

Blue Water Vicariate Pastoral Council Meeting
Holy Family, Memphis
February 11, 2009

Gerry St. John brought the meeting to order at 7:10. Fr. Nick started the meeting with the prayer "Celebrating the Year of St. Paul."

The January Minutes were approved with the addition of Tina Kovalcik to the VPC.

Members Present:

VPC Members Present: Vicar – Fr. Nick Zukowski; Cardinal Mooney – Craig LaDuke; Holy Family – Jerry Czostkowski; Holy Trinity – Mercedes Fox, Mary Suarez, Sharon Bender; Immaculate Conception – Theresa Austin, Amy O’Gara; Our Lady On The River – Roberta Ivan, Catherine Nutter; St. Augustine – Gerry St. John, Gerard Szezerbinski; St. Edward On The Lake – Sarah Rutkowski, Hank Rutkowski; St. Mary St Clair- Fred Kilcline; St. Mary Port Huron – Garry Isaacson, Cindy Platzer; St. Mary Queen of Creation – Larry Paczkowski (APC), Rick Wirick; Adult Formation – Lucy Sebastian; Christian Service – Deacon John Connors; DRE’s – Tina Kovalcik; Principals – Helen Casper; Youth Ministry – Deanna White; AOD Facilitator – Lory McGlennen and Vicariate Secretary – Debie Hauer.

APC

No report

DRE

The DRE’s are still working on a vicariate home study program. They are still working on a Baptism preparation to be offered vicariate wide to diminish Church hoppers. The presentation of Baptism prep will be presented at the DRE meeting on February 19, 2009.

The DRE’s discussed a book that each parish could present to parishioners as a Lenten Adult Formation/Study program during the Lenten Season. This event could stimulate community wide discussion. It would not matter what parish you belonged to as all parishes offering this study would be on the same chapter within a weeks time.

DRE’s also discussed which parishes have not paid their \$150 annual dues. We have no report at this time as to which parishes have paid. This fee covers all vicariate attendees for catechist formation topics. We would also like to know if this fee is adequate. Tina Kovalcik is to follow up with Fr. Nick on this matter. *Fr. Nick stated at this point that he believed the \$150.00 to be enough. Tina asked if it would be possible to pay less. Fr. Nick didn’t think so. Lucy pointed out that the Parish Leadership Conference was in the black for the first time this year and that might not always be the situation.*

An Annulment/Convalidation Seminar will be held at St. Mary St. Clair on February 18, 2009 at 7:00 pm.

Holy Family Parish will be hosting a Lenten Day of Reflection called "Conquering Un-forgiveness and Reconciling Relationships" on Saturday, February 28th from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Next meeting of the DRE's will be on Feb 19, 2009 at St. Augustine.

PRINCIPALS

The NCEA retreat on Catholic Identity was excellent and well-attended by the Blue Water Catholic elementary schools. Experiences were provided to the principals to grow in their role as spiritual leaders to staff, to students and to families.

The grade level meetings among the schools are continuing with grades 2, 5 and 1 completed and middle and high school (by subject) next. All grades will have met by early May. Professional sharing as well as curriculum goals and improved test scores are the topics.

At the Archdiocese principals meeting on February 5, several Eastern Orthodox Church leaders made a presentation in regard to their rite's reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and how to share with our teachers of religion about their differences as classes prepare for 1st Eucharist and Confirmation and many Eastern Orthodox students are enrolled in our schools. The Eastern Orthodox Church is the bridge between the Eastern Churches and the Catholic Church.

Archdiocesan tuition assistance applications for 2009-10 are now available at schools and parishes. These are due April 10 and have a \$20 fee to apply. \$600 awards for each elementary student and \$700 for high schools are available.

Next Blue Water Principals meeting is February 19th at Immaculate Conception.

YOUTH MINISTRY

No Report

CAMPUS /YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Eric Coules, Campus minister, was not present at the meeting. His report was emailed and is included as follows:

Campus and Young Adult Ministry Report

- 1.) Our advisor (John Kowalski) has now been approved and we have met with him and will be going forward with a few ideas.

- 2.) Ten students will be coming on the Tijuana Mission trip this year. We will be finalizing fundraiser ideas in the next week or so. Some ideas so far:
 - a. Bowling fundraiser
 - b. Address party—we all come together one night with at least ten addresses of people we know that might want to donate and we write letters and mail them the next day.
 - c. Spring and summer gardens—sell the produce at parishes or the market.

- 3.) We are submitting requests to host the following events at the end of this semester. Dates must still be approved but these are the events:
 - a. Ping Pong Tournament
 - b. Basketball Tournament
 - c. Debate: Over the course of four weeks we plan on having a debate once a week with the opportunity for students to engage in debate. Topics will be selected from a student survey and will relate to current events.

- 4.) Starting March 1, 2009 and every consecutive first Sunday, all Young Adults ages 18-35 and Senior High School Students are invited to the Raven at 1 p.m. for coffee and conversation. The Raven is conveniently located in downtown Port Huron, and the local 11:30 Masses will give people time to stop by on their way home. This Sunday (March 1st) we will be planning the topics for the following Sundays. In our planning meeting, we will also decide if we want speakers every week or if we will have it a little more informal. Just some topic ideas:
 - a. Lives of the Saints -- which saint can you relate to?
 - b. Catholic Young Adults -- what is our place in the Church?
 - c. Confirmation -- what do we do now?
 - d. Catechesis 101 -- brush up and Q/A
 - e. What's Your Beef? -- things in the Church you do not understand Q/A

CARDINAL MOONEY

Craig reported that the Enrollment numbers of the 1999/2000 school year and today are the same. He also submitted the following report:

Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School
Update: Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Addition Update

- The new sewer line has been added
- The footings are set to begin
- The construction sign has been put out
- Please feel free to view pictures of the progress at <http://www.cardinalmooneycatholic.com>

Upcoming Activities

- An Open House of Cardinal Mooney will be Sunday, March 8th from 1 pm-3 pm (tours will run every 15 minutes).
- This year's drama production will be *Flyin'* and is showing March 27, 28 & 29. Cost for students is \$5 and cost for adults is \$8. It will be held in the gymnasium.
- The Cardinal Mooney Annual Auction will be held in the activities center on Saturday, April 25th. It will begin with a Mass celebrated at 4:00pm at Holy Cross Church with the Auction to follow at 5:00 pm.

Academic Excellence

- The top ten academic students were announced for the Class of 2009:
 1. Laura Alger – Valedictorian
 2. Sammy Theut – Salutatorian
 3. Mary Kate Bachler
 4. Emily Horvat
 5. Zahra Hussain
 6. Yeun Kim
 7. Megan Kosinski
 8. Kara Markowicz
 9. Alec Neale
 10. Paige Szymanski
- They will be honored at Mass on Wednesday, March 18th at 9am with a brunch for their families to follow.

News

- Registration for the 2009-2010 school year has begun.
- Catholic Schools Week is complete and was very successful.
- The "Hearts of Fire" program held at the conclusion of Catholic Schools Week was well attended and many students participated and shared their talents.
- Our wonderful quartet, which includes two sophomore and two juniors, won first place in the Four-Star Harmony Quartet Contest. They will advance in October to the National Contest held in Tennessee.
- Two advanced-placement art students' portfolios have been awarded Gold Keys in the Scholastic Competition. They will advance to New York for further judging. The counties they covered were St. Clair, Macomb and Lapeer. They were the only Catholic High School students who won an award in three counties.
- Here are some great experiences the students have recently been apart of:
 1. Service trips to Gleaners
 2. Collecting items for the Chemotherapy unit at Children's Hospital
 3. Trips to see the play *Hamlet*
 4. A viewing of the movie *Defiance*, which is about life during the Holocaust

Appreciation

- As always, thank you to all the parishes for all of your continued support of Catholic Education!

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The Christian Service Coordinators met on 1-22-2009 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Port Huron. Present were Barbara Brown, Holy Trinity Parish, Elaine Schmidt, St. Edward's and Mary Paquette, St. Mary's St. Clair.

We again reviewed whether our faith communities in the Vicariate were able to meet the basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) on an emergency basis of those who came to us. The consensus is that we are. There does not appear the need to develop a "MCREST" type of program (as there is in Macomb County) for emergency shelter in St. Clair County. The present shelters in Port Huron together with the 130 supported housing units in the County are meeting the needs. This does not mean that there will not be folks "slipping through the cracks".

One of the emergency shelter programs, Safe Horizons, has joined with the Department of Human Services of St. Clair County, United Way of St Clair County and the Community Action Agency of St. Clair County under the auspices of the St. Clair County Community Services Coordinating Body to develop a Homelessness Prevention and Crisis Project (HPCP). The HPCP purpose is to prevent homelessness on a short term emergency basis for St. Clair County residents by providing emergency funding and/or support services for those residents who are not qualified for any other funding and who might otherwise become homeless without immediate financial assistance. This is a funding of last resort.

A secondary purpose is to provide emergency shelter for the homeless population in St. Clair County when no other avenues or shelters are available. There is no funding available from public sources for this project. The above agencies are reaching out to the faith-based community for donations to fund this project. More information is included in the attached Memorandum of Understanding.

There was a small turnout for this meeting of Christian Service Coordinators. It was determined that we may not need more than 2-3 meetings per year. (It was thought that an evening meeting would bring more attendees. Perhaps the weather was a factor.)

The next Christian Service Coordinators meeting is just prior to the All-Staff Vicariate meeting on May 12, 2009 at Holy Family Parish in Memphis. We will be meeting at 10:00 A.M. and then attend the Luncheon. Our topics will be. 1) What does this group think we should be doing at these meetings? 2) Discussing – brainstorming new ministries, how can we reach out and evangelize through our ministries. What is available in our communities and what is missing? 3) Share our best practices, our listing of what is done through Christian Service in our parishes and help others copy the program, service, etc so that they do not have to begin from scratch.

Question: Does St. Clair County have a MCREST-type program? Answer: No

Question: Does St. Clair Catholic Social Services help? Answer: I don't know.

ADULT FORMATION

The Adult Faith Formation networking has been postponed until the fall. AOD on line has a link.

AOD

Lory McGlennen reported that the Vicariate Mass with Archbishop Vigneron was very nice. The weather was terrible, but that did not stop about five hundred people from coming. The Archbishop stayed until the very end and greeted everyone.

The Tracking Committee meeting is in a couple weeks. Jerry, Rick, Larry and Fr. Nick are representing the Blue Water Vicariate. They will be meeting with Bishop Flores, Lory and Fr. Jerry Brzezinski from education and finance.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Response to the Tracking Committee

Fr. Nick passed out a copy of his report to the Tracking Committee which will be attached to these minutes for the file. This report generated the following discussions:

In regard to the Cluster Partners -- The question was asked why this did not “kick in” for Fr. Greg at St. Mary in St. Clair. The answer was that Fr. Greg’s medical situation is of a temporary nature. The Cluster Partner plan is designed for a long-term need.

The currently merged parishes are not included in this plan with the exception of Holy Family as one of the alternatives as a cluster for St. Augustine. The other alternative would be St. Mary Mystical Rose which is in another vicariate.

In regard to the Catholic Schools Agreement – At this time only one-third of the money has been collected. We are half-way through the year, and so one-half of the money should have been collected. Due to this we have not been able to send the checks to the schools. Statements will be sent to each parish. Question: What will we do if a parish does not pay? Answer: The Archbishop also signed this agreement. If a parish does not pay, the Archbishop will have to be involved. Our Catholic Schools Agreement is the only one in place. We are the model for the Archdiocese.

Fr. Nick will bring the Archdiocese copy of the report the Vicars to our next meeting.

In regard to Hispanic Ministry – Lucy said that Sr. Mary Barbara has retired, so now it is left to Lucy. She is willing to meet with the Spanish Council to learn what is going on. Mercedes said that the needs are being met at Our Lady of Guadalupe and at St. Joseph.

She will meet with Lucy to make a report. Question: Are there other parishes in our Vicariate that need to be included in this meeting? Answer: We do not think so. Lory said this could be a brainstorming session for what can happen in other areas.

B. Protecting God’s Children

The Protecting God’s Children survey has not been turned in by all parishes. Fr. Nick asked the VPC reps to please contact your Pastor to be sure your parish has turned in your survey. The DRE is probably the person to contact as they have been overseeing the Protecting God’s Children program. The survey needs to be sent to the Office for Safe Environments. The address is on the survey.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Review Mission Statement

Everyone was given a copy of our current mission statement to review and to be prepared to discuss at our next meeting.

B. What are we doing for the nearly homeless?

The Christian Service Coordinators have been working on providing food, clothing and shelter. These areas are being met. What is being done for the huge number of people that have lost their job and some their homes? The Unemployment/Foreclosure situation is not being met. Practical “how to” information should be put together for the parishes to use. Perhaps we can put on the Vicariate Web Site. Lory said that the Downriver Vicariate is putting something together for these issues. She will bring theirs for us to look at. Fr. Nick brought us a model from his parish showing the areas of need to be looked at, along with possible solutions. A vicariate-wide resource will avoid duplication and “re-inventing the wheel.”

OPEN FORUM

Amy reported that the Web Site had 14,690 hits in 2008!

Gerry was wondering about training on the Vicariate level for “Funeral Vigil Teams”. Fr. Nick said that St. Mary Queen of Creation has Funeral Vigil Teams. They consist of three people on a team - a leader, a reader and a cantor. Gerry suggested this be brought up to the Vicariate Clergy. Fr. Nick agreed to bring it to them. Sarah suggested that prayer for vocations should be prayed at every Mass. She thought it might plant a seed in people. Fr. Nick will mention this idea to the clergy as well.

VICAR’S REPORT

Godspeed, Cardinal Adam Maida: On Sunday, January 25, 2009 our resident APC/VPC/PPC representative, Larry Paczkowski and Larry’s wife Cindy attended the 25th anniversary celebration of the Episcopal ordination of Cardinal Maida, which also ended up being a “thanksgiving” liturgy as well for his 18 ½ years of service as the Archbishop of Detroit. To list his accomplishments as our spiritual leader would take time and space; suffice it to say that we were blessed and grateful to have him with us. Cardinal Maida will be living in an apartment at the suit of the St. John Center in Plymouth which was to be Cardinal Edward Mooney’s retirement apartment prior to his unforeseen sudden death in Rome during the 1958 conclave that elected Pope John XXIII. Cardinal Szoka will divide his time between his home in Northville and the Vatican.

Welcome, Archbishop Allen Vigneron: As soon as we said farewell to Cardinal Maida, it was time to welcome Archbishop Allen Vigneron. Three events involving the Blue Water Vicariate were planned, and two have already taken place. The first was his Installation Mass on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Detroit, which was an awesome and inspiring liturgy. Second, Archbishop Vigneron celebrated a Mass in his honor last Wednesday, February 5th, at the St. Stephen Site of Holy Trinity Parish in Port Huron. Regional Bishop Daniel Flores was also present. Four of the ten vicariate pastors were there, but I assume all parishes were represented by various lay people. Archbishop Vigneron was supposed to meet with the Blue Water Vicariate clergy last Monday but had to cancel at the last minute. We hope to meet him on Tuesday, March 10, at St. Augustine Parish in Richmond at our regularly scheduled meeting of vicariate clergy.

Response Meeting of the Blue Water Vicariate to the Archdiocesan “Together in Faith” Tracking Committee: We have been asked to attend a meeting on Tuesday, February, 24, 2009 at 8:00 PM at Sacred Heart Major Seminary to listen to the Tracking Committee respond to our report of November 26, 2008. That report was in response to the recommendations for ongoing action given to us by the Tracking Committee. From this body, we are to have our two Archdiocesan Pastoral Council Reps (Doug Fournier and Larry Paczkowski), our other Vicariate Pastoral Council Rep from a Parish Pastoral council (Rick Wirick), our VPC Chairperson (Gerry St. John) and our Vicar (myself). I ask that these folders remain after tonight’s meeting so we can work out the logistics of getting there and getting back.

Lent Begins on February 25th: I invite all members of the VPC to send their Lenten calendar of activities to Amy O’Gara, our DRIFT Vicariate Newsletter editor before Monday, March 2nd for publication on March 15th and to attend all the wonderful Lenten opportunities offered by the Vicariate. I wish you a blessed and spiritual Lent.

February Vicar’s Council Meeting: Archbishop Vigneron wanted a free and open brain-storming session with the Vicars as he had with the Presbyteral Council the day before at their meeting. The topics and issues ran the entire gamut of life and ministry. The specific agenda item discussed was the salary increase for priests and salary increase for lay personnel. Since the Detroit clergy base pay is among the lowest in the state/province of Michigan a recommendation was made to increase the base pay by 5% bringing it up to the other dioceses’ base pay in the state/province, and then an additional 1 ½ % increase to that for the next fiscal year. It was recommended that lay salaries be increased across the board by 2% for the next fiscal year. All of this, of course depends on funds and available resources.

Closing Prayer: Stewardship Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Next meeting: March 11, 2009 at the All Saints Site of Holy Family Parish in Memphis. Refreshments to be supplied by St. Edward on the Lake