



Trinity Cluster

Cluster Pastoral Council Meeting -- October 9, 2014

Members present: Fr. Nils Hernandez, Ron Berns – St. Patrick Finance Council; Wayne McGlaughlin – St. Patrick Council; Dave Koopman – St. Bridget Finance Council; Julie Heitland – St. Bridget Council; Ashley Simon—St. Mary Council; Deb Smith – Cluster Liturgy Committee representative; Jennifer Benda – Cluster Faith Formation Commission representative; Lilia Tinderholt – Cluster Social Justice representative; JoAnne Lang – Cluster Stewardship Committee representative.

Fr. Nils opened the meeting with a reading of the Rich Young Man. We reflected on some questions based on that reading. The list of hopes and dreams included: passing the torch of our faith to the next generation (children, grandchildren, Faith Formation students); to serve for the glory of God; to be a good person and share with others; to have a healthy family and community; freedom to do as “I” wish; to be a good example for my family and prepare for eternal life; and to be happy. Our second question was to define our role as a member of the cluster pastoral council, which include: to represent St. Pat’s and the cluster as a whole; to help lead the cluster forward; to be the voice of parishioners; to report back to the council what decisions were made in various committee meetings; to welcome others by making them feel needed and appreciated; to listen and learn; an awareness of our responsibility to social justice; and not sure of my role. The third question that was discussed was why we are here. We are here because: the pastor asked me to sign a paper to represent my parish; to do my part for the cluster to the best of my ability; for improvement of the liturgy and continued growth in my faith; to contribute to the good of the cluster; an active old timer who wants the church to continue for the younger generation; want to be involved and saw a need; was strongly encouraged to say yes to the position.

Fr. Nils lead a discussion on the nature and purpose of the Cluster Pastoral Council. We are to give counsel to the pastor and be a visionary for the cluster as we move forward. Our purpose is to build an identity as a cluster who are working together not as three (3) individual parishes who share a pastor. The cluster was formed in 2003. Are we any different now than we were then? Are we still operating as the church did in the 1800’s? How do we operate as one (1) church in 2014 and move forward from this point? We need to redefine our mission and vision of the cluster and re-evaluate the document that was created for the formation of the cluster. In order to make the Trinity Cluster a true cluster and not three (3) individual parishes we need to begin to erase the boundaries that keep the churches operating as individuals. This will take many years to complete. We need to recognize and acknowledge that each parish has its own history up to this point. It is important to keep this while we move forward into making a new history as one (1) cluster. What are we lacking to make us a true cluster? Fear of losing our individual identity and ownership is one thing that is keeping the walls up between the parishes. It takes courage to consolidate churches that are all unique in their memberships. It will be painful and may lead to loss of money for a time.

As a council, we must address the questions that arise and are presented to us. We must be unified in our decisions with one (1) vision and one (1) purpose. We must stand firm when we go back to our individual parishes that we represent and share with them our decisions.

This is a new beginning for the cluster with a new pastor to lead the flock. We will move forward from this point. Regular meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month. During these meetings, the council will build on our purpose and vision to help us move forward as a unified cluster. Ashley Simon made the following motion: All cluster committee meetings will be held in a central location (Monona) unless there is a need to meet at another site. Ron Berns seconded the motion. The motion passed by consensus vote. An addendum to the motion: it will be effective immediately and is irreversible. Fr. Nils accepted the motion. It will be published in the bulletin. Our meetings will have a two (2) hour maximum limit. The council members can put any decision that is made by the pastor through an appeal process. We are a mature group of adults who will respect all points of view that are presented and maintain confidentiality.

Change needs to begin slowly and simply. Changes need to be fully explained as to why the change is being made. We want to make sure all voices are represented and heard when making a decision on change. Fr. Nils has had experience centralizing cluster meetings and offices and will work towards that with the Trinity Cluster.

Fr. Nils presented each council member with a three-ring binder to keep all papers in. He explained the items that were already in the binder. Terms of service were discussed and assigned so elections can take place when needed. Finance councils are represented the chairpersons and have voting rights. Their terms of service will be renewable each year. Committee representative terms are for one (1) year and can be renewable. They are to report to the council decisions that were made or what they are working on for the benefit of the cluster. Fr. Nils must be present for all meetings and is a member of the council until he is reassigned. Elections will be held in the spring. The following were elected to serve in the following positions: Chairperson – Wayne McGlaughlin; Vice-chairperson – Ashley Simon; Secretary – Julie Heitland.

Fr. Nils shared some information on the structure of the church as it was prior to Vatican II and after Vatican II. Prior to Vatican II it was Pray – Pay – Obey. Today all are asked to Pray but only 25% use their envelopes to Pay. Obey has been removed. How do we share our resources as a cluster? We share a pastor but is anything shared beyond that point? We want to remain territorial and continue as we have always done things. In doing so, the mission of Christ is suffering.

To prepare for our November meeting, we are to look at “A Closer Look at Writing Mission Statements” as we move towards writing one for the Trinity Cluster. Members were asked to bring samples of mission statements from other churches/clusters if they have access to them. All committees will be working on the mission statement so that everyone is working under the same statement towards the same outcome. We are also to review the original cluster constitution to assist in our work with the mission and vision of the current status of the Trinity Cluster.

Our next meeting will be November 13, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Patrick. The December meeting will include a social time.

Respectfully submitted: Julie Heitland, Secretary