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The three Catholic parishes in the city of Ashtabula enjoy a truly cooperative relationship. Many of our programs, policies, and Sacramental celebrations are done together, as is our support and dedication to Catholic education through Saints John and Paul School.

Parishes of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio

The Mission of the "Transition Team" is to preserve the integrity, autonomy, and traditions of each of the three Catholic Parishes in Ashtabula, while working to ensure that the faithful of the entire Catholic Community is pastorally well-served.

ASHTABULA TRI-PARISH TRANSITION TEAM
August 8, 2007 – Meeting Minutes

The second meeting of the transition team was held on August 8, 2007, in the Mount Carmel Rectory meeting room, Eileen Novotny returned as facilitator. Mrs. Novotny opened the meeting with a prayer.

The sub-committee that worked on the creation of Mass schedules presented three Sunday options for the team to evaluate. After much discussion the group developed a compromised version with alternative times for the parishioners to review. Time was taken to discuss the 300 – 500 Hispanic people who need to be served in the area. The committee felt a Mass in Spanish could be said without putting a strain on the two priests. Daily Mass schedule was reviewed; discussion of the Mass schedule was ended. Father Ruggieri took the responsibility for creating the insert for the bulletin to provide the parishioners an opportunity for input on the Mass schedule.

Before moving on to the surveys, Mrs. Novotny brought closure to our concerns as we had outlined in the last meeting:

We, as a committee, need to remain focused on the Catholic Community.

Many parish policies are already shared among the three parishes. We need to get a summary sheet out to the parishioners explaining how much the three Parishes are already sharing pastoral resources.

We are blessed with two priests with good communication skills.

The Bishop will come for the installation of the priest as pastors of the three parishes.

Father Bob suggested a small adjustment in the mission statement as written in the first communiqué to the parishioners and suggested that it then would then serve as a true mission statement for the transition team for the length of their existence.

The three parishes were then asked to share their survey results. It was clear that different people who read these results had differing opinions of the intent, and since there were only 135 responses, the team felt it essential that we receive and read all responses from all churches before the next meeting. Mrs. Coblitz volunteered to chart the results for data analysis purposes.

The meeting was ended with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Albina Larson

Ashtabula City Tri-Parish Transition Team
August 22, 2007 Meeting Minutes

The Ashtabula City Tri-Parish Team met Wednesday, August 22, 2007, in the Mt. Carmel Rectory meeting room. Father Bonnot facilitated the meeting and Msgr. Zuraw joined us as Diocesan representative.

The meeting opened with prayer. The discussion opened with an explanation of the changing responsibilities of the two pastors. Msgr. Zuraw explained that all three parishes will have two pastors and that neither pastor “belongs to and is responsible for” any one parish, but both jointly belong to and are responsible for each parish.” The pastors agreed that they will make necessary decisions jointly and by using established Common Policies, some of which have been in place for several years. A commitment was made to continue to respect the autonomy and traditions of each individual parish.

Fathers Miller and Ruggieri discussed ideas for an Emergency Contact Plan. The team suggested that the priests might want to look into using an answering service after office hours to take emergency calls and forward them rather than publishing cell phone numbers. They will look into the possibility.

Salaries and expenses for two pastors will be divided equally among the three parishes. It is possible that this will result in a savings over current costs of \$10,000 - \$15,000 per parish per year.

The team then turned attention to the comments received from parishioners regarding the daily Mass and weekend Mass schedules. There were approximately 360 comments to review. A member of each parish summarized the comments received in his/her parish and a lively discussion followed. Statistics were distributed outlining parish populations and sacramental participation 1999-2006. After studying the statistics and discussing parishioner comments at great length, the team agreed as a whole that the following schedule should be implemented for weekend Masses beginning Sept. 1 & 2, 2007:

MOS: Saturday at 5:30pm; Sunday at 10:00am and at 11:45am in Spanish

Mt. Carmel: Saturday at 5:00pm; Sunday: at 8:30am and 11:30am

St. Joseph: Saturday at 4:00pm; Sunday at 9:00am

Sunday Mass is also celebrated at the Mission church at 8:30am on a three-weeks-on/one-week-off schedule

Because families may be out of town or on vacation the weekend of August 25/26, it was suggested that the Star Beacon be notified of the Mass time changes. It was also suggested that mailings to all parishioners would be in order as the changed Sunday schedules will be in effect immediately.

After further discussion the team agreed that daily Mass schedules would remain at 8:00am but would be rotated throughout the week so that each parish would have daily Mass at least once during the week. Saints John and Paul Catholic School Masses will remain the same for the high school students (8:00am on Friday at St. Joseph) and the elementary school students will schedule Masses at Mt. Carmel at times to be announced shortly. Daily Mass will be celebrated at 8:00am at St. Joseph on Monday and Friday, at Mother of Sorrows on Tuesday and Thursday, and at Mt. Carmel on Wednesday with additional Masses scheduled at Mt. Carmel Church according to SJP Elementary School schedule. The new daily Mass schedule will be effective Monday, Sept. 10. This schedule will allow the pastors to schedule regular Masses at area nursing homes and funeral Masses as needed.

The team had some discussion about the Spanish Mass and welcoming the Hispanic community. It was agreed that, at this time, MOS will remain the Hispanic “home parish” and Sunday Mass will be celebrated at MOS at 11:45am in Spanish.

The team will need to address discussion and establishment of holiday Masses (Advent- Christmas and Lent-Easter) in the very near future.

There was some discussion of sending a formal request to Bishop Murry for a third priest in the area. Msgr. Zuraw again explained the lack of numbers of available priests but acknowledged the opportunity to send a request. A formal request was made available for team members who wished to sign the request.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Timonere

[The next meeting of the Transition Team is Wednesday, September 19, at 7:00pm in the Mt. Carmel Rectory basement meeting room.]