

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting  
January 4, 2023**

**Present:** Msgr. David A. Sork, Sheila Bloodgood (chair), Joe McGuinness (vice chair), Janos Bakos, Rosemarie Diehl, Steve Ludwick, Ryan McCormick, Mikaela Ventura, Gayle Plecha, and Justin Fontenot as the staff representative

**Absent:** Namele Baker, Stephanie Bezner, Antonia Lavender, Lucas Damasco (youth rep.), and Tim Niemann (youth alt.)

**Guests:** Eric Cardenas

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

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Steve Ludwick.

**Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)**

Msgr. Sork informed the PC that Fr. Park's father had passed away. The funeral will be January 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Msgr. Sork attended a Zoom meeting on Tuesday with Archbishop Gomez regarding closing the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse. It's been a very complex situation due to how far back some cases go. The Archdiocese has a responsibility to offer victim assistance as people have been hurt. The unjustly accused also have a right to be defended. The Archdiocese is trying to be sensitive to all involved. Absolutely no one serving in ministry today has any abuse-related issues or concerns. The Archdiocese is making every effort to ensure this doesn't ever happen again through programs like Safeguard the Children, Virtus training and fingerprinting.

**Advent Concert – December 11**

Joe McGuinness thanked Janos Bakos and Mikaela Ventura for their help at the concert. It was a very well attended event.

**Simbang Gabi – December 17**

Steve Ludwick thought it was well organized and the food was good. Janos Bakos said the performances with singers and dancers were good. They had a full house, and everything went smoothly. Mikaela Ventura sang beautifully. Gayle Plecha shared that this group prepares months in advance for this celebration.

**LifeTeen Christmas Party – December 18**

Sheila Bloodgood said about 12 kids attended, which was enough to be a good group. They held a gingerbread house decorating contest. Msgr. Sork said that due to finals the following week they decided to have the party before Mass so the teens could study later that evening.

**Advent Penance Service – December 19**

Sheila Bloodgood said it was well attended and the process went smoothly. Msgr. Sork said it's always a challenge to get enough priests, but he was able to have 11 in total. He never wants people to be turned away by long lines.

## **Christmas Masses**

- 4:00 pm – Msgr. Sork estimated he gave out about 300 hosts for communion in the PAC for the overflow Mass. It was a much bigger turnout than last year. Sheila and Dave Bloodgood suggested we should find a way to dim the lights in the PAC to make viewing the livestream easier. Ryan McCormick said the church was very warm. Gayle Plecha said they discovered that the AC unit had a hard shutdown, and they don't know why. Despite the announcements, people were still saving an entire row for late family members even though Mass had already started, so some people were getting upset. Msgr. Sork suggested making those announcements the Sunday before and having a sign indicating seats cannot be saved. Ryan McCormick feels that usher support is a good idea to guide people to the open seats. He noticed a lot of people were taking pictures in front of the Nativity scene. He wondered if this could be a marketing opportunity, to add an SJF logo in the scene and have a staff person out there to help with photos. He also thought the church was beautifully decorated. Msgr. Sork said Namele Baker is responsible for that effort.
- 6:00 PM – Rosemarie Diehl attended and felt everyone found a seat. It was a cute Mass led by the second graders at SJF School.
- 8:00 PM – No members attended.
- Midnight Mass – Chris Acherman said the church was about 2/3 full and it was still very warm inside. The Christmas lights at the street in front of the church were off and no one knew where the timer was located. The choir did a beautiful job. Ryan McCormick asked if it was possible to change the Mass times to 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM so people can plan dinner. Msgr. Sork explained that it might interfere with confessions.
- 7:30 AM – Joe McGuinness felt attendance at this Mass and the 9:00 AM was the same as a normal Sunday.
- 9:00 AM - Steve Ludwick said he and his wife were the only ushers who signed up to serve so they had to find other ushers to help. Gayle Plecha said Dave Fair was there as well as a few others, but it would be nice if they volunteered in advance.
- 11:00 AM – Msgr. Sork felt it was well attended and they had enough liturgical ministry support.

## **Together in Mission Update (Gayle Plecha)**

Gayle reported that SJF exceeded their goal of \$204,391. As of today they've received \$207,552 which is an extra 1.5%. The end of year giving helped. Together in Mission 2023 begins the first weekend in February.

Gayle Plecha reported that they have a new company for collection envelope mailing, and this was their first time doing the Christmas mailing. Unfortunately, people didn't receive them until Christmas Eve or not at all. She spoke with their customer service who explained they'd lost personnel and apologized saying all their Christmas mailings were late. Normally these arrive at the beginning of December, so people are able to give throughout the month. They will probably take a hit on donations and will need to resolve the issue before the Easter mailing.

## **Family Fun Night**

Sheila Bloodgood shared that Dave and Yolanda Williams are organizing a bingo night on Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Rosemarie Diehl sent out the information through

School Speak and encouraged members to attend with their families. They also need help with set up and clean up. The Girl Scouts will be there to help. Ryan McCormick said he hadn't seen anything about it until yesterday. Justin Fontenot explained that there was a breakdown in communication, and it wasn't promoted as initially it was supposed to be a movie night. He said the date couldn't be changed as it's been in place for a long time. Gayle Plecha said the Williamses would appreciate help promoting future events from Pastoral Staff and Pastoral Council to promote. It should have been in the Christmas bulletin. Justin Fontenot said he thought it wasn't happening, so it wasn't put in the bulletin. Dave Williams handed out the flyers and created the banners outside the church. The event is promoted on Instagram and Facebook but not the rotating website banner.

### **Building Committee Update**

Postponed to the February meeting.

### **Looking Ahead – Upcoming Events**

- **Dawn Unity – “Noah and the Flood” – January 10** – Msgr. Sork said this in an interfaith panel that discusses their various perspectives on a different topic at different locations throughout the year. This month it is hosted at Congregation Ner Tamid on Crestridge.
- **ACCW (Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women) Conference – January 24 at SJF**
- **RE Congress – January 23 early registration** – Justin Fontenot shared that the event is February 24-26 (Youth Day is February 23) at the Anaheim Convention Center and will include various speakers on many topics for youth, confirmation, faith formation, RCIA, etc. It's a great experience which includes music, many different cultural liturgies, and a shopping arena. It's a way to network with Catholics around the country. Registration is now open but only available online through the QR code. In an effort to save money they no longer provide booklets about the event. He made some copies in the office, so he passed out a few of them. Early registration is \$75 and goes up \$10 after January 23<sup>rd</sup>. SJF reserved a suite at the Marriott Hotel for hospitality in the morning and between sessions. They will host a cocktail party on Saturday evening with appetizers. Joe McGuinness said he attended last year with the youth and thought the speakers were so good and the enthusiasm was amazing. Justin Fontenot said he attended when he was in high school, and it impacted him in his faith journey. He said Msgr. Sork will speak about it at the Masses on January 29<sup>th</sup>. He will have a table outside church after all the Masses for information.
- **SJF School Open House – January 29** – Rosemarie Diehl said they've been promoting it and are making people aware of the school on social media. They will give each student five flyers to pass out to those they know in the community, and she welcomes other ideas. Sheila Bloodgood recommended the yard signs for the school open house. This event launches Catholic Schools Week and there is a special Mass at 9:00 AM. Mikaela Ventura asked if anyone had looked into posting a banner along Hawthorne. Rosemarie Diehl said she'd find out about it. She also said they should promote Shadow Days so kids can see what a day at SJF School is really like. They should also have a table outside after all Masses, but especially the 9:00 AM Mass so people can answer any questions. Mikaela Ventura suggested a booth at the Sunday Farmer's Market at Peninsula High School. Ryan McCormick said the city of RHE has City celebrations in September with free booths so perhaps other cities do too.

- **Cornerstone Retreat Overview (Eric Cardenas)** – Eric Cardenas transferred to SJF from American Martyrs where he was actively involved in Cornerstone and would like to get it started here at SJF. He became a part of their core team and said it literally transformed the parish and wants to see if it would be good for SJF. The overnight experience makes for a better retreat and is part of the bonding and sharing process. There is no cost. Six men plus Msgr. Sork will be attending the first one February 10-11. If all goes well, they will recruit more people for one at SJF in 2024 with help from American Martyrs. He’s been working with Misty Jesse to find the right demographic to get it started. Although it is only held once a year, it’s still considered a ministry as it helps men grow their spirituality and practice the things they learned at the retreat throughout the year. It also inspires people to become more involved in the church besides just attending Mass. Msgr. Sork said about 20 years ago they had something similar called Christ Renews His Parish. He feels it would be a great way to attract a younger crowd to SJF.

## **Chair/Vice-Chair**

### **Approval of December Minutes**

Sheila Bloodgood asked for corrections to the December minutes. Hearing none, Rosemarie Diehl moved to approve the December minutes as presented. Ryan McCormick seconded. The minutes were approved.

### **Staff Representative Brief: Justin Fontenot, Coordinator of Religious Education**

- RE enrollment has increased to 200 students. Unfortunately, he had to close registration because he doesn’t have enough catechists. Grades 1,2 and 3 are full on Sundays and he wasn’t able to find additional catechists. It’s been an ongoing challenge. People are willing to help out and there was some interest last summer, but no one followed through. He’s open to those willing to be substitute catechists.
- The junior high program Edge is a way to help LifeTeen grow. Edge events have started out strong but the last two months lacked good participation partially due to the school play on the same night and then illnesses in December which caused cancellations. Rosemarie Diehl said her son enjoyed the one he attended, but it needs to be made more visible as there is interest. Justin Fontenot said a lot of the interest has been from the school and that Tina Gurrola has been good at helping him promote it. He just hasn’t had the time to promote it due to his other responsibilities. He will reevaluate the dates to eliminate any other conflicts with school, sports or other parish events. They have “something big” planned for February.
- Rosemarie Diehl asked if the school and staff meet to plan calendars. Gayle Plecha said the pastoral staff meets twice a month to share calendars. The annual calendaring exercise to plan the whole year to avoid facility conflicts happens in May. Event conflicts occur when an event is scheduled later in the year or dates change for big events. Since Edge is new, Justin had to try to fit it in with the events that had already been scheduled.
- He met with several RE and school families last May and polled other families to learn that Friday nights work best for Edge events. He said in the future he will not schedule anything in November or December due to holiday conflicts. Rosemarie Diehl thinks hosting a Friendsgiving a couple weeks before Thanksgiving would be a great event for kids that age. The students have to do service hours and it could be a way to get

help and provide hours. Parents also have service hour requirements. Justin Fontenot said it was always meant to be an SJF parish/school event. The public schools also have service hours they need to fill so this could be a great way to reach out to the community of the parish.

- Adopt-A-Family was very successful. Through the sale of Advent candles and donations they were able to provide gifts for 20 families. Gayle Plecha said Margaret Johnson purchased \$3,300 in gift cards with the donations.
- Justin Fontenot said he's working with young adults and building a team for the summer vacation bible school. It's a great opportunity for middle and high school students to get service hours and get more involved in the parish.

### **Lenten Soup Supper – PC Hosts March 17**

Sheila Bloodgood said this year Misty Jesse has opened it up so each group can create their own soup. She tested her vegetarian chili on her family, and they said it will work. Plan to cook for 70-80 people. The event will be in Barrett Hall this year. She'll have a volunteer sign-up list at the next meeting, and asked the PC members to please save the date on their calendars.

### **PC New Member Nominating Committee – members needed**

Sheila Bloodgood said Steve Ludwick and Rosemarie Diehl have volunteered to be on the committee. She will send them information so they can update the applications and create bulletin submissions. All members need to help with recruiting. There will be an information session in April.

### **New Parishioners' Brunch – May 21**

Sheila Bloodgood said the brunch will be Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup> after the 11:00 AM Mass. They have 65 new families so probably expect around 40-50 people to attend. She suggests returning to the potluck approach, which was what was done pre-pandemic, instead of catering it this time. Volunteer needs and signups will be coming later, but please save the date for now.

### **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.* Steve Ludwick reported that Stephanie Bezner found a suitable band for an 80's music night. The tentative date is June 3<sup>rd</sup>, but they are open to other dates later in the summer that don't occur close to other big events and when the weather is warmer. They need 135 people to break even. They'd like to order food from Chicken Maison but are open to other suggestions such as Chipotle. Sheila Bloodgood asked the committee to get a quote. They have a list of "lessons learned" from the jazz concert regarding food ordering and distribution. They really need everyone to participate and volunteer and it needs to be promoted with banners, bulletin articles, pulpit announcements, on website and social media, and they need help with ticket sales, artwork, banners, and food distribution etc. Sheila Bloodgood has some concern with people being stretched too thin as it's the same people organizing all the events. Gayle Plecha said there isn't much happening in July or August. She said it would be helpful if the committee discussed the date prior to the Pastoral Council Executive Committee

meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>. Vacation Bible School is offered July 10-14, so an event on July 15 might be a good way to end the week.

2. *The Pastoral Council will assist the parish in publicizing parish activities and ministries using a variety of tools, including social media.* Rosemarie Diehl said they don't have an update. Gayle Plecha said their little blurb will be in this Sunday's bulletin. Andrea Fowler is exercising some flexibility as to what gets posted each week.
3. *The Pastoral Council will directly support youth and young adult program development and monthly events.* Joe McGuinness said they had a great first meeting. They are checking Virtus statuses with Justin Fontenot so they can help him. They are asking each member to pick an objective and be the leader so they can get something done. They owe Katie Dante attendance at one of her meetings. Justin Fontenot said he has a schedule for fingerprinting in January. Virtus is closed for this month, but there is one this Saturday at St. Cyprian in Long Beach. If it's full, let him know and he might be able to work something out. Sheila Bloodgood said someone needs to delegate to the volunteers and task them as Justin Fontenot cannot tell them what to do.
4. *The Pastoral Council will support the marketing efforts to increase school enrollment.* Rosemarie Diehl hasn't connected with Stephanie Bezner since the last meeting.

### **Next Meeting**

- Wednesday, February 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.

- Ryan McCormick suggested incorporating an event with Santa Claus or cookie decorating for Christmas next year. Sheila Bloodgood seconded that idea.
- Ryan McCormick said he uses Faith Direct but still receives the envelopes. They should have a special push notification for special collections.
  - Gayle Plecha said Faith Direct subscribers should not receive envelopes.
- Joe McGuinness said the prayer cards are now in the missals.
  - Gayle Plecha and Andrea Fowler completed that task.

The meeting was concluded at 9:17 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher Parish.