

St. Clare Parish Council Meeting
Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 6:30 p.m., Friendship Hall

Present: Fr. Michael (ex officio), Charlie Homa, Tom Karasienski, Bob Rucker, Carol de Rosset, John Roché (ex officio), Keith Johnson. Guests: Ed Forester, Mari Rucker.

Charlie called the meeting to order at 6:33.

1. Charlie led the Council in an opening prayer.

2. Bob moved that the February, 2014 minutes be approved; Charlie seconded the motion; all were in favor, so the minutes were approved.

3. Schedule for hosts at Sunday mass:

Apr. 27: it was suggested that a teenager be host (since it is the graduation mass)

May 4: Tom

May 11: Keith

4. Ed Forester was present to discuss the church sound system. Ed mentioned that there had been many problems with the sound system in the past; sometimes it was too loud, sometimes too soft, there was random buzzing and popping, and it was impossible to set a consistent sound level. Further, the musicians couldn't hear anything coming out of the sound system. If you weren't in the center of the church, you couldn't hear what was coming out of the speakers. They looked at electrical issues and adjustment issues, and asked the people who originally installed the system to come and analyze it, which they did. They made some adjustments that helped, and they also helped track down other issues. Ed thinks that the improvement in the sound system was evident over Holy Week, when all the improvements were finally in place. We have more options and more people involved in the music program now than we have in the past, but the current setup doesn't adequately support the current number of musicians. There are not enough channels on the mixer, and no control, once the sound is set, to change anything during mass without it being very disruptive. The sound guy said a new mixer with more channels would be best.

Father: What's the difference in channels in the mixer we have now and the new one?

Ed: Right now, we have six available inputs for the choir, because we're using the others for the ambo, the wireless mic, etc. Out of those six, there has to be one for the piano, which leaves five. If we have three guitar players and people singing, we're at the limit of what we can do. The current mixer has eight usable channels; the new one would have sixteen. We have youth coming in with talents and I'd like to use them, but there are no inputs for mics for them.

Another thing we did before Holy Week was to replace Father's lapel mic (actually, the FCC had outlawed certain frequencies of wireless mics, and that lapel mic was one of them, but we were unaware and it continued being used). So that one has been replaced with a headset mic, and it's a lot better; that was the first technical upgrade that we purchased. A

big issue we have is that the ambo mic and the choir mic are sensitive, powerful mics. When you turn them up to the level they should be, there's a tremendous feedback problem. A suggestion the representative from Pro Sound and Lights made was to put a mic on the ambo with a switch that could be turned off when the speaker was finished.

Ed brought an estimate with items and expenses from Pro Sound and Lights; he said that the fourth item, the single gang plate, can be removed because it's already been purchased and installed. He also mentioned that if we get the Mackie mixer, we can eliminate the new mic from the list, because he can control the sound levels of all the mics from an iPad. (Father Michael or John could also do this, using their iPhones.) Ed also noted that we need to tell readers to point the mic toward their chin and speak over it. Only the part of the mic nearest your mouth should be adjusted. John noted that Katherine is planning to have a formal lector training session soon and she will mention that to the lectors. It was pointed out that if the new Mackie mixer was purchased, an iPad would also need to be purchased to go with it (the iPad is not in the estimate; it would have to be purchased separately, along with a case). Ed's suggestion is to purchase the Mackie mixer and the iPad, and to move forward expeditiously to do so. He has spoken to some donors who are willing to help with the cost.

Father commented that Ed has accelerated the improvements to the music ministry, and more people are involved—a variety of people, and he commended Ed for this. Father remarked that the musicians have been working super long hours practicing, and he wanted to thank Ed and them. The others at the table agreed.

Charlie asked whether the purchase of the new mixer needed to go through the finance council; Father replied that it did, and that he would bring it to them very soon.

5. Pastor's Report

a. Holy Week. Father stated that he thought the Holy Week liturgies went very well. The church looked good; the music was good; the ministers were good; the Hispanic community covered the stations and uncovered them; the liturgies were reverent; etc. He said he would discuss it at the liturgy committee meeting, but wanted to know what Parish Council thought about how the liturgies went. There were slightly lower numbers on Holy Thursday and Good Friday than last year; attendance at the Easter Vigil was about the same as last year; but this Easter Sunday, the church was full to overflowing (202 people). Also, Father expressed gratitude for Katherine Christensen and Diane Zekind's work during the Triduum; he really appreciated all they did. There's so much one is involved in, as a priest, especially for the Easter Vigil, that is done only once a year, and the help of people like Katherine and Diane is essential to get through all the masses.

The Council members provided positive feedback regarding the Holy Week masses. Father wanted to know if Council members had heard any comments from others, and one was that some people said the Easter Vigil was long, but there's really no way you can make that liturgy short, and after all, it is the most solemn and important liturgy of the year. Another thing mentioned that the way the Good Friday readings were done this year (i.e., breaking up the Gospel reading into scenes/chunks, each read by one of four individuals,

rather than having readers have more specific “roles” and having the parish involved as the “chorus”). Father clarified that some parishoners objected to having only a negative role, or speaking part, and that many other parishes did the readings the way we did them this year on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, but that he would bring up the matter with the Liturgy Committee.

Charlie asked how the parish did in terms of the Rice Bowl donations during Lent.

Father said that the final totals were not ready yet, but would be soon. He noted that there was an issue with the way the parish did the Lenten donations; since we used the Rice Bowls provided by CRS, a certain amount (he thought 75%) is to go to Catholic Relief Services and a certain amount (25%) stays in the diocese, and almost all of that goes to AMAP, to support our mission parishes. We have 66 missions in our diocese and 40+ are in the hole. So part of that money comes back to our parishes. There are legal requirements in terms of how much we give to whom; since we did it using the name and materials of CRS's Rice Bowl, we are required to abide by their terms. If we want to determine how much goes to CRS and how much goes to our local community, we would have to do the collections separately or not use the Rice Bowl name. Now we know better, and we can be more careful next year.

b. Bereavement Committee. Since one of the Parish Council's goals for this year was to review the committees we have in place and form new ones when necessary, it became apparent that the parish does not have anything in place concerning what to do when someone dies, and the Council saw a need for a Bereavement Committee. We had a sign-up, and as of Mar. 13, 17 people had volunteered to be on it. Cora volunteered to oversee it. Father talked to her and she said the committee was going to have its first meeting very soon. There are a number of things to be dealt with when there is a death: the funeral, the liturgy, food for families afterward, setup in the church, calling to get the word out, etc. One of the first things that should happen when a person learns of a death is to call Marie and she can send out a mass email notifying people, but this doesn't reach everyone, like Tom, for example, who doesn't have email. So the committee is going to have a phone tree. Part of what committee members will do is to meet with the family...when Father Michael was at the cathedral, there were two different bereavement teams who met with family members, to talk about liturgy (and what one is able to do and what not—readings, music, etc.--)and go over options with them. In this parish, Father Michael has had to meet with the bereaved person one on one, and tried to be helpful and sympathetic, suggesting options when the person was too distraught to choose. Someone on the Bereavement Committee could do this. It makes it easier for the mourners to go through what they must.

C. Written policies and procedures: Father Michael pointed out that in our parish we have very few policies and procedures in writing, and on some matters there *is* no policy. We need to get policies written down. John is starting to document, for example, special liturgies like the Easter Vigil. We missed a lot of things last year...there was no 4th of July picnic, for example...so John is writing down when we do things, who is in charge, what kind of food there is, etc. Father remarked that he thought our Italian dinner was fantastic this year, much better than in previous years, probably due to better organization.

John said that he has created a form which he gives to whomever is in charge of the event, s/he fills it out, then they go over it, to fill in details, polish it, etc.

Father said that this kind of documentation makes the event easier to do the next time. We need to write down policies, too.

John said that he hoped that by Advent he would have the entire liturgical year in a folder that will be available for those involved to look at.

6. Seek nominations to replace three members of the Parish Council.

Charlie, Julie and Elaine are finishing their three-year terms this year, so three openings on the Parish Council will need to be filled. We need to personally ask people if they are willing to be nominated. If there are more than three nominations, an election will take place the weekend of May 10-11.

Father stated that we should always have at least one representative from the Hispanic community on the Parish Council, and we need to get this written down.

Keith moved that we add a 10th member to the Parish Council who would always be a member of the Hispanic Community, and that the bylaws be changed to reflect this. Carol & Bob seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Keith stated that we should not only announce the Parish Council vacancies in mass, but also in the bulletin, and make it clear that self nomination is welcome.

7. Parish Council Focus 2013-2014.

a. Committee Formation and Maintenance. Since Father had already talked about this topic and the Bereavement Committee, discussion moved to the Building and Maintenance committee, which Bob chairs. They are moving toward recommendations on what to do with the green house, etc.; they are meeting periodically on this, but it will still take some time. No decisions will be made before presenting the situation and options to the parish, but the committee wants to have answers to lots of questions before they get to the point of presenting anything to the parish.

In terms of the electrical situation in the church, Bob stated that the system we have was state of the art when it was put in, but now it's falling apart. It's an institutional system, such as is used by hospitals, schools, hotels...buildings with a high occupancy 24/7. Perhaps it wasn't the best choice for our building and usage. It's worked well, but it's starting to fall apart, so there are two options: replace things one by one as they need it, or replace the whole system. Most of the lights in the sanctuary are on a sloped ceiling 25 feet in the air. You have to reach them from inside the building; there's no access from outside. The problem is how do you reach these things? A step ladder won't work, and there's not enough room to roll something in that would lift you to that height.

Keith commented that there is an A-frame ladder that would work. Bob said that he did not personally want to climb one to that height. Keith said that he had spent a lot of time on top of one, and added that there is one in the Drama Department at ECU that he might be able to borrow during the summer when they don't need it. He said he would check.

Bob said that there are a total of 94 lamp units. They will have to be replaced over time as they wear out. The units that are in the church are no longer made. You have to replace the whole unit. They cost \$200 apiece and there are 94 of them.

Keith asked whether Bob was counting the spotlights.

Bob said no, that they are separate, and that they currently have halogen bulbs in them, although the recommendation is not to use halogen. The new thing now is LEDs. They are very efficient. You can get the whole system from GE and you can control the lights through an iPad or iPhone app. Replacing bulbs with florescent and LED lights would cost about the same amount, yet LEDs use a fraction of the electricity, they produce no heat, and prices are coming down.

Keith commented on the quality of LED light, that it is a very white light rather than the yellow you get with incandescent or the blue cast you get with florescent. He wondered if any money would be saved by replacing the whole system all at once.

Bob replied that doing it all at once is more efficient and you save some on installation. Re the kind of light, he said they had installed one LED light by the choir and if you look at it you can tell it is different from the others. Ed says it works fine for him. That was about \$180 plus \$40 for installation. For the spotlights, the halogen lights would be replaced with LED lights. They can be dimmed, but only down to 10%.

b. Adult formation and evangelization:

Father reminded the Council that there had been a series on Pope Francis's *Joy of the Gospel* and before that, there was a series of meetings to discuss Vatican II. Right now there's nothing planned for Adult formation, but the Parish Council needs to think of what else we might do. We need faith formation for adults; if there's anything Parish Council members want to see happen in this area, we should make it known. The Parish Council needs to be involved with any adult formation and evangelization programming.

8. Next meeting: Thursday, May 15 at 6:30 in Friendship Hall.

- a. Opening prayer: Bob
- b. Closing prayer: Keith
- c. Minutes: Carol

Before the meeting ended, Keith asked whether all hosting at mass is done by Parish Council members. Charlie responded that yes, that is one of the Parish Council's duties.

Keith wondered, in light of the fact that at Sunday mass often the same Parish Council member has to host repeatedly, whether it would be a good idea to open the hosting job to other parishoners, liturgy committee members, etc.?

Father said he was fine with other people doing it and suggested that we start with lectors and expand from there.

John suggested that we start using lectors to act as hosts at the Saturday night mass, since no one currently acts as host on Saturday nights...he remarked that soon he and Ed would have their massive online scheduling lists ready, and could see if lectors were willing to host.

Father said that he wanted to bounce the idea off the Liturgy committee first. If we get the go-ahead there, we'll implement it shortly after.

Tom wondered if there were a way to open up communication between parishoners and us, a suggestion box, perhaps?

Father remembered that we talked about having a suggestion box but never did anything about it. He asked where it would be placed.

Tom suggested that it could go on the table in the narthex.

Father agreed and asked Tom to look into locating such a box and report back on cost, etc. John and Keith said they would help.

Tom led the Council in a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Carol de Rosset