



Reflections of the pastor after the AGM 11.24.15

Things I heard at the St. Ignatius Parish AGM:

Thanks to all those who came to the AGM (Annual General Meeting) last Thursday, November 19th, even though winter had just struck. It was gratifying to see over eighty parishioners present. Thanks also to Fr. Joe for getting the meeting started, for the succinct and informative reports given by PPC (Parish Pastoral Council) Co Facilitators Liz Polakoff and Martin Scanlon, by Jeannine Pistawka School Principal and School Board chair Andrew Hirst, by Bill Burns of the Maintenance Committee, and by Steve Ward of the PFC (Parish Finance Council). Thanks also to Steve Chipman for chairing the Open Forum and to Leslie Starosilic for taking minutes. Thanks to the Knights of Columbus for the wonderful wine and cheese party. I was glad that my sister, Marlene Miller, came from Regina to be a resource person to our Spiritual Exercises group that very afternoon and so was able to join me to provide a bit of entertainment.

I listened very carefully to those who approached the microphone to give responses, both questions and comments, to what they heard. The following are some high lights of what I heard from the community:

Regarding our Finances:

- There was a request for more practical direction to parishioners about weekly offerings. While the weekly Bulletin statement that our parish needs \$20,400.00 per week to operate and the report of the amount of the offerings collection for the week is useful, they do not help a parishioner know how much to give. Appreciation was voiced to the Parish Finance Committee for reporting that, aside from the larger weekly donors, 88% of our parishioners give an average of \$12.00 a week and for their suggestion that if everyone gave at least \$8.00 more per week our parish's financial picture would improve significantly.
- Frank Cvitkovitch brought the good news that St Ignatius Parish will receive two generous bequests in January. All were reminded to think of including our Parish in their wills.
- There was also a request to parishioners to use direct deposit PAC (Pre Authorized Contributions) for their offerings. It is particularly helpful during the summer months when many are at the lake. The parish still needs to pay its bills during that time.

Regarding an elevator:

- Some spoke providing encouragement to make quick progress on plans and action to make our Hall accessible to all people, not just those who can walk well. A conceptual design plan is in the works with a budget estimate expected early in the New Year.

Other things:

- Pastoral council reported about Pope Francis and the upcoming Year of Mercy and the plans being contemplated to help our parish focus on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
- A few voiced the need to make plans quickly to make better use of our facilities, e.g., the rectory.
- A hope was expressed that some younger members of the parish take on a fund raising project such as a dinner or social evening.

Regarding our School:

- It was pointed out that there is need to lobby the government to provide a more adequate financial support for students in Catholic elementary schools.
- There were a good number of strong voices in support of the proposal made in Reflections of the Pastor after 8 months. There were also caveats voiced, especially a concern that change to tuition based school may change the spirit within the school and that some parents will not send their children to our school.

(NB Please turn the page)

ACTION AFTER the AGM: Regarding the School proposal

Given the consensus of the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Council, the Parishioners present at the AGM, and the School Board, St. Ignatius Parish will adopt the following proposal for implementation for the year 2016 - 2017:

Based on the premise and policy: **Our school ministry to our children must always remain central to our parish. The policy that every student in the parish is entitled to attend our school regardless of the resources of the student's family remains sacrosanct.**

A tuition will be charged by the school for every student attending St. Ignatius School. Financial assistance will be available for all those students of our parish who need it. Families will apply to the pastor of the parish for that assistance indicating the amount of assistance they need and providing documentation to illustrate their financial state (e.g., an income tax return from the previous year as well as disclosing other financial information pertinent to their financial situation if they wish). That information will be rendered anonymous and vetted by an advisory committee appointed by the pastor. The pastor will meet with the families and make a final decision about the amount of the assistance the parish can provide. (In time, a Bursary fund will be established to provide ongoing assistance for families so that the revenue does not have to be coming from the Church operations.)

This structure will enable all students of our parish to attend St. Ignatius School; it will ensure privacy for the families, provide a clear rationale for decisions and maintain good stewardship of our parish resources; and it will enable our school to have a clearer financial basis on which to plan for the future.

This is a challenging direction for our parish and school and I trust that we will meet it with prayer and good will and hope. May God continually bless all of you.



Peace and prayers,

R. Frank Albright, S.J.