

Meeting Notes May 2, 2017 at Marcus Holy Name Parish Center

Meeting began at 6:30 PM.

Opening prayer: Fr Bill led those present in the Our Father.

Agenda Item: Welcome (Fr. Bill)

“Change can bring problems but can also inspire. Let’s put forth hope and trust in God. Let no one be left out. Our goal is heaven and we ask for the gift of collaboration.”

Agenda Item: Ground Rules: Fr Bill

“Please be respectful, emotions are high. But let’s bring about decisions that are good for our families.”

Introduction of clergy present (Fr. Gene Murray, Dn. Jerry Bertrand, Dn. Roger Heidt, Dn. Rick Roder).

Parish committees introduced themselves. Present were:

Roger Dentlinger, Diane Rupp Klassen, Larry Rapagnani, Mick Theisen (Holy Name)
Mark Loutsch, Wayne Pick, George Dirksen, Bill Tentinger, Monte Konopasek, Greg Schroeder (St. Catherine’s)
Tony Loutsch, John Roling, Rick Delperdang, Richard Homan, Jeff Pottebaum, Doug Heeren (St. Mary’s)

Agenda Item: Questions, comments on April 24 meeting: Fr Bill

“Minutes of that meeting were posted online on St. Mary’s Parish website (www.smparishinfo.org).”

Asked for questions and comments, none offered.

“Notes from this meeting tonight will be posted soon as possible on the website.”

Agenda Item: Review Ministry 2025 Pastoral Plan, Key Elements A-C (Fr. Bill)

Turned this over to Dn. Heidt, who reviewed pages 6-9 (items A/B/C) in the Ministry 2025 Pastoral Planning Process Guidebook, item by item, to clarify the areas the leadership teams would be considering and information to be compiled (please refer to the Guidebook, which is available on the St. Mary’s Parish website).

Dn Heidt: “We will be working on these with base lines with where we are today, with future measureable goals. Go back and visit with your parish and find out where you are

today, are you good, needing to work on it? Then we will come back on 23rd we can put together a document saying ‘this is where we are today, where do we need to go?’”

Back to Fr. Bill, asked for questions... none offered. He said, “Please be prepared with this information for our next meeting.”

Agenda Item: Questions/Comments (General)

Fr. Bill: “What looms most? What do our parishioners want us to tackle? I can say that we have established one wedding calendar; there are 19 weddings on the books at present. Great success in our couples being married in the church. Next might be what would the daily schedule look like? We need to consider nursing home Masses, weekend Mass schedule. I’d like to get a feel for parish desires for Mass time. Discussion?”

Marcus Holy Name rep: “I have not had many parishioners approach me. One said 5:30 on Saturday night, but that was the only comment for a particular time. My own personal feelings: not all will be perfectly happy.”

Fr. Bill: “If you would be open to a six month flip flop, that might be a good compromise. In other words Mass times for a Sunday vigil Mass in one location and Sunday morning Mass in another location might switch half way through a year and then back again.”

Marcus rep: “As far as Sunday morning, not sure, we could ask but maybe take a “straw vote” to get a feel for what people wish. Clarifying what we have now: Sunday: Marcus has an 8 AM Mass and 6:00 on Saturday night.”

Marcus then asked for a show of hands on Mass preference:

Sunday 8 AM: nine votes
Sunday 10 AM: four votes
Saturday 4 PM: eleven votes
Saturday 6 PM: sixteen votes

How many fit in Marcus church? 300 to 350

Are we only getting one Mass and if so are we thinking about Religious Education on Sundays? When voting we need to keep REP in mind. [NOTE: REP means “Religious Education Program”]

Clarification was provided that priests will be limited to three Masses per Sunday and estimated registered parish households are Marcus 280, Remsen 583, Oyens 76.

Comment: if we are going to be flip flopping it makes it difficult for REP, later Mass on Sunday is more beneficial to the REP group. REP students helped with Mass. Father would have time to do things with the kids if it was a later.

Question: Possible to do two Saturday night Masses and one Sunday? Fr. Bill: it's an option.

Comment: In Fr. Bill's defense, watch out for Saturdays. Besides the Saturday night Masses there may also be funerals and weddings.

Comment: possibly change REP to Wednesday night.

Question: Is there a date when this 3-Mass limit goes into effect? Fr. Bill: June 27 when I take over Marcus, starts the three Masses per weekend.

When is REP in Remsen? Wednesday evening.

Comment: we now have two morning Masses during the week, a very important part of our worship here. Want two morning daily Masses.

Comment: When picking a Mass time and location, we must make sure we can fit everyone into that church for the Mass that we pick. Comment: Watch out for early Saturday, those are often packed. Make sure they fit.

Question: What is Remsen's daily Mass schedule? Monday evening in Oyens. Rest of mornings 7:45 except school Mass (usually Fridays) at 8:15. First Saturday of the month Mass is provided.

What are current weekday Masses at the nursing homes/assisted living? Bavarian Meadows (Remsen) one Mass every other week, Happy Siesta (Remsen) once per week, Heartland Care Center (Marcus) once per month. Fr. Bill: That gives me an idea of the homes.

Fr. Murray: "It is definitely a concern to care for the people in the homes. As for Masses there will be sacrifices for pretty much everyone. I am always willing to help when called upon, but I am at the stage where my health could go bad. So I can't replace you, Fr. Bill, you are the pastor, but you are the one who has to see to the people. We not only need to keep the faithful but reach out. When the liturgy is not offered regularly, they will go somewhere else. We need to do the best we can to make sure people are cared for and we take a positive attitude. We have a vibrant parish and a good daily Mass attendance, I would hate to see that diminish."

Comment: Watch out for the farmers/feeders and chore times when considering Sunday Mass times. We need to continue to make sure we provide a Mass time that avoids chore time or we may lose some people. If there is a later Saturday Mass or an early Sunday Mass for this group, it needs to be in Remsen.

Comment: Someone from a Protestant congregation approached one of our Catholic parishioners and said that if we were not happy we could attend their church. We need to display our happiness. If we are not happy why would anyone come and be with us. Even if we are not happy on the inside we need to have a good attitude.

Comment: We need to be reminded that the purpose of this whole process is to lighten the load for our priests. We are going to have to travel more. The burden for that should not fall on Father but on us.

Comment: Along the same lines if there are daily Masses we as parishioners must find where and when they are and be there.

Fr. Bill: "This brings up a good point. We should always be aware of the possibility that a retired priest would move in and help. We would welcome their assistance. They can't be scheduled directly but they can indirectly pitch in when they can help."

Comment: Marcus has a place for a retired priest to live (in Marcus rectory), a great opportunity.

Comment (Holy Name): I would like something sent to all parishioners and ask for a vote and then go with the majority. We have met great people in Remsen and Oyens. Let's get a vote and the board and Father can figure it out from there.

Dn Jerry: I like the six month rotation. Helps with all involved.

Fr. Bill: "Would you be open to having Saturday wedding Masses at 4:00 so that it would fulfill the Sunday obligation? Anyone would be able to attend and they would need to use the readings for the Sunday (not of their own choosing). This has been done in Granville. Something to consider."

Dn Roger: Father has asked me to talk about the communications structure, which is important. The Remsen St. Mary's website will be the source, if you don't have access yet, find it there. Documents will be posted there. It is the job of those around this table to be the communicators with their parish, share the word and get the input. That will be the prerogative of the leadership group. The diocesan website also has the documents posted there. Another thing to consider for getting work out are the bulletins; have you considered one bulletin for both parishes? When could that start? (Fr. Bill said, "We have not yet worked that out). Bulletin will be another tool, also pulpit announcements. One vital thing will be transparency, not only these meetings but finance, pastoral council, etc. Communication is critical and that parishioners give feedback to the people around this table.

Question: how does the Oyens council fit in to this? What kind of information can we bring? Where do we bring it?

Dn. Heidt: Next meeting we will be talking about finances, Mass times... what are your people thinking? How will finances of Oyens be managed through the Remsen parish? One parish council, one finance council? How will this work?

Oyens rep: We have to consider the guidelines for oratory status in Oyens. Would we Oyens reps have a meeting to get us all on the same page? Go through the issues line by line so we are all on the same page? And then a parish meeting to bring that to the people? Our job is to communicate and we must have the answers when people ask us. We need to know where we are and what our function is.

Dn. Heidt: those questions will be answered at this table. All that discussion should take place here.

Various other questions were brought up by Oyens reps and several discussions ensued. Fr. Bill read most of the Financial Guidelines for Ministry 2025 document and it was agreed this needed to be posted to the parish website so people have access. Dn. Heidt and Father Bill asked that Oyens submit any questions they have and either Fr. Bill would answer or get answers from the diocese.

Fr. Bill: "One thing that would help me is if there could be one contact person for each area... music, cemeteries, etc.... that would streamline my life. The main contact person would have sub-people to contact in each area."

Question: How are you going to handle pastoral councils in the new arrangement?

Fr. Bill: "There will be one pastoral council for the parish grouping but not finance; Marcus and Remsen would each have their own finance councils."

Dn. Roger: "Open up to any other questions or comments?"

Fr. Bill: "One question is do we want to merge St. Mary's and Holy Name into one parish?"

Discussion ensued on the idea of one parish or remaining as two parishes.

Part of the discussion focused on the Catholic school equation and what that would mean for Holy Name and St. Mary's and their relationship.

Dn. Heidt asked for any final questions; none asked...end of questions.

Next meeting May 23 at Oyens 6:30, Tuesday at the school cafeteria. Communicate with Father if the date does not work.

Farmers raised a concern that if crop planting was in full force May 23 that it may need to be changed.

Dn. Heidt:

“For our next meeting we will ask that each of the three identities need to complete a balance sheet for your parish and provide a list of parish organizations. We will also want to begin to shape up what Mass times will look like. Please address elements A and B (starts on page 23) of the Pastoral Planning Guidebook. We can also try to look at letter C but may not get that far. The important thing at this juncture is to have dialogue with the parishioners, that is the critical part.”

Fr. Bill: “Thank you to all who came, it shows your love for God and your parish.”

Closed with Our Father.

Adjourn 8:04.