

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
February 1, 2023**

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Sheila Bloodgood (chair), Joe McGuinness (vice chair), Namele Baker, Janos Bakos, Stephanie Bezner, Rosemarie Diehl, Antonia Lavender, Steve Ludwick, Ryan McCormick, Gayle Plecha, Tina Gurrola (staff representative), Chris Acherman (recording secretary)

Absent: Mikaela Ventura, Lucas Damasco (youth rep.), and Tim Niemann (youth alt.)

Guests: Tom Smith, Karen Smith, Teri Mossberg, Sherry Schneider, Carl Mossberg, Howard Schneider, Dana Hargrave, Bill Smith, Unknown (name not legible)

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:01 PM and welcomed the visitors and the staff representative.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Namele Baker.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Family Fun Night: Bingo

Stephanie Bezner attended with her family and said about 40 people were there. She thought more people would have attended if there had been more notice. The Girls Scouts ran a fun bingo, and the dinner was good. Dave and Yolanda Williams did a great job. Steve Ludwick thought everyone really got into it and wanted to win a prize. He said perhaps the low attendance was due to being so soon after Christmas or that it was only announced a week before the event.

Dawn Unity, “Noah and the Flood,” January 10

No PC members attended.

ACCW (Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women) Conference, January 24, at SJF

No PC members attended. Namele Baker said she’d heard from some people that Barrett Hall was very cold. Gayle Plecha said Chris Acherman attended the event and asked her to give some feedback. Chris Acherman shared it was a cold morning, but once they shut the doors, it warmed up a bit inside. About 70 people attended this event. Msgr. Sork gave the opening prayer and welcomed everyone to SJF. The speaker was very good. They served a delicious box lunch from Lisa’s Bon Appetit.

SJF School Open House, January 29

Tina Gurrola said about 25 prospective families with kids in TK – 6th grade attended the open house. The SJF Student Council showed the families around the campus and the teachers opened their classrooms and explained the curriculum at SJF. It was a very cold and windy day, but they were happy with the turnout.

SJF School, New Principal selection process

Msgr. Sork shared that Anne-Marie Hudani has been on administrative leave. He had met with the SJF School leadership team, and the consensus was that Tina Gurrola would become the interim principal. She’s done a wonderful job. The next step is to find a

permanent principal. He appointed a search committee to announce the search, review the applicants, decide who to interview and send their top three choices to him. Then he will conduct a final interview and make his decision. The committee consists of one school parent representative, Brian Bezner who is also a public-school teacher; a member of the faculty, Colleen Gunther who has been with SJF School for a long time; a Pastoral Staff member, Misty Jesse; a former school parent who is a professor of education at USC, Debra Bogle; and a local representative from the Department of Catholic Schools. Gayle Plecha will facilitate and chair the meetings. Msgr. Sork started the process in January and the job has been posted on the Archdiocese website. He is confident that the process will work out well. Msgr. Sork met with Anne-Marie Hudani in December and they both agreed she is ready to step down from the role of principal. Msgr. really appreciates her 21 years with SJF School and feels she saved the school. The parish along with the PTO will organize a reception in gratitude for her 21 years of service on June 4th after the 9:00 AM Mass.

Building Committee Update

Gayle Plecha said the committee had a meeting a few weeks ago and will meet again next week. Msgr. Sork said they finalized the layout of the Fireside room and the access from the Church to Barrett Hall. He was hoping for the cost estimates, but they weren't ready yet. Namele Baker asked if they could see the plans for the building project. Gayle Plecha agreed to make that a future agenda item. She shared a brief overview of what the new building plans and remodeling will include such as offices closer to the church and a secure perimeter for the school. Janos Bakos said some people thought the new building would be in the current parking lot. Gayle Plecha assured him it will not. It will be in the grassy area next to the parking lot where all the utilities are already in place from Phase I. Msgr. Sork said they just learned that they need to have the parking lot wired for a specific number of charging stations for electric vehicles and future stations. He hopes to have more updates and estimates at the March meeting. Gayle shared that the building committee consists of parishioners who are architects, construction engineers and designers including Lisa Counts, Chris Ratliff, Bob Ralls, Donna Duperon, Robert Hackl, Bill Howe and Dennis Drag. Msgr. Sork said they were able to put together a good committee from the responses to the article in the bulletin.

Msgr. Sork asked for input from PC members regarding the offertory collection baskets. Before Covid, the procedure was for the ushers to pass the baskets among the pews and then bring the money up during the offerings. When the church re-opened, they put large bins at the front of the church for people to come forward with their offerings to keep people from touching the baskets that had been passed around. Recently they returned to passing the baskets in the pews. However, some people have requested that the bins be put back at the front of the church. A discussion came up during a recent Liturgy Committee meeting that there are not enough ushers and people are too spread out in the pews to pass the baskets and it slows the whole process down. They recommended that the large bins should be placed at the front and the back of the church and then carried forward during the offertory.

- Steve Ludwick said he is an usher and feels there are enough ushers, but the process is slowed down by a few minutes because people are more spread out in the pews.
- Ryan McCormick said he'd brought this up at the last PC meeting because he liked being able to put his offering in the bin at the front of the altar.
- Steve Ludwick said an announcement can be made that the ushers are available to assist anyone who is unable to bring their offering to the altar.

- Joe McGuinness asked about the baskets on the poles. Msgr. Sork said the pews are too long and people sit further apart now for those to work.
- Namele Baker suggested providing both baskets at the front for the children to drop in the offerings and baskets to pass around for those who don't want to go up to the altar.
- Carl Mossberg said people like seeing the kids take the money to the altar. It gives it meaning to them, and they feel a part of the process.
- Sheila Bloodgood shared that her parents' church has baskets at the altar for the children and baskets are passed around for the adults.
- Janos Bakos said he liked the idea of the two different ways to contribute and said the church should try it.
- Msgr. Sork said ultimately someone needs to bring the big basket at the altar to the priest as part of the offertory procession.
- Gayle Plecha said the ushers could bring the bins from the altar to the back of the church and combine the money with the other baskets to bring up during the offertory procession.
- Gayle Plecha said they could leave a large bin at the back of the church for people to drop money in if they missed the opportunity or they could put it in the mail slot at the parish office.
- Gayle Plecha added that school parents using Faith Direct need to put their coupons in the baskets because the church monitors their attendance for the school.

Guest Tom Smith said he feels the building campaign/fundraising prayer is a little off putting and affects his spirituality. He said other parishioners have made similar comments and he's noticed fewer people are saying the prayer. He asked if it could be changed or said less often. Namele Baker said she'd heard similar comments from parishioners. Rosemarie Diehl said the words of the prayer really resonate with her so maybe changing the name of it would help. Joe McGuinness shared that a visiting relative liked the prayer. Msgr. Sork said when they were fundraising and building the church they had a similar prayer they recited from the time it started until it was completed. He asked PC members to get a copy of the prayer, review it and discern whether to continue with it, remove it or adapt it. This will be an agenda item at the March meeting.

Looking Ahead – Upcoming Events

- **KofC Super Bowl Pre-Sale, February 5** – Msgr. Sork said this is the tri-tip fundraiser for the seminarians, Sheila Bloodgood said the order form is on the SJF website.
- Msgr. Sork added that Together in Mission is starting. Msgr. Tim Dyer will speak at all the Masses the weekend of February 5-6 to share how this campaign has helped his parishes, St. Patrick and St. Stephen, and to encourage others to give. SJF has a goal to raise over \$200,000 and only once have they not made their goal.
- **Fireside Chat with Msgr. Sork, February 7** – Msgr. Sork said he will give a brief presentation in the Fireside room on the topic of our understanding of mortal sin today followed by Q&A. This is not an open forum. The Adult Faith Formation Committee presented this idea as a response to a request from the Seekers for various topics to be addressed by the priests. They provided a list of topics and Msgr. Sork chose this one. Fr. Kalu will give his talk next month.
- **RE Congress –**
 - **Youth Day, February 23**
 - **Adults, February 24-26**

Msgr. Sork said he spoke about RE Congress at the morning Masses last weekend. This will be his 54th Congress. It's at the Anaheim Convention Center, and they have speakers from all over the world. The cost is now \$85, which is a bargain. You can attend for one day or all weekend. Justin Fontenot and his staff will host the SJF hospitality suite for parishioners and guests to stop by between sessions to relax, and on Saturday evening they will have a cocktail reception with hors d'oeuvres. This is a great fellowship opportunity. Antonia Lavender attended the Youth Day last year and thought the Mass was beautiful. Msgr. Sork said there are always a variety of Masses to choose from throughout the weekend. The morning Mass on the last day is celebrated with the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Orange and the evening Mass is celebrated with Archbishop Gomez. Joe McGuinness said he and Antonia Lavender would contact Katie Dante to see if she needs help with driving kids to Youth Day.

- **Choir "Passion of our Lord," February 24 at 7pm** – Sheila Bloodgood said the choir will be performing in the church on the first Friday of Lent after the soup supper and before the Stations of the Cross. The Passion of our Lord is based on John's Gospel and includes a narrator with the choir.
- **Lenten Retreat, March 12-14** - Msgr. Sork reported that speaker for the Lenten Retreat is a minister of music. She's been working with Grant Hungerford to integrate some SJF choir members into her music and presentation. She will also speak at all the Masses on March 13-14. Dinner will be served in Barrett Hall after the 5:00 PM Mass on Sunday only. The retreat will be in the church again this year.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of January Minutes

Sheila Bloodgood asked for corrections to the January minutes. Hearing none, Joe McGuinness moved to approve the January minutes as presented. Rosemarie Diehl seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff Representative Brief: Tina Gurrola, Interim Parish School Principal

- Tina Gurrola reported that this is Catholic Schools Week. Each day has a different theme, dress code and activity for the school kids.
- The fundraising Gala is on March 4th at the PV Country Club. All are welcome to attend or submit a donation for the auction.
- SJF School finished their STAR testing which happens four times a year and tells the progression of the students so they can plan for the next six months. They found that math was easier to teach online than reading and writing during COVID. The scores had dropped some, but they are coming back up, and they are working on strategies to continue the progress. Tina commented that today's 5th graders haven't been in school full time since 3rd grade, and they need to keep in mind that kids are up to two years behind in development and need more emotional support.
- SJF was successful with their ZOOM distance learning and had a large increase in attendance from public schools, but that dropped after those schools opened back up. Due to the smaller class size at SJF, the teachers are able to work faster to get kids back up to speed versus at public schools.
- Ryan McCormick asked how the state TK expansion bill would affect SJF School. Tina said SJF kids have to be 4 ½ by February to enter TK. But they also do an evaluation to determine where to place them in the school.

- Gayle Plecha said not all parishioners use QR codes and asked for the school phone number to be added to the Fundraiser “Diamonds are Forever” flyer for purchasing tickets. Stephanie Bezner will send the flyer to Sheila Bloodgood for distribution to PC members. Sheila Bloodgood will also email PC members to see who would be interested getting a table at the Gala. Stephanie Bezner added that she would be grateful for any business willing to contribute an auction item.

Lenten Soup Supper – PC Hosts March 17 – Volunteer Signups

Sheila Bloodgood said Ash Wednesday is February 22nd. She passed around sign-up sheets for volunteers for the Soup Supper and the March 26th Lenten concert.

PC New Member Nominating Committee: status

Rosemarie Diehl reported she, Steve Ludwick and Ryan McCormick met, reviewed the roadmap and divvied up the tasks. They will read through the speech, edit the language and send it to Sheila Bloodgood. They will pass around a sign-up sheet for PC members to volunteer to speak at the Masses about applying to be on Pastoral Council. Gayle Plecha asked the committee to let her know which weekend they want to do it so it can be entered in the Mass book and to book a table outside church after the Masses. They should email any bulletin articles to her or Lydia Hernandez. Steve Ludwick said he already submitted the article to begin running in the bulletin a week from this weekend. Msgr. Sork informed the committee that there will always be six open slots for PC elections. Current members usually renew, but it's not always the case. Steve Ludwick suggested adding examples of some events organized by PC members to the speech to pique interest. Gayle Plecha asked the committee to update the applications and send them to Andrea Fowler to post on the website. Sheila Bloodgood said to allow extra time to coordinate when Katie Dante has Confirmation classes that the current youth reps can attend to recruit students to apply. Msgr. Sork said in the past the youth reps often had conflicts and were unable to attend the meetings, so they elected a senior as the youth rep and a junior as the alternate. When the youth rep isn't able to attend, the alternate can vote. Rosemarie Diehl said other PC members are welcome to join and help on the committee.

Save the Date Reminder: New Parishioners' Luncheon – May 21

Sheila Bloodgood said they will begin the planning process in April.

Save the Date: PV Street Fair, June 9-11

Sheila Bloodgood said last year they collaborated with the school and need to figure out if the school would join again this year. Carl Mossberg said he used to run this event and has a notebook of information he can give to Rosemarie Diehl. Sheila Bloodgood said objective #4 team should lead addressing the street fair support with the school.

2022-2023 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review: Team Progress

- 2022-2023 PC Objectives
 1. *The Pastoral Council will host/support three Welcoming Events over the 2022-2023 term to build our parish community.* Stephanie Bezner said originally, they'd planned the 80's music event for July 15th, but with the jazz concert planned for September it could be unrealistic. It's a lot of work to put on events like this when they don't have a lot of participation and volunteers, and they don't want to exhaust their resources. Only two team members attended the objective planning meetings

in December and January. She would like to recruit PC members to take on the various tasks for these events. Rosemarie Diehl said they need something during the summer to build a sense of community. Sheila Bloodgood reminded them that they are only four months away from planning the next objectives so it could be something for next year. Ryan McCormick suggested rotating the type of music since not everyone likes jazz. Sheila Bloodgood suggested the team also consider a less complicated event, similar to the bingo event. Namele Baker, Steve Ludwick and Joe McGuinness said they'd like to work with Rosemarie Diehl on a summer event. Namele Baker said PC members should personally ask parishioners to help with events.

2. *The Pastoral Council will assist the parish in publicizing parish activities and ministries using a variety of tools, including social media.* Gayle Plecha said they've had no responses to the bulletin blurb. Andrea Fowler is trying to follow the templates she was provided. Rosemarie Diehl will get the metrics from Andrea Fowler. Gayle Plecha clarified that when people submit their own photos, they are giving permission to use them on social media.
3. *The Pastoral Council will directly support youth and young adult program development and monthly events.* Joe McGuinness reported he's been working with Mika Ventura, Namele Baker and Justin Fontenot on the Edge program. Justin Fontenot can conduct a Virtus training for the volunteers if they provide him with the names. Namele Baker said Edge needs a permanent meeting location and consistent time. Sheila Bloodgood reminded them that Edge was added late in the year, so they've had to fit in events where possible. Next year it will be part of the regular schedule planning. Gayle Plecha shared that the upcoming Mardi Gras event is both Edge and LifeTeen. Antonia Lavender is the lead for educating the parents and getting them more involved and invested in their child's religious education. Steve Ludwick said he is now the point of contact for the softball league. There will be an article in the bulletin this weekend recruiting young adults ages 18+ to play softball. He is hoping one of the existing coaches at another church will take participants from SJF but is also looking for coach volunteers. Joe McGuinness added that they have offered support to Justin Fontenot for the Vacation Bible Camp.
4. *The Pastoral Council will support the marketing efforts to increase school enrollment.* Stephanie Bezner said the Gala is their focus at this time. They need 10 people to make a table and encouraged PC members to attend. Tina Gurrola shared that prospective families heard about the SJF school open house by word of mouth, other parishioners, and some Googled it. Enrollment has increased from 165 to 173 this year. They dropped off open house flyers to daycares, a town hall meeting with Town & Country and every market they could think of. They will follow up with those who attended the open house. All applications are due February 14th before they look at the budgets in March.

Sheila Bloodgood encouraged PC members to think about how to end their year and if there is a logical objective for next year based on this year's objectives.

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at 7:00 PM.

Other

Joe McGuinness read the guidelines for Pastoral Council members to bring concerns and affirmations to the attention of the pastor.

- Sheila Bloodgood has received feedback that there is a shortage of handicapped parking spots at the 11:00am Mass.
 - Gayle Plecha said they had turned some regular spots into handicapped spots, but maybe they need to create more.
- Ryan McCormick said he doesn't carry as much cash as he used to, so he suggested having a Venmo sign for things like the donut money donations or in the bulletin for donations through Faith Direct.
 - Joe McGuinness added that visiting priests asking for donations could use Venmo too.
 - Gayle Plecha said there is a QR code on the bulletin for donating, but you have to enter your credit card information.
- Ryan McCormick said the bulletin has been profiling different ministries, but Obra Buena doesn't list what it supports, the charities involved, or how the money is used.
 - Msgr. Sork said that same discussion came up at Finance Council this week.
- Namele Baker said a lot of people don't understand the true role of a pastor and what will happen now that Msgr. Chaffman is gone and Fr. Kalu is leaving in June. They want to know about the future and also about options for deacons at SJF.
 - Msgr. Sork shared that SJF hasn't had a deacon since he's been the pastor, but they now have a parishioner in his first year of the diaconate program. They've had parishioners in formation before who have decided not to continue. SJF publishes articles in the bulletin regarding becoming a deacon. The diaconate is a call from the Lord. Deacons cannot take the place of the priest. They can do baptisms and preach and help in the parish. Lay volunteers can also do a lot of things to help in the parish.
 - Msgr. Sork said more people need to be called to the priesthood as well since deacons don't solve the problem of a lack of priests. SJF has to wait for the Vicar of Clergy to appoint another priest to SJF and they are working on it. There are fewer than half the number of priests there was when he was ordained and more than 3 times the number of Catholics. Due to the shortage of priests, he's no longer given the opportunity to interview for associate pastors. It's a challenge, and he has to rely more on lay ministers. SJF is fortunate to have a very active lay ministry and a staff person dedicated to facilitating volunteer ministries.

The meeting was concluded at 9:09 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher Parish.