



St. Raymond Church Town Hall Meeting – Oct. 22, 2011 MINUTES

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Our meeting began with Connie McCalla sharing the origin of our Pastoral Plan and how it developed through the Parish Pastoral Council over the past 18 months. She also set our goals for the day: to share our insights, hopes and concerns for the good of the parish community. She encouraged honest and open conversation during this prayerful and deliberate process. We are here to assess where we are and develop a plan of action.

OUR PROUD HISTORY

Shirley Bright will share her experience with what brought her to St. Raymond after her beloved Gesu was closed; she invited others to do the same at Table.

- *What brought you to Saint Raymond?* Children attended St. Raymond Schools, when kids moved away church family as substitute for family relationships; 6th generation catholic lived in neighborhood & closest catholic church; a letter inviting me “back to church”; followed family; loved and cared for by priests; came once and stayed; personal visit from a priest; children brought us in and we stayed; I was roaming and I liked it; 3rd Sunday singers; Homilies inspired me; I liked being with people like me; welcoming at sign of peace; family members invited me; Msgr O’Brien’s outreach and personality; Sisters of Mercy invited
- *What keeps you at Saint Raymond?*
Remained at St. Raymond b/c of neighborhood issues and support from parish; unwilling to move just b/c of changes in parish leadership; the “spirit” of the Church Family; found it as a home; I feel energized; choir; feeds me for the week; motivates me spiritually; I feel comfortable; the people are family; it is bigger than our immediate neighborhood; other parishes are not like this; location is convenient;

THE PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

In faith, we call on the movement of God’s Holy Spirit in song.

*Our Brand: St. Raymond Church: **Where God is Glorified and His People Sanctified.***

- Uncomfortable with “people sanctified” –too much like Baptist, not the Catholic way.
- It is “catchy” but can we live to it; it is who we are in many ways already
- How is this “different” from other Churches – what makes us unique?
- ... and the Devil is Horrified!
- VOTE: After some conversation other options were given. In the end, people chose “sanctified” (28) over Consecrated (2), Blessed (5), Holy (2), Uplifted (4), Anointed (6), Hallowed (1)

Our Mission: Saint Raymond Church is a community of Christians who seek to glorify God (by worship that is deliberate, by lively Stewardship and by a Caring Community) and where His People are Sanctified (through Study of His Word and Teachings, through Sacraments and Lives of Prayer, and through Ministries and Intentional Living)

- Mission statement should precede brand, would clarify understanding of brand statement, once you read Mission statement then brand makes sense.
- There are too many words – remove the “explanations”
- Mission FIRST – Brand flows from it
- Love God and neighbor – should that not be part of our mission since Jesus gave it to us?

UNDERSTANDING WHO WE WANT TO BE AND SETTING GOALS THAT WE WILL HONOR AS INDIVIDUALS AND A COMMUNITY

- Where God is Glorified
 - By worship that is deliberate: which we believe includes Excellence in Music; Preaching that is Relevant to the lives of today’s Christian; and a feeling of welcome by all who come to this holy ground.
 - GOAL: **By December 2012 we will increase our attendance at weekend Masses from 375 people to 425 people.**
 - *Why is this important?*
 - Increased attendance = increase financial support for parish; as Catholics we are supposed to be in church on Sunday; church attendance helps promote sense of community; lots of non-Catholic parents of children in our school – should require them to attend church; we need church in our lives.
 - The growth will bring new life; helps the finances
 - Current members can know they have a part to play in this
 - Should we put a # on it? Can it be “as much as possible?”
 - Youth keep us relevant; replenish members; kids bring parents
 - It makes us viable in years to come; more people means more talents and gifts (increased share in ownership)
 - Preaching is key to many; music is a big plus
 - Tough time to evangelize
 - *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Very important to stress attendance at mass as a parish goal; crucial that more people attend mass each Sunday.
 - Yes it is important
 - Yes, but we will need to be much more welcoming
 - Members must invite others; good music is a hook
 - Praise of God (not the Choir)
 - Preaching is not that important; growth is
 - We can’t just rely on visitors – we need people who will stay here and become members
 - *What is missing?*
 - Are we looking to increase attendance among parishioners who do not regularly attend or are we looking for new members of the parish? 1st priority –start with children in our school – outreach to their parents a priority; if parents attend church, children will have good example and be encouraged to attend.
 - A parish Director of Marketing
 - We need to increase a sense of hospitality and welcome (**)
 - HOW are we going to do this (creating objectives like an Evangelization Team)
 - We need younger families; can people invite guests once a month?
 - Can we grow by getting people into our ministries (next goal)?
 - Increase “average” attendance; Family & Friends Sundays; Letter of Invitation; Advertise
 - Motivating Catholics (in our pews) to take a role

- By lively Stewardship: which includes the belief that the life of the parish is “owned” by the people; there is on-going discernment of people’s gifts and how best to use them for the Church and others; and there is a commitment to sharing our time, talent and treasure and continuous development of leadership within ministries.
- **GOAL: By December 2012 identified ministries (Men of St. Raymond, Women’s Day Committee, Good Samaritan Ministry, Music Ministry, Hospitality & Repast Ministries, Greeter Ministry and Youth Ministry) will increase their active participants by 10%. The Parish will support the leadership in this effort.**
- *Why is this important?*
 - People stay in church if they belong to at least one ministry; significant part of belonging to church community.
 - We need to concentrate on our youth
 - Church will grow as people feel connected
 - Ownership of parish comes when people are more actively involved
 - We are owned by people (but it is the same people); we need to hold members accountable for the Church; it highlights our brand too
 - This is scriptural too – Jesus’ plan;
 - Ministries are central to our parish mission
 - Survival of ministries; addresses burnout; change of command and structure;
- *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Consensus among group agreement with this aspect of plan and the goal
 - Yes – BUT we need to make ministries attractive to members and new members – how and why should people join?
 - What about reviving old ministries (STRAYS)
- *What is missing?*
 - Increasing participation in ministries develops next generation of church leaders; need more communication about types of Church Ministries – what are requirements to join particular ministries; perception that need invitation to join certain ministries (Mercy Associates). Women’s day Committee just a clique – outsiders not welcome.
 - We need a Children’s Choir; Youth Ministry and Young Adults Ministry are needed badly; Little People’s Church
 - We need to break some groups out of the hold of some people (every member should have a voice in ministries, not just a few people)
 - Health & Wellness Ministry (addictions, care for elderly); Interfaith Ministry; RCIA; PREP
 - Who will join (outreach)? Have a recruitment drive in church for ministries that need members
 - IDEAS: pamphlets describing each ministry, ministries call members to join, invite folks at RCIA; year round recruitment
 - Advertise needs of ministries; help people discover their talents (which will maybe motivate them)
 - Our openness to new ministries (based on the gifts of others)
- By a Caring Community where: the dignity of each person (including their culture and personal history) is recognized and appreciated as revealing the face of God; we welcome opportunities to be present to one another as we share the joys and sorrows of life; and the people of our neighborhood, city and the larger

- world are part of our community as we are constantly seek to invite them to walk the journey of faith with us.
- **GOAL: By March 2012 the Parish will have established a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the faith based community organizing effort we have committed to – P.O.W.E.R. (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild).**
 - *Why is this important?*
 - Do not know enough about P.O.W.E.R to comment, need more information; Deliberate witnessing for God.
 - Allows us to have greater relationships with neighboring Churches
 - Involves people from outside Church too; Survival & Success; we have a duty to help the City
 - Faith based is key; it can't get too big – keep things local
 - Might draw others into the church
 - Command of God
 - *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Yes we need to go into the community – what is an LOC
 - *What is missing?*
 - Not enough information about organization to answer question
 - We need to have more about POWER communicated
 - We need to know more: POWER's goals and objectives, explain how they will work, what is the agenda for our LOC; invite everyone
- Where His People are Sanctified
 - Through Study of His Word and Teachings: as we offer regular opportunities for people of all ages to grow in the knowledge of our Catholic Faith; as we continue to sponsor an Elementary School to serve the needs of our young people in a Catholic environment of excellence; and where we're not just readers of the Word, but doers of the Word!
 - **GOAL: By November 2012 our parish Youth Ministry has an active Junior High Group (25 participants) and Senior High Group (10 participants) who engage in the study of God's Word and service to the community as a means of putting faith into action.**
 - *Why is this important?*
 - Developing Youth Ministry is an opportunity to keep more young people involve in church community. Future of the church being neglected.
 - The youth are our future; they will assume leadership roles in the days to come
 - Kids can live out what they believe
 - Keep our school open; young people are a great source of new members
 - It might be an outreach to parents too; more than a social group (BIBLE); it must make Christians – if not, it is not our mission
 - Life long learning is important
 - *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Group consensus about this aspect of plan and goal
 - Yes, to engage them is key; understanding God's purpose
 - *What is missing?*
 - Do kids have to be Catholic?
 - Goal is vague. How do we communicate with young people ; Recommend Town hall meeting for young people- ask them what they think (***)
 - Teaching the faith (Bible)

- Volunteers will be needed; connect with local schools; encouragement from families
 - Communicate the activities; gets youth input on things; keep kids in High School
 - What are we doing for Public School/Charter School kids?; Inter-generational (others assist youth and vice-versa)
 - How do we get people to become involved?
- Through Sacraments and Lives of Prayer: as the community celebrates the Sacraments from a desire for God’s grace; Daily Prayer is manifest in the culture of our parish; and there are regular opportunities to learn how to pray and pray with others (prayer groups, retreats, etc.).
- **GOAL: By December 2012 the Parish will have offered three different workshops on how to incorporate prayer into daily life while continuing to explore the use of technology for the same purpose.**
- *Why is this important?*
 - Prayer is our fuel and our defense; there are many ways to pray
 - Workshops somewhat vague;
 - We need to reach our shut-ins too; involve youth;
 - Times are changing; we need to stay ahead of the curve
 - When 2 or 3 are gathered, He is there...
 - This will keep the blessing of Sunday flowing
 - Help people identify their hunger for God’s WORD
- *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Agree with goal but need more detail
 - Some do not want to “pray on-line”
 - Another way to invite people into the life of Church
 - Technology is for some, but not all (unless we tutor people)
- *What is missing?*
 - Facebook, Prayer Groups online, tweets, more texts about prayer intentions, “thought of the day” –using technology to create prayer community.
 - As we use technology we can’t forget those who are not using technology
 - Explaining why daily prayer is so important
 - Workshops should be at St Raymond
 - Life in the Spirit Seminar
- Through Ministries and Intentional Living where: Strengthened by Word and Grace, we seek to serve those in need – within and outside the parish; we make the choice to live each day as a Catholic and allow our faith in Jesus and the teachings of His Church to guide our choices at home, at work and in daily life; and we realize our true home is in the glory of heaven and we work out our salvation day by day with God’s help.
- **GOAL: By December 2012 the Parish will identify the social service needs of the community and identify the resources that are available to satisfy these needs.**
- *Why is this important?*
 - Scripturally based’ very Catholic;
 - We need to be there for the needy
 - This is what it means to be a Christian

- We need a strong presence in the community (it builds our credibility; people will know our value)
- Faith in Action
- Sense of purpose
- We have to be intentional to be effective
- *Do you agree with this aspect of the plan and the goal?*
 - Consensus on this aspect of plan and goal.
 - This could be a way to evangelize (since door to door doesn't seem to work)
 - Serving all – not just catholics
 - If we are not doing this – we are not caring!
- *What is missing?*
 - Eligibility and accountability for social services (some people not really in need using church and resources). Once we have listed social service needs and resources, establish priorities –church cannot meet all needs of people.
 - We are doing a lot already and we should highlight this; develop a data base of resources; clothing closet for the needy maybe
 - Do we have the resources? Can we compile a resource list? Who will be doing this work?
 - Is it measurable (maybe 5 or 10)?; tough to understand the scope of the goal
 - We need to publicize all we are doing.

Open Discussion:

- *The one thing I really like about the Pastoral Plan is...*
 - Plan is moving parish in right direction; all parishioners have opportunity for input; “no excuse for complainers now”; Like our Mission statement
 - We are setting goals and that will bear fruit
 - We are setting goals that make a plan for the future
 - Every member was able to share their ideas – we all had a voice
 - We are being intentional; goals are doable; youth involvement is a blessing; it is succinct (unlike past plans that were too grand), inclusive, guides us to success
 - Intentional Living; Inclusive of all ages
 - We all have a voice in the process; it is simple and attainable
 - Goals reflect the Mission
 - It is not about change but challenge

The one thing I think we need to change in the Pastoral Plan is...

- Do not like use of “sanctify” replace with “Blessed or Holy”
- How do we make the Plan a Living Document that guides use week to week
- Where did the “numbers” in goals come from – are they realistic?
- “Sharing Joys & Sorrows” – some people want to keep stuff private
- “sanctify” (do we need to define it)
- make goals SMART
- Be specific that we worship God (not Mary)
- Sanctified might be too baptism
- Get people to stop clapping for the Choir
- Make clear that ministries are not functioning alone; we are in this together

CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- “Well blessed”; “Still going strong”; “Is that a Baptist Church?”; “Great church to attend”;
- “Welcoming, faith filled and active community. Join us. You won’t be disappointed.”
- A blessing to the neighborhood; we are for all for God’s people; ‘the Bomb.com’ – friendly and loving as we grow and grow
- Alive; place to be; Home; family, Lively church, Caring Community
- On the move; growing; where I want to be; well known and exciting; where you need to return; best in the neighborhood
- Awesome, uplifting; we’re getting BIG, it is where it’s at
- On the move; pillar in the community; place for all God’s people; inviting; making it happen; I love to be there; fulfilling Jesus’ command to feed the sheep; my home church; spiritually refreshing; still making it happen; still a welcoming presence in the community; living and spreading the Gospel
- Alive; dynamic; continuing to reach out to others
- They need a new building it is so crowded; it is where you want to be
- We’ve been here for 70 years and we are still going....
- We are humble, not exorbitant or extravagant
- We are a melting pot community (different races and ethnicities)
- We are using the ingredients of spirituality, education and social services to honor God, better humanity and build community.

HONORABLE CLOSURE

How you can you “sum up” the Town Hall Meeting in one sentence?

- Spiritually productive
- People were talkative at the table; hard to get people to move onto other topics when they had something they liked
- Nice to be aware of what is happening; enlightening process makes me want to be more active
- Hard to hear everyone at the table at times
- It was nice having mixed groups; we needed more time
- We took a giant step forward to our future; we’ve got something going here; insightful; glad to be part of a Church where I have input

Table Leader Insights:

- Good, well paced discussion; people felt opportunity to input; all voices were valued.
- Spread out so people can listen to each other (hard to hear at times); food was good
- Same people as usual – where were the other people who are at Mass but not at this meeting (and are not connected with ministries)
- Good participation; good preparation for meeting; people felt free to speak their mind; we could have had more people (*there were about 68 people present; about 20% of our regular weekend attendance*)
- Have each ministry invite people; ministry leaders assist in setting goals