

**Our Lady on the River Parish Council Minutes
Monday, November 9, 2009**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Fr. Jim Lopez	David Schwehofer (Pres.)	Stephanie Spencer
Sr. Mary Ann Ankoviak, CSJ	Mary Patrick (V-Pres.)	Barbara Persyn
	Catherine Nutter (Sec.)	Bev Simon
		Charles Ongena

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Fr. Matt Ellis

OTHERS PRESENT:

Judy Beauvais	Mary Endres	Dave C. Schwehofer
Diane Bowden	Carol Fett	Dorothy Schwehofer
Mark Bowden	Bobbi Ivan	

OPENING Fr. Jim opened the meeting in prayer at 6:45.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES Mary Patrick motioned to approve the October minutes; Bev Simon seconded; all assented.

VICARIATE PARISH COUNCIL Bobbi Ivan reported on the Blue Water Vicariate October 14th VPC meeting:

1. Career Transition Ministries (CTM) continues to expand its activities in the vicariate. A survey is being developed to assess needs and ask for volunteers. Our vicariate will request that links be added on aodonline.org for specific parish CTM info (information links already exist on the vicariate website).

2. The Ted L & Company events were a huge success. Nearly 300 lbs. of food were collected at St. Mary Queen of Creation and over 400 lbs. of food were collected at St. Mary (Port Huron). Cash donations were also collected at both sites (approximately \$150).

3. Parish Council Guidelines: New guidelines, requirements, and documentation regarding the role of parish councils are being prepared by the archdiocese and should be available soon.

4. Partner Parishes: All vicariate parishes that have not indicated their partner parishes should submit them at November's meeting. St. Mary Church in St. Clair has already been submitted as the parish partner for OLR.

5. Cardinal Mooney High School Chaplain: Fr. Nick discussed the pros/cons of rotating chaplain responsibility for Cardinal Mooney. With the assumption that OLR will have a (newly ordained) associate, it will be the associate's responsibility to also serve as Chaplain to CMC. Weekly student Masses will be presided on a rotating basis by the priests of the vicariate.

Fr. Jim clarified that Our Lady on the River Parish would only have an associate pastor in the future if the archdiocese would be responsible for paying him. A newly-ordained priest would cost the parish approximately \$40,000 a year; our parish can't afford that.

6. Budget: A proposed vicariate budget was distributed for review and a decision is expected at our next meeting.

7. Fees for Weddings: Discussion continued regarding charges levied for wedding coordinators, music ministers, and use of facilities. All members are asked to inquire as to their individual parish's procedures and costs and report back at our next meeting.

Our parish charges \$245 for a wedding: \$100 deposit to the Church (which becomes a donation); \$125 to the musician; \$20 to the wedding coordinator. Fr. Jim does not take a stipend.

8. Additional Vicariate News (not reported at October's meeting): Fr. Nick Zukowski is no longer the Blue Water Vicariate's Vicar; Fr. Joe Horn of Holy Family now is. In his November 8th bulletin article, Fr. Nick explained: "The Presbyteral Council and the Council of Vicars of the AOD voted at their September meeting to merge the two consultative bodies into one new Presbyteral Council...As a result of this decision and process, new elections were held, and the Blue Water Vicariate now has a new Vicar" (*The Luminary, St. Mary's Queen of Creation, New Baltimore, MI., Nov. 8, 2009*).

Once approved, the complete minutes are available on the Vicariate website, <http://www.bluewatervicariate.org/>

AUDIENCE ADDRESS

1. Increase in Information to Parishioners: Diane Bowden thanked Fr. Jim and Judy Beauvais for the financial reports recently included in the bulletin (Maritime Days and Harvest Dinner). She said that she would like to see the reports from St. Catherine's activities as well. In general, Mrs. Bowden would like to have regular financial and budgetary reports published.

In addition, Mrs. Bowden suggested that more information about the parish's commissions, their duties, and their memberships be accessible to the parishioners so that it can be known who is serving in what capacity and who is making specific decisions on behalf of the entire parish.

Finally, Mrs. Bowden asked for clarification as to how the interest from the "organ fund" was able to be used for the general up-keep of the parish.

Discussion: Fr. Jim said it was presented to him by the stewardship commission that using interest from the organ fund to accomplish necessary tasks in the parish was acceptable.

Mark Bowden asserted that any money made by the organ fund should stay with the organ fund.

Fr. Jim assured him that the principal was not being used and that Fr. Tim Birney and the stewardship commission had told him the interest was available for general maintenance. Stephanie Spencer and Bobbi Ivan suggested that the original document be reviewed regarding the arrangement. Bobbi asked if the organ had been receiving regular maintenance. Fr. Jim said that Bea Wassenberg has already had representatives come in from the same company that Daniel Susan used to check on the condition of the organ.

2. Advertising Knights of Columbus Events: Dave C. Schwehofer asked what should be done to make sure that parish events, such as the K of C Pancake Breakfast that took place last weekend, be adequately advertised at the Masses.

Fr. Jim said that Tom Cook is working on improving communication between the front office and the K of C. Organizations should contact Pam LaBelle in the front office to get their events into the announcements.

3. Vocations Convocation: Carol Fett reported on the Vocations Convocation that she, Catherine Nutter, and Dan and Jean LaVere attended. She mentioned a statistic given by Fr. Tim Birney: Of the 100 seminarians currently enrolled, only about half of them will be ordained. Fr. Tim would like every parish to have a Vocations Committee.

Carol highlighted much of the key-note speech given by Sr. Ann Shields. Among many other things, Sr. Ann spoke about creating the necessary environment for our young people to hear the “call of the Lord—the small voice that speaks to the heart.”

Carol also reported on strategies and actions that a newly-formed vocation committee should take to be effective. She ended her report by asking Fr. Jim if we could start a vocation committee in our parish.

Fr. Jim responded that a vocation committee was “in the works” with current members consisting of himself, Fr. Matt, Sr. Mary Ann, and Mary Patrick.

PASTOR’S REPORT

1. Adding Services to Parish: Fr. Jim met with Dave Olefin (representative of AOD Parish Life and Services) about setting up two different programs:

a. Spiritual Well-Being of Widows, Widowers, and the Separated: This program is an opportunity for those who have lost a loved-one to develop a spiritual faith life again and to grow in communion with other people. The organizers of the program will present information about it to Fr. Jim; they are excited about the idea of offering their program in this area, utilizing OLR’s facilities.

b. Marriage Preparation at OLR Site: Currently, our parishioners go to other parishes for their marriage preparation. The AOD’s program can be downloaded and offered here instead. The program could be ready in the spring.

COMMISSION REPORTS

Stewardship Commission Fr. Jim reported for the stewardship commission:

1. Capital Campaign Funds: \$100,000 from the Capital Campaign money has just been put toward the activity center debt. There is still some money left over, but the stewardship commission wants to make sure money is available for smaller projects needed at the Holy Cross site. The debt has now been reduced from \$437,000 to \$337,000.

2. St. Mark Cleaning: The stewardship commission has received bids for the needed professional cleaning at the St. Mark chapel. They are still awaiting one more bid.

3. St. Catherine Parking Lot: The two parking lots in Algonac have been surveyed, and the stewardship commission is waiting on a bid from the company for the cost of resurfacing. The parking lots at all three sites will have work done on them in the spring.

Christian Service Commission Sr. Mary Ann reported:

1. Single Commission: Sr. said it is important to remember that the entire parish has only one Christian service commission; of the 20-22 members, one representative is from the Holy Cross site and two are from the St. Mark site; the rest of the members are from the St. Catherine site.

2. Senior Bingo: A Senior Bingo and lunch will be held tomorrow.

3. Conkerr Cancer: The October 25th *Times Herald* featured, among others, our Christian service commission and its "Sewing Bee"—over 1,000 colorful pillowcases have been sewn and donated to hospitals to cheer up children with cancer.

4. Pillowcase Dresses: From the left-over material of the pillowcases, the Christian service commission made and sent more than a hundred dresses to Haiti.

5. Blood Drive: The next blood drive will be February 28th.

6. "Trunk and Treat" Event: The Block sisters organized a fun evening for the children of about 35 families to Trick-or-Treat at Holy Cross.

7. Ice Cream Social: The Christian service commission sponsored an ice cream social. Although the attendance was minimal, those who did come had a good time.

Worship Commission Sr. Mary Ann reported:

1. Vocation Committee: Sr. Mary Ann said that the vocation committee is an arm of the worship commission and that Dan and Jean LaVere have been in contact with the worship committee over the past few months. Dan will be compiling some vocation articles for the bulletin.

Catherine Nutter said that she believed that, according to Parish Council guidelines, the vocation committee technically falls under the "education commission" and not "worship commission."

2. Memorial Mass: About 85 families were invited via a letter from Fr. Jim to attend a Mass of Remembrance for loved ones who died over the past year; approximately half of the families attended. Fr. Leo Broderick did a good job with the Mass. Christian service commission hosted a reception for the families afterward.

3 Giving Trees: The Giving Trees will be set up after Thanksgiving at all three sites. Items collected will be distributed to various organizations: the local fire departments, St. Vincent de Paul, Carolyn's Place, Medi-lodge, Downriver Helping Hands, and the Blue Water Pregnancy Center.

4. Advent: Advent wreathes go up in two weeks and the liturgies are being planned.

5. RCIA: There are five potential inquirers to the Catholic faith.

6. Mission: A couple of years ago Fr. Jim contacted Fr. Michael Sullivan, an Augustinian, about conducting a mission. He will be here in Advent of 2010.

OLD BUSINESS

1. AOD Tax: David Schwehofer asked how much the Maritime Days and Harvest Dinner were taxed by the AOD, and he asked whether or not that fact changes the number reported as “total profit” in the published report.

Judy Beauvais explained that the events are taxed approximately 6% (certain factors make it vary each time), and, consequently, that the number reported as “profit” is actually less than money than the parish actually kept.

2. Monthly Calendar: David Schwehofer asked if it were possible to have a Calendar-of-Monthly-Events bulletin insert to alert parishioners of all the events taking place in the parish.

Judy explained that it was done before, but it became unmanageable and inaccurate. A weekly events calendar is included in every bulletin.

3. Discussion of CSA Target Goal: Dave C. Schwehofer asked for clarification about the 6% tax that the AOD takes from moneys raised. This led into a discussion about weekly collections, Christmas collections, and how the CSA target is determined.

It was clarified that the AOD takes 6% of moneys raised from events and collections (except the Christmas collection). In addition, although the Christmas collection does not get taxed 6%, the amount collected that day *does* get added into the parish’s yearly collections to determine the CSA target goal; it is not exempt from the formula used to determine how much a parish should contribute.

Diane Bowden commented that this was the kind of information that really needed to be communicated to the parishioners.

Fr. Jim said the CSA target goals were frozen; this year’s goal will be the same as last year’s goal. Charles Ongena asked if the CSA goal is based on the parish population and when the last census was taken of parish membership.

Judy responded that the goal is not based on population. She said that we have around 1,700 registered families and that that number is accurate based on our system for distributing collection envelopes (being mailed in three-month increments) and the responses (and lack of responses) provided by parishioners during the “Landmark of Faith” campaign at Holy Cross.

4. Archdiocese of Detroit Finances: Charles Ongena asked for an update regarding the financial decisions concerning the JP II Washington Mausoleum made by Cardinal Maida while he was in charge of the AOD.

Fr. Jim said the topic was broached at the Priestly Convocation. The AOD has to pay the Bank of Ireland \$21 million by 2011 because of the JP II. (Other dioceses had pledged funds to participate in this expenditure, but they withdrew their pledges, leaving the debt with Detroit.)

The second debt the AOD has is an \$11 million bond issue in the Pontiac diocese. Archbishop Vigneron plans to take out a loan to pay both debts. Church properties in Detroit will also be up for sale.

NEW BUSINESS/MEMBER REPORTS

1. Parish Council Year-Round: David Schwehofer suggested the parish council meet in the summer as well.

Fr. Jim said that since the merger is still technically incomplete, maybe we should keep working until we're done.

David motioned that the council meet once a month. Mary Patrick seconded. Six council members assented; one member dissented.

2. December Meeting: David said the December agenda would show an approval of the minutes and an "Audience Address" item for any audience member present. The council will meet in the chapel first and then go to the Sisters' residence for the Christmas gathering. Members should email or call Sr. Mary Ann to let her know what dish they are bringing that evening. The parish will provide the meat and beverages.*

3. Building Community: David said our parish is full of highly spiritual and talented people that we need to tap into. He encouraged parish council members and audience members to reach out to other parishioners in a welcoming way over the next few months and see what kinds of things start to change. Barbara Persyn encouraged each person to embrace a deeper prayer life and reach out to one another more to keep the Devil at bay.

CONCLUDING PRAYER At 8:27, Mary Endres read from *Colossians*:

Put on love—that is the bond of Perfection!

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Nutter
Parish Council Secretary

* *The December meeting and party were later cancelled.*