

Area Catholic Community meeting: Thursday Sept. 26, 2019

Held at new gathering center at Holy Family Church, Belle Prairie

NEXT MEETING: Thursday October 10, Belle Prairie Gathering Space

Attendance:

Chair: Bill Kuesel, St. James

Attendees: Fr. Ben K and Fr. Jimmy J

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| St. Stanislaus, Sobieski: | Joyce Borash, Michael Retka; |
| Holy Family, Belle Prairie: | Darrell Welle |
| LOLO, Little Falls: | Joe LaForce |
| Sacred Heart, Flensburg: | Carol Merten |
| St. James, Randall: | Gail Johnson, Bill Kuesel |
| St. Mary's, Little Falls: | Brigid Fitzgerald, Jon Radermacher |
| MOL School: | Mary Sowada, Asst. Principal |

Not in attendance: Jessica Brigman(Holy Family), Kaitlin Pohland OLOL), Jim Carlson (Sacred Heart)

Motion to approve minutes from August as read. **PASSED.** Secretary will send copy of minutes to both priests for review and approval, the priests will then instruct parish secretaries to place copies for parishioners.

Motion to approve agenda made ,seconded (Carol; Gail) **PASSED**

Vocations: - Vocation awareness week is coming up.. Randall will have a breakfast to assist seminarians and raise donations for them on Sunday ,November 3 after Mass. All six parishes can assist and support this breakfast. It would be good to have small children involved so they see both involvement of the parish and the discernment of seminarians.

Brainstorming goals and focus going forward:

A. Bishop Kettler's wisdom - to focus on evangelization, vocations and doing what we are supposed to do as CHURCH. It is big picture not simply logistics. How to be CHURCH, now.

B. **Fr. Jimmy suggestions for focus going forward:** How to **bring people back especially young families** as they appear less involved. It is important that those in the pews be **living witnesses to young parents and children**. Remind ourselves that the Sacraments are the main foundation to strong faith. So how are we participating in the sacraments, or something as easy as stopping in church to pray during the day for a minute of prayer. Look to the involvement of grandparents where parents are not as involved.(ie, baptize or bring children to CCD but not Sunday Mass) How to assist them to take seriously their promise to God. Remind people to think of discernment of vocations.

C. **Fr. Ben suggestions for focus going forward.** Included a handout from the book Pastoring Multiple Parishes. What is our vision to bring parishes together. How do we be Church now, with our resources and our limitations.

Easy to start with questions of what we are doing now, ie, Mass schedule, pastor residence, shared services for financial and business , collaborations between parishes as CHURCH.

Idea:Would services of a mediator assist process, ie. Franciscan sister. How do we ensure we are taking the time to invoke Holy Spirit in discernment process. How do we make the process **transparent: Idea:**

share information on what ACC is doing by sharing minutes with parishes, updates to councils, bulletin, websites, ongoing input and feedback from parishioners.

Idea: get input and feedback from parishioners, first Monday night Masses be Mass of the Holy Spirit followed by forums to focus on questions/highlights raised by ACC, facilitated by ACC with parishioners in small groups. This brings in input from parishioners. Start with description of ACC.

Should changes come out of the ACC process, ensure there is assistance for the parishioners in implementation.

Idea: develop a discernment prayer to be recited in each church before Masses.

Idea: Pulpit swap to show change and help us adjust.

Idea: Train and assist parish staff.

Idea: Use rituals to assist with changes - change of leaders - use some ritual format.

Idea: Recognize there will be a normal 'grieving' process that comes naturally with change and consider means to assist -ie. have a community conversation of blessings of the past, honesty of the pitfalls in past and hope and joy for future. Could be done as parish and tri parishes. Note that there are those in our parishes who work with grief and can be asked to assist.

OBSERVE: patterns in all 6 parishes: want youth, volunteers, Mass participation. Downturn in participation is seen across all society and all church denominations. Five year plan? Maybe use Divine Renovation

Book which deals with how to build discipleship. Fr. Ben shared an approach used in Sauk Centre churches based on Grateful and Giving book. Relies on the Spirituality of how to use your talents with Joy. Would be a multi- year endeavor. It includes developing a culture of welcoming.

Discussion was had around this idea and how it would /could be used by parishes. There is cost upfront and ongoing - similar to hiring a staff member. It is up to each parish to determine if they want to use this. Questions raised of how to implement (time wise) and what happens if the 6 parishes choose separate time lines. Focus is on talents of each member and how to open participation. Discussion about using the Nov. 3rd Seminarians breakfast as a 6 parish project.

Suggestion: near future that all 6 parishes look to endorse 'stewardship process'.

Action going forward:

ACC meetings at Holy Family, Belle Prairie: Thursdays at 7 pm on Oct. 10, then Oct. 24th.

October 14, Monday 7 pm Mass and forum- will be first Monday Mass, at **St. James Church, Randall.** Get all parish council members as well as parishioners involved.

Kaitlin Pohland to finalize info of 'what parishes look like' onto grid format. Share with ACC members for accuracy before share with all parishes. **This should be ready to share on October 14 with parishioners.**

Secretary will review the minutes from prior meetings. Minutes will be shared with all parishes and available at each church.

Announce the Oct. 14 Mass and forum at all 6 parish Masses ahead of time and in bulletins.

Prayer - will be in pews for the Sat/Sun prior to the Oct. 14 mass and forum.

Info to be brought to next ACC meetings: attendance counts for July and October. Financials and information on models for staffing, etc of a cluster of parishes. Michael will get models of media platforms to share.

Adjourned.

Submitted by Brigid Fitzgerald, Secretary