

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish
Parish Pastoral Council
March 19, 2009
7:30-9:00 p.m.

Present: Fr. John Sassani, Anne Marie Carr-Reardon, Kathy D'Agostino, Sebastian DiFelice, Stephen Kern, Carole McElduff, Rosemary Seibold, Kara O'Malley, Andy Majewski, Gisela Morales-Barreto, Tom McLaughlin, Joe Smirolfo, Dan Foley, Marcia Lucenta, Ken Donalds

Presiding: Anne-Marie Carr-Reardon

Minutes: Carole McElduff

Opening Prayer: Rosemary Seibold

Review of Minutes:

There continue to be steady requests from area families in need and an increase in the number of parishioners who are recently out of work. Rosemary reported that the 4th grade Religious Education class is collecting food for the Newton Food Pantry. She would like to have the parish sponsor a food drive for the pantry before the summer when the Pantry's needs tend to increase due to kids being out of school. Fr. John agreed to write about the hunger issue in our neighborhood to increase awareness of it and to remind parishioners to give to those less fortunate.

Staff Updates:

Kara reported that Youth Programs are going well as they wind down this year. The Confirmation overnight retreat was a success. Confirmation is being celebrated on May 31. Youth Group attracts 25-30 kids per week. Workcamp has 45 kids signed up with 6 on the waiting list.

Kathy reported that Youth Choir is going well heading into the Easter season.

Rosemary reported that 80 children will receive First Communion this Spring. The first Gr. 2 retreat was successful; the second one is to be held 3/20.

Approximately 20 parents have signed up for an abridged version of ARISE, held during their children's religious education classes.

Soup and Stations will be held on 3/27/09.

The Baptism continues to thrive. There will be a 2nd grader baptized at the Easter Vigil.

The final Parish Faith Festival for this year will be held on Sunday, 4/26 from 12-3.

Review of Brainstorm Issues:

Sebastian reviewed a spreadsheet he compiled after the January meeting expanding on the themes explored. The themes were: Outreach; Building Community; Spiritual Life; Infrastructure; and High Quality (Liturgical Life). Sebastian asked that the PPC members review the document and get back to him with further ideas or comments. It was also discussed to use the parish website as a tool for getting wider input from parishioners about these ideas.

Pastor's Report:

Fr. John reported that there are 177 registered in 18 groups for this season's ARISE program. That number is up from last season.

Interviews will begin for the open Pastoral Associate position. Some PPC members as well as those involved in affected ministries will be asked to assist with interviews of the most qualified candidates. There have been many applications received and good pool of candidates.

RCIA has 1 candidate for full initiation into the Church this Easter. There are 2 other candidates who will receive Eucharist and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. Four other adults will receive Confirmation during the Easter season.

The Thursday evening Mass during Lent has had good attendance. Ash Wednesday was a huge success. Comments have been favorable regarding the Little Black Book. A book for the Easter season is in the works.

The Grand Annual has done better than last year. This in addition to strong weekly giving gave the OK to the hiring of the new Pastoral Associate.

Financial Update:

Andy reported that the parish has been able to save money on utilities due to work done on the project by a parish volunteer. This success led the Finance Council to invite all parishioners involved in the building trades to offer their expertise to help maintain our grounds and buildings.

The Finance Council has been paying a lot of attention to Trinity Catholic as they struggle with enrollment and finances. The school is also getting guidance from the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and the Archdiocese.

The Fall surveys on parish debt point to parishioners' willingness to increase their regular giving, not to participate in a capital campaign. This will be discussed at a later date after the school is better stabilized.

It was suggested to note the success of the Grand Annual in the bulletin.