

**Parish Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes**  
**April 2, 2007**  
**6:30 PM, Ark Room**

Attendees: Rev. Msgr. Robert M. Coerver, Tony Acuna, Nicholas Alberts, Norm Brennecke, Lorraine Chambers, Julie Dulac, Bob Guzik, Karen Moss, Dan Muckensturm, Jose Rodriguez, Yolanda Rodriguez, Karen Stonecipher, Bill Stewart, and Rob Taylor.

Absent: Brett Ensor

Father Bob opened the meeting with prayer.

Special Sacramental Programs

Beth Wright, Director of Children's Faith Formation, and Kelly Colbert, director of Youth Ministry indicated they would like to present ideas for Special Sacramental Programs at Our Lady of the Lake.

In the presentation, Beth indicated that the purpose of the separate sacramental sessions is to move forward with the philosophy that formation is ongoing and a transformation for families. Beth indicated that in many parishes Sacramental Faith Formation is used to "keep kids coming" to the formation program. In many cases, children come to Faith Formation classes to "get" a sacrament or participate in the Faith Formation "sacramental moments". As evidenced by the statistics in the attached document, many families stop participating in Faith Formation classes upon receiving the sacraments. In fact, some families have multiple children, but send only the child who is making the sacrament.

Beth explained that this exodus may be caused by gaps in the Faith Formation program. The goal of the proposed Special Sacramental Program would be to spiritually nourish all families and maintain programs that transform.

Beth explained that sacramental preparation is a special time in the parish. It should be separate from Faith Formation and should not be used as a moment to teach everything we know about the faith because we might not see the participants again until they need another sacrament.

It is the belief that sacramental programs should lead people to conversion, not just inform them about the sacraments. Sacramental catechesis must feed and nourish people in the sacramental life. They should lead people to truly encounter the mystery of Christ they are about to celebrate in the sacrament. This way the emphasis is on the communion of faith and promotes unity.

Beth indicated that separate sacramental sessions would be for students in grades 2-9. As well, they will be designed for students who need to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist. Sacramental sessions would include the parents and encourage parents to assume the responsibility for the catechesis for their children. Parents are the primary educators of the faith of their children. Many parents today do not feel comfortable in this role. With parents attending the sessions with their children,

opportunity exists to refresh their understanding of the Catholic faith, as well as build community with one other. Families would attend these “Separate Sacramental Sessions” in the student’s 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Sacramental Preparation only.

There are many positive aspects to the program:

- There would be greater knowledge and understanding of each sacrament
- Increased parental involvement
- The program is intergenerational—all ages are involved and anyone can attend
- Opportunities to build community with one other
- More time for participation
- More opportunity for the Faith Formation classes to learn about church seasons, etc
- Various learning methods would be incorporated in the program
- Opportunity to include various volunteers who can’t commit to a whole year of catechesis, but could commit to fewer sessions, special speakers, etc

Some drawbacks to the program could be:

- More time involvement of parent, students and the Faith Formation Department
- Time commitment—Sessions would be longer (2 ½ hours, 4 times a year)

Kelly Colbert indicated that the programs for First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation parallel one another. This “Intergenerational Design Process” for all Special Sacramental Sessions would follow the following steps:

- Registration and Hospitality—Welcome, sign-in, receive home-kits and assign learning groups; the program may begin or end with a meal
- Gathering and Prayer—Welcomes and provides an overview of the learning program and introduction to the event or theme. This can include community-building activities, and an opening prayer service with prayer and music
- All-Ages Learning Experience—Each session will have a multigenerational experience. This could include music or singing, dramatic presentation, an art project, hearing a story, participation in a ritual, or praying together.
- In-Depth Learning Experience:
  - Whole Group Format—Using small groups or table groups where a facilitator leads the group.
  - Age Group Format—Where adults and youth are lead in two separate sessions.
  - Learning Activity Center Format—Using stations or centers (also using different learning methods)
- Sharing Learned Experience and Home Application—The whole group gathers to share what they’ve learned. This gives each generation a chance to teach each other. They reflect and then prepare to apply their learning to their daily lives. Home kits and activities are explained and given out to use with their families.
- Closing prayer service

Council members asked for clarification regarding the age ranges in this program. Beth indicated that even in ages spanning from 2<sup>nd</sup> grader to 6<sup>th</sup> grader, the program is still able to meet the needs of all who participate. Break-out sessions would be age-appropriate to the student who is making the sacrament. As well, Father Bob, Beth, or another speaker

would act as leader to the adult group. Multi-language families would be provided translation in their dominant language, if needed.

### Confirmation in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Kelly Colbert proposed the possibility of shifting the Confirmation program to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Using a two-year model, it makes more sense to use the Faith Ways curriculum (which is our current Confirmation curriculum) with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. If this were to occur, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades would participate in Youth Ministry. OLOL would offer and expand a variety of ministries to this high school age group. These ministries could include bible study, sports ministry, and many more. Programs could even be gender-specific.

Kelly indicated that one reason behind the suggested shift in the year of Confirmation is that High School students have many more commitments with extra-curricular activities. Most of these commitments are mandatory if the student wants to remain a part of the programs that they are involved in. As well, most of the churches in our diocese offer Confirmation in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. When confirmed youth (9<sup>th</sup> graders) move into our parish area, they either have to go into the High School program without their aged peers, or participate in the Confirmation sessions.

If the change was made, the 2007-2008 school year would be a transitional one for the Confirmation program.

- We would keep the 9<sup>th</sup> grade program, as is, with the same curriculum
- The transition group (8<sup>th</sup> grade) would come to their regular Faith Ways class on Wednesday evenings and then attend 4 mini-retreats on Sunday afternoons from 3-5:30.
- The retreat held at the Rockin' C Ranch would include both 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation students.
- During this year, this Confirmation group would be a very large one.

Kelly reported that this year there were 60-80 students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation session this year. About 30 students attend the High School session, and this is the highest number to attend in some time. The Junior High 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment ranges from 100-120 students this year.

Kelly indicated that for the High School students it was important to offer them choices. Expansion of the program and giving the students options might offer a solution to keeping our high school population involved in our church and its Youth Ministry.

### Time Changes to Faith Formation

Beth indicated after continued observations and recommendations made by the Parking/Access and Space Subcommittees she is proposing elimination of Sunday Faith Formation, and additions to Faith Formation sessions on other weekdays.

This proposal would have positive impact to the parish. Some of these areas would include:

- Parking/traffic problems—elimination of Sunday Faith Formation would provide the easiest and most cost efficient solution to these problems

- Possibilities for other classes such as High School or Middle School bible study, RCIA Family Sessions.
- The emphasis on Sundays would be on the Sunday Liturgy, not Faith Formation.
- There would no longer be time constraints on the Mass. Instead, a mass could be extended if the need arose.
- Promotes intergenerational, lifelong catechesis by providing opportunities for other “faith formation” programs, such as scripture study group, “returning Catholics group”, special needs, Family-RCIA, and other programs.
- More time for community building through sharing donuts, coffee, and time together.
- Challenges entire parish to find more ways for intentional catechesis

Drawbacks of a weekday-only Faith Formation schedule include:

- Inconvenient for some family schedules
- May lose some wonderful volunteers due to time constraints-try to provide other opportunities for catechesis
- Commitment of coming to OLOL twice a week, instead of once

Beth indicated that even though there were drawbacks, solutions could be offered. Those that could not juggle a weekday Faith Formation time would be offered a home-study program if they were interested. The Faith Formation office would work with the families who were interested to ensure that the needs of the family were met in this program. Our Faith First curriculum is actually geared towards home-study, and is a great asset to faith learning experiences at home. As well, volunteers who were only able to teach on Sundays would now have open opportunities for scripture study, family RCIA, or volunteering for the Special Sacramental programs which would be offered only 4 times per year. Though parishioners would be asked to commit to traveling to OLOL twice a week, this would provide more time to build community with one another.

Beth discussed that she did consider elimination of only the 11:00 Faith Formation session. The lack of cleared volunteers, tardiness of volunteers and students (due to lack of parking and traffic congestion), and the conflict of mass times with class times simply did not allow this session to continue.

Offering only one session at 9:15 on Sundays would not meet the needs of the surplus of parishioners who prefer this time.

A sample schedule for Faith Formation sessions during the 2007-2008 school year include:

Monday        5:00-6:00  
                   6:30-7:30

Wednesday   4:00-5:00  
                   5:30-6:30  
                   7:00-8:00 (this is a possible time that could run concurrently with the middle-school Faith Formation, ONLY if the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade program was able to move off-site to a leased site.

Faith Formation sessions would begin:

Monday, September 17, 2007 through April 28, 2008—27 sessions

Wednesday, September 19, 2007 through April 30, 2008—26 sessions

If we had classes on Sundays, they would begin:

Monday, September 16 through April 27, 2008—25 sessions

\*\* Sunday Sacramental Sessions would be on the following weekends:

Sunday, September 16, 2007, 3:00-5:30

Sunday, December 9, 2007, 3:00-5:30

Sunday, February 10, 2008, 3:00-5:30

Sunday, March 2 or 9, 2008, 3:00-5:30

\*\* This schedule is tentative upon approval by Father Bob.

Beth indicated that the nursery would be available on Wednesdays for volunteers who needed child-care. Beth also suggested that if Sunday Faith Formation were eliminated, it might be possible to begin Pre-K and/or Kindergarten Faith Formation during the 10:30 mass on Sundays (ages 3-5).

Council members agreed that it was important to get feedback from parishioners regarding possible changes to Faith Formation. During the next month council members will take time to listen to input and offer clarification if needed. The Town Hall Meeting will offer a great opportunity for explanation of questions or concerns. The PPC will review all feedback and input during the May Council meeting.

#### Town Hall Meeting, Subcommittee Report

Lorraine Chambers reported the following for the Town Hall Meeting, schedule for April 29, 3:00 PM:

- A flyer for the meeting will be placed in the bulletin the weekends of April 15 & 21. Subcommittee members will place these in the bulletins.
- Posters will be displayed upstairs in the entrance/exit areas of the Sanctuary, and downstairs in the Holy Family Center to advertise the event.
- All PPC members should report to the HFC at 2:00 the day of the event to help set up.
- There will be no tables in the Holy Family Center this day. Chairs will be set up in “meeting format”.

The Junta Parroquial Subcommittee met on March 20 to finalize the meeting’s agenda and determine last minute needs for the meeting. Subcommittee members present included Jose Rodriguez, Rosalba Hernandez, Yolanda Rodriguez, and Tony Acuna. The Junta Parroquial will take place on April 15 after the 12:15 mass in the Holy Family Center. Approximately 300 flyers were passed out on Sunday, April 1. The subcommittee plans to pass out flyers after the Easter Sunday as well. Posters will be placed at strategic locations in the Church. Julie Dulac was invited to the Junta Parroquial to be introduced as the PPC Chairperson. Entertainment for the children will be provided. Three to four cleared adults

would be needed to assist with this event. Additional help is needed with serving food. Light snacks such as sandwiches, and chips will be served.

Julie Dulac, Bob Guzik, Karen Moss, and Nicholas Alberts agreed to attend and will also help with the children's entertainment. In addition Bill Stewart, and Dan Muckensturm will assist as needed with food, etc. Father Bob approved the proposed agenda for this event.

#### Space, Subcommittee Report

Yolanda Rodriguez reported that the Space Subcommittee attended the Finance Council meeting to present their findings and investigations. Short-term and long-term solutions were presented. As well, the subcommittee recommended that members of the Finance Council speak with Heritage Christian Academy regarding options for the facility. (See March 18 PPC minutes for more details on these options.)

#### Access/Parking, Subcommittee Report

The Parking and Access Subcommittee reported it met on March 29. Subcommittee members present included Bill Stewart, Tony Acuna, Norm Brennecke, and James Dulac. During the meeting, discussion took place regarding the presentation made by the Space Subcommittee at the Finance Council meeting. Discussion revolved around the possible use of HCA's facilities to alleviate OLOL's current parking, classroom and recreation space deficiencies. The subcommittee also reviewed information obtained from the Church office and the City including SH 205 plans, Damascus Road plans, a 2003 property survey and other plats. Several issues were raised while reviewing these documents.

1. A memo from the City of Rockwall states that any improvements to properties using Damascus would trigger the City's requirement to complete Damascus Road at our expense. Questions were raised regarding what type of improvements on either HCA or OLOL property would trigger the Damascus issue. The City's stance on Damascus may severely restrict OLOL's future actions that do not include access improvements.
2. Potential alternate access routes were discussed. Further research into each potential route will necessitate contact with adjacent property owners and the committee will only do so if directed to. To facilitate discussions with the Council, and other entities if necessary, the committee intends to prepare a simple exhibit that shows possible access routes and identifies positive and negative aspects, including a very preliminary cost associated with each.
3. The proposed Damascus Road realignment at SH 205 will provide a dedicated left turn lane for traffic turning from Damascus to go north on 205. It may be worth asking the City to add a dedicated right turn lane for traffic turning to go south on 205 from Damascus. The cost should not be too great (<\$25K) and may be worth offering to pay for to help with the exiting traffic going south on 205.

The subcommittee reported that action items included:

1. Contact the City regarding the addition of a right-turn-only lane to the proposed Damascus realignment. Find out if the City would consider it and what their cost would be.

2. Prepare an exhibit showing possible alternate access routes, rough cost estimates and positive and negative aspects of each.

#### Pastoral Planning, Subcommittee Report

Father Bob indicated that members of the Pastoral Planning Subcommittee currently included Julie Dulac and Karen Moss, both representing the PPC, Lupe Martinez, representing the Finance Council, and Maria Dempsey, representing the Staff.

#### Ministry Liaison Reports

Karen Stonecipher gave a report regarding the Faith Formation ministry. She passed along areas of concern and proposed solutions to concerns that had been suggested by Beth Wright, Faith Formation Director.

Council members discussed the supply ordering process. The Council recommended that there be one person in charge of ordering supplies for the parish to implement the best possible purchase-order system.

#### Ash Wednesday, 2008

Council members reported that parishioners had not given feedback to the tentative Ash Wednesday schedule for 2008. A suggestion was made to reiterate and publish the ideas from the March PPC meeting in April meeting notes. In doing this, parishioners would be encouraged to give input and ideas regarding this schedule.

#### **The Council proposed the following schedule for Ash Wednesday, 2008:**

**6:30 AM—Bilingual Mass**

**12:00 PM—English Mass**

**4:00 PM—Faith Formation sponsored Liturgy of the Word/Distribution of Ashes (English)**

**6:00 PM—English Mass**

**8:00 PM—Liturgy of the Word/Distribution of Ashes (Spanish)**

(See March 18 PPC minutes for discussion regarding this Ash Wednesday schedule)

#### Comments by Father Bob

Father Bob reported that the Center for Ministry Development will house their Institute for Lifelong Catechesis at the University of Dallas. OLOL will be one of four lab parishes (including Mary Immaculate in Farmer's Branch, St. Mark's in Plano, and St. Anne's in Coppell) to participate in the program. This will have an impact on the Intergenerational Catechesis/Lifelong Catechesis program at OLOL. Our parish will have the opportunity to utilize persons from the university to assist with specifics of the program. Possible grant money could be used to fund areas in the program.

#### Concerns of Parishioners

A parishioner was concerned about the possibility of moving Faith Formation from Sundays. The parishioner indicated that RCIA would be at a loss on Sundays because children would not have a place to go while adults attended classes. As well, the parishioner reported that weeknight Faith Formation sessions would be a hardship for families who were trying to maintain family time (especially with children in two different

Faith Formation programs). The parishioner gave suggestions to alternative ways to structure and run a Sunday Faith Formation program.

A Council member reported that incredible feedback was being given regarding the Why Catholic program. Groups are meeting each week, friendships and faith throughout the parish are getting stronger as a result of these meetings.

Concerns were voiced regarding the number of errors in the bulletin. Council members discussed consistency in “cutting and pasting” information to the bulletin, as well as grammar and spelling to be a priority for publishing. The Council recommended that the bulletin be put together during a weekday and the person in charge of this responsibility is well-versed in details in formatting and editing in Microsoft Word.

The parish website was discussed. Parts of the website were out of date, including Eucharistic Minister’s schedules. A suggestion was made to include PPC minutes for the last 6 months to a year on the parish website. This would allow parishioners to look back on minutes from several months prior. Given the amount of information regarding the newest subcommittees, this might be a wise addition to the website.

Anthony Delarosa, chairman of the Finance Council indicated that the collection totals were up significantly in the last few months. Members of the Finance Council and Father Bob were very pleased and grateful to members of the parish for their dedication and generosity. PPC members echoed this sentiment.

#### PPC/FC Hospitality Schedule for April

The Parish Council and the Finance Council will host hospitality on April 22, 2007. Father Bob reported that serving cake and preparing coffee would be involved because of the First Communion reception. Lorraine will contact Margaret Cook to outline the specific duties during hospitality this week. The following PPC and Finance Council members volunteered to serve:

8:00 AM: Tony Acuna, Maria Dempsey, Lupe Martinez, and Karen Moss

10:30 AM: Lorraine Chambers, Brian Cullen, Anthony Delarosa, and Mary Johnson

#### Snacks/Closing Prayer for May PPC Meeting

Julie reminded Jose Rodriguez that he and Emma are assigned to snacks for the May 7 PPC meeting. As well, Bob Guzik is assigned to do a closing prayer.

#### May Agenda Items

Topics for the May PPC meeting were discussed. Priorities for this meeting include:

- Special Sacramental Programs
  - Report Concerns of Parishioners
  - Comments and Discussion
- Time Changes to Children’s Faith Formation
  - Report Concerns of Parishioners
  - Comments and Discussion
- Town Hall Meeting, Lessons Learned
  - Junta Parroquial, Lessons Learned

- Subcommittee Reports
  - Space
  - Access/Parking
  - Pastoral Planning
- Ministry Liaison Reports
- Ash Wednesday, 2008
- Building May Agenda
  - Comments by Father Bob
  - Report Concerns of Parishioners
  - PPC/FC Hospitality Schedule for May
  - June Agenda Items/May Bulletin Notes

#### April Bulletin Notes

Items for April Bulletin Notes were suggested:

- Refer parishioners to the posted minutes to learn about:
  - Possible changes in the Special Sacraments format
  - Possible changes in the children's Faith Formation schedule
  - Ash Wednesday Schedule
- May 7 PPC agenda

Jose ended the meeting with a closing prayer.