

Spires of Faith Cluster Minutes † December 5, 2011

The Spires of Faith Cluster Council was called to order at St. Francis Xavier Church Hall, Dyersville on Monday, Dec. 5 by Chair, Mike Helle at 7:50 pm. Introductions and prayer began the meeting. Present: Fr. Dennis Quint, Fr. Noah Diehm, Deacon Fred Pins, Deacon Jim Steger. Representatives: Dyersville: Mike Helle, Donna Meyer; Earlville: Joan Ronnebaum; New Vienna: Carl Vorwald, Gerald Schneiter; Petersburg: Jill Rahe; Worthington: Steve Koch, Mark Gaul. Absent: Bob Sabers, Vickie Theisen and Fr. O'Connor.

REPORTS:

- Pastoral Planning report from Fr. Quint was reviewed. Father spoke highly of the NCYC he attended with Beckman students. A very respectful group of 25 students and 6 chaperones went from Beckman. It was suggested that a student that attended speak about their experience at Masses and perhaps to younger classes at area schools and Faith Formation Classes. Father will ask the students if willing to speak at Masses. This Conference is held every other year.
- Hispanic Ministry continues to grow. We have more and more coming to seek the Sacraments, especially Baptism and our priests continue to work with them as needed.
- Liturgy Committee continues to work on hospitality. Greeters are being recruited in parishes. Advent preparations have been done and Christmas decorating is being coordinated. The 1st week of the Roman Missal went well and they will continue to work with parishioners as questions arise. Fr. Diehm is establishing a Vocations Crucifix Program which will begin in January. A sample prayer booklet was reviewed.
- Social Justice Committee reported a group of Confirmation students served dinner at the Catholic Worker House in Dubuque. Another group will go in January. A mission group will be traveling to Haiti again in February. The Rural Food Pantry has more requests than ever for help with food and Christmas gifts. This committee continues to look for ways to reach out to our homebound and those in care centers.
- Stewardship Committee is working through the Study Guide from the Archdiocese. It will help lay the ground work between scripture and discipleship as this committee grows.
- Faith Formation reported RCIA has seven adults and 2 youth in formation. In the Children's Sacrament sessions there are 4 families with 5 to be baptized. The First Reconciliation in November went well. The First Communion Parent meeting will be held Jan. 11, 2012 for the three parishes to the south. Confirmation Program has completed 3 of the 6 sessions. Attendance is good, as well as the feedback from students. Beckman is doing some long term planning - what should the school look like in 5 years? They are working with the Loras College marketing class to gain a better idea of perceived strengths and growing edges among our populations. They were commended for being in the Top 50 Catholic High Schools. Funding is available from the Archdiocese to help educate as part of the Hispanic ministry. St. Francis Xavier School is working with Worthington and Hennessy Schools to share resources to benefit our students. Fr. Quint, having worked in other cities/parishes, spoke highly of our faith formations here and is proud of what we offer here on Wednesday nights and in our parochial schools.

Other Discussion:

- ✓ CLUSTER 40 HOURS will be held March 11-13, 2012. Suggested themes are Evangelization or Virtues. Potential speakers Fr. Mark Osterhaus and Jon Leonetti, were discussed. Fr. Osterhaus is willing to present that weekend and had some really great ideas. Both are engaging speakers and great with youth. That is also the Confirmation Retreat Sunday and Jon Leonetti is conducting that so he would already be here. We strive to engage our young people and re-integrate our families back to church. One possibility would for the two speakers to tag team the talks. Maybe Jon could speak to Beckman and our grade School students. Either would be great. Father will speak to both and finalize the speaker(s).
- ✓ PATRON SAINT FOR THE CLUSTER. Fr. Diehm gave a little history of St. Anthony of Padua. He's a doctor of theology, felt called to evangelize those who did not believe. His statue is featured in all our parishes. Many know him as St. Anthony of lost things, among other popular devotions to St. Anthony. Deacon Pins listed the many attributes of St. Therese of the Little Flower. From her book the saying, "Don't tell God how big the storm is - tell the storm how big God is." Fr. Quint spoke of St. Clare, a Franciscan, a community of religious of which all of our parishes have benefitted. All of our parishes have men's names so a woman

would be nice. No other church or cluster in the archdiocese has utilized her name and it is easy to say and remember. None of our parishes have a statue, but if we wanted one perhaps memorial money received could be utilized for that purpose. After discussion the consensus was to go with St. Clare as our patron saint. Having a patron saint will help us to bring a sense of unity. We are the biggest cluster in the Archdiocese with close to 3,000 families. The other saints will still be there for us in our personal prayer. Immediately a suggestion came to incorporate St. Clare into our photo of the 5 steeples.

- ✓ PROGRESSIVE DINNER - Jan. 8 met with a snag. Some of the churches take down the decorations on that day following Mass. Should it be moved to Saturday, Jan. 7? If moved to Saturday it would gear toward retired people and the goal is to see more families take part. A suggestion to have an Open House at the churches with greeters at each, perhaps serve treats, on Saturday. Several commented that many families were still having Christmas celebrations that weekend. After discussion it was decided to table the Progressive Dinner until 2013. Work will need to begin earlier as all still felt it was a good project to pursue. Feast of the Epiphany next year will be Jan. 6, 2013.
- ✓ MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT: Deacon Steger talked to Bill Beaver on being a guest speaker for an evening for young couples, married 5 years and under. His fee is minor; mileage and free will offering. The topic would be marriage and spirituality. Feb. 12, 2012 is World Marriage Day so could try to set a date after that. Confirmation students could be involved helping serve a sit down dinner and provide the child care. It was agreed he should move forward and book a date and the speaker. Even encourage Pre-cana, Engaged Encounter and Sponsor Couple couples to help with the event.
- ✓ DAY TRIP: Discussed a social event, something for couples of all ages, perhaps a trip to the Old Creamery Theater, Bell Theatre or Grand that would include a meal and depending on the location another stop or two. Deacon Pins and Jerry will move forward to see what can be arranged. Also suggested was something for grandparents.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm with the next meeting set for Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 7:00 pm at New Vienna school.

Respectfully submitted Sharon Gudenkauf