



# SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

APRIL 15, 2018

Dear Parishioners:

Among the many ministries that are available here at St. John Fisher, I would like to take the opportunity to familiarize you with a particular ministry that by intent remains in the background but which provides a wonderful service to people experiencing a personal crisis. I am referring to Stephen Ministry.

Stephen Ministry has served our parish community and some neighboring parishes since 1985 and operates mainly through third-party referrals and a dedicated phone line (310-541-1403). There have been more than 265 parishioners who have gone through the training and over the years helped more than 1100 care receivers. If you have never heard of Stephen Ministry, it may well be because they perform their work under a confidentiality mandate on behalf of the care receiver.

The Stephen Minister provides one-on-one Christian care to the hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed, relocated, and others who are going through a crisis, feeling alone and in need of a sympathetic ear. They meet with his or her care receiver typically an hour a week as long as the care receiver needs this level of care, sometimes years. Stephen Ministers are schooled initially and on an ongoing basis for the delicate role of Christian care giving and participate in regular process reviews with supervision. In some circumstances a person is referred to professionals for deeper-level counseling.

The care receivers should, with the grace of God, receive quality Christ-centered, confidential care for their hurts and needs. Through this process they feel supported by the parish community in times of personal difficulty, receiving ongoing care for continuing needs long after a crisis, and after others may have forgotten about them. In the process care receivers often grow in a deeper relationship with the Lord as they appreciate the Lord's unconditional love for them through their Stephen Minister.

As you walk into our Church, you may notice a diamond with the words of John's Gospel etched in it: "Love one another as I love you." This indeed is what Stephen Ministry is about and what the Stephen Ministers hope that those whom they encounter will experience.

You may have heard one of the Stephen Ministers share his or her story at Sunday morning Masses on April 15. I wanted them to do this, so that more people may be aware of this wonderful ministry.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David A. Sork', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork  
Pastor