

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
August 2, 2023**

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Sheila Bloodgood (chair), Joe McGuinness (vice chair), Namele Baker, Janos Bakos, Mikaela Ventura, Tim Niemann (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, Chris Acherman (recording secretary) and Colleen Guenther as the staff representative

Absent: Stephanie Bezner, Rosemarie Diehl, Antonia Lavender, Steve Ludwick, Ryan McCormick, Lucas Damasco (youth rep.)

Guests: Ron Homer

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Sheila Bloodgood.

Msgr. Sork recognized the guest and the staff representative.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Volunteer Thank You Luncheon, June 10

Sheila Bloodgood thought it was very enjoyable, the presentation allowed everyone to be recognized for their service, and that it's become a popular event. Msgr. Sork said it was started as a way to get everyone together to thank them and so volunteers could see who does what in the parish. Gayle Plecha said there were about 125 people who attended this year. Msgr. Sork said Misty Jesse always does a nice job with this event.

Faith & Hope Art Show, June 24-25

The art show was held in the Parish Activity Center. Namele Baker attended and thought it was a wonderful presentation of artwork created by various prisoners who have been rehabilitated. The nun involved told her in previous years parishioners at SJF have purchased more art than any other parish, but this year they didn't sell as much.

Summer Choir Concert, "American Harmonies", June 25

Joe McGuinness said he and Janos Bakos attended and helped with the hospitality. People loved the cookies, and the freewill donations were very generous. Janos Bakos said the concert was incredible. The event draws in a lot of people. The program and hospitality help get the attendees involved. Msgr. Sork said the music ministry appreciates the support of the Pastoral Council. The church is a great venue for a music concert.

* Msgr. Sork asked for feedback about the Unbound sponsorship event. Joe McGuinness thought it was wonderful and the speaker did a great job. Gayle Plecha said the group had emailed current sponsors to help staff the tables and help people find a child, youth or elderly person in a developing country that they would like to support. She also shared that this group does not spend a large percentage of the donations on operating costs. Most of the money is distributed to the person being sponsored. Msgr. Sork said that he has been sponsoring a child since she was three years old, and she is now in high school.

“Camp Fisher” Summer Kids’ Camp, July 10-14

Namele Baker said it was a huge success. The counselors and kids were amazing. Joe McGuinness said all the planning that Justin Fontenot did was very effective. Everything was organized and well thought out. Namele Baker said even the snacks had themes. She thought about 50 kids were registered. Gayle Plecha added that the teen counselors met ahead of time to practice everything. Elisa Liberati was the lead teen, and she did an excellent job. Colleen Guenther felt it was a good mixture of SJF school and parish kids.

Namele Baker added that the summer school play *Moana* was adorable and had so much support from the school families. Msgr. Sork said the summer program is open to anyone in the parish, not just the school. Colleen Guenther said Blanca Magana and Alison Graff put it together along with two SJF school alumni.

Summer Music Concert, July 15

Sheila Bloodgood said the event was a huge success and people feel they should do it again. It was held on the grass outside Barrett Hall. There was a nice mix of people who brought their own chairs and those who used the tables provided by SJF. The ticket sales approach worked well. Namele Baker took care of the decorations and the Knights of Columbus cooked for the event. Namele Baker said people liked seeing the priests and nuns at the concert. Gayle Plecha said the band exceeded her expectations and they sold over 200 tickets. Sheila Bloodgood said they made a modest profit even though that wasn't the intent. Someone must have reported the noise because the police arrived. Fortunately, the police had no problem with the event or noise level as long as it was over by 11:00 PM. Gayle Plecha commented that the Mary and Joseph Retreat Center next door said they couldn't hear the music. Namele Baker said there were people from El Segundo there, but she forgot to ask them how they found out about it. Sheila Bloodgood said they'll make some changes/improvements and use what they learned for the jazz concert on Saturday, September 16th after the 5:00 PM Mass.

Capital Campaign/Building Committee Update

Msgr. Sork reminded members that they had reached their original goal of \$8 million, but now it's not enough given the impact of inflation. The Campaign Committee has been trying to raise more money. They've received a positive response and some people are willing to pledge again. He is confident that they can begin construction when the 2023-24 school year ends. They will meet again on Monday, August 7th, so he will have more information next week.

Looking Ahead – Upcoming Events

- **Feast of St. Phoebe, September 3** – Msgr. Sork shared that in Paul's letter to the Romans, he refers to his sister, Phoebe, a minister to the community in Cencreae translated from the Greek as a deacon. Paul affirmed her for her church leadership. Since the Feast of St. Phoebe falls on a Sunday, St. John Fisher will highlight her feast day, and Sheila Bloodgood will be the liaison to the organization Discerning Deacons which is organizing a nationwide celebration of Phoebe. The celebration will tie in with the synod and roles for women as the church goes forward, including discerning about women deacons. There are a range of possible celebrations that SJF can do including prayer cards, a special liturgy with St. Phoebe-focused music, getting all or mostly women to participate as lectors, altar servers etc., and a woman

speaker to talk about her experience with the synod and discernment process. Msgr. Sork suggested that Sheila Bloodgood also reach out to other women to be speakers. The PC was requested to let her know of anyone at the parish who would be a good candidate to speak. Msgr. said he is intrigued because women in the church is not a new phenomenon. Paul recognized Phoebe's role. It has deep scriptural roots and this is an opportunity to look into that at the synod. Sheila Bloodgood said one of the phrases is "we want to be part of this moment of discernment." St. Monica's is also participating so hopefully more parishes will, too.

* Msgr. Sork added that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is getting four new bishops, and he's very excited about it. He knows three of them, and he's heard good things about the fourth one. Their ordination will be in September.

- **2023 Jazz Concert, September 16** – Joe McGuinness said that Stephanie Bezner and Rosemarie Diehl are working on the concert and the advertising, and they are so good at doing this. He shared that he spoke with Steve Ludwick and is working with him on the food, but people will also be able to bring their own food and wine.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of June Minutes

Sheila Bloodgood asked for corrections to the June minutes. Hearing none, Joe McGuinness moved to approve the June minutes as presented. Tim Niemann seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff Representative brief, Colleen Guenther, SJF Parish School Principal

Colleen Guenther introduced herself and said she's been a teacher at SJF for 20 years. She is humbled and honored to step into the role of principal. She has tremendous support from the parish and the archdiocese, so she is excited for this new chapter. The school has had some ups and downs over the last 20 years, but their mission remains the same: believe, learn, care. They want to re-energize and develop faith-filled people. They went through the WASC process last spring and their accreditation was renewed for another six years. This is a two-year self-study and they identified three action plans including continuity of instruction due to turnover. She has made quite a few changes to the staff including new and returning teachers. Enrollment is down from where they'd like it to be. They have 169 contracts, and she is confident that they'll have more. In order to do that they need more robust programs. They need to better utilize what they have so they can build up the programming so parents will want to bring their kids to SJF. She would like more parishioners to enroll their kids at SJF School. She has been posting articles in the Sunday bulletin and has received favorable responses. She would like a dedicated school space in the Narthex with information about the school. She'd like to get school families involved in Sunday hospitality to make their presence known. She would like to leverage the banners in the parking lot. Some people are not aware that SJF has a school. Sheila Bloodgood added that several Pastoral Council members are school parents which should help with her plans for the school.

Discussion: “Instrumentum laboris”, October 2023 Synod Assembly FAQ/Executive Summary

- Sheila Bloodgood thought it was very transparent and liked the fact that they indicated which worksheets they are going to use for their discussion. She also liked the three priority questions.
- Sheila Bloodgood shared Stephanie Bezner’s comments. She pointed out the three challenges that it highlights: communion, mission, participation and was glad to see it bridged into Pastoral Council’s objectives. She liked that they are looking for engagement channels and ways to spread the word and build community.
- Joe McGuinness thought the communication aspect was important. People seemed to get a lot out of the experience of being able to say how they feel.
- Namele Baker appreciated the way they said you’re supposed to call on the Holy Spirit to guide your words instead of just coming up with a laundry list of things that are wrong. She sees this as missionary work for Catholics to go out and talk about their faith and spread the word of God. Evangelizing is something many Catholics may find difficult to do. She liked that it was an assembly of clergy and laity.
- Janos Bakos said it is nice to see the results of what they started locally.
- Ron Homer said it was interesting to share the parish feedback and the diocese feedback from individual prayer life up to the Vatican and compare SJF to the diocese of L.A. It opened his eyes to things he never thought about in the Catholic faith. It’s an historic process.
- Msgr. Sork said this synod is like no other they’ve had in recent times. There are delegates and discussion topics. It’s not just a synod of bishops, but it’s opened to lay people and women. Pope Francis is trying to get people to talk about it. Next February SJF will have a professor from LMU speak about synodality. The process began on the local level. This is a working document and a result of the whole process which is phenomenal. What SJF is doing locally should affect the synodality. There will be another synod this October and another one in October 2024.

* Msgr. Sork shared that he received a letter from Archbishop Gomez stating we may now distribute communion under both species. SJF will need to recruit more EMHCs and train them in the process. He hopes to be ready by the weekend after Labor Day. He met with Beverly Beatty to begin the process. He understands that some parishioners may not feel comfortable taking the chalice, so even if they choose not to receive the precious blood, he would like them to take the host, stop, place in in their mouth, and when they pass the chalice, they bow toward it and then return to their seat. Jesus said “this is my body, this is my blood” so people should make a bow of reverence. SJF is not ready for it yet, but the sooner we can start, the better. Ideally there should be two chalices for every host. It may be a good idea to start with the daily Masses. Janos Bakos asked about dipping the host into the cup. Msgr. Sork explained that process is called intinction, but he doesn’t like it because it’s not drinking from the cup, and it also means you’d have to put the host directly on someone’s tongue which creates issues with sanitizing.

PC Objectives for the 2023-2024 term – finalization and voting

Sheila Bloodgood said there were good collaborative ideas from the team, and they also assembled a list of ideas for ways to implement these objectives. She appreciates everyone's participation. She did an initial assignment of teams but said to feel free to be a part of multiple teams if you are interested. She read the following objectives:

1. The Pastoral Council will assist the parish in adopting engagement channels such as Flocknote to publicize the abundance of our parish life.
2. The Pastoral Council will support inviting the community to the Eucharistic Revival and the deepening of our faith through faith formation.
3. The Pastoral Council will host 4-6 events for the parish over the year to welcome new parishioners and engage the existing community.
4. The Pastoral Council will create opportunities for Catholic fellowship and provide support to Edge, Life Teen, and our maturing young adults, while encouraging parental involvement.

The Pastoral Council voted unanimously to approve the 2023-2024 objectives as presented. Sheila Bloodgood said these approved objectives will be incorporated into the 2023-2024 Pastoral Plan.

Recognition of PC Members completing their terms

Msgr. Sork passed out certificates to Sheila Bloodgood as an outgoing member and beloved chair for two years and Janos Bakos as outgoing member. He has a certificate for Lucas Damasco who couldn't be here this evening. Msgr. Sork expressed his gratitude for their time, advice, interaction, and the wisdom of the whole group. Everyone has something to offer. No one person has the right answer but coming together they do good things. Gayle Plecha brought cupcakes, Joe McGuinness brought a cake and Namele Baker presented Sheila Bloodgood with flowers. Namele Baker shared some nice things about working with Lucas Damasco and Janos Bakos. Joe McGuinness thanked Sheila Bloodgood for all her hard work and being a great mentor.

Next Meeting:

Saturday, September 9, 2023, at 1:00 PM in the Fireside room.

2023-2024 Pastoral Council Formation day and New member Commissioning

- Saturday, September 9 from 1pm – 8pm
 - 1-3pm: New Member Orientation and PC Business Agenda
 - 3-4:45pm: PC Member Formation Sessions
 - 5-6pm: PC Member Commissioning at 5pm Mass
 - 6-8pm: Social, McGuinness residence

PC Formation material

Joe McGuinness said they will be discussing Bishop Barron's book *This is My Body: A Call to Eucharistic Revival*. The book is about the Eucharistic which is so central to the Catholic faith. He's read it and learned many new things. They will pick out key pages to discuss at the formation session on September 9th. Afterwards Pastoral Council members will be commissioned during the 5:00 PM Mass followed by a meal and socializing at the McGuinness residence. He asked Gayle Plecha to order copies of the book for each member. Ron Homer added that if you order at least 20 copies directly from Bishop Barron's website, they are \$2.00 each. It's an excellent book. Gayle Plecha said that the book had been out of print, but hopefully it is back in stock now.

Other

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

- Sheila Bloodgood thanked everyone for the gifts and their hospitality tonight.

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

*** Additions to the published agenda.**