



**Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Sudbury, MA**  
Parish Pastoral Council

Minutes, December 1, 2008 Meeting

In attendance:

From Parish Pastoral Council: Fr. Bova Conti, John Nicholson, Mike Carpenter, Pat Guthy, Michael LaScaleia, Beth Palmerino, Liz Radoski, John Riordan, Jim Roach, Jill Shanley  
Guest Attendees from Parish Finance Council: Joe Onorato, Roy Sanford, & Chairman Steve Knightly. (In an effort to foster understanding and communication between the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, Finance Council members were invited to participate in this Pastoral Council Meeting.)

The meeting began with evening prayer at 7:30 p.m., after which everyone at the meeting introduced themselves.

John Riordan welcomed the representatives from the Parish Finance Council who were in attendance and thanked them for their work and service on behalf of everyone in the parish.

Review of Council Meeting Minutes for Oct 6, 2008

After the evening prayer, the minutes for the previous council meeting held on Monday evening November 3 were distributed and reviewed.

Fr. Bova Conti then reviewed the responsibilities and organizational structure of both the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, each for the benefit of the other

John Riordan than reviewed the purpose of the joint meeting.

Steve Knightly agreed that it was beneficial for both councils to become more familiar with each other's mission, membership, and activities. He also mentioned the importance of looking at things from a Collaborative D perspective.

Deacon John Nicholson reviewed the discussion at the Collaborative D meeting on Tuesday, November 18 which he attended, and shared the meeting agenda with the group. He also shared that through conversations with other Deacons he learned that many other Parishes are doing no Pastoral Planning. He also mentioned that for the next Collaborative D meeting on Jan. 15th each parish representative is being requested to come to the meeting with a review of the top 2-3 highest priorities at their parish for sharing with the group and discussion.

Joe Onorato of the Finance Council suggested that before focusing in on initiatives, we should focus on what problems exist and which ones need to be solved. Steve Knightly mentioned that a time study of Father Bova Conti's activities (e.g., split between his ministerial and administrative duties) might be illuminating.

Fr. Bova Conti expressed his concerns, which he said are shared by many of the clergy in churches throughout Sudbury, that increasing secularization within Sudbury and diminishing participation in organized religion are common problems.

During further discussion on the best ways to approach Pastoral Planning Pat Guthy mentioned that we need a better understanding as to whether pastoral planning is a top-down or bottom-up process. She mentioned that we need a broader buy-in from the parish; she believes that many in the parish do not see that there is any problem. Jim Roach mentioned that it might be productive for the Collaborative D working group to share ideas on ways and means for parish laity to shoulder greater responsibility for some administrative functions. Steve Knightly concurred.

Steve Knightly briefly reviewed the parish budget with the group, after which there was extensive discussion about the possible negative effects of the weakening economy and the possibility of how budget short falls might be handled. For instance, the Grand Annual collection is currently running about 20% behind last year's contribution level and this is an important part of the parish's annual income. The sense was that if shortfalls become a reality that it would be appropriate to dip into the parish rainy day fund. Chairman Knightly cautioned, however, that we should be reluctant to make it a practice to routinely dip into the parish stabilization reserves. There was a consensus view from the Finance Council that we could weather the current storm with some postponements of 2009 capital projects, even though such projected costs are already fairly modest.

Prior to wrapping up the meeting, John Riordan confirmed that the next Pastoral Council meeting would take place on Monday evening, January 5. He also asked that issues which Parish and Finance Council members believe should be addressed at the next Collaborative D meeting in January should be e-mailed to Deacon John and Father Bova Conti.

#### Adjourn

After a prayer to Our Lady, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

*The next meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council is scheduled for Monday January 5, 2009 at the Parish Center.*