

St. Mary Parish
Franklin, Massachusetts
Parish Pastoral Council
Minutes for the Tuesday, February 7, 2017 Meeting
In The Sacred Heart Conference Room

Present were: Father Brian Manning, Pastor; Father Jack Sullivan, Parochial Vicar; Father Chris Bae, Parochial Vicar; Karen Ackles, Religious Education Director; and Council members Tim Hurdlebrink, co-chair, Roberta Trahan, Christine Landry, Faith Flaherty, Paul Clary, Curt Patalano, John Ristaino, Paul Sullivan, Christopher Feeley and Lisa Oxford. Unable to attend were Nan Rafter, Terry Kerr, Katie McNiece and Cheryl Crowley.

The meeting began at 7:10 with Father Brian leading us in the opening prayer.

Tim introduced Jane MacDonald from St. Catherine of Sienna Parish in Norwood. Jane is a member of Cardinal O'Malley's Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, which was mandated by Vatican II, representing the West Region/Vicariate IV. Her role is to meet with the Pastoral Councils in her region and serve as a link for communication between the laity of the Archdiocese and the Cardinal. She explained that this connection provides Cardinal O'Malley insight into what is happening in the parishes of the Archdiocese, as well as parishioners' thoughts and concerns, which is important to him.

Her focus in this role is to seek answers to the following questions:

- Are people's needs being met?
- How are these needs being framed?
- What are the age groups within parishes?

Jane opened the floor for questions and comments.

Discussion and questions were as follows:

- Is there a particular criteria for how Vicariates are formed?
 - The formation is essentially geographical.
- What was the outcome of the survey that was implemented last year?
 - The results of the survey were for use within the parish itself.
- St. Mary Parish is in the process of writing our Parish Plan. We are an integral part of the Franklin community, serving as “the hands of Christ” within the community.
- Our St. Vincent dePaul Society performs incredible work in reaching out to those in need. The Society is sustained by the work of it's members and donations by parishioners.
- It was noted that we, like other parishes, struggle with inspiring the teenage population to stay engaged in the Church as young adults. When asked if we have a program for this population the response was that it is being researched.
 - Father Brian went on to explain that mostly millennials do not live in suburbia, and that we must be careful of only using past paradigms anymore.
 - Our culture has shifted to a model where people don't do things in groups anymore. We must remember that our culture has shifted, as the sociological study “Bowling Alone” has researched and analyzed for us.

Jane was then asked to tell us about her parish, and she shared that she began her career in elementary education and as time went on she saw a need for adult faith formation. She began a Bible Study program that was held in people's homes and led by a trained facilitator. Other programs that were

implemented included Living the Eucharist, the History of the Mass/Parts of the Mass and Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible. This led to a discussion about other programs for adult faith formation and how to get a sense from people of what they are looking for and what the new evangelization means to our parish.. Some suggestions for resources included:

- Podcasts on *Adult RCIA for Catholics*;
- *Christ is the Answer* on Catholic Radio with Father John Ricardo;
- *Walking in Her Steps*, a book on the passion of Christ from a woman's perspective.

It was then pointed out that our programs around the book *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* were well received, as well as the 1 hour Sunday Spirituality programs that were offered after the 10:30 Mass.

In terms of outreach, the Knights of Columbus were recognized for the support they provide the Saint Vincent de Paul Society . Paul Clary explained that the wives of council members have joined the Society , and the Knights have adopted SVDP and committed between \$15,000.00 and \$18,000.00 a year to their cause. Their Christmas Stop and Shop Gift Card program has been very successful in raising funds for SVDP as well.

It was also noted that the Catholic Women's Club is instrumental in providing scholarships for graduating seniors.

In Nan Rafter's absence, it was noted that she performs outstanding work within our parish, particularly for the elderly and home bound. Nan will be featured on the Archdiocesan Annual Appeal Video.

Karen Ackles briefly explained that our Religious Education Program is large in terms of enrollment.

Finally, our mass schedule was discussed, with the explanation that masses are varied to meet the needs of all parishioners.

At this point Ms. MacDonald thanked us for her time, and departed.

Our next agenda item was the sharing of the draft of our Parish Plan. Father Brian prefaced the discussion by noting that at this point the plan is confidential and may not be shared.

John Ristaino introduced the draft, explaining that his purpose this evening is to listen to our reactions and share our feedback with the Plan Writing Committee. John pointed out that Pandora Carlucci has done an incredible job shepherding the process of writing the plan, and shared a prayer by Saint Anthony of Padua that she reads at the beginning of each meeting to guide the committee.

We learned that as the plan is finalized it will be introduced to other parish groups, and finally to the parishioners. In addition, once the plan is finalized, an implementation committee will be formed to set the plan in action.

Feedback that the committee has received on the plan thus far from Denise Ehrlen, Staff of Catholic Leadership Institute, Philadelphia and Consultant of the Planning Office of the Archdiocese, is that our priorities appear to be global and far-reaching, and need to be brought to a more practical level. In other words, as Father Brian explained, the committee has done more than is necessary at this time.

The question was posed as to why the goal for Communication was pushed out further than the others. John explained that because this goal may likely involve hiring a new staff member to implement it, the committee felt it may require more time. Father Brian reiterated this, explaining that while some goals may be implemented sooner, it was necessary to allow for more time.

John explained that in the next draft goals and objectives will be finalized and broken down into

steps/benchmarks. The goal is for the plan to be approved mid-summer.

Council members were pleased with the plan, and agreed that the framework is far-reaching and long lasting, and that the goals are specific and can be revisited over time. It was noted that the vision statement will be revisited bearing in mind the questions of who we are now and where we want to see ourselves in 3 years.

It was asked how we see the plan going parish-wide. It was explained that there will be various ways to relate the message, including a booklet available for distribution at masses, meetings to explain the plan to parishioners and opportunities for parishioners to be empowered to meet in small groups to bring the plan to others. Before the plan is published the committee will elicit feedback from small groups within the parish.

As we finalized discussion of the plan, Father Brian reiterated that the plan is confidential at this time.

Next on the agenda was the Knights of Columbus Mass that will be held at 10:30 on March 19th. Cardinal O'Malley will be at the Mass, which will be a celebration of our Knights of Columbus' centennial. This is a major event, and there will be no noon mass on that day. Following the mass will be a brunch to be held at Tri-County, with food prepared by the Culinary Arts Program. Tom Seery is coordinating the event, and tickets will be on sale for \$5.00 per person. Father Brian asked that Parish Council members attend to support our K of C Council in this celebration.

Our next agenda item was regarding members who will be stepping down from the Parish Council at the end of this year. Outgoing members are Paul Clary, Katie McNiece and Curt Patalano. It was noted that we have adopted the practice of appointing out-going members as the committee to coordinate and facilitate nominations and the election of new members.

Our final item was the confirmation of our next meeting dates, which are April 4th and June 6th.

Father Jack then led us in the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Oxford