

St. Mark's Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Feb. 24, 2009

(Our next meeting will be on March 31, 2009 at 7 PM.)

Attendees

Msgr. Sean Flynn* Present
Deacon Dennis Saake* Present

Members

Peter Abitanto**	Present	Melissa Rafter	Present
Craig Beattie	Absent	Nestor Roman	Present
Gary Cademartori**	Present	Frank Sharp	Absent
James Farrell	Present	Marjorie Zaccaro	Present
Karen Pappas**	Present		

* Denotes Clergy/Staff

** Denotes Officers

Highlights:

Monsignor opened the meeting with a special prayer and scripture reading. Karen then called the meeting to order, welcoming members and thanking them for coming.

Monsignor then provided some updates:

- We are having some attendance problems with our Altar Servers. After some discussion it was concluded that Altar Servers should start at the fourth grade level; some of our current servers may be too young for that responsibility.
- The Hispanic Ministry held its first leadership training session with about 10 members participating.
- The "Meet & Greet" dinner was held as a pilot event to start introducing American and Hispanic families to each other. All participants seemed to enjoy this gathering and it was considered a success.
- The schedule of events for Ash Wednesday and Lent were reviewed.
- The Diocesan audit of our Parish was recently completed successfully.

Marjorie reported that an Irish Night is still being planned for March 14, after the 5 PM Mass, although the caterer has cancelled. Other options are now being considered.

Jim reported that our Parish collections are improving, although January was still operating at a deficit without factoring in investment income. According to the auditor, we should not be relying on investment income to offset the deficit.

The role of Parish council liaisons to the various ministries was discussed and it was agreed that council members are to serve as informal liaisons to the ministries where heads of ministries could ask for various issues to be brought to the attention of Monsignor Flynn and the Council; likewise the council could relay information through

the liaisons to the ministries. This is designed to aid communication. Formal matters, such as personnel or finance matters are outside the scope of this role, as the role of liaisons is strictly informal.

Karen reported speaking with the head of the Readers Ministry and a meeting will be scheduled this spring with their members that Monsignor will attend. Karen also reported that Parish Council contact information has been added to our Bulletin.

Gary reported that more Eucharistic Ministers are needed and after some discussion it was agreed that the best way to recruit would be by asking existing members' spouses to participate and to reach out on an individual basis to other qualified parishioners.

Nestor also reported a need for Eucharistic Ministers in the Hispanic Ministry. The Hispanic Ministry will be considering forming a Parish Council for its members after the completion of leadership training, assuming enough qualified people will participate.

Melissa reported that Couples Nights are scheduled for March 13 & 27 and some Hispanic couples are also being invited to this. Another "Meet & Greet" dinner is being planned for April 25. This will be a BYOB event for which the Hispanic couples will prepare the food and the American couples will be asked to bring the desserts.

Our youth activities are going well. CYO girls helped as servers for the recent Meet & Greet dinner. Separate "Guys Night Out" and "Girls Night Out" events were held recently and both were well attended and considered successful. The activities with our seventh and eighth graders are also proceeding along well.

The Music Ministry is settling into their new schedule and the most recent parishioner feedback has been positive. The current music scheduling gives parishioners the option of selecting a weekend Mass with their choice of music.

Regarding changing the time for the 5 PM Saturday Mass, Monsignor suggested we include this in our Parish Survey to see what our parishioners would prefer.

We then resumed the discussion of our planned 2009 Parish Survey to be distributed in May. Gary had edited the questions from our 2005 survey which were distributed and he volunteered to be on the committee that will develop, implement and evaluate the results of our new survey. Marjorie also volunteered to help on this committee and Melissa and Nestor will collect questions for the Hispanic Ministry. Other suggestions were:

- We should ask our various Ministries for any questions they might suggest.
- Our questions should all be worded carefully and objectively so parishioners can clearly understand them and easily comment however they prefer.
- A question should be included asking parishioners who no longer attend Mass why they stopped and what we might do to interest them in returning.
- We should insure that all Parishioners receive this survey and are given the opportunity to respond. A direct mailing may be the only way to insure this.

We might also consider including copies of the survey in the Bulletin, have them available at the back of Church and have it posted on the website.

- Surveys from other Parishes in New Jersey and elsewhere might be worth reviewing for additional ideas and Karen volunteered to try to locate some.
- It was agreed that using an outside company to help was not necessary.

The committee was asked to email their first draft of this survey to all council members before our next meeting, March 31, so everyone is prepared to discuss this at that time.

The plans for the Memorial Tribute to Msgr. Carton were reviewed and after some discussion it was agreed to have the portrait presentation near the end of each weekend Mass on April 18 & 19. Msgr. Flynn will say a few words and hopefully Msgr. Carton will be present for parishioners to see and have the opportunity to say hello. The Parish Council is planning to invite Msgr. Carton to dinner on April 18. Gary will check on the availability of a private room at a nearby restaurant.

Dates to Note:

March 13 - Couples Night

March 14 - Irish Night

March 27 - Couples Night

April 18 – Parish Council dinner with Msgr. Carton

April 18 & 19 - Msgr. Carton dedication presentation at all Masses

April 25 - Meet & Greet Dinner

May - Distributed 2009 Parish Survey to all Parishioners

Acton Items from the Feb. 24, 2009 Meeting:

1. Get suggestions for agenda items for our meetings to Karen by the 10th of each month to allow sufficient time for review, approval and distribution of the package one week prior to each meeting. Responsibility: All Members.
2. Think of ways to better operate and utilize our Parish Library. Responsibility: All
3. Finalize plans for the dedication of our Library in honor of Monsignor Carton. Responsibility: Melissa and Gary.
4. Identify a young adult who may be interested in working as a liaison with the Parish Council to represent the youth of our community. Responsibility: Dennis
5. Provide Parish Council liaison support to the following Ministries:
 - a. Altar Servers – Responsibility: Craig
 - b. Eucharistic Ministry – Responsibility: Gary
 - c. Hispanic Ministry – Responsibility: Nestor and Melissa
 - d. Music – Responsibility: Marjorie
 - e. Readers – Responsibility: Karen
6. Arrange for a meeting with members of our Readers Ministry for Monsignor to attend. Responsibility: Karen
7. Try to locate recent Parish Surveys used by other Parishes in New Jersey and elsewhere for comparison and ideas in preparing ours. Responsibility: Karen

8. Email the first draft of our 2009 Parish Survey to all Parish Council members before our next meeting so we can all be prepared to discuss this on the 31st. Responsibility: Gary, Marjorie, Melissa and Nestor
9. Check on the availability of a private room at a local restaurant for our Parish Council dinner with Msgr. Carton on April 18. Responsibility: Gary