

St. Bernadette Church  
Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes  
January 4th, 2012

**Present:** Father Bill, Tim Geers, Donna Thompson, Charlie Quehl, Bev Barnes, Mark Zurlinden, Paul Justice

**Guest:** Mark Armstrong (Parish Finances, Bingo), Sarah Holland, John Sawyer (Pastoral Region)

**Absent:** Jim Sperry

**Minutes:** Minutes were reviewed and accepted from the November meeting.

**State of the Parish:**

**Financial Report:** Mark Armstrong is currently transitioning to his new position as Business Manager. Some tuition written-off from last year has unexpectedly been paid this year by a family that wanted to make good on their debt to St. Bernadette. Right now, it does not appear that we will have any tuition write-off this school year.

The economy has affected people's ability to pay their tuition in one payment at school registration time. We have historically used that pre-paid school tuition to help our cash flow situation at this time of year. A suggestion to time our one pay tuition discount with tax season is being discussed to help with the cash flow problem. To help set tuition appropriately, Mark will be working to get a true cost per capita per student including all real overhead items in the coming weeks.

**Bingo:** Mark Armstrong reported that in 2010 there were on average 84 players per Friday night. If all expenses associated with operating a bingo are calculated, it appears the parish actually lost \$14,000 that year. The idea of stopping St. Bernadette Bingo is attractive, but may not be the right move if ever we wanted to do bingo again. Shutting down bingo and then reopening it in a year or two after re-organizing does not historically produce good attendance as those players have moved on to other establishments for their bingo night. The proposal is to give another good year of effort to turn things around and make the decision after that year as to whether it is worth continuing bingo.

There is a concerted effort to advertise St. Bernadette Bingo and the Bingo organizers are getting feedback from trusted players as to how we can turn things around and start getting the attendance we need to make bingo a worthwhile revenue generating event.

At 100 people in attendance, we break even (bank \$900 gross). At 115 attendees, we bank anywhere from \$1,300 to \$1,500 gross. At 160 people, a \$2,600 gross bank deposit occurs. It's unrealistic in this economic climate to think we could get 160 people on average, but 135 to 145 players in attendance would double our bingo revenue from what it is today.

The topic of service hours as a means of getting more volunteer help from school parents was discussed. The thoughts from several members is that service hours are not explained or reiterated throughout the school year like they were several years back. It was also suggested that it would be good to have a service hour tracking coordinator to enforce the service hour issue in general. While those hours cannot be forced to be committed to any one parish event, it would certainly be easy to promote Bingo as an easy way to be able to get the hours served.

Overall, education about bingo to the parish needs to cover the fact that bingo money isn't just a school subsidy, but a parish well-being item that supports continuing education in our Catholic Faith, sponsorship of various parish spiritual events, etc.

**Pastoral Region Planning Update:** For any reason that a priest leaves a parish, the Archdiocese cannot replace them. There are 100 regions in Cincinnati's diocese and a couple of well-recognized research firms have concluded that the number of pastors will drop down to 100. Right now we have 133 pastors – 34 of which are eligible to retire in the next couple of years. A decision was made by Archbishop Schnurr to allow St. Bernadette and St. Thomas More to prepare to be a collaborative region and some day share a pastor. Once the Archbishop has received a printed plan on how our region will work, he will review and eventually sign-off on it. The plan would then officially be in place for whenever either pastor from their respective church was to leave for any reason. Donna, Sarah and John represent St. Bernadette with Father Bill and St. Thomas More also has a similar group of people. These two groups have met eight times so far. Pastoral Councils from both parishes need to approve the plan prior to it being presented to Archbishop Schnurr.

An interview on the Archdiocese site was viewed by pastoral council called, "A Conversation About Change" <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/pastoral-regions> .

There is a Pastoral Region Planning Tool and consultant that the groups are using to help devise the plan. There are eight areas to consider for this plan, but the update presented to Pastoral Council addressed the first three: Deacons, Staff and Lay Leadership, Mass Schedule and Non-Eucharistic Worship Schedule. St. Thomas More's Pastoral Council was scheduled to receive the same presentation the following week.

Council's role for now is to dispel any rumors about pastors leaving, etc. and to bring any concerns around this topic to the committee and pastors of both parishes.

**School Update:** Plans are under way for Catholic Schools Week.

**Pastoral Council Business:** The Stievenard Declaration of Uses was updated with the new pastoral council member's name and all signed in agreement.

**Pastor's Corner:** Mark Armstrong has stepped up as Business Manager for the same salary that Bob received and is off to a great start. Father will be on a mandated retreat for a week in January for silent reflection. Food for the Poor, a Catholic sponsored relief agency for the Caribbean and Latin America's, will be handing out pamphlets with information on their cause. There will not be a separate collection for them. We donated our old church pews to this organization for the Caribbean. They took care of the freight charges. A priest from this organization will present the sermon at the masses the weekend of January 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Parish Voice:** Eucharistic Ministers that bring the chalice from the sacristy bow to the altar with the Body of Christ in their hand. This is incorrect and we will ask Carol Henderson to talk to the ministers before the 9 and 11 mass.

A couple of parents have asked about the play set at the school and why we're spending "frivolous" money on things like that. It should be made clear how items such as this are being paid for. Tim to talk to Mark Armstrong about making sure these items are clearly explained in the bulletin.

**Next Meeting:** February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

**Faith Formation:** Mark Zurlinden