

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
May 6, 2020 – Zoom Meeting**

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Chris Ratliff (chair), Joe Arroyo (vice chair), Janos Bakos, Sheila Bloodgood, Dana Hargrave, Steve Izuno, Carl Mossberg, Bill Smith, Megan Tilles, Dave Williams, Gayle Plecha, and Anne-Marie Hudani as the staff representative

Absent: Kelly Tramontin, Roya Adli (youth rep), Chiby Onyeador (youth alt.)

Guest(s): Bev Fink

Note: The meeting was a Zoom video conference as a COVID-19 mitigation measure.

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:01 pm.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Steve Izuno.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Feedback

Livestream Services

- Msgr. Sork reported that the 8:00 am daily Masses and 9:00 am Sunday Masses are now livestreamed due to the closure of the church. He thanked Dave Bloodgood and the video ministry for all their daily work. Dana Hargrave said all the livestream services exceed her expectations. Carl Mossberg has really enjoyed the livestream Masses. Msgr. Sork reported the number of views for the following Masses:

- Palm Sunday – 2,602; Holy Thursday – 586, even with the power surge and glitches in the software; Good Friday – 1,002; Easter Vigil – 707; Easter – 2,525
- Daily – average 225
- Sunday – average 1,500 – 2,000
- Divine Mercy Sunday exposition and chaplet - 370

- Gayle Plecha said annual headcount in October 2019 reported 1,800 people attending weekly Mass, indicating the consistency of the livestream viewership numbers.

- Msgr. Sork said there are two statistics: how many are watching live and how many watch later in the day.

- Sheila Bloodgood reported that metrics show people from all over the world are watching.

- Msgr. Sork said he decided the day after the church closure that all three priests would begin concelebrating Mass every day via livestream so that people would know they are in this together. Chris Ratliff feels it is a comfort to have all three priests present at each Mass and it adds so much to the services.

- Sheila Bloodgood likes Msgr. Sork's comments at the end of each Mass.

- Carl Mossberg likes having the song sheets to print from the website so he can sing along on Sunday. Msgr. Sork said there is now a daily song sheet, and he encourages active participation from viewers.

Parish finance update

Gayle Plecha said that weekly giving during the pandemic is down only 10% for the entire month of April 2020 vs. April 2019 due to increased giving via Faith Direct. There had already been a steady number of people signing up for Faith Direct and it's now jumped quite a bit.

Access to Priests

- Msgr. Sork said guidelines for personal contact pose a challenge. For example, priests originally were able to hear confessions, but he had to make other arrangements when the church closed. Sick calls really depend on the restrictions of the institution and adhering to their guidelines. If it's a COVID-19 case, they can't do it because the priest would be quarantined for the following fourteen days.

- Chris Ratliff said some parishioners commented to him that the priests were accessible when needed.

Impact of office closure

Msgr. Sork said they were required to close the office to the public, but they could still do business. There is a receptionist answering phones Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. It is important to him that callers hear a live voice. Msgr. Sork said he is very proud of the way Mercedes Castillon has been able to counsel some of the callers. A caller can reach Msgr. Sork after hours by dialing extension 123 and leaving a message if he doesn't pick up directly.

Impact on SJF Ministries

Chris Ratliff asked PC members to share how the lockdown has affected the ministries in which they participate.

- Carl Mossberg said Mission Circle was able to send \$15,000 to Fr. Tony in Peru to help finance some of their projects. The Mission has been affected by the closure of transportation and some of their centers, but they're trying their best to continue a normal life.

- Dana Hargrave said PV Resale is closed and they have no idea when it will reopen since most of the volunteers are over the age of 60. Lost opportunities for charity support amount to about \$40,000-\$50,000 for each month of closure. She also reported that the March chorale concert had to be canceled. They hope to perform in the fall. She said she is unable to take a Virtus refresher course as well.

- Chris Ratliff said the COA Long Beach kitchen and dining room are closed, but there is still a need for food. The various SJF Hot Food Ministry teams figured out a way to make and deliver 120 sack lunches.

- Dave Williams said the Family Promise of the South Bay families have been staying at the day center. The hosting churches have been providing the meals to the day center when possible. It is unclear when they will rotate through the churches again.

Faith Formation

- Confirmation – Msgr. Sork said it was supposed to be last Saturday, May 2. He doesn't have a new date, but he assured the youth that they will be confirmed and that he might be the one doing it.

- First Communion – Msgr. Sork said it was always done in small groups during the Sunday Mass, but it may need to be done differently now.

- Livestream Youth Bible Study – Zack Zuvich has been using livestream services that archive to YouTube for Bible studies. Megan Tilles has listened to a couple of the online Bible studies and thought they were good.

- RCIA – The catechumens who should have been baptized at the Easter Vigil and the Inquirers now meet via Zoom with Misty Jesse. She has had great participation.
- Religious Education – Margaret Johnson posted many aids to sjf.org that parents can use with their children. She records and posts a video of the Liturgy of the Word for children to YouTube of each week.
- Misty Jesse’s Online Bible Study: Book of Revelation – Her four-part scripture series is now on YouTube. Misty has had 425 views. She will be uploading the Book of Matthew next. Gayle Plecha said having it online greatly widens the audience. Carl Mossberg has enjoyed listening to Revelation online. Thanks to Chris Acherman for transcribing each of the units.

Sense of Community Across the Parish

- Role of SJF Social Media – Msgr. Sork said we are blessed with social media to create a sense of community.
- Use of weekly bulletin posted online – Msgr. Sork reported that SJF is not printing the bulletin during the church closure, but it is still posted to sjf.org, the principal form of remote connectivity with parishioners
- Other information sources of connectivity.
 - Gayle Plecha said the receptionists were calling all the parishioners in the database to check on them. Some parishioners volunteered to help with this process. 99% of the responses have been overwhelmingly positive. She also reported that Bill Munday and the Knights of Columbus are available to help parishioners in need, but not much help is needed at this time.
 - Chris Ratliff said either Gayle Plecha or Misty Jesse has been sending out emails to the ministry leaders with information from Archbishop Gomez, which the ministry leaders have passed along to their contacts.

Looking Ahead: Pastor’s Expectations

Msgr. Sork said the church is closed through May 15 and he expects more extensions but hopes we can re-open before August, while adhering to guidance from the governor and the archbishop. He does not know what restrictions will be in place as the church opens up. He recounted that the Sunday before Palm Sunday, a restriction was in place to allow no more than 250 people in the church, and SJF was prepared to have overflow with proper social distancing in the Parish Activity Center (PAC). A similar use of the PAC is a possible strategy for the re-opening, depending on specific guidelines from the Archdiocese.

Capital Campaign Update – public announcement postponed (but already announced in 3/15 bulletin)

- Msgr. Sork said he was prepared to make the kickoff announcement on the day of the shutdown. At the time of the shutdown, \$5 million of the \$8 million goal had been pledged. The Capital Campaign Committee is still meeting and decided to postpone the announcement until further notice.
- Gayle Plecha added that people are continuing to pay their pledges, which is encouraging.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of March Minutes

- Chris Ratliff asked for corrections to the March minutes.

- Hearing none, Dana Hargrave moved to approve the March minutes as presented. Joe Arroyo seconded. The minutes were approved.

PC Membership Nominating Committee

- Chris Ratliff said there was a pulpit announcement and bulletin notice, and he sent Pastoral Council members an email asking them to help recruit candidates. The deadline for applications is May 15th. The plan is to hear the candidates and have the election at the June meeting, but the Council members need to be flexible as to how the June meeting will take place. So far three nomination packets have been submitted and more are expected.
 - Msgr. Sork said that having many applicants to consider helps the Council members with discernment.
 - Joe Arroyo said the pastoral plan is now on the website to use as a recruiting aid.

Principal Anne-Marie Hudani: SJF School Update

Anne-Marie Hudani reported that it was very difficult initially going to online learning as they had never done it before and had to scramble.

- There is still a lot of work to do. She is in the office and the staff and teachers are in and out as well.
 - While working to get access to Google Classroom, they copied and scanned paperwork to families. Younger children were on Seesaw Classroom. They are now definitely in the swing of online learning, though the workload for the teachers is so much more than in the classroom. The parents are most appreciative
 - The teachers teach from home offices using Zoom and Google classroom. There is no charge for schools to use Zoom, and there's no time limit either. Zoom has addressed their security vulnerabilities.
 - Reports cards will be written narratives.
 - A plan is coming together for the 8th grade graduation. The ceremony may be in the church since there are only 14 students in the class. The parents could attend, and it could be livestreamed for the rest of the family members.
 - Some new families have been accepted into the school, and they are looking forward to starting.
 - She applied to the C3 IGNITE Grant Program for iPads from the Archdiocese. They were not successful last year, but this year they were awarded 150 iPads, which will arrive during summer break. Each of the teachers will get one, and the students can check them out to bring home.
 - Mary Claire McQuade, who taught religion, is retiring and returning to Omaha. Mrs. Gradoville, a current 2nd grade teacher, will be the new religion coordinator. The school needs to hire a new 2nd grade teacher to take her position. A part-time P.E. teacher is also needed. Please direct anyone you know to Anne-Marie Hudani.

2019 – 2020 Pastoral Plan Objectives:

Team Leaders' Briefs

- Objectives 2, 4, 5
- Objective 1, 3, 6 and 7: reporting complete
- *Objective #2 - We will seek opportunities to witness at Mass in various ways to help make the Gospel come alive.*
 - Carl Mossberg said there has been no action since the last meeting.

- Chris Ratliff suggested that it's a good time to work with Fr. Francis to identify people and then recruit them to talk at the Sunday Masses once the church opens.
- Gayle Plecha said they should look at the objective differently during the lockdown. Think of something creative that can be done now.
- Dana Hargrave suggested an "after Mass show" on the livestream.
- Chris Ratliff mentioned a podcast.

• *Objective #4 - We will support ministries and provide opportunities for their continued success by promoting volunteerism.* Dana Hargrave reported that SJF has very active and robust ministries competently overseen by Misty Jesse and other parish leaders. Activity has and will continue to be seriously limited by the Coronavirus pandemic and the path forward needs to be considered in light of this crisis. Key recommendations going forward are:

- Continue to promote and support volunteerism and key ministries from the pulpit.
- Recruit strong, dedicated leaders for key ministries. Without passionate leadership ministries fail.
- Develop a tool to assess the health and viability of our ministries. Use it to direct help struggling ministries, to identify needs for new ministries and consider retirement of declining or dormant ministries
- Continuing discussions with Bill Munday. Bill has been directed not to conduct an on-site Called and Gifted workshop. He has considered conducting an online version but has taken no action at this point. He does not recommend that we give it a high priority. Further direction needs to come from the Pastor.
- We propose that the recommendations for Objective 4 be provided to Gayle Plecha and Misty Jesse, and that Objective 4 either be closed or redirected in response to the Coronavirus crisis.

• *Objective #5 - We will improve our usage of social media to better enable all our goals.* Megan Tilles reported that she has been following Andrea Fowler's Instagram and thinks she is doing a great job. She thinks people may now be open to a Zoom meeting to discuss ways to support Andrea by providing her material to post on the various outlets.

June Meeting: June 3

Chris Ratliff reminded everyone to mark their calendars for the next meeting on June 3 and asked everyone to continue to recruit people for the Pastoral Council.

Other

- Joe Arroyo read the guidelines for PC members to bring concerns and affirmations to the attention of the pastor.
- Pastoral Objectives for the Next Term
 - Msgr. Sork said It is time to start working on goals and objectives for next term. The Pastoral Staff postponed their annual evaluation meeting to June 22, when they will discuss objectives, so other things might get pushed back, too.
 - Chris Ratliff will send an email to Pastoral Council members with instructions for getting started with the new objectives.

- Gayle Plecha announced that Msgr. Sork will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of his ordination in May. There will be an announcement on the back of the bulletin to make parishioners aware, but the celebration party will be scheduled after coronavirus abatement measures are relaxed..
- Msgr. Sork shared that he has been our pastor for 21 years, his longest assignment. He said he is glad to be here shepherding the people of St. John Fisher.

The meeting concluded at 9:02 PM with the Prayer of St. John Fisher Church.