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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.

The Transition Team met on Wednesday, September 19. The minutes from that meeting will be published soon. Here is a brief recap of some of the items that were discussed.

1) We discussed the response to the new Mass schedules.

- a) For the most part, our three parishes seem to have adapted rather quickly to the new schedules. Weekday Masses in particular are better than ever since each day there is now one larger assembly instead of three small ones. Comments were reported on how welcoming everyone is at all three parishes of "visitors" from the neighboring parishes for Sunday Masses.

2) We finalized the Mass schedule for the upcoming holiday season.

- a) **All Saints Day** (November 1) – we'll use the same "Holy Day" schedule we've used in the past.
- i) Vigil Mass (10/31) at 7:00pm at Mother of Sorrows;
 - ii) (11/1) 9:00am Mass at St. Joseph, 10:30am at St. Joseph for Sts. John & Paul students, and 7:00pm Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.
- b) **All Souls Day** (November 2) – 8:00am Mass at St. Joseph (to include the All Souls intentions of the entire Tri-Parish Community). Additionally, there will be a "Dia de los Muertes" (*Remembrance of the Dead*) service at 7:00pm at Mother of Sorrows.
- c) **Thanksgiving Day** (November 22) – 9:00am Mass at Mt. Carmel for the Tri-Parish
- d) **Immaculate Conception** (December 8) – 9:00am Mass at Mt. Carmel for the Tri-Parish
- e) **Christmas** (December 25)
- i) Vigil Masses (Christmas Eve):
 - 4:00pm at St. Joseph
 - 4:00pm at Mt. Carmel
 - 5:30pm at Mother of Sorrows
 - 7:30pm at Mother of Sorrows in Spanish
 - 11:00pm at St. Joseph
 - ii) Midnight Mass at Mt. Carmel (at 12Midnight!)
 - iii) Day Masses: 9:00am at Our Lady of Miracles (St. Joseph Mission)
10:00am at Mother of Sorrows
- f) **Mary, Mother of God** (January 1, 2008 – New Years)
- i) Eve Masses: 4:00pm at St. Joseph and 10:30pm at Mother of Sorrows
 - ii) Day Mass at 10:00am at Mt. Carmel

[All members of the Tri-Parish Community will participate in our Advent Retreat/ Mission, hosted and sponsored by Mother of Sorrows Parish. It will begin with all the weekend Masses at all three parishes the weekend of December 1 & 2, and continue, each night at 7:00pm from Sunday, December 2, thru Wednesday, December 5. The Advent Communal Reconciliation Service will be part of the Mission on Monday, December 3. Mark you calendars now! Plan to attend! Bring a friend! It will be very inspiring, uplifting, and rewarding both individually and as a community!!!]

- 3) **The schedules for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter were also solidified**, and these will be published with the minutes.
- 4) **The Transition asked the Tri-Parish staffs to develop a different “Confession” schedule.** Beginning next weekend, September 29 & 30, Confessions will be:
- 3:00pm at St. Joseph,
 - 6:00pm at Mt. Carmel (after the 5:00pm Mass), and
 - 6:30pm at Mother of Sorrows (after the 5:30pm Mass).
- [This rescheduling was needed due to conflicts with Wedding times, and to allow more people easier access to this Sacrament.]*
- 5) **We also discussed and made a final decision regarding the Tri-Parish telephone systems.** A professional answering service will be employed to receive emergency phone calls from parishioners who need to reach a priest. While this will still not guarantee 24/7 access to a priest, it will enable parishioners to speak to a live person (rather than a machine) on weekends and after the parishes’ offices have closed for the day. The answering service will then attempt to reach Fr. Miller or Fr. Ruggieri in the event of a pastoral emergency requiring a priest’s attention. It will also allow access to the other parish pastoral staff (Sr. Laurie, Sr. Dorothy, or one of the Deacons, Alan, Rich or Don) when a priest isn’t necessarily needed. The cost for this service is \$100 per month, a cost which will be shared by all three parishes (\$33 per parish per month).
- 6) **Fr. Miller and Fr. Ruggieri explained Pete Olsen’s expanded role as Tri-Parish Business Manager.** Quoting from his new job description:
- “Working from the office of the Pastors, the Tri-Parish Director of Business is responsible for the daily business operation of the three parishes and the cemetery. The Tri-Parish Director of Business also works to insure that the three parishes and the cemetery maintain their parochial and individual identities. This includes staffing, record keeping, finances, banking, scheduling, fund raising, rental properties, lay leadership and committees, and facility use. In time, resources could be shared as cost savings are identified. This includes staffing, purchasing, and facility use.”
- We cannot stress enough that money from each parish stays at each parish! Pete will explore centralizing our Tri-Parish purchasing (which will save the parishes money), but there will be no sharing *of* money. His 20+ years as Business Manager for St. Joseph Parish and Cemetery makes him uniquely qualified to assist the day-to-day facilities management of the three parishes’ buildings and personnel. In short, he is the right man, for the right job, at the right time.
 - General Accountability of the Tri-Parish Director of Business (also from Pete’s Job Description)
 - Is directly responsible to, receives direction from, and maintains continued reporting to the Pastors.
 - Is to be attentive to the recommendations of the Pastors, other members of the Staffs, and Parish Committees.
 - Is to report regularly to the Pastors and the Parish committees as directed by the Pastors.
- 7) **Lastly, we discussed the future of the Transition Team.** *[See the “Mission Statement” on the reverse side.]*
- The Team as it is currently structured will continue in existence until at least June of 2008. At that point, we will evaluate the necessity of continuing. We recognize the possible future need for a “Tri-Parish Council,” perhaps evolving from the current Transition Team.
 - Currently, we see our role as assisting the pastors and the Tri-Parish staff identify particular pastoral needs for each of the three parishes and the entire Tri-Parish Community. We hope to continue fostering parish lay-leaders who will help develop programs and policies to grow the sense of unity among our three parishes, while also maintaining the special “uniqueness” of each of our three parishes and their histories.

Fr. Miller and Fr. Ruggieri wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the entire Team for all their hard work these past two months. We commend the Team, and the entire Tri-Parish community, for all your support and prayers for us personally, and for the future of the Catholic Community in Ashtabula.

May God’s blessings continue to grow among us all!!!