

March 13, 2017

OLS Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Joan Delaloye

Attendance: Msgr. Robert Emery, Father Rich, Sister Mary Selina, Heather Machado, Dominic Anozie, Sandra Carless, Joyce Ashurst, Ellen Wiese, Liz Petroccia, Mimi Hermann, Liz Ebert, Tom Pollard, Joan Delaloye

Absent: Marli Craig, Diana Tynan

WORD

Cluster members met to discuss follow-up on offering a marriage enrichment program for OLS married couples using the Mamre model. The program would be for couples wishing to enrich an already healthy marriage. Heather Machado reported they are exploring places to hold monthly sessions at an anticipated cost of \$35 per session for 30 or more people. Deacon Walters offered to assist but suggested this monthly fee may be expensive. Some sessions might be "pot luck" and/or offered outside to keep costs down. Deacon Walters, who is married, may conduct sessions as well as other clergy. Heather suggested that time should be set aside at each session for couples to speak privately. The *Above* restaurant in South Orange was suggested as a possible meeting venue. The cluster will continue their organizing efforts with a view to starting the program before summer. It was further suggested that ideas could be culled from pre-Cana programs and from the Archdiocese's Office of Family Life as well as from the Theology of the Body which is available as a set of CD's/DVD's comprised of three essays by Christopher West on Saint John Paul II's teaching on the human body and sexuality.

Word will host coffee and donuts on Sunday, April 2nd.

WORSHIP

The Worship cluster hosted coffee and donuts on March 5th. Twenty-seven dollars in donations were received some of which was retained for expenses. The remainder went into the poor box as Msgr. Emery suggested. It was noted that in the past as much as \$70 or \$80 was donated at the coffees to offset costs, however, donations have declined in recent years.

COMMUNITY

The Cluster is organizing an event for a group of parishioners to attend a performance of *Mary Poppins* at the Papermill Playhouse. Joan Delaloye reported that a block of 20 tickets has been reserved for OLS parishioners for the Sunday, June 11th performance at 7:00 pm. Tickets were secured at the special low rate of \$33. A flyer will be in the Sunday bulletin on April 23, 30 and May 7th. Marli Craig will send out an e-blast 1 or 2 weeks before as well. Parishioners should send the money for the tickets to OLS and Joan will bring the payment to the box office. Final payment is due to Papermill about a month before the performance

Liz Ebert, reporting for Marli, said that the St. Patrick's Day party was a great success with about 180 people attending. Final tallies are still being recorded. Those attending were of mixed ages making for a nice blend of school families and children and older parishioners. The face painters reportedly did a great job. A few attendees stated that they couldn't see the children who were performing the Irish dances because they danced on the gym floor rather than on the stage. Sister Mary Selina said that they couldn't use the stage because props were on the stage for the school play. Fortunately, all the children in the audience could easily see the dancers since they sat on the floor directly in front of the dancers.

Msgr. Emery stated there will be a "welcome" for new parishioners in St. Joseph's Hall immediately after the 5:30 pm Mass on Saturday, March 25th. Pizza will be provided. Council members are welcomed to attend but should inform Msgr. Emery if they plan to attend. Msgr. Emery said OLS has 90 new families.

The Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Holy Saturday on the lawn. To make it more fun for the little ones, the eggs will be dropped near them as they were last year so they can "discover" them. Participants were disappointed last year because the Easter Bunny did not appear. The Easter Bunny costume can't be found and will be looked for.

The Community cluster will host coffee and donuts on May 7th.

SERVICE

The Service cluster hosted coffee and donuts on February 5th. Ellen Wiese said that the Food Pantry has seen a decline of 13% since January in the numbers of families coming for food unlike last summer when numbers were up. The Food Pantry is currently serving 80-90 families, previously there were 180 families. Other food pantries in the area are experiencing the same thing. The reasons are uncertain but could be related to two factors. One factor may be that families were asked to re-register by showing proof of residence. This is necessary to prevent abuse of the system (only one bag of food is to be provided per family and some families requested more) and because, MEND, which provides financial support to local pantries is required by government entities to submit documentation re existing needs. This reporting is essential and affects MEND's funding. In order to do so pantries must give this data to MEND. At OLS, families were given six opportunities to provide proof of residency and were turned away if they did not do so. A second factor may be fear of consequences by some families if they are undocumented.

MEND recently gave financial assistance to the OLS food pantry. Other assistance came from a meet and mix event sponsored by SOMA as well as a contribution of \$2,100 from Stop and Shop shoppers. This grocery chain, in an effort to be more community minded, had asked shoppers for donations over the recent holiday period.

Liz Petroccia discussed the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) which is hosting two homeless families in St. Joseph's Hall during the week of 3/12/17 through

3/18/17. Because of the impending snow storm only those volunteers who can walk to OLS will be there to provide assistance and company for families as well as other tasks. The IHN team has all the groceries needed and the Food Pantry will provide assistance as needed.

Msgr. Emery reported that the Peace and Justice committee has announced that a Syrian family, approved and vetted through Catholic Charities, will be coming to South Orange and is in need of assistance. Further information on how parishioners can help will be in the Sunday bulletin and sign-up sheets for various volunteer services will be in the church vestibule.

Msgr. Emery indicated that Diana Tynan, who could not attend this meeting, said that Bingo night is set for April 1st at 6 PM in the gym. The last Bingo night attracted 100 people many of whom were from outside of the parish. Cost is \$30. Flyers will be in the bulletin.

Finally, Msgr. Emery asked each cluster to begin thinking about one goal they will focus on for next year and come prepared to discuss that goal at the Council's next and last meeting before summer on May 8th.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 8, 2017 at 7:30 pm