

**Ss. Maria and Isidore Torribia Planning Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

Monday, April 29, 2019 – 6:30 pm  
St. Joseph's, Campbell

Members Present: Fr. Pat Connor, Suzanne Krebs, Deacon Doug Farwell, Peter Olausson, Anna Bauer, Kathy Bailey, Theresa White, Roger Parulski, Mark Houck, Greg Cacace, Nicolette Butler, Arthur Jones

Members Absent: Joseph Crance, Janette Malavet, Kevin Krebs

Others Present: Karen Rinefierd – Resource, Planning Consultant for Diocese of Rochester

I. Welcome / Introductions / Organization

- Opening Prayer – Father Pat led an opening prayer.
- Welcomed Art Jones, new member to the planning committee
- Kathy Bailey was selected to record minutes for today.

II. Questions / Thoughts / Concerns Since Last Meeting

- What role does this committee serve and where do we take the lead? Areas of need and discussion centered around the financial crisis, revitalization of parish involvement, increasing attendance, evangelization efforts, mass schedules, etc.
- Town Hall Meetings:
  - Very low attendance at the meetings. (Combined Town Hall meeting only had 42 people outside of committee members attend.) Do people care?
  - Very little improvement in mass attendance and/or collections since the Town Hall Meetings. In fact, there was a significant drop in both attendance and collections at St. Catherine's.
  - There appears to be negative response to the Town Hall Meetings. Discussion centered on trying to identify causes/perspectives for this response:
    - Still frustrations about the Mass Schedule. Lack of follow-up after the meeting held in the Fall.
    - Attendees wanted to discuss / talk / vent at the first informational meetings and did not get that opportunity.
    - Concern that the setting of being in church limited free expression of opinions.
    - No instant answers offered.
    - Mistrust of committee, staff, diocese, etc.
    - Territorialism
- Morale:
  - Communications to Committee Members, Father Pat, Deacon Doug, and Parish Staff indicate that there is an overall low morale within the parish for a number of reasons, both known and unknown. This needs to be addressed in order to revitalize the parish in general.
  - How do we address the mistrust to help people see that the committee or staff are not the enemy?
  - How do we battle the old demons: dislike of the diocese, separation among churches (territorialism about how do I preserve my worship site)?

- Move forward as a whole parish (Ss. Isidore and Maria Torribia) while focusing on revitalizing all worship sites (St. Catherine, St. Joseph, and St. Stanislaus).
- Do people feel welcome within our parish at all of our sites? How can we improve this?
  - Turn and introduce yourselves / welcome neighbors at beginning of Mass.
  - Welcome / Greet everyone at the door.
  - Build community.
- Parish Mission Statement – Are we evangelizing?
- Financial Crisis:
  - Parish Appeal / Fundraising letter – Peter gave updates on the process of putting the letter together. (#10 envelopes with the letter and donation form, #9 addressed envelope) Who are we sending it to? How many are we sending out?
  - Should we do a Stewardship Campaign? Holy Family Catholic Community of Wayland and St. Mary’s in Watkins Glen both completed successful campaigns. Anna will get the information from Wayland to review. There are multiple companies out there that help with these campaigns at different prices. Wayland may have done theirs with Our Sunday Visitor and Suzanne believes Watkins Glen did one with Cunneen. She recommends this process every three years.
  - Recent article in the Star-Gazette regarding “The Perfect Storm”.
  - Per Peter, collections this weekend were approximately \$4300 including the second collection for Catholic Mission of approx. \$700.
  - Altar and Rosary Society at St. Stan’s held a Polish Dinner and Basket Raffle. Donated funds to the parish.
  - CMA is still in progress.
- Revitalization models:
  - Deacon Doug shared ideas from the book, Rebuilt, which details a struggling church in Timonium, MD that successfully revitalized under the leadership of Father Michael White and Tom Corcoran. Improvements included attendance at mass increased from 1,000 to 4,000, 25% of their parishioners volunteer within the parish. Deacon Doug attended a seminar there and he felt that there were good ideas for us to explore to increase fundraising, volunteerism, etc. They did utilize multiple greeting ideas and welcomers/ushers. Rebuilt 2: Tools for Rebuilding is also now published.
- Mass schedule:
  - If we are limited by the amount of masses we are permitted to have, what can we do? What tweaks can we make to provide the best possible mass schedules for our parish?
- Leadership:
  - We must make sure that we implement plans and follow through.
  - Need to share follow-up in a timely fashion. (i.e.: Mass schedule meeting report should have been done before Thanksgiving. This may have contributed to lack of interest/attendance at the planning committee’s town hall meetings.)

### III. Strategies / Ideas / Priorities

- Before this meeting, planning committee members reviewed suggestions from parishioners. Each came to the meeting with their top 5 strategies that should be used in the immediate future. These were shared and discussed.
- Brainstormed priorities and categorized strategies.
- Discussions of past practices and possible new practices.
- Karen will organize these and we will move forward at the next meeting to set specific goals and action plans. (See list of compiled top 5 suggested strategies.)

### IV. Moving Forward

- Appeal letter: work to get the letter out as soon as possible. Theresa volunteered to purchase the envelopes needed, with Roger contributing. Peter will keep us apprised of whatever else will be needed to complete this goal.
- Communication: This committee reiterated our commitment to regular two-way communication with parishioners. We have held town meetings, solicited input, communicated via the bulletin and website. We need to continue to look for ways to ensure communication is a priority. What do we need to share and how?

V. Next Meeting

- Next Planning Council meeting will be Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 6:30 pm at St. Joe's.

VI. Closing

- Closing Prayer: Our Father
- Meeting closed at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Bailey