accommodation for Parishioners to ask questions on any topics of interest through our web site, as well as through the mail or by dropping a note in the collection basket.

Priority 3:

Have guest speakers / Parish renewals (mission held earlier this year)
Parents signature required on assignments

Deacon Dennis identified a Diocesan person, Marty Arseal, who maintains a list of Speakers who can address various topics of interest. He gave the contact information / web site to Karen who will look into this further. Also Nelda suggested Fr. Ken Boyack of the Passionists at St. Paul's College in Wash. D.C. Monsignor said that we normally have retreats every other year with different retreat masters.

Monsignor will speak with our CCD Director regarding Parents signatures on assignments. He also advised that our CCD children must be in the program for 2 years before they receive their First Holy Communion and 2 additional years before receiving Confirmation in the 8th grade. Monsignor is planning to meet individually with the Parents of each CCD child during or by their 7th grade year to enlist their help in keeping the spirit alive and reinforced in their homes so their child is better prepared for Confirmation and beyond.

2. How can St. Mark's Parish foster better attendance at Mass?

Priority 1:

Publish who is saying the mass and who is the Homilist
Contact all and survey the inactive / mailings to inactive members

We will start publishing the Mass Celebrants in advance in our Bulletin.

Contacting and surveying our Parishioners as part of our outreach to inactive members will be considered as part of our preparations for the special Welcoming Mass planned for later this year. This will be coordinated with our new Intergenerational Faith Formation Director after that position is filled.

Priority 2:

Check with other Parishes with good attendance for ideas
Guest Homilists / Co-Celebrants

The national attendance average for all Parishes is about 33%. There are no Parishes that can be easily identified that are doing much better than that.

With the current shortage of Priests, it is increasingly difficult to find guest Homilists / Co-Celebrants, and since the goal is to keep Homilies to an average of about 6 minutes, it would be more effective to focus on guest speakers scheduled at times that don't conflict with our Masses.

Deacon Dennis then reported on the progress with our Parish renovation projects. The new air conditioning for the Rectory is completed and the new heating system is expected to be done by the end of this week. The renovation of the bathrooms should be done in a few weeks and the remaining Rectory projects should be completed by the end of August. There were some complaints about the Air Conditioning in our Church this past weekend; the front of the Church was too cold and the rear was too warm. Deacon Dennis reported that this was due to someone opening the windows in the Choir loft instead of turning on the supplemental air conditioners up there, causing an imbalance in the system.

Nelda provided a number of interesting articles found while searching through various Religious publications. Dennis is reviewing these themes for possible use in future articles in our Bulletin.

The ongoing action item to: Be prepared to discuss the following articles that were distributed at our February 28 meeting: "The Spiritual Life of Teens in America" and "How to Build a Better Church" will be deferred to our new Intergenerational Faith Formation Director to consider.

Action Items from May 30, 2006 Meeting:

1. Get suggestions for agenda items for our meetings to Karen by the 10th of each month to allow sufficient time for review, approval and distribution of the package one week prior to each meeting. Responsibility: All Members
2. Check on the various meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. that our Diocese sponsors and report on those of potential interest. Responsibility: Nelda
3. Prepare for continued discussions of the prioritized suggestions from our October 25, 2005 meeting, and start reaching out to other Parishioners. Responsibility: All Members
4. Identify what help is needed from Council Members to arrange and support our planned social events. Responsibility: Deacon Dennis
5. Announce in our Bulletin an accommodation for Parishioners to ask questions on any topics of interest through our web site, as well as through the mail or by dropping a note in the collection basket. Also announce in our Bulletin who our mass Celebrants will be. Responsibility: Deacon Dennis
6. Look into the Diocesan list of Speakers / Topics for consideration at St. Mark's. Responsibility: Karen