

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
St. Vincent de Paul Church  
December 9, 2008**

The meeting was brought to order by our President, Colleen McCahill, at 7:35pm and prayer was offered by Jim Casey. Present were: Fr. Richard Lawrence, Graham G. Yearley, Brian Loughlin, Audrey Rogers, Barbara H. Hodnett, James Casey, Pat Ball, Joan Campbell, Nancy Kavanaugh O'Neill, J. Edmond Guy, Maureen Fitzsimmons, Dennis B. Moore, Colleen McCahill, and Kevin O'Reilly.

**Pastor's Report**

Due to the importance of the issue, Fr. Lawrence's report was solely about his proposal on behalf of the Queen of Peace Cluster Schools: SS. James and John and St. Katharine's. St. Vincent's has had a long history of supporting through tuition assistance the life of these two inner city Catholic schools; that contribution represents some 6% of our offertory. The Cluster's budget is approximately 2 million a year; half of which is provided through parents' tuition payments and the other half through interest from a small endowment, support from five parishes, and private funds. Some of the major donors include: Cardinal Sheehan Fund, the Archbishop's Annual Appeal, and Partners in Excellence.

Tuition is down due to the drop in enrollment, the development of charter schools, and the state of the economy. The Archbishop's Annual Appeal which gave \$20,000 last year will only give \$4,000 in the coming year. Partners in Excellence is reducing its donation from \$425,000 to \$225,000. The situation financially has become dire for the schools and what cuts to their budget that could be made have been made.

Therefore, Fr. Lawrence proposed an immediate campaign to raise money for the schools to commence immediately and run into January with the stated goal of raising \$50,000. Other parishes will also raise money (although they may not mount a general campaign as St. Vincent's is doing). Our appeal is not intended to replace the Archbishop's Appeal. Brian Loughlin proposed seeking matching funds from institutions since the money is being raised for schools, not for the parish. Joan Campbell suggested the St. Thomas More Fund might be another source. Graham Yearley commented that a letter asking for contributions might not have that dramatic an effect and he hoped that Fr. Lawrence might speak to the four masses of St. Vincent's on this issue. Audrey Rogers suggested that, if an issue of Together Sharing Christ could go to print before February, it could become another fund raising tool. The Parish Council unanimously supported the Pastor's proposal.

**Finance Report**

The offertory is under budget by \$18,000. Although the amount in our bank account looks healthy, a good proportion of that money is already allocated and is not available for general parish expenses. No payment on the Archdiocese Tax has been made since

July 1<sup>st</sup>. and none will be made until certain expected contributions have been received, probably in the spring.

### **Attendance Question**

Colleen reported that she had found twenty people in her directory who were no longer attending St. Vincent's. Some have been ill, others are not attending as often, and, as Barbara commented, several in our parish have moved out of state. Colleen promised to give the names of the sick to the Pastoral Care Committee for follow-up by them. Colleen said she intended to gather the listeners from the Listening Project in February to see if that will generate some interest in this important question affecting our future as a parish.

### **Committee Reports**

**A. Peace and Justice Committee:** Dennis Moore reported that the committee met on December 5<sup>th</sup>. One topic of conversation was Sylvia Eastman's request for an additional \$500 for the South African Higher Education project she has developed and that is already sending three students to university. She hopes additional funds will aid 1 to 3 more students. Peace Building seminars will be offered on March 7<sup>th</sup> at Seton-Keogh and on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, another entitled "Overcoming Fear: Building International Solidarity", will be presented at St. Matthew's.

**B. Education Committee:** no one representing the committee was present, but it was suggested that, since we are paying honoraria and travel expenses to our speakers for the lecture series, we "pass the hat" to help defray the expenses.

**C. Social Action Committee:** St. Vincent sent nine representatives to Washington to Bridge's convocation on December 4 where Congressman John Sarbanes and other politicians were present. The Social Action Committee will not meet in December.

**D. Liturgy Committee:** met on November 22<sup>nd</sup> to finalize plans for Advent. Some preliminary planning for Lent was discussed.

**E. Park Working Group:** the first meeting of the reconstituted PWG will meet next Tuesday with twelve new members. As Loyola University student are out of town, St. Vincent's will take over the Monday meal provision in December and January. There will be two teams for the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday Park Cleaning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03pm.

Minutes submitted by Graham G. Yearley, secretary of the Parish Council