

## St. Thomas More Pastoral Council Minutes

May 29, 2018

**Members Present:** Fr. Hunke, Travis Washington, Emily Boisseree, Abby Skradski, Joe Pesek, Monica Mora-Handlos, Connie Gewinner

**Members Absent:** Liz Fox, Kelly Sobetski

**Guests:** Jim Jansen, Beth Carlson, Sr. Pauline, Allan & Sharon Schumacher, Rick Fanciullo, Theresa Gunia

**Opening Prayer:** Fr. Hunke

**No Old Business**

### NEW BUSINESS

Jim Jansen and Beth Carlson were our guests this evening. Jim is the Director of the Office of Evangelization & Catechesis for the Archdiocese. Beth had worked here at St. Thomas More as DRE when Fr. Lewis was Pastor. She now works for the Archdiocese as Administrative Assistant.

Jim spoke to us about taking the parish from "Maintenance to Mission."

He introduced himself and gave us a brief background of his life and his faith journey. He then asked us to introduce ourselves. He wanted to hear our stories. He wanted to get a feel for us as a group.

He shared some statistics with us from a 2009 Study:

25% population of Douglas County are practicing Catholics

25% are Protestant or non-Catholic believers

50% profess to be nothing.

These statistics bring about the awareness of the need to evangelize. To "Ignite the Faith," to go beyond just attending weekly Mass, to know our faith, to live our faith, to share our faith. To go from "Maintenance to Mission," to recapture our faith.

There is a decline in sacramental practices. We need to do something.

We need to adapt rather than resist. Two specific points he made were:

First, to commit to reading books, to learning and studying. To raise our expectations, our knowledge, to think, to grow. He recommended the book "Forming Intentional Catholics" by Sherry Weddell.

Second, to become the best version of ourselves (taken from Matthew Kelly.) To recapture the man or woman God created us to be.

Think of what the disciples had to work with. Not much, nothing compared to what we have today. They went out to evangelize the world, why, because they were full of the Holy Spirit, they had the sacraments and the word of God. Their mission was to evangelize.

We need to prioritize adult conversion. Are we equipped to evangelize? We may have all the tools we need to evangelize but tools can't bring people to a love of Christ and the church. We, like the disciples, need to take whatever opportunity that may come our way, to listen, and share our love of our faith, our love of our God and what He has done for us. Our mission is the people who are in our area but not coming to church.

### **FOCUS ON CONVERSION!**

Fall in love with Christ and desire to know what He has to say. Focus on an encounter with Christ.

Missionary Disciples are the currency on which a church runs. There has to be more than just fulfilling our Sunday obligation and sending our kids to Catholic School. We need to know our faith, have a personal relationship with Jesus and be open to share with our families, our children, our friends and those hungry to fill the void in their life.

We are experiencing a "culture shift" at this time. We need to meet the people where they are at. Theresa Gunia, DRE for STM, shared of the need for the parents of our students to know their faith. "We need something," she pleaded. Jim emphasized the determining factor for a child to practice their faith is a devout father and devout parents who know and live their faith.

All this led to a conversation about bringing the Alpha Program to STM.

The Alpha Program is a process of conversion, fruitful ongoing conversion. It is a bridge to those wanting more out of their life. To fill the "missing void" in their life. To ignite the fire within them. The parish can do things to create a clear path along the way. We need to encounter the Lord; to want to know more about Him, to focus on conversion. The church exists to evangelize. Fr. Hunke said "yes" to starting an Alpha Program at STM. Sr. Pauline, Allan & Sharon Schmaker, Rick Fanciullo and Theresa Gunia will be on the Alpha Team.

Fr. Hunke concluded "*All this is Food for Thought*; it is a starter. "

**Closing Prayer:** Jim Jansen

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 12 at 6:30pm in the rectory.

**Respectfully submitted by Connie Gewinner**

