

March 10, 2008 Parish Council

NOTES by paula c. [New readers will see that these are truly notes rather than formal minutes. Apologies in advance for all misspellings and punctuation horrors.]

Present

Council Members: Dan Thomas, Luis Gachuz-Meza, Linda Fitzgerald, Jim Donato, Sean Bryan, Jim Martin, Deborah Tatto, Paula Carrell, , Bernie, Susan Cass, Miriam Choe & Fr. Bernie.

Guests: Roni Rolf (Meditation), Gary Addiego (Eucharistic Ministers), Michael Dalton (Fiction Group), ., Paul S. (LGBT), Al Toles (Loaves & Fishes), Kara Speltz (Peacemaking)

Program Presentations:

Christian Meditation (Roni)

Teaching & practicing Christian Meditation at Newman since 2005. Ongoing: two meetings weekly—Sat. 4 pm & Sun. 8:30 pm (generally 3 – 8 people). Also giving Meditation Workshops regularly to offer the practice to new folks.

Importance of having meditators in a parish community linked to an international community: The World Community for Christian Meditation. Out of this has grown:

* a worldwide website: www.onethousandactsofpeace.org which suggests a practice for adults and kids of three Acts of Peace a day, which add up to over One Thousand Acts of Peace a year.

* a Monthly Forum, “Ascent to the Divine” (with 30-40 regular attendees) on the roots and development of Christian Mysticism.

* Also, a bi-monthly Meditation Retreat at the Hesed Community in Oakland.

Wishes there were more CAL students involved in learning a life-transforming practice of contemplative prayer.

Sustaining numbers is hard at Newman –difficult to get people to commit long term and consistently. Wish for a sense of support in the community for the contemplative practice. Hard for people to understand this sort of “activity” as necessary for truly profitable active engagement.

Eucharistic Ministers (Gary)

Only 5 words that we say, but it’s an extremely powerful experience. Gary offers training regularly to continually recruit new ministers – 4 night series in history and practical practice. Participants come and go – particularly students. Goal is to have readily enough people for each Mass. Recruiting is a never-ending job.

Fiction Group (Michael)

Meets once/month – some months close to 20 participants. Regular group of thoughtful leaders. Bias towards books w religious themes, but not always. No real leader.

Only problem/need is that in winter Newman meeting rooms can be cold and uncomfortable for older participants.

LGBT (Paul)

Meets 1st & 3rd Thurs of every month. Follow school calendar. Attendance of 8 to 20. Why in the world would you want to be Catholic if you're gay? Offers a rare opportunity to support each other in finding and living the answer.

Loaves & Fishes (Al)

Going through a renaissance. Used to function as a separate entity from the parish, but now much more an integrated part of Newman community. Doing well. Would like to get additional members for Steering Committee (currently ~13). Would like to interact w different ministries in the parish so that we are all working together in whatever ways we can.

Non-violent Peacemaking Group (Kara)

First offered a training on non-violence – about 12 participants. Then sponsored a retreat on non-violence. Consistent entity is really a group of three with a mailing list of about 15. Display case for MLK grew out of the group. Showed the film *The Narrow Path*—35 attendees. Focusing on education, prayer, networking. Goal to get an active group of people who will take on non-violence and even risk arrest.

Maybe get parish to pray for the prisoners at Guantanamo. This coming weekend passing out a prayer and giving people the name of a prisoner and ask folks to sign a statement opposing torture.

More displays maybe – Chavez, Romero, . . .

As a Christian, can I support war?

Could use help – continued support in publicizing the educational opportunities we want to offer the community.

BOCA (Alan in absentia)

Berkeley Organizing Communities for Action. Interfaith. Rallies parishes into taking action around social causes and concerns – activism and a voice from the various churches. A good way to live ecumenism.

One reason for low participation may be a large number of non-Berkeley residents & transient nature of many Newman folks (students). Also, rewards of participation are a long time coming.

Only 12 – 14% of people in Berkeley go to church.

Further Thoughts/follow-up Suggestions:

Wonderful to be exposed to all this information – this direct and vital picture of what's going on at Newman. Impressive (and probably too little understood by many/most parishioners).

Deb: Something that's missing -- bring people together around communion to the sick with ritual at Mass.

Paula: Might there be some value in bringing Program Leaders together regularly – maybe once or twice a year super council?

Kara-yes. Could the meditation-based Acts of Peace group be in communication with the Non-violence group?

If we're talking w each other, might be better able to build a broader sense of community?

Roni: Could we consider more frequent support from priests in pulpit for the different programs?

Bernie: Think in terms of 9:30 Mass – most robust community. Also, the 5 pm on Sunday evening. Regularly announce presence and be outside after these Masses to chat w folks. Be fishers of men and women – the discipleship piece.

Ministry Fair? A point where we see ourselves together. Do at 9:30 and one additional Mass? Value? More publicity – pulpit announcements. Printed in bulletin – multiple times. Write an engaging flap, web announcement. Create a sense of expectation, community vitality/connection. → Plan for Fall.

For future Super Council. Meet and set theme for year that resonates throughout all groups.

Each Group periodically write a piece/report/enticement on your group for The (bulletin) Flap. Talk w (John McChesney). If you write it for the flap we can also post your narrative on the web page.

Re-organize/structure the Welcome Table w some uniform format for each group. Have a Ministry Insert in the bulletin periodically.

The Council will consider ALL this input, along with that from the surveys and try to integrate the picture of the parish and parish activities that emerges. THEN, need to decide how to begin to move forward. Will be back in touch with the Group Leaders.

Survey Results To Date:

172 on-line so far, plus some on paper. . (As against Sunday participation of about 1700-1800).

Was decided to do one more round of Pulpit Announcements **with the URL projected on a slide** on Palm Sunday, urging folks to do the survey on-line. Discuss survey results in some depth at Apr Meeting.

Surveys appear to be reflecting how much people don't know what goes on in the parish.

85% say they prefer to get their info from the bulletin.

People also say they use the web site.

Begin to improve information flow:

* Post Council minutes on the web page?

Need activities appropriate for families.

Thanks All!