

Minutes for Parish Council Meeting – September 8, 2017

In attendance: Fr. Tom, Deacon Frank, Gary Perrydore, Jeff Mesch, Bridget Galbraith, Emily Shurtliff, Jacob Visovatti, John LaRock, Marie Scrobola, Maria Russell

Visiting: John Alves from Greater Mission

Excused absences: Bill Boudreaux, Deacon Jim

After opening prayer and approval of the minutes, there was a brief discussion of using google docs for the minutes and approving them electronically. It was put to a vote and approved unanimously.

Fr. Tom reiterated the three-fold purpose of the council.

John Alves, representing the diocese and the Greater Mission Company, presented the council with the specifics of the upcoming Witness to Hope Campaign. John explained the methodology of Greater Mission.

- they do not use volunteer solicitors but make presentations at small or large gatherings in homes or the parish
- prayer team/champions across the diocese
- use hospitality volunteers
- distribute gift request packets (each family will have a suggested gift range that is roughly the total of their last 2 years of giving, adjusted for any known extenuating circumstance, this will be determined by Father and Greater Mission)
- there will be glossy, color parish brochures to distribute that will explain diocesan and parish goals related to the campaign
- participation will be encouraged, an emphasis placed on individual sacrifices, and the decision ultimately rests between the parishioner and God

John noted that the campaign was planned by Bishop Boyea to support Catholic Education and Catechesis after a recent demographics survey indicated that only 24% of Catholics are active, indicating a need for better catechesis, though his goal is to serve everyone, not just those in education. John noted that in the bishop's eyes, the campaign is a realization of the guidance offered in the bishop's 2012 pastoral letter, "Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord," which discusses the need for catechizing and evangelizing (1) current active Catholics, (2) lapsed Catholics, and (3) those who have never been Catholic.

There will be no DSA in 2017, but will resume in 2018

The funds will be paid out to the parish as they are paid in.

A 501(c) (3) foundation (separate from the diocese) will administer campaign funds, including record keeping, reminders, and disbursement. This protects the funds from mismanagement, theft, and liability. Each of the 81 parishes in the diocese will have an account with the foundation. Transfers of funds will be done electronically.

John handed out copies of the financial summary of the campaign funds and elaborated a bit on each section. He also distributed sample information packets.

John then explained the roll out process.

- Announcement weekend
- bulletin insert
- information packet to council with volunteer roles
- there will be a campaign cabinet made up of parish council members and others to help build momentum and enthusiasm
- there will be an all in ministry meeting of the campaign cabinet to help with the campaign, keep track of one time gifters and possibly approach them again, create an atmosphere of tremendous giving, and become a stewardship committee
- meet with people at gatherings in home or parish
- distribute packets after Masses
- mailing
- witness weekend, parishioner will speak 3-4 minutes after Masses
- participation weekend – pledge cards passed out in envelopes during homily
- campaign officially over
- tabulate pledges, send follow up letters to anyone who did not pledge

John will be at OSP one day a week and on the weekends throughout this process

John explained that there will be no named endowment funds.

If a donor wishes to restrict his gift it should be \$25,000 or more and will not count toward the parish goal.

We will encourage parishioners to “Give from your own understanding of what it means to be a faithful steward.” Pastors are asked to visit and interact with parishioners personally, as their interaction and relationship is important to the success of this campaign.

Average participation is about 30 -35%, good participation is 45 – 50% John mentioned that the

campaign currently has \$43M pledged of \$65M targeted and he expressed optimism that the diocese would exceed the campaign goal.

Jacob asked if the parish goal [\$480K] was set with the diocese' knowledge that our 2015 collections were higher than our 2016 collections. John said they are aware and the bishop is just asking us to do our best, and understands the ebb and flow of parish collections. John reiterated that if a parish does not meet it's goal, there is no penalty to the parish.

There was some discussion of the specificity of the goals. John said the foundation is working to further define goals. "Religious Education and Parent Formation" and "New Evangelization Initiatives" line items are both currently envisioned as grants that parish groups apply for and the diocese disburses. Jacob and Jeff asked about the Catholic schools endowment and John clarified that the money will be for tuition assistance, but not available to homeschoolers or non-diocesan schools. There was some more discussion on specificity and concerns about people's reluctance to give. Gary mentioned that this could be a spiritual exercise and a bigger mission to support Catholic formation in our diocese. John mentioned that the bishop has listened to his priests and been generous in the [donations]split. He said we must turn it over to God and let people give accordingly.

After John Alves left, the council discussed which projects to support with the parish campaign funds. It was narrowed down to 3 tentative ideas.

1. Endowment fund to support OSP seminarians -intended to foster additional vocations by helping young men discern a calling and removing an obstacle from pursuing that vocation (namely tuition support)
2. a sports/activities field behind the parish hall
3. a picnic pavilion behind the parish hall - the latter two projects are intended to foster a greater sense of community by facilitating both planned and impromptu gatherings friendly to folks and families of all ages

Perhaps we have parishioners who can donate time and talent to these projects to help stretch the funds. John LaRock also suggested we approach non-parishioner businesses who may be interested in supporting a local church or donating work as a write-off opportunity. He said OSP had success with this in the past.

After brief discussion the council voted to meet regularly on the second Thursday of each month.