

Blue Water Vicariate Pastoral Council Meeting
Holy Family, Memphis
November 12, 2008

Gerry St. John brought the meeting to order at 7:11.
Fr. Nick led us in a prayer.

VPC Members Present: Vicar – Fr. Nick Zukowski; Cardinal Mooney – Craig LaDuke; Holy Family – Catherine Wullaert; Holy Trinity – Mercedes Fox , Mary Suarez; Immaculate Conception – Theresa Austin, Amy O’Gara; Our Lady On The River – Roberta Ivan, Catherine Nutter; St. Augustine – Gerry St. John, St. Edward On The Lake – Sarah Rutkowski, Hank Rutkowski; St. Mary St Clair- Fred Kilcline; St. Mary Port Huron – Garry Isaacson; St. Mary Queen of Creation – Larry Paczkowski (APC), Rick Wirick; Adult Formation – Lucy Sabastian; Campus Minister SC₄ - Erik Coules; Christian Service – John Connors; DREs – Tina Kovalcik; Youth Ministry – Deanna White; AOD Facilitator – Lory McGlennen and Vicariate Secretary – Debie Hauer.

Gerry St. John asked for approval of the September minutes.

A clarification was made in the open forum section of the September minutes, with regards to St. Augustine’s Sunday evening Mass. It is not a traditional Mass. It is held in their parish center not the church.

The minutes were approved as corrected.

APC

No Report

DRE

Tina Kovalcik reported that the Blue Water DRE’s are in process of developing Vicariate guidelines for a Faith Formation Home Study Program.

The Circle of Grace program is to be implemented this program year. Each DRE is to instruct their catechists to specific lesson plans. This program is a Safe Environment teaching. One lesson is required per year. More are available. A gathering took place early October at St. Mary’s – Port Huron to introduce the program. Handbooks were given to each DRE/Pastoral Associate that attended. This program is recommended for grades 1-8. Grades 9-12 are optional.

DRE’s are looking into obtaining information for a windmill grant to get windmill power for catholic schools. Parishes cannot receive the grant but schools can. There are a lot of grants out there; the DRE’s are looking for more information.

The DRE’s are celebrating all Catechists who obtain a Level 1 certification on January 17, 2009 at Immaculate Conception.

The DRE's next meeting will be November 20th that they will plan further formation opportunities for the balance of the year. Next vicariate certification offering will be on December 4th 6:30 to 8:30 at Immaculate Conception. Topic #3 Facilitating a Catechetical Session: Group Dynamics will be presented.

PRINCIPAL'S

Sarah Rutkowski reported for Helen Casper who was not present as she was at a Dare Graduation at St. Edward.

The Principals did not meet as a vicariate nor as an archdiocese in October due to the MANS Convention. At the convention more information and presentations were done on Professional Learning Communities, a goal for all our schools.

The November 13th principals meeting of the archdiocese is with state and federal representatives for the title programs our schools utilize.

Catholic schools are invited to a School Safety & Security Assessment wrap-up by MCC (Michigan Catholic Conference). Several of us are attending one on November 18th at St. Isadore's. This will speak to our individual schools' safety & emergency plans, protocols and procedures which were assessed last spring and address areas of vulnerability.

The November 19th vicariate principals meeting at St. Edward will discuss the January 24th Academic Olympics.

On December 5, the principals are inviting all vicariate pastors to a Christmas luncheon as a thank you for the schools support plan.

On January 15 & 16 the principals will attend part II of the NCEA retreat (National Catholic Education Association) at St. John's Plymouth.

The Principals are praying for and asking non school parishes to publish in their bulletins that they are "proud supporters of Catholic School Education" using our logo. This will be provided electronically. For example, IC Schools has St. Mary Queen of Creation.

YOUTH MINISTRY

The Youth Ministers are joining the Young Adult Ministers to help promote the "Coffee House" that has been traveling around our area. Any parish that wishes to help should contact Kristen Coules at St. Mary Queen of Creation.

There will be a Vicariate party for the youth, titled "A Night Under the Stars" with an Epiphany Theme, on Friday, January 2nd. All youth in 7th – 12th grades are invited to come celebrate together at St. Mary in Port Huron.

There are three parishes going to Rainbow in February, the youth conference put on by the AOD. They are looking into sharing transportation; we generally have at least 100 youth from our vicariate attend this annual conference.

The "Circle of Grace" program aimed at the younger youth in our Parishes held trainings this past month and all parishes are asked to comply with having one person who can bring this program to all the grade levels. The Youth Ministers are also to bring this program to the High School Youth. This program helps with the understanding of bullying and a personal safety circle.

Three of our Youth Ministers will be attending the National Conference for Youth Ministers in Columbus, Ohio at the beginning of December

St. Mary, St. Clair has two weekend retreat opportunities open to High School Youth. Please contact Theresa Barrons for more information.

Our Vicariate retreat will again be with the National Evangelization Team on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

We are looking for a parish to hold a summer camp out, along with the youth ministers from the Thumb, East and North Macomb vicariates. Any suggestions could be sent to Theresa Barrons at St. Mary St. Clair.

We are collaborating our Summer Mission trips with Young Neighbors in Action; we are looking at either Detroit or Chicago for the second full week in July. The cost is \$335 per person.

Holy Family attended the Summer Youth Conferences at Franciscan University of Steubenville. This has also been opened to the parishes of the Blue Water Vicariate at the cost of \$160 per person which includes room, food and conference.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

The Newman and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship clubs now each have a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

The Bible study has had a consistent average of seven participants.

Eric received a few phone calls with requests for the High school study program but he does not have any students willing to tutor right now.

There will be a ping pong tournament on Monday the 24th of November from 11:00am-4:00pm.

The office for Campus and young Adult ministry is looking into renting a bus for the March for Life, so that they may take more students.

The Tijuana Missions trip may not be advertised on campus since the College will not be a sponsor for this event.

Starting next week Eric will be contacting each parish to advertise it in their bulletins.

Eric also started taking a class at the college and is currently looking into teaching as an adjunct faculty so that he may have some affiliation with the college. If he becomes adjunct faculty then he would be able to be an advisor and when he becomes a student he will be able to join a club and therefore be able to have a voice and a vote which he currently does not have.

CARDINAL MOONEY

Over 30 families toured Cardinal Mooney at the open house Sunday, October 26th.

Cardinal Mooney is starting their school addition. They met with the Bord of Consulter last week and got the go ahead. They scaled their plans back a bit in order to stay within their budget. They are adding three classrooms, front offices and a conference room. The design is open ended for any future possibilities. They have been running their capital campaign for five years. The money is there and the contractor has been hired. They are meeting with him to make sure they are all on the same page.

The question was asked if they would be using local contractors. The answer: they are using as many people attached to Cardinal Mooney as they possible can. They are trying to keep it local.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The vicariate meeting for the Christian Service leadership will be December 9th at 10 am prior to the All Staff Vicariate meeting.

Deacon shared information regarding the Blue Water Community Food Depot as noted here:

During the entire calendar year 2007, 3145 families were served.

During the first nine months of 2008, 3199 families were served. (This represents a 38% increase over the comparable period in 2007.

8942 individuals were assisted.

The ages of these 8942 persons were as follows:

Under age 5	12%
Ages 6 – 19	30%
Ages 20 – 59	53%
Over 60	5%

In October 2008 499 families were served.

So far during the current calendar year, in addition to the food donated (Over 65,000 pounds in the Post Office drive alone), the Depot has had to buy \$33,000 worth of food. Presently, the shelves and available reserves are quite limited.

This is one way to measure the difficult economic climate we are in.

There are a large number of parishes currently planning for Christmas and Thanksgiving baskets for the needy and Christmas gifts for children from families with great need.

ADULT FORMATION

Seventy participants attended the Parish Leadership Conference. The feedback received was positive.

Fr. Nick asked about the checks he received from the parishes for \$150.00. Lucy explained that the agreement was for each parish to pitch in this amount to help cover formation costs.

Fr. Nick explained that some basic bookkeeping would begin being done by the Vicariate secretary. Lory said that is a common practice in other Vicariates as well.

OLD BUSINESS

The sign in sheet and VPC address sheet was passed around for updating.

NEW BUSINESS

Our Vicariate has three merged communities right now. We need to know who would be clustered if more clustering needs to be done.

Lots of discussion ensued in regards to clustering. What would be the most important consideration? Is the most important factor location or demographics or liturgical style? Could there be more than three parishes in a cluster? Lori said the most in the AOD is four.

Also what about our Priests? We are running them ragged. Lori said we are seeing that some of this clustering and keeping two or three buildings is not working. The parishes themselves have had to have tough discussions about making one Worship site and using the other sites for other things like education. The AOD does not want to enforce these decisions on the parishes but let them come to these conclusions on their own.

The VPC decided that the most logical partnerships would be:

St. Edward on the Lake	and	St. Mary in Port Huron
St. Christopher	and	St. Mary in St. Clair
St. Augustine	and	Holy Family
St. Mary Queen of Creation	and	Immaculate Conception

Lori explained this could be a temporary situation in the case of an emergency. Then the assignment board and Cardinal Maida would not have to make decisions in a vacuum.

Fr. Nick then talked about the Tracking Committee report. We need a detailed update on our three areas, Youth – Young Adult, Stewardship and Social Justice. Also, we need an update with regards to Hispanic Ministry. Each group is asked to submit a paragraph or two to Fr. Nick with an update on what has happened and what we plan to do next. Then Fr. Nick will take this information to the Pastors for approval. We can then submit our proposal on time and get approval back from the Tracking Committee.

Lucy suggested we put a member's name to each group so everyone knows who is doing what. It was decided that Young Adult will be Erik Coules, Social Justice is Deacon John, Stewardship is Fr. Nick and Hispanic Ministry is Lucy with Mary Suarez and Mercedes Fox.

OPEN FORUM

Eric Coules told us about the St. Cecelia Festival presented by youth and young adults at Sacred Heart on November 22nd. All are welcome and it is free.

Catherine handed out a flyer advertising A Day and a Night in the Life of Christ. Presented by The Servants of Jesus of the Divine Mercy. It consisted of three consecutive days reenacting three different miracles of Jesus.

VICAR'S COMMENTS

Fr. Nick reported that approximately sixty people attended the stewardship awareness workshop on Wednesday, October 8th. The first half of the workshop presented the general principles of stewardship, and the second half detailed the specific Archdiocesan process. Those present seemed enthused about the process and were eager to begin implementing it in their parishes. St. Mary Queen of Creation will be wrapping up the program in two weeks, just before Advent begins.

COUNCIL OF VICARS MEETING: The Vicars met on Tuesday, October 7 and Monday, November 3. At the October 7 meeting, they discussed various pastoral issues regarding funerals and the practices which are incompatible with universal, particular or liturgical law.

Our Vicars specific sub-group (Parish Life) received a copy of the first draft of the revised Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines and Handbook. They were to look it over during the month and bring back suggestions for edits and improvements.

A third discussion with the entire body ensued regarding the parish targets for the Catholic Services Appeal. A final appeal was made to promote voting NO on Proposal 2. At the November 3 meeting, their specific sub-group (Parish Life) gave its input on the first draft of the revised Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines and Handbook. It was recommended that the document be reduced from fifty pages to six or eight. Cathy Wagner will take all the input and work on Draft Number Two.

Tom Scholler from the Archdiocese of Detroit development office gave the vicars a copy of the formula that goes into determining a parish's annual C.S.A. target. He admitted that one third of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit did not make their individual parish targets. He did not say if that was a high or low percentage, compared to prior years. A suggestion was offered that the C.S.A. be dropped in favor of doubling the diocesan "tax" or cathedraticum from 6% to 12%. A vicar noted that the C.S.A. funds are newly-generated money, and that a doubled cathedraticum would still have to come from the Sunday collection, which would be a great burden to the parish budget.

The second topic they discussed was the pastoral care of sick parishioners who are in hospitals and in nursing care facilities. Most parishes now have only one resident priest. When an emergency call comes in to the parish office, pastors in the suburbs often have to drive seventeen to thirty miles one way to reach the hospital or nursing care home. Often the phone call is made too late, and the patient dies before the priest arrives.

While some vicariates have rotating coverage of area hospitals, the priest still may not be available or get there on time. It is imperative that parishes educate their people that the Anointing of the Sick should happen sooner than later, before surgery or critical condition. A distinction was made between the Anointing of the Sick, Last Rites and Viaticum. Anointing of the Sick implies that the person may get better. Viaticum is administered while the patient is still alert, able to go to Confession, make a Profession of Faith and receive Holy Communion. "Last Rites" is when the person is dying or dead.

Another topic was the concern of one of the vicars that the process of the life of a parish seems to be "viable", then "cluster", then "merge" then "close". Opinions were expressed that the concept of clustering or merging isn't working and that it is burning

out and killing off our priests. Is this to be the future pattern for all Detroit and near-Detroit parishes? Some parishioners expressed concern that the transfer of a pastor and the arrival of a new one signal the start of this process. Canonically, a pastor is responsible for the administration of a parish, but when a priest is given 2 or 3 parishes in a cluster, how can he be a true pastor of his flock? There was no response to this inquiry.

The vicars acknowledged prayers for Bishop Francis Reiss, who is recovering from cancer chemo and radiation therapy (the esophageal tumor was reduced by 75%) and congratulations and prayers for Bishop John Quinn, who has been named the new co-adjutor bishop of Winona, Minnesota. He will succeed Bishop Bernie Harrington.

Cardinal Maida is planning on issuing a pastoral letter on the spiritual dimension of Michigan's economy and unemployment situation. It should be published around the beginning of the Advent season. He asked for prayers as the American bishops gather in Baltimore for the fall session of their annual meeting.

The next meeting of the Vicars Council will be on Tuesday, January, 2009 at 1pm.

BLUE WATER VICARIATE SCHOOLS:

All elementary and high schools in the Vicariate survived the scrutiny of the Minimum Criteria Worksheet. The three areas of concern in a few cases were student enrollment, teacher pay scales and parish subsidy of the school.

Meeting ended at 9:10

Next meeting is January 14, 2009. Fr. Nick is unable to attend and will ask a fellow priest to substitute.

Our Lady on the River brings refreshments

Respectfully Submitted by Debie Hauer