

PASTORAL STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Minutes for the PSC Meeting on July 12, 2006

7:00 PM at Our Lady of the Rosary Church

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Present: Fr. George Aranha, Helen Baumann (STA Site Committee), Laura Chiu (OLR Site Committee), Tom Jaworowski (Human Concerns Committee), Mary Beth Lefebvre (Youth Ministry Board), Micky Martin (Liturgy Board), Gerard McGuire (Adult Spiritual Development), Bud McKenna (Facilities Committee), Fr. Tony Medina, Joan Meyn (Community Life Board), Joe Passarello (Finance Committee), Marguerite Purcell (SAG Site Committee), Jesse Ruezga (Hispanic Leadership Team), Mary Sullivan (Communications Committee)

Absent: Catechetical Board, Parish Administrator

Guests: Ruth Chippendale, Walt Lundin, Jim McLaughlin

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Fr. George introduced Fr. Tony Medina to the PSC and Guests. He will conduct bilingual liturgy services at OLR. Jean Ramacciotti has scheduled training sessions in hands-on healing at OLR during August. Linda Gariulo is leaving her assignment as Liturgy Coordinator on July 14.

The 'Percept' data for zip codes in Palo Alto has provided an incentive for evangelization in our parish. Fr. George has offered to conduct sessions to present information about our faith and to invite dialogue with non-practicing Catholics.

The Communications Committee provided ideas on how communication can be improved in the parish. Some changes and additions to the parish bulletin are being evaluated. A better way of polling Mass attendees was presented.

The STA Site Committee reported that renovations to the Homer House are almost completed on the lower apartment and are scheduled for completion by the end of August for the upper apartment. Plans are underway to modify the garage structure to create a rehearsal space for the Gregorian Choir. Long range plans for reclaiming the Thomas House for parish functions have been initiated.

The Facilities Committee has inspected and restocked the First Aid kits located at each site. Facilities personnel have also tested and brought fire extinguishing equipment up to state and local codes. A Disaster Plan is being formulated for each site under

the direction of the Facilities Group.

Prologue

Roland Quintero arrived before the meeting and started to take photographs of the present members of the PSC. The meeting was called to order by Bud McKenna at 7:10 P.M. Joan led the attendees in the Stewardship Prayer. The agenda for tonight's meeting was accepted. There will be no meeting of the PSC in August, although the By-Laws stipulate that there should be no meeting in July. The minutes of the June 14 PSC meeting were approved with one minor correction concerning the date of the Youth Mass. No one stepped forward to commit to lead the PSC and Guests in prayer at the start of the September meeting. Information sheets were passed around to identify the new leadership of the various parish ministries and to verify the addresses of parish leaders.

Comments from the Council and the Floor: Mary Beth informed the PSC that the middle school and the high school youth of the parish will meet at the Dermody Center on Sunday evenings for socializing activities. Ruth reminded everyone that parish participation in Hotel de Zink would occur during the last two weeks in August by volunteers bringing food for the guests at the Christian Reformed Church on Arastradero Road.

PASTOR'S REPORT

1. Fr. George introduced Fr. Tony Medina to the attendees. Fr. Tony exercised priestly duties here at STA six years ago. He will conduct bilingual liturgy services for the Hispanic Community.

2. The Executive Committee will meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the Pastoral Center at 9:00 A.M.

3. The 'Free the Pastor' sentiments that were expressed at the June Retreat have prompted Fr. George to focus more on spiritual matters and less on administrative tasks in the future. He described a laminated Prayer Card for parishioners to use. Twenty-five people have signed up for the Prayer Circle to offer prayers for sick and deceased individuals. Ruth suggested that permission be requested before adding people to this list.

4. Jean Ramacciotti has scheduled three training sessions in hands-on healing prayers at OLR on three Wednesday afternoons in August. There will also be six healing prayer sessions offered at STA on Wednesday afternoons starting September 6 and three sessions for the Aquinas Contemplative Prayer Community starting on August 15.

5. Linda Gargiulo's mother died yesterday. She was planning to leave her position as Liturgy Coordinator on July 14. Linda's experience in this assignment has initiated an update of the job description for this post as a model to select suitable candidates. In four years the parish has hired four Liturgy Coordinators. An advertisement for this position will appear in the STA bulletin.

6. The 'Staff Day Away' that was held on June 28 at Vallombrosa was a great success. The attendees considered and responded to the three goals for the parish

chosen at the June Retreat: 1) Improving communications, 2) Building bridges between the Hispanic and Anglo communities as well as the four Mass communities at STA, and 3) Increasing the number of volunteers for the various ministries.

7. Fr. George and Walt have examined 'Percept', a data base of demographic information collected by zip codes. Some of the statistics for zip code 94301, for example, include 15,364 residents with an average household income of \$165,758. with 49% of these having no faith involvement.. For zip code 94306 these values are 24,232 people with an average household income of \$129,222. and no faith involvement for 51% of the population there. Fr. George noted that 1/2 the residents of Palo Alto do not go to any church. He thinks that we need to offer evangelization and is open to providing a forum for this purpose. As an example, monthly sessions of 'Burning Bush' could be advertised in the newspaper. These sessions would consist of a brief presentation of faith concepts and an invitation to dialogue along with wine and cheese.

Gerard discussed a phone survey of parishioners in the past which asked questions such as, "Is the parish meeting your needs? What does church do for you? Is it enriching your life?" etc. Micky recalled that this survey was done in connection with the 'Renew' program, and it was a very positive effort.

Fr. George wanted to encourage all forms of positive outreach. He contemplated a six week scripture course and opportunities for praying together.

The Communications Committee is considering a newsletter to reach people who don't read the weekly bulletin. Marguerite remembered a time when an individual in a block/neighborhood would invite 20 people who weren't practicing their faith to come to his/her home and attend Mass with the pastor.

Mary is recruiting a volunteer coordinator for each site who could help with evangelization. She now has an office at the Pastoral Council.

Call to Action: Bud asked, "What should we do with this zipcode data?" Walt suggested providing 'Percept' data to Staff, PSC, and Ministry Team Chairs for their consideration about what might be done with it. Also we should ask other parishes what they have done with this information. The Deanery is not using it. To date, the church, Walt, and Nancy S. have looked at it. Helen thought it should be referred to the Communications Committee.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Bud asked that each Ministry Team decide what schedule would be suitable for reporting its activities (e.g., the Finance Committee publishes its annual report in October). Bud requested that each ministry send its written report to Tom (preferably in electronic format).

Communications Committee Report

Mary inquired about the format of the parish bulletin: "Should it be bigger with more information? Is it better now?" Mary Beth commented that most people don't read the bulletin. "Would a bigger bulletin be better?" Jim supported the practice of

inserting flyers into the bulletin. He gave an example of the flyer announcing the Golf Tournament which was really effective.

Fr. Tony recommended focusing on the big picture. Bigger print would be appropriate for parishioners who are visually challenged. He thought that we try to convince people by using more printed material. "Does it work?", he asked.

Tom displayed a communication tool used by a Chicago parish which consisted of a one page insert placed into the bulletin each month.. On one side was printed the calendar of the parish activities for that month and on the other side the names and phone numbers of the appropriate individuals/parishioners to contact for more information. This communication method was generally supported by the PSC.

Mary revealed that only 53 responses were received of the questionnaire about the existence and use of the parish web page/site. Since there are about 1900 households in the parish, the percentage of returned questionnaires was underwhelming.

Someone suggested a better way of getting responses from the attendees at Sunday Masses: Pass out a short questionnaire before the end of Mass and have those present complete it before they leave the church.

Bus asked about the PPP booklet that will be distributed in October. Mary and Chris Lundin are currently updating the booklet distributed last year.

STA Site Committee Report

Helen reported that monthly meetings held on the fourth Wednesday have experienced an increase in attendees during this past year. Some of the new members of the committee represent ministries with which the STA Site Group often interacts. There are also representatives from the four Sunday Mass communities on this committee.

The renovations of the downstairs apartment of the Homer House are almost complete. This unit should be available for occupancy by August 1. The renovation of the upstairs unit will be completed by late August.

The garage at the rear of the Homer House is being considered for updating to provide a suitable rehearsal space for the Gregorian Choir. This would free the basement of the Thomas House to provide hospitality space for the attendees of the 10:30 A.M. Sunday Masses, especially during times of inclement weather. Jim cautioned that modifications of the garage should be done in accordance with city codes. Fr. George suggested that this ailing garage be a candidate for inclusion on the Prayer Circle list

Helen described long range plans for reclaiming the Thomas House for parish based functions. This house is currently occupied by a group called 'Compassionate Living'. This plan envisions renting the second floor suites as office space to pay for required renovation of the Thomas House to adapt it for parish use. Joe stated that the rental now being received for the Thomas House is the current market rate.

Facilities Committee Report

Jim pointed out that the Facilities Committee actually has three separate enti-

ties under its umbrella: the Building and Maintenance Committee, the Safety Committee, and the Business Operations Group. The Building and Maintenance Committee is monitoring the renovation of the Homer House. One modular classroom addition for the ISP is being reviewed by this committee. In addition, the moisture problem (and the moldy smell) at the Dermody Center should be resolved with the installation of a much larger dehumidifier compared to the one that is currently functioning there.

The Safety Committee has inventoried and resupplied all First Aid kits located at the three sites. All fire extinguishing equipment installed at the various sites have been tested and brought up to state and local codes. A site plan for each site is being prepared to show the location of the First Aid kits and fire extinguishers. Someone suggested procuring paddles for shocking victims of a heart attack. Jim's response was negative because of the special training and skill required in the use of these devices. He also revealed that the diocese has indicated the disaster plans for earthquake and floods at each site is the responsibility of site chairperson.

The Business/Operations Group handles the revenue generating tasks of the property owned by the parish. Tom Foy and his son conduct the lease arrangements for the parish.

The detailed reports of the activities of these three ministries appear as attachments to these minutes. Each ministry typically provides this detailed report once every quarter of the year.

Closure

Bud distributed handouts detailing the voting for the parish goals at the June Retreat. The Mission Statement for the STA Parish was also given out. Tom provided a written overview of the events occurring at the June Retreat to each attendee. The next meeting will be held at OLR on Wednesday, September 13 at 7:00 P.M. The meeting was adjourned at about 9:10 P.M.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review the Mission for STA Parish and seek to improve it.
2. Each Ministry Team should create a plan for its ministry to support the 2006/2007 goals of the parish.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Communications Committee Report
2. STA Site Committee Report
3. Facilities Committee Report

The STA Site Committee has continued its practice of regular monthly meetings on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the basement of the Thomas House. It has instituted a regular practice of posters and announcements to encourage a broad base of parishioners to attend the meetings. The number of attendees has been growing over the course of this past year. The site committee has at least one faithful representative from each of the four Sunday mass communities.

In addition to the reps from the various masses, the Site Committee has recruited members who also serve on the Facilities, Liturgy, Communications, Human Concerns, Community Life and Finance Ministry Teams. The committee looks forward to working closely with all of the other ministry teams to fulfill the mission of the parish.

Starting in March, members of the site committee began taking an active role in **the remodel of the Homer House duplex**. Mary Sullivan, Tom Jawarowski and Helen Baumann have contributed untold hours to this project, and many others have also supported the decision of the Facilities Ministry and the Finance Committee to upgrade this valuable parish resource in order to maximize the rental income. This project is nearing completion, and we are happy to report that the downstairs unit will be completed this week, and the upstairs unit should be available for rent in mid August.

The site committee is hosting an **Open House, on Sunday, July 17th**, to educate the parish about the Homer House, and hopefully assist Tom Foy and the Finance Committee in the reletting of the premises, while simultaneously trying to encourage members of the different mass communities to stay after mass and engage with their fellow parishioners. One major goal of the Site Committee is to have regular, well-attended, after mass hospitality after every mass at STA. This is our beginning effort. All are welcome to come see this lovely apartment, and join us for coffee and juice and doughnuts.

Renovating the **Homer house garage** is the next most likely project for the committee. The hope is to have this building put into usable condition in order to provide a place for choir practice that will not conflict with after mass hospitality. In the planning stages, we have come up with a number of other possible uses for this facility. Mario Veloro has agreed to bring this to the Knights of Columbus as a possible community building project. Mario has presented some very exciting ideas on how the structure could be modified and upgraded without significant cost and using in-house resources.

A larger, and more long range, goal of the Site Committee is to **reclaim the Thomas House for parish based functions**. We have visited the Thomas House with members of the Finance and Facilities Ministries, and we are in the process of formulating a plan, and developing scope and cost information. Tom Jaworowski is looking into the cost of installing an elevator in order to make the entire structure handicap accessible. The vision of the Site Committee is to greatly expand use of the Thomas House by all four

communities that attend the Sunday Masses at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Included in the projected new uses are hospitality gatherings after each Sunday Mass, spiritual education, social gatherings such as funeral receptions, wedding rehearsal dinners, and other activities. The Thomas House, like the Homer House, has not been renovated in many, many years, so a significant renovation project is contemplated. The expectation is that we would be able to rent the second floor of the building out as office space in order to pay for the renovations and to continue the current income stream on which the parish apparently is dependent.

In addition to the peripheral buildings, the church itself is in need of updating. There is an ongoing effort to support the Facilities Ministry in its intention to reroof STA and paint the exterior of the church. In addition, the interior of the church needs to be painted, and there is a laundry list of other maintenance currently under study.

In addition to its other projects, the Site Committee is continuing to work with the liturgy teams of each of the mass communities to build better communications. We have developed a structure for resolving issues with the sound system, which is complicated by the fact that so many different people use the equipment every week. We have been very fortunate to identify a sound technician, Jim Thalmann, who ably maintains our system, and a team of people who assist in adjusting the existing system and buying needed enhancements for the system. These efforts are directly in line with the PSC goals for 2006-2007 in that it is a major priority of the Site Committee to build bridges between the six disparate communities who worship at STA.

The Site Committee is very fortunate to have Mary Sullivan as its volunteer coordinator, and Tom Jaworowski as its secretary. We are looking for more members who are willing to take a leadership role on the Site Committee, or on one of the numerous subcommittees that are in formation to support the vision and goals of the Site Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Baumann
July 12, 2006