

ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PASTORAL COUNCIL MINUTES

June 28, 2005

Katharine Anderson
Tracy Belcher
DJ Belcher
Nikita Laster

Mary Lou Marple
Paula Mierzwa
Teresa Moreira
Richard Poprik

Susan Ruppel
Anthony Sadowski
Father Mike Schmied
Consuelo Segura

Sarah Spain
Alberto R. Torres

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Prayer and reflection was based on the Gospel reading for June 26, 2005, Matthew 10:37-42. The question of the week was: "When have you felt more fully alive by giving of yourself to another?"

PARISH VOICE

1. A parishioner asked whether we could pair up a sponsor (a person or an entire family) with each new parishioner. This would make the new parishioner feel more invited into the community and provide the parishioner with someone whom they could ask their questions of.

Currently, Mary Ann Figuera meets with new parishioners. Mary Lou has worked with her in the past. Usually Eileen Brown, Mary Lou and Kathy Jones are also a part of the process of greeting new parishioners.

The question then arose as to where will we get sponsors. A suggestion was made to extend personal invitations to new parishioners to the various parish functions. Father Mike would like something done about this issue. Possibly after the new parishioner meeting, someone from the Parish Pastoral Council can call them to see if they would like to go to the Poor Box Breakfast, would ask whether they would like a sponsor, and extend an invitation to other evening events and activities. If a new parishioner doesn't drive, then offer to arrange to have the person driven.

The question was asked as to who would be in charge. Alberto suggested this could be handled by the Hospitality Committee. Tracy asked if pictures are still being taken of new parishioners and put up for others to see. Mary Lou said no.

The third Sunday is welcoming after the 9:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 6:00 pm masses. The Council should always be provided with the names of new parishioners names at the next Parish Council meeting and be used at the next hospitality. Allow Mary Lou a couple of minutes at the next meeting to report on the progress of this issue.

2. Several parishioners were upset over the food service at the picnic.

We on the Parish Pastoral Council recognize both the feeling and the legitimate concern behind the feeling. We also recognize that the St. Augustine Picnic Committee is one of the best run and most dedicated committees that we have and this undertaking for the parish involves an almost year round effort on the part of many of the committee's volunteers. This year 672 tickets were purchased for the picnic. Each year the number of people attending the event increases. More tickets could have been sold this year except a limit has to be placed on last minute sales. The limit is necessary because the number of people to be served has to be set almost a week before the event. The number is determined based on up-to-the-minute ticket sales plus trend data from prior picnics. The Picnic Committee has already held a post-picnic review and a number of items are being taken into consideration for next year. Some of them are as follows:

Everybody was concerned about the food service. It was a learning experience for the vendors, and one of the vendors experienced a truck breakdown on the way to the picnic and then had further complications

based on having gotten a late start.

People who expressed their thoughts to members of the committee did indicate that they liked the idea of having more than one food choice. The committee is considering having maybe four vendors instead of three next time; also considering serving the food in the Church Hall instead of outside; also wanting to arrange serving the elderly and the picnic workers first somehow; and also seeing what type of covered walkway can be set up for those waiting in line for the food.

The committee is considering asking Father Mike whether the mass might begin at 10:30 instead of at 11:00 on the day of the picnic.

They will spend some time refurbishing some of the games such as the bean toss board.

They recognized that some people sitting behind the altar had difficulty hearing the mass and plan to have additional speakers set up behind the platform next year.

The committee wants to make it easier on the volunteers as well and is planning on having a volunteer coordinator next year as well as posting a schedule at the picnic of times and names of those who have volunteered.

They will see to moving the dumpster to the end of the parking lot and not rely on our trash service to do it. The Picnic Committee always welcomes ideas, suggestions, and volunteers.

Alberto reported that many members from the Hispanic part of our community participated. The vendors were each prepared to serve 250 people. Due to one vendor experiencing difficulties, the other two experienced pressure to serve larger numbers of people. This became difficult because they had been so generous with their portion sizes when they first began serving. The food was very good. The petting zoo was also a hit.

We want to thank Sarah for stepping forward and assuming the job of making sure everyone got served especially the elderly that needed extra consideration. Teresa noted that many of the picnic helpers didn't have an opportunity to eat at all. Maybe we should start putting food away for the volunteers, so they can eat after they are through. A list of whom, what time and where volunteers need to be should be used in the future. The Hispanic Committee has people assigned to make sure that the volunteers get to the event. Chairpersons could be responsible for asking five (5) people to volunteer at the picnic.

COMMITTEE VOICE

Hispanic Committee Report:

- The inception of a second mass in Spanish began on May 29, 2005. Between 150 and 180 people are attending the second mass so far.
- Father's day was celebrated on June 19, 2005. The coordinator was Teresa Moreira. Food, music, dances, poems, and a beautiful mass were experienced by those attending.
- On June 18, volunteers from the Hispanic part of our community attended the Dupont Village Community Day. Different government and private agencies participated in the event. Interpreters were available for the community. About 20 people signed up for English as a Second Language class. Members of Just Faith participated.
- On June 25, the Hispanic Committee held their annual retreat. They had the participation of 54 people. The theme was: "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Father Michael (Vicar of the Hispanic Apostolate in the Dioceses of Richmond) and Elisa Montalvo (Director of the Hispanic Apostolate in Dioceses of

Richmond) participated. The retreat was an inspiration for many. A parishioner came to Alberto and made an unsolicited donation of \$100.00. She said, "I was so inspired by the program...I want to donate this money anonymously for future retreats like this."

- On July 23 at 7:00 pm, the Hispanic Committee will have liturgy of healing. They have already created a subcommittee. Father Paddy is working with the subcommittee.
- On July 23, the Red Cross will conduct CPR training. Please see the bulletins for more information.
- Hispanic Month – Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

Stewardship Committee: Sarah reported that the Stewardship Committee is putting together a newsletter that will be placed in the church bulletin and will eventually be on the church's website. She brought a sample for everyone to review. The newsletter is still being edited and put together. They tried to keep the word count down to 250 words per article, but that is almost impossible. In the first issue, they wanted an article from the Hispanic Community and Fidel gave Sarah an article on the Bible-Belt Catholics. The newsletter will contain information that is neither in the church bulletin nor in the *Catholic Virginian*...something a parishioner wants to share with other parishioners.

Sarah has enough articles to put out another issue next month, but a regular schedule for publishing has not been set because there are only three (3) people on the committee. There is hope that the newsletter will also be published in Spanish.

Justice and Peace: Mary Lou focused on the trip to Guatemala. Thirteen (13) people are going on this trip. Four (4) of the participants are youth. They will leave on July 9 and will be staying an extra day.

There was a meeting scheduled to meet with local Guatemalans to get information that might be helpful for those going on the trip. None of the Guatemalans were able to attend the meeting. Mary Lou, among others, extended considerable efforts in trying to arrange a meeting. Father Mike expressed his dismay that no connection had been made between those going on the trip with any one of our many Guatemalan parishioners. This trip is to help us learn the culture of the country. Maybe the Hispanic Committee can help arrange a meeting with some of the Guatemalan parishioners. Alberto was asked to help with this and get with Mary Lou.

The use of Fair Wage coffee parish-wide will begin on July 1.

DISCUSSION OF WHOLE COMMUNITY CATECHESIS

Sue thinks it will be easy for the parish to accept these changes.

Confidentiality is a concern with open and frank discussions of personal and spiritual matters of significance. A concern was raised that when personal stories are shared with groups of people, they tend to spread. Concern was also raised that some participants may open up and express personal matters that we are not equipped to handle. Richard said these problems have not arisen at St. Gabriel's monthly Feasts that have the same structure. In fact, the process is similar to the Lenten Soup Suppers we held here two years ago with focused topics and no problems arose during those events. While there is no format to train facilitators, table leaders and participants are given guidelines and instructions to follow.

Another concern is that introverts may be uncomfortable speaking in front of strangers. This is a "dinner table" concept giving everyone who chooses to participate the opportunity. The dinners have as their primary purpose the catechesis of all age groups and the secondary purpose of providing the opportunity for parishioners to see each other as an extended family.

ST. AUGUSTINE FEAST DAY

This will take place on August 27 after the 5:30 pm bilingual mass with a pot-luck, buffet-style dinner set up in the hall. There will also be a “re-birth” cake, lemonade, coffee, and a keg. We are also planning to have samples of Algerian foods. Tony said that the Boy Scouts could handle a bon fire provided we are not prevented from having one because of possible drought conditions late in the summer. Sue and Alberto will help with the sub-committee on this event. There are plans for a soccer game before mass and coaches and referees will be needed.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

This issue will be brought back to the table next month. This should be the last time for this issue. The proposed amendments are expected to be accepted, rejected, or revised at the meeting.

REVIEW OF MEETING

Generally, the meeting was lengthy as we pursued some issues at length, but it was good to get some decisions made. Father Mike stated this was the most participation of any meeting yet.

The minutes for the May 24th meeting were approved with changes.

The next meeting will be on July 26th at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula A. Mierzwa, Secretary