

# Church of St. Leo the Great

176 Ridgeway Avenue • Oakland, California 94611 • (510) 654-6177 • FAX (510) 654-4203



## Parish Council Agenda TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2003 7:30 in the Old Prayer Room

I. Opening Prayer

Angie Minor

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the November, 2003  
Will be handed out at the meeting.

III. Suggestions for  
Pastoral Councils

Chapter Four:  
Reading: Bernadette Lufrano  
(Remember to bring your  
copy of Suggestions)

IV. AGENDA

- A. Pastor's Report
- B. Christian Enrichment Ministries Report (see attachment #1).
- C. Pastoral Assistant Report (see attachment #2).
- D. School report
- E. Old Business
- F. New Business

Pastor  
Norah Hippolyte  
Norah Hippolyte  
Sonya Simril

V. Closing Prayer

Gil Adauto

VI. Hospitality

Evangeline Brown

- Attachments:
- 1. Christian Enrichment Ministries Report
  - 2. Pastoral Assistant Report
  - 3. Family Care Ministers Article
  - 4. Another Look at Demographics

## ATTACHMENT #1

Date: December 2003  
To: Parish Pastoral Council  
From: Norah Hippolyte  
Re: Christian Enrichment Ministries

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### **RCIA/RCIC**

We have arrived! The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens and the Rite of Welcoming of Candidates who are preparing for Confirmation/Eucharist or Reception into Full Communion of the Catholic Church was spirit filled. Those present experienced a church filled with prayers, support, love and Christ within their midst. We are a truly blessed community to have so many people participating in the initiation process. Some of those who participated in the Rite will not be receiving sacraments at this coming Easter Vigil, they will continue in the process.

### **CLW**

Children's Liturgy of the Word will not happen at two of this month's 11:00AM Masses. The Mass on Christmas day and the Mass on the Feast of the Holy Family.

### **Christian Enrichment**

The season of Advent provides a focus for active participation in the enrichment of our faith lives. It seems a good time to get people going to evening prayer on Wednesdays, Scripture Study on Tuesdays or Christian Meditation on Saturdays. Maybe people will be interested in family activities, etc.

### **Infant Baptism Preparation**

Two families came for baptism preparation in November. One family for the baptism of a second child and another family preparing for the baptism of their first child.

If you have questions, please feel most welcome to ask. I am available at the rectory on Wednesdays from 8:30A -5:00P, 7:30P-10:00P and Saturdays from 2:00P-4:30P. Or you can email me at [NHipp0@aol.com](mailto:NHipp0@aol.com) (that's a zero).

## ATTACHMENT #2

Date: December 2003

To: Parish Pastoral Council

From: Norah Hippolyte

Re: Pastoral Assistant Report

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### Advent Penance Service

The Communal Reconciliation Service will be celebrated at 2:00PM and 7:30PM on Tuesday, December 16. In addition to priests we need two people to read at each service.

### Social Events

This month we are planning to celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family on December 28 with a gathering at 5:00PM in the Fr. Lacey Room.

### Stewardship

In January, we will be sending out the annual stewardship appeal to all parishioners. What is a stewardship parish?

### Evangelization

The Theology on Tap team has started to plan for the spring series. The start date is in April.

### Registration

We have registered approximately 4 families this past month.

# Family Care ministers say 'I've been there'

The Catholic Voice, November 17, 2003

By Sharon Abernombis  
Staff writer

Bruce and Marie Gordon's perfectly healthy 16-year-old son died overnight from a fast-acting blood infection. Monika Klein's 27-year abusive marriage ended abruptly when her husband walked out.

Although their reasons for grief were different, both the Gordons and Klein shared a common feeling — isolation. "I thought I was the only one who ever had anything like this to happen," recalled Klein.

Reflected Bruce Gordon, "when Michael died, the whole family thing came crashing down. Both Marie and I fell so alone and we wondered, 'What now?'" The Gordons knew the statistics, which put the divorce rate at 75 percent among couples who lose a child. They were scared.

But this trio's tears and isolation began dissolving after they linked up with bereavement and divorce support groups that are part of Family Care Ministry at the Catholic Community of Pleasanton.

## Family Care

"I've been there, I understand" is the bedrock of the parish's Family Care, explains Father Padraig Greene, who directs the program. "It is the like-minded ministering to the like-minded. Each has its own focus."

Teams of caring family ministers helped the Gordons and Klein mend their broken hearts. Then Father Greene invited them to join his training program for new family ministers. They accepted and today are among the 117 family ministers in the community's diverse collection of support and enrichment groups.

Most of the sessions are held weekly at the community's two sites — St. Elizabeth's and St. Augustine — for a month or less, depending on the type of group and its particular focus. Some of the social groups meet off-site at local pubs and cafes.

There are groups for bereaved families, widows and widowers, divorced and separated, single moms, breast cancer survivors, as well as for those seeking to enrich their lives.

Each group is mentored and guided by more ministers. When the divorce support group meets, for example, there will be at least 15 ministers there to facilitate when the group of up to 60 breaks into smaller sharing circles. Other ministers will be on hand to provide refreshments. Many of the ministers also work one-on-one, especially with people in the bereavement groups.

There are groups for people who aren't in the midst of a crisis but who hunger for friendship and affirmation — like isolated, going-up-the-wall moms who have no one to talk to all day but their two-year-olds. When these meetings are held, their husbands get recruited to baby sit. These dads, in turn, are invited to become part of their own social get-together, which eventually turns into a support group.

## Blessing of mothers

For expectant couples and their extended families, there are twice yearly Masses that include a blessing of mothers.

Other groups offer support for parents of gay and lesbian children, basic classes in the 'how to' parenting of kids from babies to teens, and tips for successful merging of stepfamilies.

Engaged couples meet with veteran marrieds who prepare them for the necessity of moving beyond the romance of the wedding day and into the good, difficult and mundane of married life.

Gregor Markel and his wife, Michelle, help facilitate this group. As an engaged couple nearly a decade ago, they participated in the parish's pro-Cana program.



Monika Klein invites fellow parishioners to join the Family Care ministry program during a recent ministry fair.

When Father Greene introduced his Family Care ministry four years ago, the Markels decided they wanted to give something back to their parish, so they asked if he would train them as family ministers.

Married couples can sign up for a series of maintenance and retuning evenings temptingly titled "If I'd Only Known," "The Goodbyes of Marriage" and "Where the Rubinet Meets the Ford." This program includes a gala Valentine dance, complete with renewal of wedding vows and childcare.

For families in crisis, Father Greene asks the couples to reevaluate the source of their problems, examine the glitches that have developed during the years of their relationship, and identify the dysfunctional behaviors they've brought with them from their own families.

"If we do not transform this pain, we will transmit it," he said. As an example, he cites the cycle of family violence which, as a learned behavior, can be unlearned.

## Training

Father Greene trains all the ministers, who must write papers recounting some of their own journeys as part of the training process. They have their own initiation rite the first night they take charge.

Monika Klein recalls her talk when she acknowledged, "I'm German so I didn't know I had any feelings. After my divorce I was sad for a week, and then I shoved all my sadness into a drawer and shut it. The feelings didn't come back out, till I started talking to Father Greene."

Klein had languished in denial for 14 years until she found the family care program four years ago. "Since then I have learned how to deal with the sadness and go on with life. I had thought I was happy then, but now I know I am. But it took a lot of work to get to this place."

That's what other family ministers who have "been there" say.

"I now recognize the possibility of having a contented happy life even though I experienced a huge loss," said Bruce Gordon. His wife, Marie, said the group "helped me not to feel alone, and allowed me to stay in this sad loving place as long as I needed to." She also credits the group with "bringing Bruce and me closer together."

The Pleasanton program is an American



Father Padraig Greene (right) speaks at a retreat for Family Care ministers.

counterpart of a project Father Greene piloted 16 years ago in the West Ireland Diocese of Elphin. His bishop had envisioned a diocesan family ministry program based on Pope John Paul II's 1981 paper on the Family in the Modern World, "Familiaris Consortio."

Father Greene, then dean of students at a Catholic boys' boarding school, was recruited by his bishop to get a master's degree in family ministry at Fordham University in New York. Back in Ireland several years later, the priest set up his new program. His first support group for the Boyle Family Life Centre met at a corner table inside the pub of a downtown hotel.

Later, with the aid of government grants, Father Greene purchased a site, which eventually included a residence for battered wives and their children. To date, there are three family life centers operating in the Elphin Diocese.

In 1996, Irish national television devoted

its prime time Sunday night slot to the Boyle Family Life Centre. Father Greene came to the United States a few months later to attend a sabbatical program at the School of Applied Theology in Berkeley, and decided to remain in northern California. He brought the Boyle Family Life Centre model to the Catholic Community of Pleasanton in 1999.

What is happening in Pleasanton and West Ireland can happen anywhere, said Father Greene. It involves, trains and then supervising a team of committed lay ministers.

"Jesus' great commandment is to love one another. We enable people to do this here by helping them to find God in their selves and one another."

He quotes Albert Schweitzer who believes, best sums up the philosophy of family care ministry. "Those who bear the mark of pain are never really free. They give it to others who are still on the journey."

# Piedmontage

ATTACHMENT

ANOTHER LOOK AT  
DEMOGRAPHICS:  
THIS IS FOR ALL  
OF PIEDMONT. 65%  
OF PIEDMONT IS  
WITHIN OUR  
PARISH BOUNDARIES  
AND THAT MAKES UP  
60% OF OUR PARTSH  
IN THE SENSE OF  
BOUNDARIES ONLY.

PIEDMONT POST, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2003

## Giving thanks for Piedmont (and its numbers)

By Jeff Wieler

Thanksgiving shouldn't be the only time of year when we give thanks for the blessings in our life. In addition to family, friends and health, I'm also grateful to live in a town as comfortable - and unusual - as Piedmont. Because I'm a "numbers guy," I'll use the 2000 U.S. Census to take a closer look at the place we all call home.

We're still small, with a population of 10,952, and we have fewer than 3800 homes. We all have our mental images of small East Coast communities, seemingly unchanged since Colonial days. And in fact, 99 of the 100 cities with the oldest housing stock are east of the Mississippi. Leading the list is Whiting, Indiana (pop. 5137), with the age of the average house 67.2 years. Piedmont is No. 2 nationally, with an average home 66 years old. And just like the old Avis commercial, we're trying harder.

Old our houses may be, but they're still valuable. Piedmont home values are the 23rd highest in the nation. We're the East Bay's leader, ahead of Alamo (28th), Blackhawk (30th), and Orinda (47th). In the Bay Area, only the Peninsula ridge from Hillsborough (No. 3 in the U.S.) south to Los Altos Hills (11th), is more costly. And of course, we have the best views!

We pay a lot to live here. 70% of us have a mortgage. Eight lucky families pay between \$300 and \$500 a month, but 1877 pay more than \$2500 a month. Overall, our average mortgage is \$30,400 a year, and 25% of Piedmont households devote more than a third of their income to housing costs. And that's as close as I'm going to get to the property tax issue this week... I promise.

So, who lives inside these old but costly homes? Not surprisingly, we make a lot of money. With a median household income of \$134,270, we rank 31st in the country, barely behind Wolf Trap, Virginia. On the other end of the spectrum, Piedmont has 116 households living on less than \$15,000 a year, 410 living on less

than \$25,000, and 29 households relying on public assistance.

We probably enjoy our healthy incomes because we're an educated lot (12th in the nation). In California, only Stanford (No. 1 nationally) and Los Altos Hills (11th) boast a greater percentage of Bachelor degrees. Superb school systems like Piedmont's attract highly educated parents. As a result, nearly one-third of all residents are under 18, and more than a third are in the 35-54 age group. Our under-represented age group is young adults. Piedmont has about as many residents over the age of 75, as it does between the ages of 20 and 35.

Digging down deeper, we find nearly 79% of Piedmonters are of European descent, 11% Chinese, and 3% Hispanic. Japanese and Koreans (1.3% each), other Asian origins (2.1%), and African Americans (1.2%), help round out the mix. 12% of us were born outside the United States, and 18% of us speak a language other than English at home.

Contrary to public belief, only 503 Piedmonters are in the legal profession, and they're outnumbered by the 632 who work in sales. Health care industry (464) and education (413) are also widely represented. Surprisingly for an urban area, Piedmont has 7 people who support themselves by hunting and fishing, and 6 through mining.

On average, it takes us about 27 minutes to get to work, although almost 10% Piedmont residents commute an hour or more each way. To get to work, 63% drive, 17% carpool, 10% take public transportation, and 8% carry a cup of coffee to their home office. More people ride motorcycles (9) than ferry boats (7), and 37 ride bicycles - at least in decent weather.

Whether you get to your table by car, bike, ferry or foot, I hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

*Jeff Wieler is a member of the Piedmont City Council, and welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached by e-mail at [JWieler@ci.piedmont.ca.us](mailto:JWieler@ci.piedmont.ca.us), or by phone at 428-1648.*

**Parish Council 12/09/2003**  
**Church of St. Leo the Great**

**Attendees:** Fr. Tim K Johnson, Nora Hippolyte, Gil Aauto, Joseph Loduca, Stephen Howe, Charles Gittings, Elma Penaranda, Angie Minor, Evangeline Brown, Bernadette Lufrano, Stanton Jones.

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** None

**Hospitality:** Evangeline Brown

**Opening Prayer:** Angie Minor

**Closing Prayer:** Gil Aauto

**Corrections:**

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:40PM

**Approval of Parish Council Minutes**

First – Nora Hippolyte

Second – Charles Gittings

**Readings from Suggestions for Pastoral Councils**

Bernadette Lufrano – Chapter Four – *Organizing your Pastoral Council*

The parish must first decide which type of council that it wants, whether it is to take a more proactive or reactive approach. From there it can decide the characteristics and qualities of the members that make up the council. These members can be formed when involved through parish functions and activities.

Many pastoral councils should take greater responsibilities in planning the spiritual and pastoral life of the community. Once councils are developed, days of discernment are helpful.

*Reactions to the reading:*

A day of discernment is a good idea for our parish council so it is put on the January agenda items.

**Pastor's Report**

A light to light the back end of the building at night was talked about. EFT has 7 – 8 signups so far. We are about \$7000 under budget in terms of income. Money is needed next year to touch up the rectory paint. The parish still has no budget guidelines from the diocese.

## **Faith Formation**

### *RCIC*

Nora feels good about the reconciliation service to be held 12/16 at 2:00PM and 7:00PM.

### *Children's Liturgy of the Word*

Normal celebrations that occur during Advent will prevent two CLW from occurring during two masses this month.

### *Christian Enrichment*

Advent is a good time to get people started in Wednesday evening prayers and Scripture Study on Tuesdays or Christian Meditations on Saturdays.

### *Infant Baptism Preparation*

Two families started baptism preparation in November.

### *First Reconciliation*

## **Pastoral Assistant Report**

### *Advent Penance Service*

### *Social Events*

The Feast of the Holy Family will be celebrated 12/28 at 5:00PM in the Fr. Lacey Room. A bake sale is planned for 12/21. Concerned citizens for medical professionals will be around 12/14 to talk to parishioners.

### *Stewardship*

The annual stewardship appeal will be sent to all parishioners in January 2004. The bishop raised the annual appeal from \$13,700 to \$14,500. The increase in money is going to catholic schools among other things.

### *Evangelizations*

Theology on Tap will begin the spring series in April 2004.

### *Registration*

Four families have been registered in November.

## **School Report**

A school demographics report was passed out. The Christmas boutique was held Sunday 12/7 and turned out well with a good turnout. School Christmas holiday will be 12/17-1/6. The school management report will not be out until the end of the month. It may be helpful for the advisory board to meet with the parish council.

**Old Business:**

A bench committee is to meet to determine a site for a permanent bench structure to be put in the church yard. The annual parish picnic will be in the same location at Lake Temescal as this past summer's stream spite. A reservation has been made for 9/12/2004. We were contacted by a Russian singing group looking for venues in the 9 – 10/2004 vicinity.

Stewardship goals –

Gil will ask for Colombo club availability dates for a potential dance fundraiser for spring 2004.

**New Business**

A discussion was held on how we can involve people. We should be looking at more ways to get people together for needs that may arise for fellow parishioners. Charles suggested that we put an ad in bulletin for acolytes, lecturers and Eucharistic ministers. The current numbers are low for those participating. Council members should be looking around for other parishioners to be involved. We should consider possibly starting a Novena that ends with Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration.