

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY TRANSITION TEAM
MEETING MINUTES

The first meeting of the Catholic Community Transition Team was held on September 20, 2017 at 6:30 PM at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Constable, NY.

Present: Fr. Tom Kornmeyer, Deacon Brian Dwyer, Cherie Jock, Joelle Lamica, Angela Bashaw, Jay Brockway, Lucien Leroux, Jennifer Rearden, Jack LaCroix, Betty Cook, Paula Boyea, Nicole Dumas, Lynda Jones, Rod Lauzon, Margaret Lester, Harold Phillips, Karen Matthews, Pat Mathews. Absent: Gerald Rufa, Sharon Malette, Dale Selkirk, Dick Onufer, Lori Tulip

After opening prayer, Fr. Tom called the meeting to order. Introductions were made and he thanked everyone for agreeing to participate. Participants were chosen because of their vested interests in the churches and their open willingness and understanding of the Bishop's proposed plans for the future. He further stated that this group is not about closing churches. He stressed that everyone realize that this is not the goal or objective.

Each member present was given a packet containing: (1) Guidelines & Policies for the Formulation of Pastoral Plans for Parishes, (2) Completed Pastoral Plan for St. Andre Bessette Parish, (3) Linkage Proposal of St. Alexander, Morrisonville and St. James, Cadyville. Each group of parishes are required to submit Pastoral Plans by December 31, 2017. Fr. further explained that the purpose of this committee is to review the guidelines, set up sub-committees for each discipline and put together a viable plan for submission. There will be 3 Town Meetings held....one in Constable, one in Ft. Covington, and one in Chateaugay. Dates to be announced.

Deacon remarked that we should be looking at where we are now and what we can do together to improve our present resources. Changes are coming and we need to meet them in a non-negative way in keeping with the Bishop's policy of Christ-led, Christ-fed and Hope-filled. He asked for input and is hopeful that our dialogs will spread to outside these meetings by your discussions with others.

There are only 50 priests in the diocese who cover 12,000 sq. mi. We are fortunate to have Fr. Looby who is receptive to helping out with Masses when he can. There are a lot of pastoral needs of the people that are not being met and we need to pool resources.

Q & A'S FROM THE FLOOR & DISCUSSION

How many Deacon are there is this area? Franklin County has 5 Deacons and Brian is the only one in this area who is full time.

- **How many priests are currently studying to be Ordained?** There are 9 Seminarians in the system. History proves that only 20-30 % finish. There was discussion on how to recruit new priests. Fr. explained that it is difficult to get priests from foreign countries. Immigration paperwork and language barriers are a couple obstacles noted.
- **What is being done now to meet our goals?** Two Altar & Rosary Societies have worked together. Constable & Chateaugay presented an Ecumenical Program that was very successful. Musicians have been combined as have Altar Servers and this committee is an example. We also have Lectors, EM's and Parish Councils in place.

What are the statistics on the numbers of Baptisms, Marriages, etc.? The stats are reported to the Deanery. As an example, during the last 12 months, there were 6 Baptisms in Constable & Westville. The administrative set up is looked at as well.

Financial Consolidation - Fr. Tom discussed with the three Parish Councils, the idea of centralizing all the financial components. An accounting firm has been contacted for a proposal. If this is approved, it will eliminate the need for a full time bookkeeper and relieve him from some administrative duties.

Buildings & Grounds: Of all the buildings, St. Patrick's needs the most physical work. #2 is St. Mary's of the Fort.

Do all the churches keep attendance records? No, not all

There have been over 30 burials in Bombay alone recently. How many new people have been brought into the church? Of course, a lot less. A lot of our parishioners are getting older and we need the young people and we need to reach out more to them. A lengthy discussion was held on recruitment and retention. The Census was brought up. Suggested that the census cards be checked again to be sure that all the outreach was done particularly for those who requested to meet with a priest.

Outreach: Deacon noted outreach is a high priority. He stated he gets to communicate with a lot of people at weddings and other occasions when he officiates. This is an example of how people now communicate relative to the Catholic faith.

FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE OUTREACH ITEMS:

Have a booth at community & civil events that are not held in a church setting. Garage sales are an example.

- Hold a Youth Mass (Fr. suggested holding one a month in rotation) He informed the group that Bishop LaValley plans to celebrate 9 am Mass at St. Francis on October 29th. He plans to address the Franklin Deanery Confirmation Candidates.
- Think outside the box for Youth Ministry
- Place Bulletin Announcements in all bulletins – “You Are Welcome Here”, etc.
- Other Parishes hold a Ministry Fair where the Catholic Church disciplines are explained
- New parishioners should be asked to present the gifts at Mass
- Greeters are very important and families need to be involved. Karen Mathew offered her family as greeters at St. Francis
- A Web Master is needed to manage our web pages including the use of Facebook!
- Unification of our resources, i.e. Food Pantry, Country Patch (we do fairly well in those two areas)

In her capacity at Catholic Charities, Joelle stated there is a lot of pain among people right now. They are looking for ways to make themselves feel better. The church should do more than just Mass. There are parents, particularly single parents, looking for help. Fr. Tom said they have not refused any Sacraments.

Fr. asked that the committee members visit other Parishes and get to know each facility as far as availability of services, size and community space.

It was noted that the 5:30 Mass at Our Lady of Fatima has more and more visitors from Malone. How do we get our own local parishioners back? Fr. Tom has changed Mass times to see if that would help and apparently it has not. Deacon stated there are "Mass Stations" now and no sense of community.

There was a discussion on divorced parishioners who do not feel welcome. Fr. noted that regulations are in place for a reason. This was identified as another serious problem.

Fr. Tom's wrap up Read the reports from St. Andre Bessette Parishes and the others. Discern what your interests are. What Committee(s) would you like to serve on? Think of a plan if one Priest "goes down". Keep in mind that the function of this team is to make the Church vibrant and strong in all areas.

- **Come to the next meeting with some ideas on:**
- Youth Mass with older teenagers participating
- Consider if Fr. Looby was no longer able to assist and Fr. Tom was left alone
- Recruitment of Laity
- Media Podcast
- Bulletin Blurbs
- Ministry Fair

The next meeting is scheduled for October 4th at 6:30 PM at St. Francis.
Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM after a closing prayer.

Fr. Tom Kornmeyer
Pastor

Lynda Jones
Recorder