

Minutes of the Parish Council
St. Vincent de Paul Church
November 11, 2008

The meeting was brought to order at 7:35.p.m by our President, Colleen McCahill, who offered a prayer and a reading. Present were: Fr. Richard Lawrence, Colleen McCahill, Maureen Fitzsimmons, Dennis Moore, J. Edmond Guy, Mary Kate Fries, Kevin O'Reilly, Joan Campbell, Pat Ball, Raymond Heil, Audrey Rogers, Brian Loughlin, and Graham G. Yearley.

Pastor's Report

1. There have been four recent deaths in the parish, creating both sorrow and a heavy work load. Barbara Hodnett is on vacation in Italy; she will return Saturday evening, November, 15 and will be back in the office next week.
2. St. Katharine's School, a school with a long relationship with St. Vincent's, has a new principal. However, enrollment and income are down, resulting in the cutting of two teachers (one was 83 and happy to retire). The Day Care Center is also facing reduced enrollment and may have to close before the school year's end.

Finance Report

1. Neither the attendance nor the offertories have risen since the beginning of fall after the expected drop in numbers during the summer. Maureen Fitzsimmons presented charts relating attendance and contributions. The average gift has risen over the past three years; the average weekly gift per person is \$13.70, but, as attendance is down, the total does not meet the projected budget numbers for this fiscal year. The council discussed how to increase attendance. Fr. Lawrence urged person to person contact to find out why members of the parish are not attending and to encourage them to return. Colleen suggested that we check our parish's directories to see who has not been attending and get in contact with them. Audrey Rogers urged us to "re-invigorate" the Outreach Committee which has not functioned since last spring and to seek a dynamic person to head it.
2. Maureen Fitzsimmons also presented an Accounting Procedures Proposal designed to bring the church's accounting practices in line with standard accounting procedures. It was agreed that ushers or volunteers count the cash received at that mass and place the figure on the card already provided. Fr. Lawrence felt that the other suggested procedures would not be helpful. Audrey Rogers suggested that we ought to differentiate between what practices we are doing and which are seen as what we plan to do. Maureen said she would contact the ushers to start the cash counting after each mass.

Visits to Other Parishes Project

Parish Council members had been urged to visit other parishes to see what was working well at those churches. At the meeting parish council members gave their reports; the churches visited were: Nativity (in Timonium), Sacred Heart (in Glyndon), Corpus Christi, St. Joseph Monastery, Pius X, St. Bernadine's, Epic Church, and St. Athanasius (Curtis Bay). Some of the parishes were small and urban like our own, but with special ministries of their own. Others were very large, suburban churches with coffee bars, an emphasis on families and children, and tracks of small groups of parishoners within the parish community to foster support.

Social Action Committee Proposal

A letter stating our proposed project has been prepared and Fr. Lawrence, Colleen and Audrey have read it. Joe Cronyn has talked informally with the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust and others there. The letter will be sent and we will see what the response will be. Fr. Lawrence found the original deed of easement and is not convinced the Historical Trust will even considerate our letter or may want a more formal proposal. Ray Heil , while agreeing that a Town Meeting is the next step, is not sure the response will come soon enough even for a town meeting in January or February.

Committee Reports

1. **Liturgy Committee** revised the letter thanking those who participated in the liturgy survey based on feedback from the parish council. Their next meeting is November 22 where the plans for Advent will be finalized.
2. **Education Committee** met two week ago. There will be another lecture this week on Hinduism. In February, the first five weeks of discussions on Quest for the Living God will begin; the other five weeks of discussion will be held in the fall of 2009. The parish will sell copies of this book for \$10 (trade value:\$24.95).
3. **Social Action Committee** registered 180 people to vote in the general election. Bridge gave the committee an award for its outstanding efforts. There will be a forum entitled "Community, Faith and Democracy" to be held on December 4 from 3 to 5pm at the Washington Hilton where politicians and nationally known social activists will be present. The committee would like participation from St. Vincent's and will provide transport on that day at 1 pm from the church.
4. **The Pastoral Care Committee** would like to provide information to the parish on what needs can be met by the committee. They are also seeking further training for the members of the committee.
5. **The Park Working Group** is seeking more parishioners to be involved with the group. They have established rules for keeping the park clean and a three-strike-you're out rule for infractions. They have also have completed a census of 73 people who have lived off and on in the park since May, and re-defined Steve Bossey's job (he will be in charge of cleaning the park three times a week).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm with a closing prayer offered by Graham Yearley and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

In the Peace of Christ,

Graham Yearley, Secretary .