

**St. Bede Pastoral Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 28, 2005**

**Present:** Fr. Abe, Greg Ballentine, Jack Bray, Bill Burke, Dave Clemens, Toni Collingwood, Ginger DiLoretto, Joe Guion, Michelle Kelley, Charles Leahey, Betty Morris, Monica Rettig, Miriam Saguto, Don Seger, Tina Straight, William Theroux, Tess Thome

**Absent:** Rosanne Black, Frank Capone, Jeannie Trainum

Don called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and Tina led the opening prayer. The minutes from the July meeting (there was no meeting in August) were approved.

Don introduced and welcomed three guest speakers: Joe Guion – a member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Bill Burke – representative from the St. Bede FC, and Michelle Kelley – Coordinator of Youth Ministry from St. Bede.

**Diocesan PC (DPC):** Joe explained that the DPC is one of two advisory groups to the bishop with the other being the Priest Council. At a recent retreat the bishop asked that the DPC members go to the various parishes within Region 4 to discuss issues of concern and to report back to him. Joe focused on the topic of clustering i.e., spreading priests responsibilities to more than one parish, and he referenced a Catholic Virginia article on clustering in region 10 (a western region within the diocese). The DPC is reviewing the need to cover the faith needs within the regions with a fewer number of priests. They realize that using clustering has pluses and minuses and using Region 10 as an example he commented:

- 1) Region 10 using clustering has 3 priests covering 9 parishes. This solution places greater travel burdens on the priests. It also means that mass cannot be celebrated as often in each locale and communion services become more necessary.
- 2) The pastoral role of the priest is diluted since time in each parish is limited.
- 3) Mass attendance may be reduced.
- 4) Lay people may have to take on more responsibility with the pastoral coordinator taking a larger role. Clearer guidelines/instructions for the priests and the pastoral coordinators (who are in clustering environments) are forthcoming.

Joe commented that with Region 4 there are 18 parishes, chapels and faith communities and there are more resources. We may be able to help other parishes by sharing those resources. A program for lay ministers is being developed.

In response to questions/comments Joe added:

- 1) That the diocese is telling the parishes to be ready for clustering and other plans.
- 2) The DPC will report back to the bishop in December.
- 3) He agreed that similar activities (clustering) have been done in other areas of the country for many years.

Fr. Abe commented that Region 10 is made up mostly of chapels and smaller faith communities and we should be careful in how we define (as to size) a parish when

discussing this issue. We will help but who will be clustered is still to be determined. In the meantime we have to ensure that our ministries flourish and are strong.

**Finance Council (FC):** Bill introduced himself as the new FC liaison to the PC replacing Larry Fronheiser who is now chairman of the FC. Bill will attend our meetings once a quarter.

**Youth Ministry (YM):** Michelle thanked the PC and introduced LIFETEEN members who would provide their witness to their experience in youth ministry programs:

- 1) Mackenzie Murphy: a senior in high school she became active within the YM 3 years ago. This has helped her to see God's calling through the guidance of good people she has met. She has been involved in several mission trips and retreats and enjoys the camaraderie, group interaction and support of everyone involved. She sings in the 5 pm mass band and enjoys leading others in worship. All of this is a wonderful foundation for later in life.
- 2) Mary Maston: a junior in high school this is her 3rd year in the LIFETEEN YM program. This involvement has helped her to experience God and showed her how to center herself toward Christ and to be a better Catholic.

Michelle started her review of the YM programs with a handout covering the YM programs: LIFETEEN, Middle School Ministry and Confirmation Ministry.

- 1) For high school students the LIFETEEN program is an international youth ministry program and the largest in the US. It is geared toward teens and young adults with a LIFETEEN mass each Sunday. The motto of the program is "Leading teens closer to Christ". The program headquarters is in Arizona and she and Heber Dunkle (head of the music group) have attended their training program. The music is contemporary and based on key themes of the scriptures. The teens meet after the 5 pm mass on Sunday for 1 hr. and 20 minutes and eight young adults and parents lead small group discussions. New this year is a group called "First Aid" – juniors and seniors who, while not lead catechists, take on leadership roles. There are 11 such leaders this year versus 0 last year. Also new this year is a high school advisory committee made up of volunteers who are active in all aspects of LIFETEEN from the basics to long term planning. (There is a similar group for the middle school as well.) During the summer the focus is on "big projects and activities" with youth retreats, mission trips, habitat work, etc. Michelle networks with other youth ministries and the plan is for a "Making a Difference" retreat in March with @ 300 teens.
- 2) Confirmation is a 2-year program with the second year focus on the Sacrament of Confirmation. The teaching starts this Sunday with the teens separated into small groups, which break out into "host homes" under supervision of parents (VIRTUS program verifications are done). This has been successful due to the "small faith" aspect of how it is done i.e., there is a strong need for support/help in the faith journey.

- 3) The middle school program is coordinated by Mary Jo Padula (3<sup>rd</sup> year) and involves grades 6-8. This ministry follows the "Living Our Faith" program, which divides the catechesis into semesters. This past year they incorporated service as a part of the program with service opportunities at church versus regular catechesis. About two-thirds of the students participated and the activities included the making of rosaries, caps for premature babies, etc. that allowed for the students to experience fellowship and service. Additional fellowship activity included a ski trip with @ 20 people. This trip alternates between the middle school and the high school each year.

To all of the above Michelle added that a Parent Education Program started on October 9<sup>th</sup>. This provides a resource for the parents in developing/supporting their faith.

In response to questions Michelle stated:

- 1) Space is a key issue and that currently they are "pushed to the walls" with people. With a growth of 8% in both LIFETEEN and middle school attendees this year they have to be creative in placing the groups throughout the church for classes.
- 2) More parents are getting involved and especially in the small group leadership roles.
- 3) She would like to have more involvement of the students in Youth Conferences where they can have the "head to heart" experience. One such attendee told her that they "got alive" with their faith while attending a youth conference.
- 4) She is hoping to have a "Fund Raising Coordinator" to help in raising money for scholarships to pay for those who cannot afford mission trip expenses, conferences, etc.
- 5) Logistically it is problematic to use Walsingham for education programs with the 5 pm mass being at the church. It is better to stay at the church (no travel) and set up is easier.
- 6) At the end of the year they will evaluate the host home confirmation program.

### **Committee Reports:**

Liturgy Committee (LC): Betty distributed the LC minutes from the August meeting. She reviewed that in the minutes for the September meeting (held the evening before) that details on the following would be available:

- 1) Blessing of the animals this Sunday
- 2) Masses for All Saints Day, Immaculate Conception, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years
- 3) The possibility for 24 hour adoration are being reviewed
- 4) Several different wines are being evaluated.

Social Ministry (SM): Jack commented on several areas:

- 1) At Fr. Abe's request, a parish task force was established in the case that evacuees from the hurricane-affected areas should arrive in Williamsburg. (About 28 people have volunteered for this task force.) The Ft. Picket staging area has been shut down and in addition the Red Cross sent an email concerning how the community can mobilize should we get a disaster.
- 2) We are getting some evacuees who are arriving on their own and some have family here. We are assisting a couple which lost everything in the hurricane.
- 3) We are participating in VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster). This is a Red Cross umbrella group.
- 4) The City of Williamsburg Social Services Department depends on us and contact with SM is frequent. We have done as much as the city in keeping people from becoming homeless. At a recent meeting of city churches the city spoke positively of our role and what we do. We stave off homelessness by keeping people from being evicted. We are not a homeless shelter per se but we help by stepping in before people become homeless.
- 5) The Methodist church respite care ministry lost their building and we stepped forward and they now use our parish center room number 1 for this ministry. The caregiver brings a person to the facility for care for about 3-4 hours of respite. During that time volunteers read to the guest, do arts and crafts with them, feed them lunch, etc. This is working very well.

Stewardship Committee (SC): Miriam reported that:

- 1) This committee is rebuilding since it took a back seat to other efforts, like the pipe organ campaign, over the past months. Ed Lull is still the chairperson and he will meet with Fr. Abe to explain the vision for stewardship. All are welcome to join.
- 2) The Stewardship office worked with the FC to produce the annual report, which was in the September newsletter.
- 3) In follow-up to the annual report a quarterly report from the pulpit will also be done. It is important to keep the message about finance out there since it does make a difference in our offertory.
- 4) We received a grant from the Bishop's Appeal for a study analyzing the Parish Center/CCM infrastructure support costs. To get the CCM self-sufficient we need to have accurate figures on what it will cost to maintain these facilities.
- 5) In an effort to seek support for the CCM a letter was sent to current W & M students. Last year such a program yielded \$16K in donations. Similarly a letter was sent to W & M alumni in support of a CCM endowment. To date @ \$36K has been raised. This will be an on-going effort.
- 6) The Irish Tenor concert is coming up on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The money raised is not for a specific program but will be a part of the operating budget.
- 7) This Friday the pipe organ dedication concert will take place.

**Old Business:**

Neighborhood Roundtable/Neighborhood Ministry:

Toni and Miriam suggested that the next such meeting be with Windsor Forest and the neighborhoods along Old Town Rd. We can use the Windsor Forest clubhouse but due to scheduling conflicts the meeting will be on October 17<sup>th</sup>. The format of a potluck supper followed by an abbreviated PC meeting and then Q&A with the neighborhoods will be followed. Dave will again act as our facilitator. Invitations will be sent out by Miriam and neighborhoods included are: Chisel Run, Scotts Pond, Lafayette Apts., Longhill Gate, Longhill Grove, Regency Apts., Seasons Trace, The Hamlet, The Muse, Westmoreland, Williamsburg West, Windsor Forest.

Pipe Organ Update:

Miriam reported that the committee took August off. The plan had been to start an October campaign for the final \$150K but after discussion (we just had a large response to the hurricane relief effort of over \$90K) this will be postponed. Charles volunteered to write a PC note for the November and December newsletter.

Suggestion Box:

Monica reported that the new box is out in the Commons and that it is out all the time. The recent inputs (fewer due to the summer months) did not include anything new i.e., similar points raised about holy water stations being more available, sound system.

**New Business:**

Goals Committee:

Don reviewed that our goals for this year (roundtable, FIA, ministry overviews) are working. He added:

- 1) We need to publicize the availability of the FIA program. As a parish we are very active in FIA and we want to continue to support this good work.
- 2) **Everyone should send an email to Don with their ideas for a goal for next year**
- 3) We need to plan for a combined retreat for the FC, Administration and the PC

Nominations for PC Elections:

Elections are to be held the second Sunday of January. In November Fr. Abe will provide an announcement from the pulpit asking for people to run for the PC.

**Comments from Fr. Abe:**

Fr. Abe stated that he recently met with Msgr. Schmied and Elisa Montalvo from the Diocesan Office for the Hispanic Apostolate to discuss the Williamsburg Hispanic community. We currently have the rosary in Spanish every Tuesday, and an ESL program. The goal would be to have a Spanish mass in Williamsburg each Sunday. We have a Hispanic Outreach Committee in place and Fr. Abe will ask them for feedback on a time for mass and the location (church or chapel – the latter offers better public transportation options). The feeling is that such a mass could draw >250 people within 6 months.

This weekend we will begin the new process of distributing bulletins after each mass. We discussed the possibility of placing the missalettes around the church for easier access.

William offered the closing prayer.

**The next meeting will be Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Windsor Forest clubhouse and Fr. Abe will offer the prayers. The meeting will start with a potluck supper at 6 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Ballentine  
Secretary