

## Evangelization Commission Meeting Notes

February 24, 2020

**Present:** Fr. Jim McNulty, Deacon Don Esler, Sharon Miller, M. George McConnell, Sandy Rogala, Richard McGraw, Matt Brandon, Diane Geverink

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m. with prayer led by Diane. Fr. Jim welcomed and introduced Deacon Don Esler as the new coordinator for the Evangelization Commission.

**Chairperson's Comments** - The big push for new members at the week-end Masses of 2/01&02 resulted in getting just a couple persons for welcoming and one family expressed interest in being welcoming mentors. Committee persons did sign up for welcoming at the 2/23 blood drive. The blood drive chairperson really liked the presence of the committee and said it was a big help. Likewise, welcoming for fish fry sign-ups need to be encouraged. It was discussed that mentoring cannot really start until we have a process in place. Question was asked how are mentors found for baptism and marriage candidates. It was suggested that the best success happens with approaching and asking people whom you have seen at church/events and perceive they may be a good fit for mentoring. Currently, we only have the one family. St. Edith has had an average of 80 new families registering per year. We need more mentors, but there was discussion of beginning of what we have and go from there. It was suggested that one telephone contact and inviting the new parishioner(s) to coffee&donuts, spaghetti dinner, coffee and conversation, movie night, family picnic, etc.

Updated the commission on the 2/11 Pastoral Council meeting. St Edith chosen by Diocese for Wave 2 (there are a total of 4) of Unleash the Gospel. Sharon along with other council members will attend kickoff meeting on 3/10 at Sacred Heart Seminary. Pastoral Council members have met with the U-M student team who is creating our parish survey. Draft survey will be provided by 3/10. Discussion on how the commission is doing with the current 2019-20 goals. Consensus we are doing well, but ways in which we can improve, such as:

**Fr. Jim's Comments** - There are four areas to focus for evangelization:

1. Follow up with new parishioners. This means to track who turns in a registration form. This is the point that a welcome packet is given out. The contents of the packet should be reviewed with the new parishioner, particularly the church directory with special attention focused on the commissions and various subcommittees. See if there is an area which interests them. The point is to have a conversation with them. Guidelines need to be set up for how Welcoming talks with people after registration, particularly going through the packet.

2. Volunteer opportunity of the month. Discussed showcasing one opportunity of the month, as we did for Welcoming Committee at February first week-end Masses. Announce at the end of those Masses that Evangelization and members of those groups will be available for questions/sign-up in the gathering area.

3. Grief support – There is currently running a 6-week program for grief support but this is for widows and widowers. This should be expanded to anyone experiencing a loss whether a parent, child, friend, someone close. This should be very do-able to implement as, in the case of DivorceCare, there is a program already set up.

4. Small Groups -There currently is nothing for the 55+ group. There is the New Dawn group for widows and widowers, but nothing for the senior group. This also should be very do-able to set up.

**Miscellaneous** – Discussed “Sharing Your Story” as it appears in the Bulletin. People willing to share stories but not comfortable speaking at the ambo. Perhaps host a “Share Your Story” event.

Some discussion on DivorceCare group. Leaders and participants feel it is a very good program, but participation has dropped off. It was felt that people still have a stigma about being divorced and feeling welcomed. It was stated that other non-Catholic churches have no problem attracting participants and others to sign-up for programs such as this, committees, small groups, etc. Father Jim suggested that in spite of all good sign-up efforts, which we should still continue, the best way of recruiting is by word of mouth. George said it was frustrating that neighboring parishes and vicariate would not put an ad in their bulletins for DivorceCare. It was suggested that an ad could be placed on the local community cable channel.

The letter that St. Edith sends out to welcome new parishioners was discussed. It was felt that the letter should be reworked to get the message of Welcome out first and foremost.

***Next Meeting – Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Fireside Room.  
Opening Prayer – Deacon Don; Closing Prayer – Sandy***

Thank you, Richard, for the yummy treats! Meeting closed with prayer led by Sharon and adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Written by: Diane Geverink