

**Minutes of the Parish Council
St. Vincent de Paul Church
October 14, 2008**

Present: Colleen McCahill, Audrey Rogers, Dennis Moore, Joan Campbell, Lorna Patterson, Anne Marie Freeberger, Nancy O'Neill, Pat Ball, Jim Casey, Kevin O'Reilly, Brian Loughlin, Maureen Fitzsimmons, and Graham Yearley

The meeting was brought to order at 7:38pm. Our president, Colleen McCahill, read from II Corinthians 9 and then offered a prayer. As our pastor is on retreat, there was no Pastor's Report at this meeting.

A. Financial Report

Maureen Fitzsimmons offered the monthly financial report. The offertory is down, as is the revenue for the renting of parking spaces. We discussed whether we should be more aggressive about making sure parkers are paying. We realize there are limits to what we can do as a non-profit. There is an increase in Tuition Assistance as our portion of the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal has come in. Maureen was asked to bring a report of attendance statistics for the November meeting.

B. Liturgy Committee Survey

Brian Loughlin gave an introduction to the survey which was compiled last spring which produced a good deal of information. Overall, there is satisfaction with the liturgy. The highest level of dissatisfaction was expressed by the members of the 9:30 mass. Principal complaint was the length of the mass. Some changes have already been put into place: better preparation for the lectors, shortening the Call to Worship and greater effort to begin the mass at 9:30. Four points of the Mass were brought by the Liturgy Committee for consideration by the Parish Council.

1, Start Time of Mass:

There was general agreement that this was the most realizable goal.

2. Sign of Peace:

There were complaints that the passing of the Peace took too long with people crossing the church to greet their friends and socializing. Lorna Patterson argued that the Sign of Peace was a vital part of St. Vincent's worship, that sharing the peace was not only the sharing of God's love, but also the sharing of love between members of the community. She agreed that everyone was responsible for not just greeting people they know, but also greeting those they don't know. Audrey added that some have said the passing of the Peace has been an isolating experience for newcomers and not-so-newcomers. The Liturgy Committee will offer continuing education on the meaning and practice of the Passing of the Peace.

3. Petitions from Congregation

Complaints include political petitions, overlapping petitions and repeated petitions for the same person or situation. Anne Marie expressed doubt that much could be done. The suggestion that there be a minute of silence for all to make their petitions or that all petitions be offered at one moment (all at once) did not receive much support.

4. Announcements

Everyone agreed that one person's least liked announcement could be another's godsend. Audrey mentioned that, if one sits further back than the first three rows the announcements are, for the most part, inaudible. It was also noted that when announcements were suspended for Lent, no one really objected to their absence.

Brian suggested that the proposed changes be returned to the Liturgy Committee for revision in a series of emails. Audrey felt that, as the survey had been ready for almost six months, that going back to Liturgy Committee did not make much sense. It was agreed that a one page insert be made to offer further catechesis on these various points of the mass, that the entire twenty page survey be published on our website and that we continue to enforce a 9:30 start time rigorously.

C. Proposal from the Social Action Committee

Colleen began the discussion by reminding us of questions we should have been considering since last month when this proposal was first made: Does the proposal support the Gospel? Our Mission Statement? Is it in the best interest of our parishioners (including everyone with the area of the parish)? Can I as an individual live with it?

Everyone at the table, with the exception of Brian Loughlin, gave their assessment of the proposal in turn. For individual responses, see addendum.

At the end of the discussion, this proposal was made: to ask Joe Cronyn to proceed with asking the initial questions of the Maryland Historical Trust. Once this information was obtained, we would proceed to have a Town Meeting open to all the parish with a panel of knowledgeable people and, perhaps two Parish Council members, one favorable to the project and one not favorable to it. The meeting should be led by someone impartial to the outcome.

As the meeting time had overrun by twenty minutes already, no committee reports were given. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 with the saying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Graham G. Yearley, Secretary of the Parish Council