Chelmsford Catholic Collaborative

Pastoral Council Meeting

March 4th 2018

The meeting was held at the new parish center at Saint Mary’s and called to order at 7:10 pm

Role call of council members:

Angie McMaster (co-chair)    Ray Wagner    Jessica Hagg (youth)
Cliff Mann (co-chair)        Chickie Rigazio    Paul Therrien
Father Brian Mahoney         Paul Sidari      Rachel Beechin (youth)
Laura Conte (absent)         Scott Davidson    Julianna Magbonzi (absent)
Matthew Larson (youth)       Julie Seitter (absent)    Karen Drake (absent)
Matthew Pontbriant (youth) (absent)    Lori McDonald    Laura Zatta (absent)
Peter Lando                 Ross Drew       Mike Condor

1) The meeting began with an opening prayer led by Father Brian.

2) The group reviewed and approved the February meeting minutes.

3) The best Lent ever program was the first item to be discussed on the agenda. As reported during the last meeting, Father Brian had purchased the internet based learning program called ‘formed’ at a cost of $900. This on-line service provides spiritual movies, reflections, daily emails, etc and had already been used for baptismal preparation. Informational cards were distributed during Ash Wednesday at both parishes during Mass. The question was asked as to how many parishioners have signed up for this program so far as it appears that some had a hard time putting in the password. Father Brian said he would ask Christine Trznadel to look into this.

4) Next on the agenda was a question, “Can those who contribute to the offertory online stop receiving the paper envelopes package which costs around $4 to $7 to print and distribute to each household?” Father Brian said all that parishioners have to do is call the office and they will call the printer to have them removed from the mailing list.

5) Cliff asked if a St. Vincent De Paul collection box could be added at St. Mary’s Parish center similar to Saint Johns? Father Brian advised Cliff to contact Paul Firicano.

6) Due to Laura Zatta not being present for personal reasons, it was asked that we keep her in our prayers.

7) Father Brian mentioned that the canceling of the 5:00 Mass at St. Johns during the summer months may occur if we remain to have less than four priests.

8) During this annual Catholic appeal time of year it was asked how the financial contributions goals of each parish are set. Father Brian explained briefly how this is done. There is a ‘goal’ and ‘assessment’ figure. The ‘assessment’ is set to a lower amount than the ‘goal’ and is how the ‘rebate’ amount sent back to each parish is determined.

9) Council members were then invited to continue to share what their thoughts were on 3rd chapter of the book the ‘Four signs of a Dynamic Catholic’. Below are a few comments.

Paul Therrien started the discussion stating we should celebrate our humanity via the good things we do with our own ‘free will’.
Scott then stated that when we identify individual events within our daily lives, look to see what God is inviting us to.
Angie added that when challenging young children, direct them to look and see that God is in everything.
Chickie shared a situation going on with her son as he was looking for another job due to what he felt his currently employer was doing in an unethical / dishonest way. He had to ask himself, “What is the meaning of work? Is it about money? No, it is about honesty and integrity.”

Ray brought up his experiences with ‘relativism’ within his household. He sees how influenced the outside world has on his children which does bring a twisted sense of what is right and wrong. What our secular society is ‘accepting’ as the norm should not lead to judging others. We need to love the sinner, not the sin.

Scott had some concern in that sometimes we do not always know how to express ourselves to others. Father Brian reinforced that sometimes it is not always about getting the church teachings 100% accurate but more about getting others to think about what they may need to change in their own lives. Ross then added that the challenge sometimes is not how to talk to others but to get them attentive enough to hear what is being said.

Angie said that planting a seed is sometimes all it takes. It may take a little while to sink in but hopefully it eventually does. She followed this up by looking for ways in trying to get others to read 5 pages of a Catholic supported book daily. The ‘Forms’ program mentioned earlier is one way.

Father Brian responded that it would be great to get people to read 5 pages per day but ‘reading’ is becoming a lost art. Due to advances in technology we have become a post literate culture. When going to Mass, sitting there and listening to the readings is better than following them in the missalette. Reading the Bible outside of Mass should always be encouraged.

Pete followed up with examples he does with his family and co-workers when it comes to gospel readings and biblical passages. We should not hide who were are especially when we are in the presence of ‘silent’ Catholics.

Mike pointed out the challenge at times of trying to find the proper time with others when trying to bring up a point.

Cliff and Ross feel as teachers of religion, their experience of concepts sinking in with students is better when there are activities rather than just lectures followed by questions.

The group discussed that another approach to suggest reading with others is to a set amount of time (ex: 15 minutes per day) instead of a set number of pages. Father Brian said that 15 minutes represents only 1% of our day.

Another way to get more people interested and engaged in their religion is to encourage them to look at the bulletin for events they can attend and participate in to during weekday evenings. There are quite a bit of interesting topics that are being discussed and taught within both parishes.

Father Brian recommended that when we approach others as to why we believe in something the church teaches, don’t so much about why. People can usually figure it out for themselves and if not, they will become aware of the answer when they attend church. Fear of the ‘truth’ is something they may not want to admit to themselves.

This discussion will continue with chapter 4 at the next meeting

10) Round Table topics of discussion

Lori McDonald made a book recommendation called ‘Same kind of different as me’.

Then Peter followed up with a book called ‘The Fourth Cup’.

Ray mentioned how much of a success the women’s ACTS retreat was the previous weekend, even for him.

Mike mentioned that the donut issue at St. Johns Sunday morning 8:30 Mass has been resolved. He also mentioned some ideas about distribution of Ashes for next year’s Ash Wednesday.

Scott commented that there is a meditation for Lent section in the ‘Formed’ package that was very good!

Rachel asked about leaks in heating system in St Johns. Father Brian stated that the system is ok for upcoming events.

Jessica mentioned how beneficial the ‘Lift’ event was at Saint John’s a couple week ago. She mentioned how much it affected a young girl she invited to go with her.

Father Brian asked everyone to start thinking about nominations for the upcoming Parish council election that will be held in a couple of months.

He also mentioned that the Mass schedule survey study was still being analyzed. Depending on how many priests we will continue to have serve the collaborative the Mass schedule could eventually change to: two Saturday afternoon masses, four Sunday morning Masses and one Sunday evening Mass.
Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm

Next meeting April 8th, 2018 at Saint Mary’s new parish center – 7 pm

Peter will present closing prayer

Respectfully submitted

YBIC

Ray Wagner