

St. Augustine Parish Pastoral Council Minutes
April 30, 2007

Attendees: Deacon Joe Bichotte, Ellen Byrnes, Bill Cahill, Pat Conway, Gladys Cruz, Gillian Frasier, Sister Ellen Glavey, Tim Hurley, Richard Lewis, Eileen McHugh, Rosario Paleaz, Reneida Reyes, Michele Somerville

Follow Up from Parish Assembly

Pat began the meeting by thanking everyone for their hard work on the very successful assembly. Sister Ellen said the feedback she's heard so far has been very positive and she has some good photos of the event if they prove useful as we move forward planning and publicizing future steps.

Everyone shared their impressions of the evening – our overall feeling was that it was a great turnout and an engaged group of people who are, on the whole, happy with the parish. People were very vocal and invested, our diversity really showed through, and people who are interested in the parish really connected with each other. It was also a nice opportunity for people who are very involved with the life of worship but less involved with parish life to get to connect with others from the parish.

Some concerns that arose were the lack of younger people in attendance, as well as the small turnout from the Spanish community. Rosario observed that the assembly wasn't publicized as well at the Spanish masses – there weren't many announcements and she felt the Spanish community in general didn't understand as well what it was all about. But, she said that those who came were engaged and really liked it. Deacon Joe said the Haitian community enjoyed it very much and many asked if we're going to do it again.

Richard mentioned that people have already asked him about follow up, so we may want to communicate with the parish about it sooner than later. Pat also let us know that the sign in sheet was missing, but she thought Sharon was at the door with it, so she would give her a call and see if they could track it down.

Review of Cards from Parish Assembly

Pat had compiled the responses from many of the index cards collected at the assembly and we went through these to pick out some underlying themes that seem to be strengths, issues of interest, and common concerns about the parish. Some themes that emerged were:

- Three major positive characteristics that people point to about the parish are its uniqueness, its diversity, and its community.
- In general, the comments about worship were very positive – the homilies in particular and the leadership of Father Bob and the other religious and lay leaders.
- People love our diversity, but many mentioned that the different groups don't really talk to one another. How do we figure out a way to be one community while continuing to value our differences?
- Many are concerned that our parish may be out of step with the universal Church. People like our tolerance, but are concerned it may not stay that way (i.e. they support ministries to gays and lesbians but are not sure if those may be in jeopardy).
- People feel there's a racial divide in the parish addition to the language divisions.

These were initial impressions from the already transcribed cards. Rosario, Deacon Joe and Mozart will transcribe the Spanish and Haitian cards so we can add those to our results.

One-to-One Conversations

Pat is also assembling feedback from the One-to-One conversations and asked that anyone who has not given her an update on these to please do so.

We briefly discussed whether or not we should be continuing to pursue One-to-Ones, and if there is some way to let people know that we are still available to talk but that we don't know who hasn't been covered. We thought announcing this at a mass might be a good idea.

Mission Statement

We read the existing parish Mission Statement, and decided that it could use some revising. Although there was nothing in it we disagreed with strongly, it seemed a bit general to encompass our unique community. We arrived at this draft:

We are the Church of Saint Augustine, a community of Christian Disciples in the Roman Catholic tradition, gathered in worship since 1870. Trusting in God and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we embrace our diversity and witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ through education, fellowship, service, commitment to the arts and to social justice, and faithful stewardship of our gifts.

This draft is still in process and we will continue to refine it and review it at our next meeting.

Follow Up/Next Steps

We ended the meeting by discussing how to best follow up from the assembly and get ready to move into the next phase of the planning process. We discussed the possibility of putting an insert in the parish bulletin as a summary of what we've gotten from the assembly and the One-to-Ones. We could do a few pages, including a few pictures, and have something ready to put in the bulletin the weekend before our open meeting in June, encouraging people to come and participate in the process.

At the June 11 meeting, we will work on next steps, including deciding whether we need work groups to meet over the summer on some of the continuing planning tasks. Our material is supposed to be turned in to the Diocese by the end of November so we want to make sure we're on track for that. We will also discuss whether or not we will need to have an additional assembly in the fall – possibly a half hour or so meeting after a group mass.

The next regular Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be on Monday, June 11th. This meeting is open to all parish members.