



Pastoral Council Meeting
February 12, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

The Trinity Cluster Pastoral Council met on February 12, 2015 at St. Patrick's in Monona. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Fr. Nils Hernandez, Wayne McGlaughlin, Dave Koopman, Ron Berns, Jennifer Benda, Deb Smith, Ashley Simon, Lilia Tinderholt, and Julie Heitland. Absent was JoAnn Lang.

Ashley Simon led the opening prayer with a Night Prayer to the Trinity. The minutes from the November and December meetings were read and approved with motions by Ashley Simon and Ron Berns.

A discussion of October mass counts over the past five years was held. Fr. Nils had data from the past 5 years and 1995. The formula for determining averages is set by the Archdiocese of Dubuque. It is difficult to get an accurate count by parish when you are part of a cluster as people travel to the mass and location that is most convenient for them. The findings showed that there has been a decline in the number of people in the cluster over the past five years. Ron Berns made a suggestion that we try a different way of counting to see if we can be more accurate. A piece of paper and pencil will be placed at the end of the pew. The person on the end will count the number of people in the row, write down that number and hand it to the usher. The counts will be tabulated by someone else at a later time. Wayne wondered if we should not do this for an entire year to get an accurate picture. A question was asked if the mass time might also factor into the counts at each location. Another option would be to do a count every time the mass rotation occurs. The national average for mass attendance is low – about 25% attending on a regular basis. The Trinity Cluster falls in about the same area so we are in line with the national average.

Based on the attendance numbers, we may need to take a look at the number of masses that are being offered each weekend. There may be a need to consolidate in some areas. We also looked at the 1995 attendance numbers that were before we became the Trinity Cluster. At that time St. Bridget was sharing with Clermont and some of the members may have continued to go that direction. A discussion was held about registration as there are some people/families who are attending mass in the cluster on a regular basis but are not registered with the cluster office. Fr. Nils stated that it is not mandated be registered with the cluster. His job is to take care of all the souls in the area.

The council will continue to look at the numbers over the course of the year. This will drive our discussion and decisions on where we want to go and setting our goals for the future. The pastoral council is the advisory board as visionaries to the future and make recommendations to the Pastor. Following a lengthy discussion Ron Berns made a motion to conduct the parish count with the person at the end of each row counting how many are there, writing it down on a piece of paper, and handing the number to the usher to be tallied. Lilia Tinderholt seconded the motion. This will be used with the next count. Motion passed.

The remainder of the meeting was spent looking at the Cluster Constitution line by line. A discussion was had on certain parts for clarity on wording. Some of

the wording will stay as is due to the correct canonical wording per the law. Fr. Nils made the updates to the document as the discussion was being held. A fresh copy will be provided to each member once the document is complete. We completed the Preamble and Articles I through VIII.

From there we moved into the Bylaws section and completed Article I on Membership. We currently do not have an official cluster finance council. St. Patrick's Financial Council is acting in that role at the current time. All parishes need to have a representative on the council to represent the parish and another from the finance council. Currently, St. Mary's does not have a representative attending the cluster meetings acting on behalf of the finance council for their parish. The cluster council and the finance councils are required to meet on a regular basis. The cluster finance council would report to the pastoral council as needed at the regular monthly meeting. They could meet before the pastoral council if needed. A definition was given for ecclesiastical penalty when having to remove someone from a position on the council. The definition that will be used is the one provided by Canon Law.

Dave Koopman made a motion that we stop the discussion at this point and continue with Article II at the March meeting due to time. Deb Smith seconded the motion. Dave Koopman led the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Lilia Tinderholt will provide the opening and closing prayer for the March 12 meeting at 7:00 p.m. at St. Patrick's in Monona.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Heitland, Secretary