

# *St. Sebastian Parish Pastoral Council*

## **Regular Meeting – 11 December 2014**

---

IN ATTENDANCE: Father John Valencheck      Rich Dobson, Member  
Pat Clark-Varga, Chair      Sara Beis, Member  
Jan Alpeter, Member      John Jewell, Secretary  
Todd Dekatch, Member      Jim Dietrich, Member  
Rob Sveda, Excused      Brandon Foster, Member  
Chris Montana, Member      Candace Bates, Excused  
Cyndy Cook, Member      Father Peter Kovacina  
Fr. Ed Leonard

**Call to order** at 7:04 PM by Council Chair, Pat Clark-Varga.

**The Opening Prayer:** Rich opening prayer.

**Special Report:**

- None.

**Pastor's report (Father Valencheck):**

- Parking lot surface – 3 possible surfaces. Company is doing mock-ups. Largely paid for by Diocesan Capital Campaign but those moneys have not all come in yet. Foundation will float the parking lot funds and then when Diocesan campaign money comes in it can be used for the earmarked projects that the Foundation was going to pay for.
- “Strengths” (of the Parish) from Partners in Excellence will be used for staff develop at their retreat.
- (John) We need to finish the second half of the Partners in Excellence by asking about the parts of the parish/school community that are weaknesses/need improvement.
- Estimates are being collected for roof of church.
- Business Office will go to Julie Billiard to discuss a business plan for the school for children with disabilities.
- Two technology grants are being received from the Dioceses (from the Capital Campaign – see principal's report). \$1 million was available from the Dioceses but lots of requests.

**Finance and Marketing Committees:**

Finance

- Finance Council met this am (11-Dec-14). Talked about enrollment. Everyone is expecting a down turn the next few years (Dioceses wide).
- Tuition discussion for next year. We have the lowest added fees. Fr. V. wants to keep added fees to a minimum and use this as a discussion point for attracting families to the school.
- • HASA (fee/donation) was discussed.

Marketing (Michelle Huber)

- Michelle will be here for the January meeting.
- Our third edition of the Brick Lot Bulletin will be out in early January.

---

1 | *December - 2014*

- Ads and promotions are set for January for Catholic Schools Week. Our school open house is Sunday, January 25 11:00 am – 1 pm
- During Explorer Day, we had 30 children explorer our Kindergarten classrooms
- The new Parish Handbook should go to print in mid-January for a delivery date in early March
- The Academy Spring Brochure should be available by the end of December
- Holiday ads are scheduled for the Universe Bulletin and West Side Leader inviting readers to come celebrate at one of our Masses. The fence banner also just went up.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Minutes

- October meeting minutes approved and sent to be posted. No minutes for November – there was not a meeting.

### Other

- Social Justice Committee: Discussion & Response
  - (Pat) Sara prepared a response to SJ Committee and Parish Council is reviewing.
  - (Sara) Discussed the letter she drafted and the specifics that she put in the letter.
  - (Pat) Talked about the Social Justice request(s) as indicated by Greg and Larry.
  - Everyone believes in the mission and work of the Social Justice Committee.
  - Recommendation is that the SJC should be sent the letter.
  - Developing programs is not the purview of Parish Council.
- HASA Dues: Mandatory or Voluntary?
  - (Pat) Joe Rusak indicated the Finance Council did not say that they recommended or did not recommend the “mandatory” dues.
  - HASA info and request for dues used to be included in the registration packet. At one time the membership was mandatory (Fr. V.) and then it moved to voluntary. The group would like to move back to it as a mandatory fee. It does a great deal of work and defrays the cost of field trips, etc. for the school students.
  - (John) The process by which HASA implemented the “mandatory fee” this year (2014-2105) was problematic.
    - No one disputes the good work that HASA does. The issue does not seem to be about \$20.00. Although HASA has yet to still publish a school directory, which in the past had been the valued added service for a \$20 donation.
    - HASA is an auxiliary group (much like all of the other groups at the school and church which need to fundraise on their own). HASA does not have any authority to make policy, especially financial policy as it related to the school.
    - HASA making its dues “mandatory” was done so after the school year started and tuition and fees for the current school year were already published (Spring 2014). No HASA information was included in the registration packet.
    - The problems could have been avoided if there was clear communication between HASA/school and the school families.
      - A simple form asking to support HASA with a \$20 donation and including 3 options: 1.) I am sending a check for \$20.00; 2.) Please make by donation by debiting \$20 using Smart Tuition; or 3.) I prefer to not donate at this time.

- There was no option presented to families to “opt out” of the donation. More importantly, no opportunity was given for families to consent to making the donation by having the money deducted using Smart Tuition. The business office does not have the authority to make a draw (other than the agreed upon tuition payment) using Smart Tuition without the consent of the account holder.
- It is illegal to make a draw on someone’s bank account without their consent.
- (Cyndy) Another problem is that the school/business office, by adding \$20 on to one months of tuition payment via Smart Tuition could have had a significant negative impact on a family, as such:
  - If a family had set up a separate bank account just for their monthly tuition draw via Smart Tuition and put exactly the tuition payment amount in this account each month, the school/business office in adding an additional \$20 could have resulted in the family’s bank account having insufficient funds.
  - This would then result in an insufficient fund fee for the family from both Smart Tuition and their bank.
- No one knows if this has affected any family, but it is a real possibility and at no fault of the family.
- (Fr. V.) What should be the course of action?
- (Various) HASA information needs to be in the school registration packet/tuition packet in the Spring (which had been the case previous years).
- (Various) The school/business office needs to notify all families that there was a mistake in how the HASA dues collection was handled and that if anyone who had the HASA dues deducted from their bank account via Smart Tuition does not wish to donate the \$20 the business office will reimburse the \$20. (Call the school office to receive the reimbursement.)

## NEW BUSINESS

- Request from Social Justice Committee for a joint meeting in February.
- Discernment of Officers
  - Chris would consider being Secretary but is not “wordy”. Chris will show us what she can do based on her taking of the minutes tonight. She will decide what to do based on what PCC thinks of her minutes.
  - Chair nominations were discussed.
  - Todd was nominated for chair of PCC
  - Candy indicated that she was interested.
  - Voting was tabled until January meeting.
- On-line homilies (M. Huber question)
  - Interested to hear our comments/feedback
  - The homilies from 2 of the Sunday Masses have been recorded and uploaded.
  - Numbers of people listening are low, but the homilies are not uploaded in a timely fashion (right now they are caught up).
    - Editing issue for getting just the “homily” piece.
    - Other issue might be time to code it, but should be a link to an audio file.
  - Fr. Leonard has talked to here about inexpensive software that can easily edit the homily.
  - (Fr. V.) It would be nice if each homilist had their homilies uploaded.
- Fundraising request/Easter Seals
  - Easter Seals of Northern Ohio sent Pat an email – no sell event at no cost to the parish. Plan for the church and school to fill the truck event. Proceeds from the sale of the items

- in the truck go to Easter Seals and we get a donation based on the weight of the truck filled.
  - o We have a conflict on interest with the Good Will truck.
- Fr. Leonard had a proposal for a booklet that he wrote to help get people get back to confession. His request is for anyone interested to look at the booklet and critique it for him.

### **Pulse of the Parish**

- St. Sebastian Feast Day Pot Luck at Z-Hall Jan.18th.
  - o Suggested at the Memorial Day potluck.
  - o Feast day needs to be moved to Jan. 25th because Fr. V. will be away on a mission trip but Z-Hall is in use that day.
- (Sara) Has indicated that Marcy may have had interest in helping build a hospitality committee. This may be the perfect opportunity to launch such a group and have the first focus be Memorial Day again. There are also other out there who would like to help with such things and have not been called upon to do so.
- (Pat) Someone made a request that the stairs at the back of the school that go to the basement be blocked or gates when the donut Sunday is outside so that a child doesn't fall or go down the steps.
- (Pat) Food recycling program to divert food waste.
- (Fr.V.) Can we table for now and put it on the January PCC agenda when Candy will be present, and the new school recycling program is just getting up and running.
- (Pat) Vacation Bible School will not occur this year because Z-Hall will not be accessible.
- (Cyndy) Can there be a gate in front of the steps in the crying room in the church? Fr. V. checking with Aron.

### **COMMISSION REPORTS**

Please note that Secretary will endeavor to include highlights of commission reports if they are sent ahead by email and those reported during the meeting. If items are sent ahead, please be sure that the name of the Commission is on the report as well as the date of the report. Typed (paper) reports may be included by reference only.

#### **Worship:**

- Cyndy – close to putting a notice in the bulletin for servers for the Latin Mass.

#### **Spiritual Life and Faith Formation:**

- Eucharistic Adoration, Chair: Marga Bohm
- I have made a chart of signed-in Adoration visitors for October 7th and 14th.
- October 7th:
  - 32 persons signed in between 8:30 am and 7:00 pm.
  - About 22-25 persons attended Benediction between 7:00 -8:00 pm.
  - There is a definite rise in numbers after Fr. Valenchek's invitation call to visit the Blessed Sacrament.
- October 14th:
  - 50 persons signed in between 8:30 am and 7:00 pm.

- About 30 persons attended Benediction between 7:00 -8:00 pm.
- We also have visitors who do not sign in and some who come only for a short visit.
- Current Report from Marga Bohm:
  - We still need people at 10:00 am, 11:00am., 12:00, and 1:00 pm. It is hard to judge by the signatures alone since many visitors do not sign in. I think it would help to post a note on the doors reminding visitors to sign their name in the book. Could a note be placed on the doors and a note in the pastor's column in the bulletin explaining why we need visitors' signatures.
    - (Fr. V.) No notes can be placed on the door.
  - During the initial recommitment period on Tuesdays, Marga posted information sheets on the doors, but someone kept removing them two weeks in a row.
- PSR Report - Melanie Francis
  - Students in grades 4-8 had a prayer service to honor Mary for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Students in grades 3-8 participated in confessions with Fr. Leonard and Fr. Kovacina. Students are working on Advent wreaths and Nativity ornaments in the classes. They also participated in the school's canned food drive for the hunger center.
  - Melanie Francis sends her thanks for all the teachers and staff who volunteer their time on Sundays to teach with PSR. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
  - (Chris) Judy was very thankful for the bulletin article(s) [by Louise McNulty] for Disciples for the Dying and Rosary Cenacle (Home group).
  - (Chris) Carmelites gave Faith Lodge presentation in November. Thankful for the opportunity because they can take it to other places.

### Parish Life

- (Cyndy) Loftus girls are in charge of Archivists.
- (Pat) Deacon Jeremy sent Parish Council a "thank you" card in response to our letter of congratulations on his ordination.
- Please remember to pray for him!
- KofC:
  - KoC descended on house along with some other parishioners pulled carpet from the house and cleaned the floors (parish cancer patient).
  - (Jim) Can KoC put some things on the walls?
  - (Fr.V.) Can not put anything on the walls there.
- Sivec Report (see below).
  - Cathy Sivec, Director of Religious Education and Youth Ministry
  - Faith Lodge-** We've decided not to schedule speakers for December, due to the small numbers during this busy month. Father and I may re-work Faith Lodge a little for January.
  - RCIA-** There are currently 7 people in the RCIA program, only one to be baptized at the Easter vigil at this point.
  - PSR-** Christmas Break - No classes on Dec. 28 and Jan. 4
  - CLOW-** We will not have CLOW on Jan. 4...we will begin our every Sunday (11:00 am Mass) schedule

on Jan. 11

**Confirmation** - Our next Confirmation meeting will be Monday January 26 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in the church. Our topic will be: "Theology of the Body" Father Barry Gearing will be our guest speaker

**First Reconciliation** - First Reconciliation will be Saturday February 7, 2015 from 9:30-11a.m.

**First Communion** - First Communion Mass will be Saturday April 25, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

**Baptism** – Our next Baptism session will be Monday January 12th in Byrider Hall

**Youth Ministry-**

\*Both groups will be attending a Cav's game on Sunday Dec. 21 with the St. Vincent youth group.

*Senior High Youth Ministry:*

\*We sponsored a gym night at Byrider to help earn money for our trip to the Steubenville Youth Conference in June.

\*We helped Community Support Services of Akron pack 1500 holiday bags to distribute to their clients.

\*We will face paint at the Peter Maurin Center's Christmas Party at Open M on Dec. 20.

\*We are one of six parishes participating in a collaborative retreat at Our lady of Victory in Tallmadge on Jan. 30 and 31. 6th, 7th and 8th graders are invited to the Saturday retreat, led by the high school teens from these parishes.

*Junior High Youth Ministry:*

\*In November:

- We helped Christ Child Society pack up their Boutique
- We helped clean a parishioner's house, just diagnosed with cancer and beginning Chemotherapy
- We raked leaves during a fall clean-up on the St. Sebastian Parish grounds

\* In December:

- We are helping to set up the Christmas Tea
- We are wrapping gifts and making treat bags for St. Paul's preschool to use at their Santa Brunch
- We are face painting at the Peter Maurin Center's Christmas party at Open M on Dec. 20

- Ski Club:

Registration for Ski Club is now open. The deadline for registration with out a late penalty (Boston Mills imposed) is Dec. 20th. At December 20th the late fee is \$25 per person and after Jan.2nd the late fee is \$50 per person. Ski Club begins Sunday, January 11th at 4pm.

- Scouts:

Concluded popcorn sales and all went well with campouts.

- Athletics:

Saturday January 31st, 2015 Annual Night at the Races. Tickets are \$20 per person and horse tickets are \$25. Those interested in Program sponsorship should contact Mike Jozic (mjozic12@hotmail.com). The NATR is the largest fundraiser for the Booster Club and helps significantly defray the cost of any student (school and PSR) playing CYO athletics as well as the developmental soccer program.

Sixth and eighth grade teams made it to playoffs but lost. o Floor in Byrider was redone over Thanksgiving break.

Terrier Madness was held Dec. 5th – all basketball teams were introduced.

- Bridge Flights:

Very active and donated \$500 to the Academy of Arts.

- Donut Sunday:

---

6 | December - 2014

Barb would like to retire from her responsibilities. •

### **Social/Community Outreach**

- Giving Tree: Chair, Meri Skiera
- The Giving Tree program is running smoothly. Here are some of the main points:
- We have had a large number of tags taken and many gifts already returned.
- The ushers continue to help (as they always have) by placing gifts in the bride room after each of the Masses.
- The program runs through this Sunday, December 14th with a final flyer insert in this weekend's bulletin.
- There is a wedding at the church on Saturday, December 13th so we will have the bride room cleaned out by Friday December 12th.
- After the wedding we can store the items we receive at this weekend's Masses in the bride room again.
- We will make the first distribution to the agencies beginning Tuesday, December 9th.
- We will make the final distribution of the gifts early next week after our final collection day Sunday, December 14th.
- The trees will be taken down in the week following Sunday, December 14th.
- We usually receive a handful of gifts after the deadline. These are taken to the rectory, and Jennifer will contact us so we can pick them up and get them to the agencies.

### **Social Justice**

- Respect Life Committee
- The Right to Life of Northeast Ohio Signature & Media Campaign will be held after all Masses January 10/11, 2015. Parish volunteers will collect donations, to be used where the money will be most effective: the internet (the number 1 choice for most women seeking an abortion), advertisements on public transportation, television and radio, plus mobile phone applications. The goal is to change the hearts and minds of women who are considering an abortion, by directing them to trained counselors and an ultrasound. Right to Life coordinates this effort with all area crisis pregnancy centers and works in conjunction with Option Line. The campaign has been highly effective, directly impacting abortion rates. Through a matching grant, every dollar donated will be tripled.
- ... And Justice for All report - Mary Yanko
- Mary Yanko just finished her 3 year term as chair of "...and Justice for All". Carolyn Varner will be the new chair beginning in January.
- Mary wanted to make sure that council understands that the social justice group will "certainly in the future comply with bulletin guidelines." Mary also mentioned that the group "look[s] forward to collaborating in 2015 to agree on a procedure to spread the message of Catholic Social Teaching to the parish."

### **School**

- Principal, Sandie Isabella:
- The school is working hard during the Advent Season to prepare for Jesus's birth. Every classroom is completing activities. Students in grades 3-8 have participated in the sacrament of Reconciliation. The library book fair and Santa shop were great successes this month!
- Matthew Dennee in 6th grade is our school National Geographic Bee competition winner. He will now take a written online test to see if he qualifies for the state geography bee to be held in March.
- The office of Catechetical Formation and Education for the diocese of Cleveland has informed the school that we have been awarded two technology grants from the Rooted in Faith initiative. We do not have the amounts yet—more communication to the parish will follow about this.
- Thank you to Parish Council for all their support this year. On behalf of the faculty and staff of St. Sebastian Parish School, I would like to wish you a blessed and Merry Christmas!

---

7 | *December - 2014*

- School Band: No report at this time
- **Administration**
- Finance Council from Joe Ruscak:
- We will be having our meeting the morning of 12/11/14. Our current discussions will include an expected tuition increase (roughly equal to cost of living 2-4%). We will also be discussing our annual ask to Foundation for improvement projects: Father V's requested focus continues to be the parking lots and learning labs.
- I think at some point early next year – we would like to have [the Chair of Parish Council] in for an update at one of our meetings. Is there anything I should convey to SSFC from the Parish Council side? o (Pat) Mentioned the HASA issue and SSFC input – Joe responded that it was an extremely brief conversation and that no information was given as to support or not support the mandatory HASA fee.
- Academy of Culture and Arts: Headmistress, Judy Gillick:
- By January we will have an online enrollment and payment capability established. We are adding 4 new classes: a children's after school Art class, both Drawing and Painting for adults, and a Film Appreciation course. Finally, we are opening up the Academy by placing flyers in the bulletins of our sister parishes, St. Vincent, St. Mary, St. Bernard, and St. Hilary.
- Our new course catalog for spring will be available January 3rd/4th, both on line and in physical form in the church. Registration runs from January 5th through the 25th; and classes start on February 2nd.
- (Jan) Offered that some group(s) seem to continually be mentioned and wonders if it is clear what the mission and boundaries are for the different groups/committees.
- (Sara) It is hard to often get information and know if groups/committees are still functioning.
- (Fr. V.) Let's put the committee/volunteer group discussion on next agenda.

#### **Other**

Closing Prayer presented by Fr. Leonard, "Silent Night". Meeting adjourned – 8:45 PM

Next meeting scheduled for 22 January 2015 Opening Prayer: Chris & Closing Prayer: Cyndy.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Jewell, Secretary



**Report Summaries:**