

**St. Bede Pastoral Council
Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2006**

Present: Fr. Abe, Fr. Rod, Greg Ballentine, Rosanne Black, Dave Clemens, Toni Collingwood, Sasha Digges, Noel Fort, Doug Gebhardt, Mike Kaurich, John McCormack, Patrick McQuade, Tina Straight, Jeannie Trainum, Bill Theroux

Absent: Francis Capone, Chuck Leahey

Since this was a PC meeting in conjunction with a Neighborhood Roundtable session an informal “get-to-know-you” introduction was started by Jeannie and was followed at 7:10 pm with the formal start of the meeting by Dave. Fr. Abe led everyone with an opening prayer.

Dave then continued with a brief review of Phase One and Two and other opening business:

- 1) Phase One: soon to be completed with the finishing of the side parking lot
- 2) Phase Two: The PC started to reach out to the parish through the Neighborhood Roundtable meetings. Four have been done to date with a geographical breakout. This is the first such meeting done demographically i.e., young families. (Families with children 12 and under)
- 3) Each of the PC members introduced themselves and added why they had run for the PC.
- 4) The September PC meeting minutes were approved.

Committee Reports:

Liturgy Committee (LC): Mike commented that much of what the LC does emphasizes recruiting and training e.g., lectors, altar servers, etc. Of these the recruiting is most difficult to do and Mike asked that everyone consider volunteering or ask parishioners they know to volunteer. We are especially in need of ushers, lectors and Ministers of the Eucharist. He added that the LC preparation and organization at Mass allows the priests to concentrate on the Eucharist and not the details. He reminded us that Christmas falls on a Monday this year so there will be regular Sunday Masses plus Christmas Day Masses that will require many volunteers. Similarly New Years is on a Monday.

Social Ministry (SM): John spoke about the Outreach Ministry that has two parish coordinators and the office is open 4 days a week, Monday – Thursday from 10 –4. Individuals coming to this office for help are parishioners, are referrals from outside agencies e.g., Salvation Army, etc. These individuals are interviewed so that we can understand their situation, they are counseled and we work with other agencies and churches to see if assistance can be provided. John added that the food pantry is very helpful in these efforts. The Haiti Outreach and the Joy Ministry are also tied in with these efforts.

Young Adult Ministry (YAM): Dave explained that this ministry is aimed at individuals 30 and under.

Stewardship: This ministry is currently dormant (for now) since there are no fund raising efforts underway at the present time.

Core Committee (CC): Dave reviewed that this is a relatively new group and that it should not be mistaken with the CC from the Phase One effort. This new CC group has representatives from the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council and the Parish Staff. It is just beginning to get into the issues surrounding Phase Two and will develop over the coming months into a larger group focused on Phase Two.

New Business: this section was deferred in order to proceed to the roundtable discussion with the young families.

Neighborhood Roundtable Discussion

Dave opened the floor for comments and questions:

- 1) **Question**: A returning parishioner commented that since the parish has shown a budget surplus could their oldest son be reconsidered for tuition assistance at Walsingham Academy. Apparently he was turned down for such aid earlier in the year. Why can't there be more tuition aid? **Answer**: Fr. Abe responded that there is an established process for applying for such aid and a process for filing. He meets with some of the applicants and tries to meet some if not all of the requests. Such support was expanded last year by over \$10K and this year \$70K was provided with the hope to increase it in the future. Fr. offered to meet with this family to review the current situation. He also mentioned that our surplus comes in a number of ways e.g., fiscal control, increases in the offertory, the Kearns concert, etc. Some of these monies are put to contingencies e.g., new HVAC system.
- 2) **Questions**: What is the policy for turning the sound system on in the commons during Mass and what is the policy for taking pictures during Sacraments? **Answer**: Fr. Abe answered that the sound in the commons is usually on during Mass so that people with children and others could go there and still hear Mass. Due to a problem with the system it was recently not available but it is now operational. As to pictures during the Sacraments the policy of no pictures was established in order to protect the solemnity of the Sacramental celebrations e.g., at weddings no flash photography and at confirmation, first communion, and baptisms no photography including video.

- 3) **Questions:** Can there be Masses for children e.g. children's liturgy of the word? Can we make Mass more children friendly? Can we have a Mass where children feel more welcome? Is there a format or process to follow to have such a Mass? Can the kids be given a children's sermon? **Answer:** Mike answered that children's liturgy of the word was considered but the basic problem is that there is no space here. There is nothing to say that it cannot be reconsidered in the future. Jeannie added that we have done this before (at the old church) but we need space and the commitment of people to have such a service. The previous coordinator moved away and no one replaced her. There are programs for this type of Mass but there are new rules that have to be adhered to and people properly trained. Dave added that one of the goals of the new Core Committee is to determine what else we need. We currently use Walsingham for religious education because there is space there. With our current debt load we have to plan ahead to when we can do this type of liturgy.
- 4) **Comments/Question:** We want to go to Mass with our entire family but the nursery is only open for two Masses: 9 and 11 am. Have to "tag team" with my husband but would like to attend Mass with my family. The 9 am Mass has so few children present, therefore it is not welcoming to kids and we want the kids to also feel welcome. Best time to attend is 9 am but that is when other children are at religious education at Walsingham. Fr. Abe, do you hear from older parishioners about children? **Responses:** There are fewer children at the 9 am Mass because many are at Walsingham for religious education. Fr. Abe added that we have over 3200 families in the parish, over 2000 are couples 50 and older and about 1200 are families with children. There is a sense that St. Bede is not open to and participation by younger families. We need more space for children's liturgy of the word. We need to respond to legitimate concerns and glad to hear from the young families tonight. Toni added that the reason we had this forum and are gathering tonight came as a result of the work to organize neighborhoods (Neighborhood Ministry) into smaller Catholic areas where people could know each other and respond and help each other. She has spoken with a lot of people and has heard these comments before. We are concerned about your concerns and appreciate that you are sharing them with us. A gentleman responded that he is glad that there is no children's liturgy of the word and that he wants his family together at Mass. He has always felt very welcome and the reaction by older people has been positive. He feels welcome and part of the community. Dave added that as he looks back he found it hard to get involved. He can agree with the frustration but also found that persistence paid off. It took time but it paid off. The PC is aware of the issues and wants to respond.

Dave then asked the question: What can we do as a PC to lead the parish into the future?

Responses/Comments:

- 1) Fr. Abe was commended for the work to catechize our children with programs and methods for all ages.
- 2) Educating children and more programs to educate adults to grow spiritually. Have more events where we come together as families with potlucks, a playground for after Mass, prayer services, more childcare. Want to see all ages active in the church.
- 3) Thanks to Fr. Abe for the First Friday service.
- 4) Fr. Abe asked how many would like to see the nursery open for the 5:30 pm Mass on Saturday. He asked that all present ask about this with their friends to see if there is sufficient interest and that it would be used. The 9 am Mass nursery has enough volunteers but the 11 am Mass could use more people. Four people are needed so that both sides of the nursery can be open.
- 5) Further discussion ensued re: mass times with John relating that with the new church and the large space we gave up smaller Masses. We had a 10:30 family Mass at the old church once a month. While the 5 pm Sunday Mass fulfills this somewhat it is a difficult time for younger families.
- 6) We cannot please everyone and so we have to get along since we have a family of all ages.
- 7) Concern over religious education and space for that and vacation bible school. We can work it all out if we work on these concerns and have sufficient space.
- 8) An additional building will help and a playground where children and their parents could meet after Mass.

Dave wrapped up the commentary by observing three points of interest:

- 1) Education of children – having the resources to help raise the kids to be good Catholics
- 2) Parental involvement – need for a lot of volunteers
- 3) Community – part of a larger community effort

Dave thanked all for coming, that we should do this again and to keep the momentum flowing.

We closed with a Prayer from Fr. Rod.

The next PC meeting is November 9th at 7 pm in the church. Sasha and Noel will lead the prayers.

Respectfully submitted,
Greg Ballentine
Acting Secretary