Parish Town Hall Minutes

May 8, 2021

Fr. Oscar started with a prayer.

18 People were present.

Fr. Oscar gave a vision for Religious Education to be family-oriented building our domestic churches based on the diocesan plan and V Encuentro. He stressed the difference between catechesis and doctrine.

Last year the staff planned to go to a Rebuilt conference cancelled due to COVID. Fr. Oscar hopes to send Suzanne and Taylor to the actual parish for training in the Rebuilt concept.

The purpose of the town hall is to share our ideas and get everyone’s ideas.

Suzanne made a presentation with her vision for Religious Education:

* Now have TVs in all classrooms for a more interactive experience and moving away from textbooks.
* Children would probably sit on the floor as a way to make a more homelike atmosphere over another classroom experience.
* Teachers were using the Sophia program which was expensive, and families were not following up as required.
* We have a new online program which will be used that is more interactive.
* This past year we had in person classes for Sacramental preparation only.
* Suzanne meets with DREs and Mike Martacchio from the diocese to discuss engagement of children and parents.
* The diocese has a soft rule of the children needing 30 hours of class time.
* The families coming to Mass with their children is the most important part o their formation.
* We had 300 kids last year.
* We only have 8 or 9 classrooms.
* Next year parents will attend with the kids.
* Parents are the first teachers.
* Parent meeting will happen once a month.
* First communion does not have to be 2nd grade.

Input from those attending:

* As parents, children hear us all the time.
* Kids may want to express thoughts without parent around.
* Parents attending may work for K – 5 but not for older kids.
* In RCIA, the older kids were very open in expressing their thoughts without parents present.
* There is a formation gap because when parents “graduated” at confirmation, they stopped being formed.
* How can we teach the children about the real presence in the Eucharist when the parents don’t understand it?
* Adult education programs are lacking at this time.
* We need to help people move from attending church only to attending adult formation.
* Fr. Oscar: All groups need to rediscover the Mass. Part of their faith is the Eucharist. It makes us different from all other churches. If hey fall in love with the Eucharist, we are gaining souls.
* Parish organizations have people faithful to groups, but they are not coming to Mass. The Eucharist should be the base of these groups. This is true in most parishes in the diocese.
* Fr. Oscar: Staff are Catholics so don’t be too busy for the celebration of the Eucharist. This will produce good fruits.
* There is a challenge of people being at Mass but not being fully present including many of our liturgical volunteers such as ushers and choir members.
* In Pennsylvania there was a parish that educated parishioners throughout the Mass helping them to be fully present as a form of interactive catechesis.
* Bishop Barron’s DVD on the Mass is excellent. We can put it on our webpage.
* Children learn by example!
* Children are being influenced by public school and are carrying that into their spiritual life.
* Crossword puzzles related to faith are very successful.
* Pope Francis: Faith is a personal experience, but it is not private.
* Our older generation was never taught about the Mass, so they didn’t teach their kids, and so on.
* Mass was taught to be a duty, an obligation. We need to change this mentality.
* Bring the kids into the church and teach them all the signs and ritualistic significance.
* Teach kids a sense of awe and respect.
* Give people a way to experience God and develop a sense of community.
* Bulletin articles with teachings on meaning of Mass.
* Fr. Oscar: This will be a long and difficult process. We can make change one person at a time.
* We have to integrate our parishioners into the life of the parish.
* The obligation mentality is harming our faith and churches.
* We are up against fun stuff that makes it easy to skip church.
* Use a back door approach of making learning fun for both kids and parents.
* There needs to be discipline as well.
* Fellowship and fun are part of our mission of being a community of joyful disciples. It is also away for people to experience our various cultures.

Catholic Charities now has a mobile shower unit that will serve in their area. We are looking for volunteers and leaders to work with this program. We will put something in the bulletin and announce it at Masses.

May crowning and the saints projects are happening tomorrow