

**St. Catherine of Siena  
Pastoral Council Minutes  
October 13, 2009**

**Present:** Juan Arroyo, Beth Carroll, Frank Ciaramello, Matt Cooney, Dan Finlay, Carl Franck, Ann Gifford, Eileen Gravani, Sarah Page, Janet Strebel, Larry Walker, Beverly Way, Sr. Mary O'Brien, Mary Boris

**Absent:** Chuck Alridge, Chang-Sik Oh, Nancy Pringle

1. Carl led the Council in prayer.
2. Members introduced themselves and welcomed Sarah Page, the new Youth member of the Council.
3. September minutes were approved.

4. Comments

Sr. Mary noted that organizational support from the Diocese for new pastors and pastoral administrators is very good. A new Buildings and Grounds committee will be convened in the spring of 2010. The Facilities Project Steering Committee (FPSC) will create its charge. Alan Lentini and Steve Moolin have already agreed to serve.

Matt Cooney noted that the fundraising campaign moved into its third and public phase the weekend of Oct. 4/5. There will be witness talks at all the masses for the next two weekends—Oct 17/18 and Oct. 24/25. Speakers will address how they grew spiritually in response to the campaign. **Between now and Nov. 21/22, communication will emphasize the number of pledges returned rather than the exact dollar amount collected.** Nov 21/22 will be Announcement Sunday when the result of the fundraising campaign will be announced. A Bridge Team has formed to handle ongoing communication with the parish about pledge fulfillment and how the money is being spent. Beth Carroll is on the Bridge Team and is the liaison to the Pastoral Council.

Dan explained that the Pastoral Council agenda is set by the Executive Committee (Pastor, Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary) prior to every PC meeting. All PC members are invited to suggest agenda items. He also noted that the regional Mass for Peace with Bishop Clark was well attended.

5. Covenanting Council discussion

Other parishes in Tompkins County identified ministries of which they are most proud. These include a school and food pantry (Immaculate Conception); “Holy Grounds” discussion of faith and life (Ithaca College); music (Cluster Parishes); Taize prayer and the distribution of two reflective questions after mass (Cornell).

Other parish concerns included building maintenance and school support (Immaculate Conception); winter low (Ithaca College); loss of identity (Cluster Parishes); a generation of ignorance (Cornell).

There was mention at the Covenanting Council of initiating a Welcome Home project sometime in the future.

The council discussed concerns for St. Catherine's. These included people leaving for other parishes; burn out of Sr. Mary and Mary Boris; lower than usual response from the Stewardship forms especially for altar servers and Eucharistic ministers; training requirements discouraging pastoral visitors; a need to increase the number of parishioners involved in parish life beyond Sunday liturgy.

It was noted that St. Catherine's has wonderful leadership among the parishioners and on the staff. St. Catherine's also has a more transient population than other parishes so gestures of welcome and efforts to connect people are critical and ongoing.

Possible remedies were suggested including: council members approaching people who might be altar servers or Eucharistic ministers, especially at the 5pm and 11:30am masses; providing a description of ministries and their requirements in the bulletin; community nominations for liturgical ministers (as we do for Pastoral Council members); announcing ministries to young people in a more attractive and fun way so they are not thought of as a chore; getting people more comfortable with each other so they are not so self conscious about serving.

#### 6. Sustainability—committees

The Council discussed how to support our committees to keep energy up and prevent burn out. The Council agreed that it would be good to invite all the committee chairs to an informal meeting with the Council. The event would include discussion with the PC and among the committee chairs. Food would be served. Benefits of this approach include reduced anxiety, community building among and between committees, and an opportunity to express our gratitude to the parish leadership.

#### 7. Sustainability—staff

Sr. Mary noted that it is difficult for her to offload some responsibilities because they involve contacting people. An administrative assistant who doesn't know anybody could not take on such work. Sr. Mary and Mary Boris agreed that they need time to think, strategize and set priorities for the near future. They agreed to let the Pastoral Council **know** if they would like to do this work between themselves or with the help of a subcommittee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Submitted by Beverly Way