

## **St Thomas Pastoral Council mtg minutes Sept. 22, 2015**

Present: Fr Bill, Fr Todd, Paul Thiefels, Jo Ann Thiefels, Paul Jackowski, Cathy Dowling and guest Jessica Dudek

Absent: David Williams, Marie Williams, Deacon Jim Miles, Moira Cullen, Rod Gauvin, Naomi Corera

Minutes from the June meeting were approved.

Jessica Dudek talked about the local Intervarsity group on UM's campus. Jessica grew up in Rochester, MI, attended UM, lived at the St Catherine House and participated in Generation Christ. She finds few churches as active and sacramental as St Thomas. She asked first for our views about what the youth of our parish need and received this input: our kids have only a child's knowledge of the faith, they need to meet Jesus and they need to be challenged to believe that the virtuous life is worth pursuing. Jessica was a Business major and uses both "push" and "pull" marketing to reach people. The first bible study she attended seemed superficial, but she later understood that the study was just an initial step. Rather learning to love the person first. There are five steps: trusting, a Christian curiosity, seeking, being open to change and embracing. She and other friends found that helping others connect with the Lord was a transforming experience. Some people need stepping stones, while others are all or nothing. Cold evangelization is also a challenge. IV started in 1860 with bible studies. Intervarsity promotes work between campuses. They believe: the Lord created the world and each person for good; virtues are not actively taught or expected; moral relativism is a major problem. While IV was birthed in the Evangelical environment, it has grown internationally into an inter-denominational organization. It helps students return to their own faith tradition and has a strong biblical training. UM was the first IV chapter. It is a friendship evangelism and requires one's own personal growth. They attempt to connect campus issues with the Christian faith. Students are empowered to be evangelists. It is multi-ethnic: using many kinds of music and traditions. The discipleship helps students deal with real problems. UM art school ministry. Core values needed to keep an organization alive: evangelism, personal discipleship, leadership mentoring, and spiritual direction. It is important to have a network of counseling to support the evangelism process. The annual conference is named Urbana because it started in Urbana, IL and has just kept the name. They bridge the various denominations and foster cross-denominational cooperation and are committed to the biblical text. IV and Jessica need support in the following ways: prayer, volunteers, and financial. Jessica is only 70% supported; she works on and off campus part-time to raise funds. One can donate on-line. Fr Bill & Fr Todd have talked with Fr Ben at St Mary's about how to work cooperatively. FOCUS ( a Catholic college evangelization non profit) is employed by a parish and 2 employees cost a \$50,000 typically. Jessica provided a doctrinal statement.

Plans for the Alpha course continue. There is a limit of 200 attendees and currently 140 have signed up. We may need a few more table leads and helpers.

Fr Todd is speaking to parents through the Vine course ( a part of our parish Religious Ed). He talks once a month on a specific topic. About 100 parents attended his first talk.

The Diocese of Lansing is beginning a Feasibility Study to raise money for: Parishes that might be struggling financially, Catholic Schools, Catholic Charities especially in Flint, Parish Emergency Capital Needs, Supporting Evangelization, Caring for Priests by supporting the Priest Pension Fund, and Seminarians.

Our parish sound system has been improved recently by a sound engineer. The engineer will submit a proposal for approximately \$40,000.

Next meeting is 10/27/2015