Tri-Parish Catholic Community

*Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish - St. Mary’s Ridge ~ St. Augustine of Hippo Parish - Norwalk*

*Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish & School - Cashton*

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Pastoral Council Report

7 February 2017

The Tri-Parish Pastoral Council met Tuesday evening, February 7, in the Sacred Heart parish hall. Fr. Klos welcomed all in attendance for a discussion on Sacred Worship and the spiritual life in our parishes. Present were: Trustees - Nate Klinge (SH) and Kathy Barrett (SA); PCCW President - Elizabeth Brown (SM); Knights of Columbus delegate - James Eeuck; Organists - Sandy Schmitz (SM), Lucy Bolton (SA), Alvirta Wiedeman (SH), and Mary Beth Smith (SH); Choral Director - Ann Klinkner (SM); Art & Environment Coordinators - Deb Mashak-Hundt (SH), June Randle (SM), and Geralyn Klinkner (SM); Pastoral Staff - Fr. Michael Klos, Deacon Sam Schmirler, and Lisa Steger (DRE). Prayer was led by Fr. Klos.

Fr. Klos gave a short presentation on liturgy and devotions. He pointed out that as Catholics we don’t have to make a lot of things up because the Mass, the center of our life in Christ, has been handed on to us from the earliest beginnings of the Church. He also pointed out that while there is a format and rules given us by Holy Mother Church, there is still the need to figure out how best to carry this out in each particular culture and place. Father also explained that the devotional life comes out of the Mass and the Eucharist which is its “fount and summit”. Deacon Sam added that the Sacraments are also a part of the liturgical life of the Church and their celebration takes a special part in our own lives.

Next those assembled were asked to consider what we currently doing. **The list of those things that we are doing, and doing well included:**

Eucharistic Adoration is a particular strength

Our churches in Cashton & Norwalk are open each day so that people may stop in for prayer

There is good singing in a variety of styles and varied solemnity through the weekend and throughout the year

Servers are well trained and add to the dignity of our celebrations

Each parish gets a Mass for Holy Days of Obligation

There is good cooperation between parishes, especially amongst the choirs; of particular note is their combined efforts for the Triduum.

Greeting of neighbors before Mass is considered a good sign of hospitality

Rosary before the 4:00 Mass

**Also mentioned were:**

Marriage adoption program

Purgatorial Society

Participation of the school children at Mass

Eucharistic Procession on 1st Fridays at the end of the school day

Marriage and Birthday blessings at the beginning of each month

Lighthouse CD’s and “My Parish App”, especially for the daily Mass readings

Prayer meetings are available

Children’s Liturgy of the Word at the 10:00 Sunday Mass.

Next the council was asked to consider where there may be holes in our spiritual lives or things that we don’t do well. **The following items were identified:**

We do not have greeters to welcome and assist those who are not from here; *this has been commented on by visitors more than once*

Starting on time - especially Mass and Confessions

Succession planning and recruiting for ministries, especially musicians

Need for more Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, especially at St. Mary’s

Rosary is not prayed before the other Masses

There is a felt need for Scripture Study to be offered

Sacramental information could be in a more visible place in the bulletin

a better of sense of community - knowing who people are

Next, those assembled were asked to adjourn to the church for a time of prayer and discernment over how we might address these identified areas of weakness.

After 20 minutes of silent prayer the council reconvened. Discussion revealed two particular points:

1. We are stronger and our efforts more fruitful when we consciously work together as a Tri-Parish Community. Efforts at “Community Building” must be a focus; including young married couples, families who have experienced loss of a loved one, etc.

2. Not all activities need to be led by the parish clergy (priest and deacon). Many of the things that will make our parishes stronger can and ought to be led by lay parishioners with only guidance and some occasional assistance from the clergy.

**Over the next year it was felt that we need to concentrate our efforts on the following:**

\*Recruiting and forming parish greeters in all three of our parishes.

\*Developing Bible Study groups, maybe focused on *Lectio Divina* on the Sunday readings or DVD based with time for discussion and sharing (keeping in mind #2 above these could be encouraged and assisted by the clergy but not dependant on them.

\*Cultivating the rosary before the other weekend Masses especially as we walk in this 100th year since Fatima - accomplished with leadership from the Knights of Columbus and the PCCWs.

Identifying musicians and cultivating a program of mentoring, training, and “job-shadowing”.

The possibility of a “Tri-Parish” Funeral Committee assisting especially St. Mary’s which has difficulty providing sufficient hospitality for funerals especially with regards to meal preparation and serving.

It was asked if Communion under both forms by *Intinction* could be implemented to cut down on the number of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion needed for each Mass.

**Items identified which could be more fruitfully addressed at the fall meeting addressing *Family Life and Justice & Peace*:**

Would it be possible to develop Tri-Parish socials and celebrations?

How do we encourage and promote small Tri-Parish groups: i.e. young married couples, single adults, widows & widowers, etc.

Thanks for everyone’s very fruitful participation was expressed by Father and a closing prayer led by him.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, June 6, @St. Mary’s, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Area of Pastoral Concern: *Catechesis, Evangelization, and continuing Formation of youth and adults.*** **Groups asked to participate:** Catechists, community leaders: i.e. 4H and Scout leaders, coaches and youth advisors, summer rec organizers, teachers, adult community organization leaders and members.