

St. Mary's Education Commission Minutes, 2-20-2016

1. Attendance:

Present: Peggy Casing, Samantha Guerra, Mary Davis, Meghan Schuler, Tom Wietchy, Denis Naeger, and Suzie Phillips

Absent: Kim Boismier, Jennifer Neill, and Clem Valot

2. Chairperson Samantha Guerra began the meeting by asking our SMYG representative Mary Davis to give her feedback on this year's Rainbow Weekend a few weeks ago that many SMYG members attended downtown with hundreds of other teens from the Archdiocese of Detroit. Mary stated that SMYG's moderator Chris Kozlowski liked the Rapper who had a big role in the convocation. In general Mary said that St. Mary's attendance was a little down from previous years—it was hard to really pinpoint a specific reason, except to say that in the past more SMYG members attended.

Samantha then reported that she attended the Agape Winter Retreat held at Subiaco at the end of January. She said that there were over 50 people in attendance with the focus being on the theme of the Year of Mercy along with six reflections of Mercy. The weekend centered on feedback from the reflections, adoration and reconciliation.

3. Samantha then turned to the topic of diversity within the Parish as suggested by member Tom Wietchy in a note to the Education Commission. Tom stated that in recent years our parish's minority population which is made up of Latins (Mexican and Central and South Americans), Asians (subcontinent Indians, Filipino, and Chinese), Near Easterners (especially some Chaldeans), as well as other European groups (especially from Eastern Europe). Tom reflected that this was good. He just wanted to see if his views represented what other members saw. Peggy mentioned that she and her staff were aware of these facts. For quite awhile she has attempted to have a monthly or quarterly Spanish Mass at St. Mary's—from time to time there was such a Mass, but attendance was not always great. She feels that there was no one among the Latin community who wanted to lead the effort. She too thinks that many people who want the Spanish Mass might be attending at one of the Spanish parishes in Pontiac. Suzie Phillips said that we might suggest that the upcoming Parish Census include some mention if there was another Language spoken at the Home. It was also suggested that at some point there might be a general Town Hall meeting called where people of different language groups might meet to discuss their situation (was that actually suggested?). Father Stan came in during this discussion. He was sympathetic with the situation and acknowledged that our Parish has a nice diverse mix; however, while that

is the case, few, if any, members of the groups listed have volunteered to help promote dialogue among their group and within the Parish as a whole.

4. Samantha then suggested that our Commission see if we could take the March Chapel meeting to help explain to the assembled commission members about the various forms of Social Media that Parish is employing to communicate St. Mary's message among our Parishioners and to the local community as a whole. She was referring to the various forms of Social Media (the printed Bulletin, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn). The Group again reflected on the increasing amount of pictures showing up within these communication outlets and their importance.
5. Dennis followed up on this discussion by asking what are we, the one-third active members of the Parish doing to get the two-thirds of our registered parishioners back as active members? Other members said that this was a big issue. The realization is there, there are no easy answers on how to solve this dilemma.
6. Samantha adjourned the Meeting since the regular Council Meeting was about to begin.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Wietchy