

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2009
Submitted by Kathleen Pfahl

Members Present: Fr. Richard, Doug, David, Peg, Suzanne, Kathleen, Debbie, Karen
Note: Meeting was led by Richard in Fran's absence.

Opening Prayer: Kathleen Pfahl

Faith Sharing: All shared their responses to the reflection question: "As we start Lent, describe some of the features of your life of faith, or your spirituality at this point in your journey: some images may come to mind, such as desert, oasis, spring, late winter, light, dark, etc. Your own images are best."

Communication Audit

Richard posed 2 questions: Will we take this on? And if so, when? Audit timeline and tasks were reviewed. Then Richard requested feedback.

Debbie expressed that after much thought, she is excited to do it. However, she's not sure it's wise both financially and with time. We already have a lot of resources in the printed bulletin, the online bulletin, the tables in the Narthex and the Parish Office, notably Liz Keuffer. Parishioners need to also take responsibility to find information. Requesting help for focus groups in the bulletin...seems if they read that, then why do we need the audit? She expressed concern that the timeline is very "crunched", noting that qualitative analysis takes a lot of time.

Kathleen agreed and felt like the upgrade to our website would help what the audit is trying to fix. It was also noted that we want to care for those who "don't ask".

Peg expressed that talking in our meeting is preaching to the choir and we see the many sides. But we also need to reach out to the marginalized. Also posed the question, "How important is this for all the time it will take?"

David repeated that we keep talking about how communication is amiss at Bellarmine. But he expressed that the communication timeline itself is good because it gives us a good idea of the scope. He gave three solution ideas...

- *What about targeting parishioners individually for feedback?* – We could create a phone bank to solicit parishioners' thoughts.
- *Could we review other churches?* – Other churches are doing good stuff too, and sometimes the best ideas are borrowed.
- *We could do targeted group emails.* – By setting up email groups (Parents of young kids / RCIA / Parishwide), and being specific in the Subject Line it could be a quick way to spark interest...and easily deleted if not.

Doug commented that the audit is a lot, but it's good to review it. He doesn't want to table it completely because then nothing gets done. Maybe doing a few small things like David talked about keeps us moving toward success. It would also put issues to rest of what we do well, and bring to light what we need to work on. He also praised Tom Schick for doing an outstanding job of outlining the audit.

Debbie shared her experience about the environmental audit. Not a lot of people participated (54), but a lot of great ideas came out of it. It was put in the bulletin and online.

Suzanne wondered that if we had 'inside' people doing the audit, would it be biased? Thinks the audit probably needs to be done at some point, concretely and visibly, so that we can say we have a good system, or what else can we do?

Richard asked, "What are the concerns being raised, that the parishioners are calling 'communication'?"

- Everyone being notified in a timely manner about deaths in the parish.
- Announcements and updates on parents/kids activities.
- People put effort into something, and then too few people respond.
- We need to solicit reasons for better communication, like an Idea Box in the bulletin, online or during announcement....and keep reminding them.

Richard requested that we keep paying attention to, "What is our mission" in regards to the audit. He repeated what we discussed and elaborated:

- I'm not hearing a ground swell for doing it.
- Too much effort on wrong issues.
- Right now it's too analytic, too many details.
- Where is the heart of the issue?
- Our mission is to be communicators.
- What have we learned so far about what is needed?
- Evangelization is communication and we need to be active in it.
- There is a mystery here that we're not quite getting at.
- Targeted email lists would be great.
 - **ToDo:** Pastor recommends that we get leverage to create targeted email lists, using the BCC blind copy function. Re. death notices, parents programs.

Karen stated that generally, we are tabling the full scope of the Communication Audit.

David said that Phil can work with Liz to extract email addresses for targeted emails and group lists.

Web Page Update

Richard gave an update that Phil Roberto and Liz have met agreeably. Phil is working on a platform now. He will present it to Liz et al. before May, 2009.

Preparation for Financial Report

Richard asked, "What would be useful to hear from the Finance Committee"? The purpose is informational, not to tell them what to spend money on.

- Have they planned for giving patterns to change, given the down economy?
- Collections vary at each Mass. Why?
- What are the different methods of collecting regularly?
- Describe auto deposit and how consistent it is. How many parishioners do it?
- What about EFT/Bank withdraws, in addition to credit cards?
- Because of the economy, are projections done beyond one year? Is there an even broader trend done?
 - Richard noted that we take past years and forecast that way. Right now, it is maintaining. It helps that our parish is diversely employed, re not a large demographic working at Ford Motor Co.)

September Retreat Review

Richard asked, "What calls out to you as to what we've done, and what we could do"?

- Karen – We have determined that we are more drawn to setting up faith sharing than communication audit.
- Doug – What about like what NPR does with Story Core? It would be a great library for Bellarmine to have...each others stories.
- Kathleen – We could archive them as MP3's online.
- Debbie – It's good to hear what staff members do, but how do we get that out to the whole parish and make it clear to all?
 - Richard – Sue has shown that she is visibly engaged in the parish. Jeff is active as well.
- David – In looking at the list from the retreat, we've had a good year. He likes the retreat and the sharing that we do. We've done good ToDo list stuff and the ebbing & flowing to move our faith forming talks forward. The Spirit has worked in these areas. We haven't missed big tasks and have done a lot to move our parish forward.
- Richard – The spirit we have been given is not the spirit of timidity.
- David – God brought us together before we even knew...and we need to have courage and faith in that.
- Suzanne – Commended Richard for his work on the Ignatian Retreat. Suggested that a family faith formation be done, that it hasn't yet.

April Meeting Note – Sue Antoinette will present at April meeting, instead of March meeting.

Final Prayer

Scribe and Lead Off Prayer for the next meeting, April 1st will be Mark Stockman. Richard suggested Wednesday, May 6th for our May Advisory Meeting.