

Bellarmino Advisory Committee Meeting Notes
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
7:00 – 9:00 PM
Alumni Conference Room

In Attendance: Fran Harmon, Karen Brandstetter, Debbie Webber, Tony Dardy, David Kitchings, Richard Bollman, Suzanne Kammer, and Doug Brausch.

Absent: Jessica Stieritz, Sally Fellerhoff, Kinny McQuade

Prayer

- David Kitchings opened with prayer.

Reflection Question

- “What new realizations or gifts have you recognized or received this Easter Season?”

Will Our Kids Have Faith

- Suzanne Kammer gave an overview of the presentation “Will Our Kids Have Faith.”
- The presentation was given by Sean Reynolds, Bellarmine parishioner and archdiocesan Director of Youth Ministry, on April 9th. (He will also be giving another presentation on April 26th that several Advisory Committee members will try to attend.)
- Mr. Reynolds’ presentation was based on a project conducted by Dr. Christian Smith from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill titled The National Study of Youth and Religion. This data resulted in a book published by Dr. Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton titled *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford, 2005).
- Suzanne gave the following key points from the presentation:
 - The project was conducted from 2001 to 2005.
 - The population consisted of 3,370 English and Spanish speaking kids aged 13 to 17 years old.
 - This study was unique in that it consisted of not only quantitative questions, but qualitative interviews with both the adolescents and their parents.
 - In the survey, 1 out of 5 kids were catholic, 86% of these Catholic kids went to public school and 9% went to Catholic school, and 50% of the kids were female.
 - Locally in Cincinnati, 2 out of 3 Catholic high school kids go to public schools, however, the vast amount of money from the archdiocese go to private Catholic schools.
 - In the study, the majority of the teenagers identified themselves as Christians.
 - Five general points were made about kids and faith today:
 - Kids primarily follow the faith practice of their parents.
 - Highly religious teenagers appear to be doing better in terms of positive life outcomes than their less religious friends.
 - Catholic kids are doing significantly worse than kids of other denominations. Mormon teenagers scored the best, followed by conservative Protestants and black Protestants.
 - Most American teenagers were found to not be very religious or spiritual. They were tolerant of faith expressions, but not interested in their own. The term used is moral therapeutic deism. Kids seek to be happy and feel good, and tolerance is a part of this.
 - Most teens are inarticulate about their faith. Catholics were particularly inarticulate about their faith.

- Today, religion is competing with other positive activities such as sports and music, however, these activities do not give the degree of moral support given by church activities,
- The decline of Catholic faith competence was attributed to the upward mobility of Catholics today, which has caused less dependence on the local Catholic community. Further, Catholic schools and CCD no longer effectively serve as primary vehicles for education, formation and ministry.
- More church staff members are needed to address these issues.
- Three legs were recommended to help a Catholic parish develop the faith of teenagers in the church:
 - A full-time youth minister,
 - A vibrant liturgy, and
 - Parental support.
- Suzanne said one theme was the Catholic Church has no clue how to minister to kids.
- The advisory group discussed if today's youth needs more access to Catholic culture.
- Several committee members with kids who have graduated high school said their kids were brought up in the Catholic church and are now focused on social justice, but are not actively participating in a Catholic Church community.
- The group discussed that parents who raised children after Vatican II gave their kids more freedom to explore and make choices about faith and were less "iron-handed" in child-rearing. However, the reliance was still put on Catholic schools to provide the "Catholic" education and faith formation.
- We briefly discussed thoughts around the age that Catholic kids received First Communion or were confirmed.

Preparations for Family Liturgy

- Suzanne gave an update on the development plans of Family Liturgy.
- The Family Mass is on track for Sunday, April 20th, although much needs to be done.
- She was concerned about the turnout for the Mass. There is much competition with soccer games and nap time for younger kids.
- Richard stated that we would learn more after two Masses.

Finance Committee Report Follow-Up

- Richard provided an overview of conversations with the Finance Committee after we received the Finance Committee presentation at the last meeting.
- A Salary Review Committee has been established to begin work on April 29th. Kathy Riga is the chair and Steve Peterson and Rick Coomes are members. This committee will do the following:
 - Review the history of staff salaries from the time of the last recommendations.
 - Learn of the archdiocesan salary scale and university scale relevant to parish jobs.
 - Review the job descriptions of current employees.
 - Make recommendations regarding beginning compensation, annual increments and the optimal current rate of the jobs being done now.
- The remaining outstanding Capital Fund Pledges will be contacted this week for payment. In early June, XU will be contacted to determine what has been paid and how much is due.
- The Finance Committee recommended that the CMA, formerly the Archdiocesan Fund and the Archbishop's Fund, be supported by the parish. A letter will go out this week to the parish about the fund. Richard handed out the Catholic Ministries Appeal Brochure.
- The Finance Committee acknowledged the desire to promote giving by credit card, especially by posting procedures on the Bellarmine Chapel website. This will be included in the larger picture to review and revise the current website.

- Stewardship is an event about “Image” building and promotion. The committee will try to create a threefold flyer for late summer mailing. Richard feels the parish needs to see and hear a clearer, and perhaps deeper, message about stewardship of treasure, time and talent. This needs to be considered for a “new” congregation that continually develops at Bellarmine Chapel.
- Advisory committee members once again encouraged a meeting with Xavier University officials to discuss the importance of Bellarmine Chapel to the University. Richard said there is another meeting with Xavier University in May.

Adult Faith Formation

- The question was presented in the Agenda, “From your point of view and your contacts, what opportunities do you see for adult faith formation here at Bellarmine?”.
- Several parishioners have requested more adult faith formation opportunities and that some of these opportunities occur during the day.
- Topics that have been discussed or suggested were:
 - Aging
 - Being a member of a community
 - Race
 - Faith development discussion with other parish members
 - Support of parents with kids in non-Catholic schools
- One challenge discussed is that several opportunities already exist such as small faith communities or educational classes at the Archdiocese. However, not everyone takes advantage of these opportunities. So it becomes difficult for the Bellarmine staff to know where to direct their limited resources.

Director of Social Mission Opening

- Richard reported that Stephanie Beck Borden has accepted a new position as Ohio State Coordinator for Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good.
- This will be a significant position to fill. Richard recommended we consider a meeting with parish to discuss the development of the parish since 2004 and whether or not this position should stay the same or change.
- Richard will try to bring an Bellarmine Chapel Staff organizational chart to the next meeting to discuss present positions versus the needs of the Bellarmine community.

Calendar and Transition Issues

- Three Advisory Committee members are leaving after the summer and one has already left from the previous year’s class. As such, three new members will need to be recruited this summer. Invitations to the committee will occur in June and early July, with informational meetings occurring in July.
- The next Advisory Committee Meeting is May 21st at 7:00 PM. Doug agreed to lead the group in prayer and take minutes at the next meeting.
- Fran will coordinate the June Advisory Committee Meeting which will be a social evening for the group.
- The annual retreat for the Bellarmine committees will be September 26th and 27th.