

Minutes of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

October 2, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7.30 pm, and began with an opening prayer.

The agenda included three central items, plus an opening for the possibility of other business.

1. Reaction to the Atchdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission's final proposal

A. Fr. Scott provided information on the context and process for the APPC proposal, and informed the committee that Cardinal O'Malley is currently reviewing the result. A decision is expected in mid- to late November, after which we may expect the beginning of a 5-year period of implementation. He also noted some changes with respect to prior versions of the proposal and/or interpretations of those versions: (1) on occasion, the pastor of a collaborative may come from one of the parishes; (2) implementation will be gradual, requiring a "roll-in" period.

B. There was some discussion of the fact that the archdiocese remains vague about the process of implementation, though not about the dates (apart from the fact that we do not know which parishes will enter the process first, etc.). It was also suggested that the archdiocese's claim that this will strengthen outreach is not evident. It was observed that much of this will require new training, and thought that there may have to be a freeze on hiring new staff until some of this becomes clearer.

C. Reaction among parishioners appears to be mixed, though on the whole somewhat more positive than several committee members had expected. Some parishioners may well leave the parish or the Church in response to the coming changes; others are concerned about the difficulty of finding a pastor who will fit with the culture and multiple styles of all parishes in our collaborative; some have expressed surprise at the fact that at least some of our concerns were heard and, in the above instances (A1 and A2) seemingly met. All of this said, the committee continues to feel that new information must be disseminated as widely as possible. Some concrete and particular issues remain unclear: how, for example, will it be decided where to locate staff offices, what to do with each rectory, etc.? According to Fr. Scott, these last concerns will have to be addressed at the local level.

D. The committee then discussed a continuing sense of need to remain in open conversation with members of the Blessed Sacrament and St. Mary's parishes.

E. It was reported that work on the coming collaborative mission is progressing well. The committee has been in discussion with the two speakers toward shaping a

program. OLOS has been working with Blessed Sacrament, as in the past. St. Mary's will be invited.

2. Parish feedback from the in-person Religious Education registration process

Jackie Baldino circulated a record of OLOS registrations for Faith Formation during each year from 2008 through 2012. She then outline some key points. There has been a clear overall decline (409 down to 319). Parishioners continue to express an interest in adult education and in service. There is food appreciation of the parish assembly. Attendance at CCD becomes especially difficult beginning in the 5th grade year. Percentages of churchgoing families with children in CCD seem to approximate those of the general population (roughly, 25-30%).

3. Increased Offertory Campaign

Mailings and announcements during each Mass seem to have insured that the parish is well informed. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people consider this to have been handled tastefully, and find the new process to in fact simplify some things. People also appreciation the honest, straightforward manner in which the program has been defined and discussed. A new stage of the process is underway, with phone contact to begin during the week of October 14.

Fr. Scott expressed mild concern that the program will be followed closely by the Annual Collection (i.e., donor fatigue may negatively affect the latter). He also noted that the IOC seems to have stimulated some movement toward arranging an automatic electronic contribution.

4. Other business

There was one final announcement: the parish has been in discussion with a new bulletin company, and will begin working with them in February 2013.

The meeting adjourned shortly before 9.00 pm, following check out and a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Jeff Bloechl.
October 31, 2012