

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
December 6, 2017**

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Beverly Beatty (chair), Frank Lee (vice-chair), Joe Arroyo, Marianne Canetti, Mac Chapman, Jack Creeden, Carl Mossberg, Bill Munday, Chris Ratliff, Megan Tilles, Kelly Tramontin, Gayle Plecha, and Katie Dante as the staff representative.

Absent: Onyi Onyeador (youth rep.), Andrew Leung (youth alt.)

Guests: Paul Leo (Seekers)

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and welcomed the guests.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Mac Chapman.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Mass of Remembrance Feedback

Msgr. Sork asked for feedback from anyone who attended the Mass of Remembrance. Joe Arroyo thought it was very moving. Marianne Canetti felt it was a positive and meaningful Mass. This is a very wonderful tradition at St. John Fisher. Beverly Beatty shared that it was a very powerful experience, and Msgr. Sork does an amazing job. The lighting of the candles is very impressive.

Treasury Commitment Process Feedback

Msgr. Sork and Gayle Plecha are involved in the treasury commitment process each year. He is always concerned that it is done efficiently and effectively, so he asked Pastoral Council for their thoughts on the process. Megan Tilles felt that the music should be cut back when having the homily and treasury commitment process so that the Mass isn't so long. Msgr. Sork asked where the music could be eliminated. Msgr. Sork shared that he requests that all the priests have a shorter homily during these types of collections. Carl Mossberg didn't feel that Mass was too long. If people have to leave, then leave; but those who can stay should be able to enjoy the Mass. Chris Ratliff said that more ushers are needed to make the commitment process go more quickly. Beverly Beatty said that other parishioners, in addition to the ushers, could be invited to participate in the collection process. Gayle Plecha said more ushers are needed in general, so she asked Pastoral Council to think of people who might be ushers and invite them to participate. Joe Arroyo said it's a constant challenge to fine tune things. Carl Mossberg suggested asking people from the various ministries to help with the collection process. Bill Munday said the Knights of Columbus might be able to help at these collections too. Kelly Tramontin said that fundraising is very difficult and talking about money is uncomfortable. The Mass seems broken in half by the appeal for money, and she feels it is jarring. She said a couple other parishioners feel the same way. One suggestion is to ask parishioners about the time and talent commitments before asking for their treasury commitment. It may feel more genuine and not as harsh. Some schools spend money on a well-done booklet that shares what is happening in the school and then has a section about the fundraising.

Advent Activities

Giving Tree - Frank Lee said normally the collections occur during the four Sundays of Advent. They are consolidating it to three Sundays since Christmas Eve occurs on the fourth Sunday of Advent. This year they had a large amount of donations for the first Sunday. Christian Family Movement collects the gifts and stores them in the auditorium. There will only be one distribution this year on December 18th at 7:00 PM. If you would like to help, please arrive at 4:30 PM in the auditorium to set up the gifts. Please be prompt. Last year there were so many gifts and within three minutes all the gifts were gone. Gayle Plecha said people are bringing gift cards and cash to the Parish Office. She also said that the gift card box in the church must be emptied every day as there has been some theft in the church.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception (Holy day of obligation) – The Vigil Mass is Thursday, December 7th at 5:30 PM and the holy day Masses are Friday, December 8th at 6:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 11:00 AM (school Mass) and 7:30 PM. Gayle Plecha asked for Pastoral Council's help with the collection.

Christmas Concert – The St. John Fisher choir will be performing their Christmas concert on Sunday, December 10th at 3:00 PM. Beverly Beatty asked for Pastoral Council's help with handing out programs, ushering for the collection and the reception after the concert. She asked everyone to pray and discern if this is something they could help with, and please let her know.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – The procession, reception and potluck with mariachis begins with the 5:15 PM Mass on Tuesday, December 12th.

Simbang Gabi – Beverly Beatty shared the information from Mely de Leon about Simbang Gabi. The event is free, but everyone must have a ticket. Volunteers are needed for set up, clean up and participation. The event begins with the 5:15 PM Mass on December 16th followed by a celebration in Barrett Hall. It's a very beautiful experience.

Penance Service – The Advent Penance service is Monday, December 18th at 7:30 PM. Msgr. Sork will try to get as many priests as possible in order to keep the lines short.

Msgr. Sork added that parishioners must attend Mass on Sunday, December 24th in addition to attending Mass for Christmas.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of November Minutes

Frank Lee asked for corrections to the November minutes. Hearing none, Jack Creeden moved to approve the November minutes as presented. Carl Mossberg seconded. The minutes were approved.

End of Mass Blessings

Bill Munday reminded members that he and Megan Tilles created some additional and alternative “end of Mass” blessings and brought them to the last meeting. It was determined these would continue on a weekly basis. The next step was to narrow them down to a final list. Beverly Beatty passed around their proposed draft announcements. They want to have many announcements so that they don’t get boring. Bill asked the members to scan the list and check whether to delete or keep each statement. Kelly Tramontin asked if there was any hard data on why people are leaving Mass early. If that information is known, it might help target what to say in the announcements. Msgr. Sork felt that people initially thought it was okay to leave after communion. Kelly suggested putting something in the bulletin about whether or not it’s okay to leave Mass early. Joe Creeden said to appeal to people to celebrate Mass for an hour and 15 minutes. The messages need to have a positive tone and not a reprimanding tone. Chris Ratliff enjoys hearing the messages and doesn’t take them as negative; it’s just a characteristic of St. John Fisher. Marianne Canetti doesn’t see it as a burden. Carl Mossberg also enjoys the messages. Marianne said she was told, “You wouldn’t get up and leave someone’s home after eating their food, so why would you leave Mass after Communion”. Kelly said the messages may make people feel like they’re not part of the community if they have to leave Mass early. Msgr. Sork said parishioners may leave when the priest says, “Go in peace”. People don’t have to stay until the choir finishes singing; they sing to accompany people as they leave the church. Megan Tilles suggested having the priests explain why people should stay until the end of Mass during their homily. Having an explanation may help get more people to stay. Bill welcomes any edits or anyone writing additional messages. They will look at the results and get back to Pastoral Council. Msgr. Sork thanked Bill and Megan for their work.

Implementation of Synod on the Family

Divorce and Beyond Ministry – Cathy Alessandra spoke about this new ministry. She had approached Msgr. Sork and Fr. Francis about starting the ministry at SJF. She spoke with the staff at Family Life and got the tools to start it at SJF. They currently have 8 -12 members who meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. It’s geared toward those who are separated or divorced but not widowed. They offer resources to help people process through a divorce, and they’ve published it to other churches in the area. Cathy shared that she was going through a divorce and wanted to bring something to SJF. She had gone through the Stephen Ministry program so she had some training in dealing with grief. The ministry seems to be well-received with the parishioners who are attending and helps with the extreme pain and mourning process they are going through especially when they may not be receiving support from others. Msgr. Sork thanked Cathy for taking the initiative to start this ministry. This was an underrepresented group, and as part of the pastoral plan, Pastoral Council wanted to reach out and support them through their struggles. Cathy thanked Msgr. Sork for his support as there is a lot of confusion and stigma attached to being divorced. Cathy passed out her flyer. All calls go directly to her personal cell phone.

LGBT Presentation – The presentation with Dr. Elizabeth Taylor will take place on January 18th. This is a hot topic and has been met with some resistance. The church needs to be welcoming, sensitive and compassionate. There have been some

negative comments from parishioners who haven't read Fr. James Martin's book. Some people feel this event doesn't affect them. Gayle Plecha said it is getting attention since it's been in the bulletin. Msgr. Sork received a call from a former pastor at Holy Family in Pasadena. He said Dr. Taylor is wonderful, and she will be a great speaker. She doesn't share her personal opinions. Misty Jesse did a great job finding this speaker. Frank Lee recommended that all Pastoral Council members attend if possible. If they are inviting the community, then the council members should attend as well. Joe Arroyo recommended using the words "SJF Community" when sharing the information about the event. Katie Dante is planning on inviting the confirmation candidates and their parents to the presentation. Chris Ratliff brought a bulletin from St. Matthew Catholic Church in Charlotte, NC. This is the largest parish in the United States with 12,000 families, and 2,000 people attending each Mass. Beverly Beatty read a statement from the front of their bulletin that applies to being a welcoming church. Beverly asked if something similar could be added to SJF's bulletin. The majority of the members really liked what was written. Msgr. Sork asked Chris Ratliff to contact someone at St. Matthew about adopting their statement and possibly giving them some type of credit for it. If approved, Msgr. Sork would like to present this statement to Pastoral Staff for their feedback.

Los Angeles Religious Education Congress

The R.E. Congress is March 16 -18, 2018 in Anaheim. Beverly Beatty gave everyone a registration booklet. Fr. James Martin will be talking about his book at one of the presentations. Msgr. Sork said he will be attending his 49th congress. It's the biggest of its kind and makes you proud to be Catholic. The exhibit hall is amazing, and SJF has a wonderful hospitality room.

Other

- Bill Munday complimented the new bindings on the Missals.
- Megan Tilles loves the new bulletins; they're colorful and interesting.

The meeting was concluded at 8:27 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Acherman