
STATE OF THE PARISH DISCUSSION

Discussion Summary

Date of Discussion: April 27th, 2016

Location: Parish Fellowship Hall

Panel Members: Fr. Dominic Petan (Parish Administrator)
Mr. Donald Zehner (Chair of the Finance Council)

Participation: Approximately 30 members of the parish

Summary:

- Fr. Dominic welcomed everyone and opened with a prayer.
- Fr. Dominic offered some opening comments about “state of the parish” report, specifically commenting on the sacramental statistics.
- Don Zehner commented on the financial report, commenting on its uniqueness given the events of 2015 (specifically the closing of the school).
- The floor was opened to questions and comments.
- The initial question requested more information on parish statistics (such as, the number of registered families and whether or not the trend is going up or down).
- This continued into a discussion about sharing/communicating information, including:
 - Requests for greater transparency about activities and finances
 - Inquiries about how new parishioners come to know what activities/ministries are available in the parish
 - Introducing the idea of a “welcome wagon” for new parishioners
 - Ideas such as: having a better populated website that is regularly updated, including
 - Names and photos of pastoral and finance council members
 - Contact information included with each ministry/activity description
 - News about happenings in the parish
- One parishioner spoke at length about his continued frustration with the Bishop and his staff both for how the crisis that led to the closing of the school was handled and the type and amount of support (or lack thereof) our parish received from the diocesan level.
 - Frustrated that it seems like, while the diocese touts that we are united as the Local Church, in practice we are more “congregational”: with each parish left to their own devices when a crisis occurs.
 - Frustrated that we are reimbursing the diocese for the overpayments from the school voucher program.
 - Suggested that we not repay anything and that we consider not participating in Fruitful Harvest this year to let the Bishop know how upset we are.

- Others countered his opinion that All Saints is entirely inculpable in the situation and turned the discussion towards our ongoing plan for religious education (faith formation) going forward.
- One parishioner expressed concern that while there were 40+ First Communions, there were only 9 seniors in high school who were enrolled in our faith formation program.
 - He would like to see our plan moving forward for how we are going to keep our parish youth involved in faith formation programs throughout their years with us.
 - He also acknowledged the role that the parents of our youth play in keeping the youth in faith formation programs and would like to see us focus on helping parents grow in faith.
 - These points were supported by others in attendance.
- Another parishioner suggested bringing back a “youth-oriented” Mass as a way of generating excitement for the faith among the youth; as well as the need for a full-time youth minister.
- The conversation once again turned back to communication from the parish administration to the parish at large and a final request for more detailed/regular financial reports was made.

Summary of Fr. Dominic’s comments (both during and at the end of the discussion):

- He emphasized that there had been a lot of work done in the past year on the parish website and that much of the requested information was already up there. He acknowledged that there was still plenty of room to grow and update.
- He acknowledged that communication has been lacking, especially during this transition (both of closing the school and of having a new parish administrator).
 - Commented on the challenge of finding which medium is most effective in reaching the parish at large due to the limited resources available for working on communication.
 - Commented on his hope to roll out some different ways to improve both the quality and quantity of information that is shared with the parish at large.
 - Confirmed that some of the efforts are already being worked on and will be rolled out soon (for example: a booklet for new parishioners listing the activities/ministries of the parish along with contact information and duplication on the website).
- He acknowledged the need to focus more on “whole family faith formation”, instead of each individual member in parts. He acknowledged that Pope Francis’ latest document, “The Joy of Love”, will give us some direction for implementing this.
- He commented that the Pastoral Leadership Team continues their efforts to help define our parish priorities for the next 3-5 years and that these are starting to solidify. As they do, the parish at large can expect to begin seeing a flurry of communication regarding “where we are going” and “how we plan to get there”.
- Fr. Dominic wrapped up the discussion by saying how edified he was by the frank and open discussion; and that he hopes to do this on semi-annual basis as a way of keeping communication paths open with the parish at large.
- He thanked everyone for coming and offered a prayer and a blessing to close the meeting.