

## PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL BEGINNINGS

The first ten members of a revived Parish Pastoral Council met a little over a week ago to get to know each other and to begin the process of creating a viable structure for this group going forward. It was a lively two-hour meeting that perhaps raised more questions than answers, but that's OK; in fact it's a good thing that all those present offered a variety of suggestions that we can use to shape a Council that will best serve the needs of our parish, rather than a cookie-cutter version based totally on what other parishes might be doing.

As I've mentioned here in the several times I've written about this, the main purpose of a Parish Pastoral Council is to create a **vision** for the parish that will lead to greater **vitality** in the years to come. A good PPC doesn't try to micro-manage what's already going well, but rather imagines new ways to enliven a parish and seeks to support existing ministries and groups, assisting them in whatever way possible to thrive and to grow.

Although our Council will be a work in progress for at least the next several months, there was one thing everyone agreed on: the need to reach out to young people – teens, young adults, young families – to make them feel welcome and to find ways to help them become involved in parish life. To that end, we will be looking for two more members to add to the ten who have already offered to be part of this project. We want to find and invite a teen and a young adult/local college student/young parent to join us to bring the PPC membership to twelve (if it was good enough for Jesus it should be good enough for us). It would also be great if one of those two additional members were tech-savvy, since communicating with young people really requires those skills. We'll be actively reaching out to find these two; but if there's a teen or young adult out there who would like to become part of this important group, just let me know.

The other project certain to take up the time and energy of our Parish Pastoral Council at some point in the next couple of years will be *Renew My Church*, the collaborative process that will involve conversations with staff, parishioners and PPC's from St. Anne, St. Lawrence O'Toole, St. Emeric and IJP. The start times for the next groupings will be announced this week at the summer Presbyterate Meeting with Cardinal Cupich, but I would hope that we wouldn't be given a mere three-week notice if we were to be one of those groups scheduled to begin work in July.

Our next PPC meeting will be in mid-July and after that, when we are hopefully at full strength, I'll publish the names of those who have begun this important work of helping to make St. Joseph's an even stronger, more vital and more welcoming faith community.

Fr. Bob