

St. Mark's Parish Council Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2006

(Our next meeting will be on May 30, 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*	Absent	Frank Sharp	Present
Karen Pappas	Present	Carlos Zuna	Present
Gary Cademartori	Present	Diana Zuna	Present

Highlights:

Karen thanked all for coming and handed everyone a blank piece of paper to list their suggested agenda topics for future Parish Council Meetings, which were collected later.

Monsignor reported some progress in recruiting for a new position of Director of Youth Programs and Faith Formation Coordinator. A few candidates are being considered.

Deacon Dennis provided an update on our renovation activities. Most of the outside work, landscaping, etc. is completed and they are now focusing on the interior of the Rectory. The second floor renovations are well underway and new heat and air conditioning systems are being installed that will service all 3 floors. When the old systems are removed, a large area in the basement will become available for additional meeting room space. The Rectory work is expected to be completed in the fall. The only significant work remaining in the Church is painting the ceiling and replacing the carpeting. When all is completed we expect to have about \$300K remaining from the original fund raising campaign which is intended to cover future maintenance, repairs, etc.

We then continued our discussions on how best to implement a "Welcoming Mass" to attract inactive Parishioners and other inactive Catholic members of our community back to the Church. Karen suggested we try to possibly combine this with a wine & cheese social, the first of which is scheduled for May 20. However, after some discussion it was concluded that this would not give us enough time to properly prepare and effectively get the word out to everyone. So we are now targeting sometime later this summer. Initially it is planned to send a general mailing to all Parishioners on this topic. And prior to this event we will have Homilies to announce this activity and to encourage the active members of our Parish to invite someone who is currently inactive that they know. Additional supporting information will be provided in pamphlets that will be available at Masses in advance. This will also be highlighted in our Bulletin and Monsignor suggested placing a notice in the local newspapers and possibly even having some signs around town.

Gary spoke about a most inspiring Mission he had attended earlier this year that addressed many of the current issues facing the Catholic Church today, and suggested we consider doing this at St. Mark's at the start of Advent. He had previously provided a videotape of this Mission to Monsignor and Karen will also be reviewing this as well. This may be a good activity in support of our goal of fostering Adult Catechesis at St. Mark's.

Mary Ellen provided information on a person we can speak with who can help arrange a Casino event at St. Mark's and advise us on the associated regulations.

Action Items from April 25, 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. 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”, as we progress through Item 3 above. Responsibility: All Members
5. Identify what help is needed from Council Members to arrange and support our planned social events. Responsibility: Deacon Dennis
6. Prepare drafts of announcements for our upcoming “Wine & Cheese” event on May 20 for Monsignor to consider for use at Mass and in our Bulletin. Responsibility: Karen
7. Speak with our Social Concern’s Group in planning for the May 20 “Wine & Cheese” event. Responsibility: Peter
8. Review the videotape of the Mission that Gary had attended and provide additional feedback at our next meeting. Responsibility: Karen
9. Review the original list of suggestions from our Oct. 25th meeting and identify those items that still need to be discussed. Responsibility: Peter

A summary of the “Ongoing Activities, Plans and Suggested Actions Being Considered” so far from the results of our Oct. 25, 2005 general meeting are attached.

Also attached is an updated list of the “Recommendations / Accomplishments of St. Mark’s Parish Council”. This list represents the first year’s activity with our current Council leadership

Ongoing Activities, Plans and Suggested Actions Being Considered:

1. How Can St. Mark's Foster Adult Catechesis?

Ongoing Activities:

- St. Mark's held a Parish Mission in March.
- A hot-key was added on our web site to access an external web site that provides Bible study specific to the Sunday Readings that parishioners can access at their convenience.
- "Faith Enrichment for Adult Catholics" sessions are being held on Wednesday nights starting March 15 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM, as part of our Parish's Diocesan Faith Enrichment Center's activities.
- St. Mark's has an active Bible Study Group for young mothers and children that is very well attended.
- More Adult Catechesis information is now being provided in our Bulletin.
- Intergenerational Catechesis - A Stations of the Cross event by our CCD children is planned for the 10 AM Mass on Palm Sunday

Plans:

- We are looking for someone to take over the leadership of our Adult Faith Formation Ministry.
- Intergenerational Catechesis Program - More work is needed here to develop a plan for implementing parts of this at St. Mark's, and we will need to recruit some volunteers to support this activity. Responsibility: Deacon Dennis, Karen, Nelda, Mary Ellen and Frank
- We will try to keep the Homilies simple with one specific take-away, related to the Readings. This can also be reinforced with relevant information in our Bulletin, web site and CCD instruction.
- We will try to focus our attention first on educating our Parishioners on the most important elements of the Mass / Liturgy and the Sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The Celebrant will occasionally add explanations during Mass and briefly discuss the significance of certain parts of the Mass. This can also be reinforced with relevant information in our Bulletin, web site, and CCD instruction.

Suggested Actions Being Considered:

- We should encourage our Parishioners to review the selected Readings in advance to prepare for Mass.

2. How Can St. Mark's Parish Foster Better Attendance at Mass?

Ongoing Activities:

- Occasional "wine & cheese" socials after the 5 PM Mass on Saturday.
- There will be special Welcoming Masses scheduled annually with the theme of reaching out to those who are not currently involved with the Church or those seeking a spiritual home. This was done at all Masses on the weekend of March 11-12, 2006.

Plans:

- We are trying to develop a youth musical group.
- We have invited the music group of the Hispanic Ministry to occasionally perform at other Sunday Masses. This will be scheduled and announced in advance in our Bulletin.

Suggested Actions Being Considered:

- St. Mark's should have better signage outside of the Church that will get the attention of more people and is capable of advertising some of our religious and social events. We will also consider having a portable sign that can be used for increased exposure of special events.

- Have a specific program for CCD parents and have more special Masses with their participation.
- Have our CCD children perform more at Masses, using the children's choir and having the children do more readings to help improve attendance.
- "Relationship building" may be a good topic for a future Homily.

3. How Can St. Mark's Parish Foster Increased Parish Participation In Various Ministries?

Ongoing Activities:

- Have a representative of each Ministry speak after Mass once a year to help our Parishioners become more aware of their activities.

Plans:

Suggested Actions Being Considered:

4. How Can St. Mark's Parish Foster More Youth Involvement?

Ongoing Activities:

- Checking with St. Catherine's & others on what they do. Msgr will speak with St. Michael's in Union / best CYO in the state.
- Bowling league
- Basketball games
- Update Web site and keep it current
- We need to recruit someone to run our Youth Program.
- We are trying to develop a youth musical group.

Plans:

- Have our CCD children perform more at Masses, using the children's choir and having the children do more readings.

Suggested Actions Being Considered:

Recommendations / Accomplishments of St. Mark's Parish Council:

(This will be updated and distributed quarterly.)

1. Established new acting Council Leadership – 4/26/05
2. Recommended proceeding with the Parish Directory project – 5/24/05
These were completed and available for distribution in March 2006.
3. Recommended more Parish socials to help bring people together. A Parish Picnic is scheduled for Sept. 25. Monthly Wine & Cheese events will be held starting in October after one of the Saturday 5 PM Masses. Breakfast socials are being considered after certain Sunday Masses. – 5/24/05
4. Started ongoing interactive discussions of “The Seven Essential Elements of Parish Life; Descriptors of Worship” and how best to tie these into our Three Year Planning Cycle. – 6/28/05. Completed discussions 9/27/05. One key recommendation from this was to consider establishing a Liturgical Committee.
5. Recommended we try offering Communion in both species. – 6/28/05
Started on Holyday weekend of 8/13 & 14; now planned on all Holydays and on weekend masses once a month.
6. Recommended establishing a more uniform dress code for Cantors and Readers at Mass that is more complementary with the Celebrant's vestments. – 6/28/05
7. Started having presentations / discussions at Council meetings individually with other key Parish organizations:
 - Finance Committee – 6/28/05
 - Adult Faith Formation – 7/26/05
 - Holy Name Society & Readers – 8/30/05
 - Hispanic Parish Council – 9/27/05
8. Recommended final version of Three Year Planning Cycle Mission Statement – 7/26/05
9. Recommended a written response on the results of the Parish Survey – 7/26/05
Published in Bulletin on 8/21/05.
10. An open meeting with all Parish Ministries was held in Father Child's Hall on October 25, to discuss how we could all work collectively to help meet the goals of our Three Year Planning Cycle Mission Statement.
11. A meeting was held on Nov. 19 with Msgr and Dennis to discuss the formation of a Liturgical Committee as previously recommended.
12. Reviewed and prioritized suggestions from our Oct. 25th meeting for future action consideration. 12/6/05
13. Started monitoring the various meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. that our Diocese sponsors and reporting on those of potential interest. 12/6/05
14. Begin posting Parish Council Meeting Agenda and Minutes on our Parish website for all interested Parishioners to review. This started with our 2006 meetings.
15. Began detailed review of the prioritized suggestions from our Oct. 25th meeting and started developing recommendations and action plans appropriately. 1/31/06
16. Start using our Bulletin to provide more information to our Parishioners on Adult Catechesis and Evangelization. 1/31/06
17. Recommended adding a hot-key to our Parish website to access more information on our weekly Mass Readings. 1/31/06

18. Representatives from St. Mark's Hispanic Ministry were added to our Parish Council. 1/31/06
19. Began planning for a special Welcoming Mass to be done annually with the theme of reaching out to our inactive Parishioners. 1/31/06
20. Recommended keeping our Homilies simple with the goal of providing one specific take-away related to the Readings. 2/28/06
21. Recommended occasionally adding explanations during Mass on the significance of certain parts of the Mass. 2/28/06
22. Invited the musical group of the Hispanic Ministry to occasionally perform at other Sunday Masses. 3/28/06
23. Recommended having a representative of each Ministry speak after Mass once a year to help our Parishioners become more aware of their activities. 3/28/06