

# Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of St. Vincent de Paul Church January 10, 2012

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President, Jim Casey, at 7:33pm and a prayer was offered by Teresa Payne. In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence (Pastor) Jim Casey (President), Christopher McCullough (Pastoral Associate), Audrey Rogers (Acting Chair Communications and Outreach Committee), Dennis Flynn (Finance Committee) Teresa Payne (7:15 Mass Rep), Peter McDowell (11:45 Mass Rep), Jack Bonner (9:30 Mass Rep.), Pat Ball (Facilities Committee Chair), Peggy Meyer (Social Action Committee Chair), Anne Marie Freeburger (Corporator), Kathi Jeffra (E & E Committee Chair), Kevin O'Reilly (9:30 Mass Rep.), Maria Rose Mercy and Graham Yearley (Corporator and 12:15 Mass Rep.).

## **Pastor's Report**

Christmas liturgies went well and we enjoyed a near capacity crowd at the 7:15 mass and good attendance at the midnight mass. The Christmas offetories were a bit better than expected. Decorations from the season are being taken down today.

## **Central City Catholic Church Interim Report**

1. While the report of the clustered churches (The Basilica, St. Alphorns, St. Ignatius, Corpus Christi and St. Vincent de Paul) is entitled an "interim report", most of the decisions reached are to be considered conclusive. Bishop Madden, our Urban Vicar, urged the group to get the report to him as quickly as possible before a new Archbishop is appointed and all work in progress must stop.
2. The group decided all five parishes should remain open and are financially solvent. Secondly, that the Basilica and St. Alphonsus should be "paired" as they share commonalities and Corpus Christi and St. Vincent's will do the same; St. Ignatius, with its two priests, will serve as a resource parish. The Jesuits for the time being are committed to having two priests at their parish. Peggy Meyer pointed out that, as currently scheduled, the mass times at the Basilica and St. Alphonsus would not be workable.
3. St. Vincent's 12:15 am Mass will be ended in eighteen months when Father Lawrence retires. Graham Yearley noted his sadness over the loss of this unique and historic mass which has existed for over eighty years and is the only one at that time weekly in the Archdiocese. He added that he understood the rationale behind the decision. He also pointed out that, while our Saturday 7:15 pm Mass fits within the proposed Saturday schedule for the clustered churches, it will never attract large crowds because of its odd time in the evening. The Sunday 11:45 Mass may be cut eventually, but Fr. Lawrence will celebrate it until he is forced to close it. Bob Reuter would like the website to mention that the 9:30 Mass is signed for the deaf.

4. Fr. Lawrence asked for the Council's approval of the Interim Report, so the report could be given to Bishop Madden next week. The Council gave its approval.

### **Finance Report**

Dennis Flynn, standing in for Maureen Fitzsimmons, reported that the money collected at Christmas was better than expected. Tomorrow, representatives of the Archdiocese will meet with Fr. Lawrence to discuss the implementation of the Archdiocesan Capital Campaign whose kick-off will be between January and June of 2012. The goal is to raise 100 million dollars in five years. St. Vincent's portion will go to Saints James and John School for its endowment and tuition assistance. Currently, the Archbishop's Annual Campaign has already begun. Fr. Lawrence urged parishioners to focus more on the Capital Campaign.

### **Lay Homilists**

The lay homilists have suggested that their ministry be extended to the other masses. The rotation would mean the each of the other masses besides the 9:30 would have lay preachers twice a year. Both representatives of the 7:15 and 12:15 Masses reported that preaching by laymen will be welcome. Peter McDowell wanted more time to talk with people from the 11:45 Mass.

### **Letter addressing Emergency Repairs**

Jim Casey gave copies to the Council of a draft of the letter to be sent to our parishioners, addressing smaller repairs and services that cannot be funded. Fr. Lawrence felt it was not a good time to present this letter when the beginning of the Capital Campaign by the Archdiocese is just about to start, which will involve major donations from the parishioners. Graham argued that the letter did not give a clear way for parishioners to donate. Jim Casey said the request for gifts was deliberately vague because he did not want people to feel bombarded with requests for money. Dennis Flynn added that our financial situation was not so grave that these expenses couldn't be met by what we have already. Peggy Meyer suggested the priorities should be: 1) leaks 2) cleaning needs and 3) carpet in balcony. Pat Ball echoed her support for these priorities. Jim promised to rewrite the letter in light of this conversation.

### **Committees:**

**Education:** No report.

**Liturgy:** No report. The Liturgy Committee will meet this Saturday, January 14 at 2pm.

**Social Action:**

**The Resource Exchange:** We continued to move/provide furniture and starter kits to neighbors. We have three neighbors scheduled for January. **Jonestown Planning Council:** We devoted the entire meeting to discussion of Greater Baltimore's Affordable Housing Corporation's plan for redevelopment of the Hendler Creamery Building and its block. Cunningham Quill Architects brought models and hopes for our support. They will update the status on zoning etc. next month. The **Peace & Justice Subcommittee** will meet 1/9/12 after typing of this report. We did the final Vespers service at Mission Helpers for Pax Christi. **Emergency Services:** Monthly gave out groceries to about 100 families. **Other:** Friday dinner attracted between 150 and 350 each week. We delivered many mittens/gloves to St. James & John and still have more to take. Christopher Place men continue to help on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays and Helping Up Mission men on the 2nd Saturday of each month.

**Facilities:** The Committee continues to work with Doug Johnson, from the archdiocese regarding the air conditioning system. We are evaluating the proposal from the engineering firm. The contractor who is going to do the roof repairs is scheduled to do them sometime this week. Larry has agreed to remove the carpet from the balcony in church. Then we will evaluate the noise level without carpet.

**Communications and Outreach:** Our committee had its last meeting on December 11, 2011. **Website:** We will be adding a 'Disability Access' page to the website. A repeat website training will be conducted early in the new year for website editors. We are still working on posting links to videos of parish liturgies and events on the website. The committee decided against a formal evaluation of the website as was conducted last spring after its launch. The evaluation in April, 2012 will focus on website diagnostics. **New Parishioners** We have produced a new parish registration form which the committee reviewed and accepted. In addition, we have produced a 'welcoming booklet' that presents information on 'life at St Vs' and opportunities for involvement to new registrants. **Chris** has established a procedure for receiving these forms and making the initial personal contact with new registrants. **Publicity** The committee reviewed the draft publicity guidelines, offered some reformatting advice for better clarity, and 'approved' via email. These are submitted to January Council. **New Ways of Providing Education** We discussed providing spirituality links, reflections on current education/enrichment offerings, and possibly providing 'webinars.' The last one has 'pro's' and 'con's'. We decided that we need a systematic approach to deciding about the 'jump' to web-based adult education. This topic was tabled until next meeting on February 12. Audrey said the agenda for the Parish Council Meeting should be sent to Terri Rizzo some days before the meeting. The final draft of the minutes of the Parish Council should include the committee reports sent prior to the meeting. Also the December minutes should be sent to Joe Yingling. Graham agreed to do this.

**New Business**

Maria Rose Mercy proposed that a group of our park's former residents would be willing to attend a mass and afterwards, to share stories of their days in the park in the undercroft. The date of February 12 was set for this event.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23pm with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

In the Peace of Christ,

Graham Yearley, secretary to the Council