

GARY/HOBART LAY DEANERY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 14TH, 2010 MEETING

Fr. Jon Plavcan opened the meeting with prayer at 6:35 p.m. The following members were present: Judy Siroky, St. Mary of the Lake Parish; Frances Lenzo, Laura Reese, and Peter Podnar, St. Joseph the Worker Parish; Susan Schaefer and Michael Cummings, Ss. Monica/Luke Parish. There was no representation from St. Mark, Nativity, St. Bridget, and St. Francis Xavier parishes. Assumption members asked to be excused.

Fr. Jon explained his role as Dean:

- He meets monthly with the priests of the Gary/Hobart Deanery.
- He is the liaison between the priests and the Bishop.
- He provides assistance to the parishes in resolving issues.
- He serves as the pastor and rector of the Cathedral, and Administrator of Holy Rosary Parish in Gary. He also serves as the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop.

Those in attendance introduced themselves and shared their parish ministry.

Fr. Jon asked Anne Verbeke from the Office for Pastoral Councils to explain the purpose of the Deanery Council. She emphasized the following:

- The Council looks at the issues of the whole deanery and seeks solutions when appropriate.
- The Council encourages clustering activities and programs.
- Two members from each parish serve on the Council...these members should be members of the parish pastoral council.
- Members serve a three year term.

Fr. Jon then shared with the Council the results of the priests meeting concerning restructuring the Deaneries. He stated the following:

- After extensive discussion by the priests on restructuring of the Deaneries, it was concluded that the present structure should remain.
- Clustering was debated. Bishop Melczek urged the group to consider clustering when ever possible.
- Fr. Jon stated that with a shortage of priests the following should be considered – reducing the number of Sunday Masses; clustering with programs. Some examples would be Peace/Social Justice and Stewardship programs. One Council member

suggested Formation programs. Formation he said is seriously lacking in the Gary/Hobart Deanery.

- Fr. Jon pointed out that this Council needs to be visionary. The Council needs to discuss what will be our needs a year from now. We need to relook at Future Full of Hope planning program and clustering with RCIA.

Peter asked Fr. Jon what are concerns from the Priest Deanery meetings. He stated that they are concerned about the lack of involvement of the laity at all levels. One member commented that the priests have to let go and let the people lead. Parishes need to become communities and this takes the leadership of the priest and laity.

St. Mary of the Lake has been reaching out to the people who are registered at the parish. What they are doing is similar to a census. They expect to have it completed by August. Two of the questions asked are “why are you not coming?” and “what would bring you bring?” They are looking for a general trend. The group was asked how open their parish was to change and what has changed since the people left?

After much discussion the Council came back to the question of this Council’s vision and goals. The Council agreed that they should begin with Formation. Until people have some sense that the church is lived in the parish and the parish is not just a Sunday morning gas station we will continue to have less than a vibrant parish. Parishes need to meet the spiritual needs of their people. In October the Diocesan Emmaus Program is offering a class on what it means to be Church. The Council agreed as a beginning to collaborate with this program and each parish will bring a minimum number of 10 people to the event. The site of the class will be determined, but it will be in the Gary/Hobart Deanery.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be in September. Anne will continue to work with the above four parishes to recruit a representative from their Council.