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

6 June 2017

The Tri-Parish Pastoral Council met Tuesday evening, June 6, in the St. Augustine parish hall. Fr. Klos welcomed all in attendance for a discussion on Evangelization and Catechesis in our parishes. Present were: Trustees - Jim Schreier (SM); PCCW President - Michelle Herricks (SH), Anne Klinkner (SM-VP); Knights of Columbus delegate - Craig Steger; Catechists - Linda Baker, Sue Cummings, and Ann Klinkner; Pastoral Staff - Fr. Michael Klos and Lisa Steger (DRE). Tahira Cummings attended as an interest young person and recent graduate. Elizabeth Brown attended as a youth coach and parent. Also present were Cheryl Cummings as well as a delegation of members from St. Mary’s who came for the discussion on the continued use of the convent for the 7-10 CCD evening program. Excused: Theresa Lehner (SA PCCW), Kathy Barrett (SA Trustee), Nate Klinge (SH Trustee), and Jayme Klinge (SHCS Lead Teacher). Prayer was led by Fr. Klos.

Fr. Klos gave a short presentation on the role of Catechesis and Evangelization in the life of the parish. Included were the importance not only of youth catechesis and the role of Catholic Schools, but also of continuing adult catechesis. It was pointed out that all of the catechesis in the world is of little worth without a movement of the Holy Spirit bringing about the recognition of our need for God and the value of the life He offers us in Christ; this is where evangelization comes in.

**Next those assembled were asked to consider what we are currently doing. The list of those things that we have going in these areas include:**

We have dedicated catechists in all three centers covering youth catechesis for grades 1-6 in Norwalk and Cashton and grades 7-10 at St. Mary’s Ridge.

Men’s Spirituality Night and Women’s Spirituality Day are occurring three times each year.

Our Catholic School currently serves children from each of our three parishes and is a source of important spiritual formation for our children and of energy for Sacred Heart Parish.

Our summer “Catholic Kids Camp” program is well attended.

The prayer group led by Deacon Sam is a source of deepening faith for those who attend.

Our Sacramental prep is an important opportunity for evangelizing those preparing for the baptism of their children and for those preparing for marriage.

Our young people are involved in serving Mass, singing in the choir at Sacred Heart and St. Mary’s, and are sacristans at Sacred Heart.

The Marian Catechist program is offered as an option for those Confirmation candidates who desire the challenge.

**Also mentioned were:**

Children’s Liturgy of the Word at Sacred Heart is an additional source of evangelization & catechesis, not only for the young people who attend but for the adults and young people who assist in guiding them.

**Next the council was asked what needs there are to be addressed. The following items were identified:**

The opinion was expressed that we need to be more pointed about the expectations that arise with living our life in Christ, but in love.

Our young people are not in conversation with adults who care about them and about their faith; how do wehelp adults have more confidence in mentoring our youth as they engage in the many activities that occupies them in and outside of church?

An interest was expressed in continuing adult faith formation, ie.: Bible Studies.

How do we facilitate youth experiences such as Adventure Camp, Steubenville Conferences, Mission Trips, etc.?

How do we ignite the fire in our adults? Is there something else to be done?

These are the questions and concerns those assembled were asked to bring to prayer as they adjourned to the church for a time of prayer and discernment.

**After 20 minutes of silent prayer the council reconvened. The following points were discussed:**

1. There needs to be a more intentional inviting of the adult community into the work of catechesis and evangelization. In this way they may themselves be convicted in the Spirit to take their faith more seriously and deepen their relationship with Christ. Kick-offs for CCD, Confirmation, and summer programs could be prime opportunities for drawing parents in.

2. Our young people need to be mentored more effectively by adults who love and value their faith. Could this be done in the context of those chosen as Confirmation sponsors? Mentors are needed to reach our youth on a personal level, meeting them where they are. What kind of training is available?

3. Could we formalize the steps taken in Confirmation preparation liturgically as is done in the RCIA program, i.e. formal entry into the program; formal send-off to the Confirmation liturgy at Sunday Mass; formal assignment of sponsors? Father likes the idea and will look into what can be done and how.

4. Adults need to be encouraged to organize for themselves groups which can meet at a particular time and place and are interested in exploring a particular topic at which time the Pastoral Staff can assist them in obtaining the resources needed, assisting more where more is needed or desired. This can happen through bulletin and pulpit announcements.

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

\*Develop a mentoring program for adults, possibly through the Confirmation program. Father, Ann Klinkner, Cheryl Cummings, and Lisa Steger will work on this together.

\*Tweak the 7-10 grade program to possibly include food for the kids coming in right after school activities, some special programming to incite more thoughtful participation by young people, retreats, nights of reflection, liturgical experiences, etc. ***This will necessarily require more adult participation.***

**St. Mary’s Convent**

The delegation from St. Mary’s stated that the convent is in need of much work in the near future; the windows are in need of replacing, the roof will need to be replaced, and other work. They questioned the value of keeping the building up for a program that meets little more than an hour a week, 30 times per year.

There was pointed out by some from St. Mary’s that it is necessary for the life of the parish to have a youth presence at the parish. It was also pointed out that these grades meet at St. Mary’s because they are coming from the entire cluster and St. Mary’s is the central location.

Father will take these issues under advisement and seek to meet with the stake holders involved in this particular issue in order to come to a resolution in time for fall classes. Thanks for everyone’s very fruitful participation was expressed by Father and a closing prayer was led by him.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, October 3, @ St. Mary’s, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. **Area of Pastoral Concern: *Marriage & Family Life*** and ***Justice & Peace.***