

**St. Bede Pastoral Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 22, 2005**

**Present:** Fr. Abe, Greg Ballentine, Jack Bray, Francis Capone, Jay Colley, Toni Collingwood, Dave Clemens, Mike Kaurich, Charles Leahey, John McCormack, Monica Rettig, Miriam Saguto, Don Seger, Tina Straight, Tess Thome, Jeannie Trainum

**Absent:** Rosanne Black, William Theroux

This was the first St. Bede Roundtable meeting (seven neighborhoods were represented at this meeting) and it was held in the Jamestown HS cafeteria. A potluck supper started at 6 pm and preceded the regular PC meeting and the roundtable session.

Don called the meeting to order at 7 pm and he offered the opening prayer. Don introduced the members of the PC and commented that Jay Colley would be concluding his three years of service to the PC. The minutes from the May meeting were approved.

**Committee Reports:**

Liturgy Committee: Mike Kaurich distributed the May meeting minutes and commented on two highlights:

- 1) Corpus Christi Sunday included a procession and adoration along with a blessing for all ministers.
- 2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary mass was held on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

The committee will be meeting in 2 weeks with Fr. Abe. Planning is already underway for Christmas and Easter. There will not be a liturgy committee meeting in July.

Social Ministry: Jack commented that he has been the Director since Jan. 2005. He offered the following account of recent SM activities:

- 1) The policy of the SM office is to offer food to whoever requests it. At their request we recently sent food to the Bethlehem Monastery of the Poor Clares in Barhamsville.
- 2) In May 37 clients (representing 117 individuals) had requested help.
- 3) Jack continues to be the liaison with all other social service agencies.
- 4) Through the generosity of St. Bede parishioners and the 18 volunteers in the SM (one new volunteer just joined) the office functions very well.

**Old Business:**

Neighborhood Ministry: Toni commented that there were 7 different neighborhoods at this first roundtable meeting. She reviewed the list of neighborhoods, the number of families in each and the names of the captains. She thanked all of them and stated that it is important for the neighbors to get to know one another not only for the personal rapport that develops but also for support when more serious issues arise.

Suggestion Box: Monica announced that a new smaller version of the suggestion box was to be installed soon. She reviewed that the process is to direct suggestions to the appropriate person for response.

Stewardship: Miriam reported that the pipe organ fund raising campaign pledges/collections has now grown from \$560K to \$670K. She asked all to thank Connie Lippman for her good work in leading this effort. She added that there are new giving capabilities that have been announced:

- 1) ACH direct debit giving is now a possibility for those interested
- 2) Credit cards are now also being accepted

### **New Business:**

Comments from the Pastor: Fr. Abe offered that he was now in his 8<sup>th</sup> day as Pastor of St. Bede Parish and he is overwhelmed by the support and kind words from the parish. Coming from a parish of 650 families to one of 3000 families is a big challenge. He affectionately calls his new parish "St. Beehive" in honor of the tremendous activity and energy he has witnessed. It is an honor to be named Pastor by the Bishop and he is grateful. He is a Virginia native and has been a priest for 21 years starting at Immaculate Conception church. He found it interesting that several parishioners from that first assignment are now also at St. Bede and it was nice to see those familiar faces once again. He added that the neighborhood concept is very important since it is vital that we stay connected. He commented that the use of nametags was a good idea and one that could be helpful to everyone.

Special Presentation: Tess offered that there will be a special presentation, given by Msgr. Raymond Barton, on the Catholic Church's commitment to ecumenism: "That All May be One". RSVPs are needed soon for this June 28 & 30 presentations at St. Joan of Arc parish in Yorktown. She asked all to see the bulletin for details.

### **Roundtable Discussion:**

At this time Don turned the meeting over to Dave and Jay to be moderators for the roundtable discussion with the parishioners. Comments and questions followed:

- 1) It was suggested that when people register with the parish office they should be advised that a neighborhood organization exists. Toni agreed that this would be good along with a phone call. She will provide a list of new parishioners to the captains and ask them to check the list for accuracy. In response to another inquiry Toni added that a notation is placed on a registration card if someone does not want to be contacted but that is a rare occurrence.

- 2) Fr. Abe commented:
  - a) That parking at his former parish in Staunton, VA is actually worse than here. He suggested that if some families are coming in more than one car to a mass (based upon after mass plans) that they try to use one car instead.
  - b) With 5 masses we have the ability “spread out” e.g., the 5 pm mass on Sunday is not so full. The plan is to add two masses, during the school year, at the chapel.
  - c) In regard to the rectory - he stated that they are to be out of the old rectory in July and are in the process of closing on a house that has room for 3 full-time priests in the Foxes. (A neighborhood adjacent to the church on Ironbound Rd.)
  - d) Fr. Bill O’Brian will be coming out of retirement and joining him as Parochial Vicar. Fr. O’Brian is a graduate of the Wharton School of Business and he will attend the FC meetings.
  - e) The new church is a blessing and offers an historic opportunity to broaden our ministries and to make a large and positive footprint. The church cost over \$12M and we have a debt of \$3.8M. The gift of 42 acres was a key part of building the church. A goal of Phase II is to move all of the parish groups to the new site and to provide adequate and flexible facilities to meet the needs of the parish. He asks for the support of the parishioners and for their ideas.
- 3) Dave commented that phase II started last year and a core committee was created. It quickly became clear that we cannot move ahead due to the debt (\$3.8M) and that the growth of the parish has been greater than originally anticipated. Before phase II can start we need to better understand whom we are as a parish e.g., demographically, in order to plan appropriately. The PC invites all to comment, now or later, with their constructive ideas.
- 4) A point was raised that it sounded as if we are inferring that the \$3.8M in debt was unexpected. Wasn’t a study done and the conclusion made that we had the cash flow necessary to cover this debt? How long until we pay off the debt?  
Several people answered:
  - a) About 5 years ago we secured a lower price for the organ and a low interest rate and this was the right thing to do.
  - b) The debt structure was anticipated, approved by the FC and the plan was broadcast to the parish. We made “phantom” payments to ourselves before the actual payments started in order to contribute to the finance and construction needs. Paying down the debt is important but the difficulty arises with operating two sites. We have a commitment to the old site and too operate the new site.
  - c) The monthly debt payment cost is \$30K, there are two loans outstanding of \$3.5M and \$.5M respectively, and these are balloon loans.

- 5) In response to a question about when CCM would be self-sustaining and therefore not a part of St. Bede parish. Fr. Abe responded:
  - a) He has met with the steering committee that is planning for the building of an endowment fund. The goal is to maximize this fund so that it can carry the biggest share of the costs. We do not know how long this will take. We can have two campuses with sensible cost management.
  - b) Our CCM program is the pride of the diocese and the model that others want to emulate.
  - c) As pastor of St. Bede and with the support of M.E. Pitard and the Dominican priests (Fr. Becket and Fr. Gabe) a plan is in place for CCM for the coming year. It is interesting to note that 42% of W&M students are Catholic and that is in contrast to 9% of Virginians who are Catholic. Priestly and religious vocations are coming out of W&M and other campus ministries. Indeed Fr. Abe recognized his call to the priesthood while a part of campus ministry.
- 6) In reply to a question about how many new pledges were coming in from new parishioners it was noted that campaigns have been sent to these families and another may be planned. Over the past 6 months the focus has been on the pipe organ campaign and asking new parishioners to contribute there.
- 7) A comment was offered about whether we are “advertising enough” to the parish about finances. In addition to the fact that there will be an article in the next newsletter Fr. Abe stated:
  - a) Once the current debt is gone we can take on new debt based upon the diocesan 1/3 formula. (debt, reserves, committed monies)
  - b) There are many ways to give e.g., stock transfers
  - c) We are all eager to get to a new phase and coming generations deserve the best as we hand on the faith.
- 8) In response to a follow up question on the rectory and a phase III Fr. Abe stated:
  - a) The cost to build a new on the church site rectory was too expensive. It is more reasonable to purchase the house in the Foxes neighborhood.
  - b) As to a phase III that is probably to happen but not in awhile and not until we get through our current situation.

Since we had to vacate the HS at 8 pm the meeting was adjourned.

Fr. Abe offered the closing prayer.

**The next meeting is July 27 in the Parish Center with Tess and Jeannie offering the prayers.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Greg Ballentine  
Secretary