

St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting November 4, 2020 – Zoom Meeting

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Chris Ratliff (chair), Joe Arroyo (vice chair), Cathy Alessandra, Janos Bakos, Sheila Bloodgood, Dana Hargrave, Antonia Lavender, Joe McGuinness, Dave Williams, Chiby Onyeador (youth rep), Maddy Magaña. (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, and Misty Jesse as the staff representative.

Absent: Kelly Tramontin and Steve Izuno

Guest(s): Bev Fink

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:04 pm and welcomed the guest and staff representative.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Chris Ratliff.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Feedback

- **Faithful Citizenship Panel 2020 (livestream)**

Chris Ratliff, John Torelli and Msgr. Sork were on the panel this year. Antonia Lavender thought it was marvelous and found it to be a great reflection of the beauty of democracy in our community especially for our young people. It stimulated a lot of conversation. Sheila Bloodgood thought everyone did a great job with the hard questions and appreciated the perspectives each one brought from their backgrounds. Chris Ratliff said there were 77 devices viewing it live and the number is now over 200. Joe Arroyo watched it later and appreciated the way it was laid out. Misty Jesse monitored the event and found it exciting. She felt it presented itself well although there were a few sound issues. The Respect Life issues seemed to dominate the questions.

- **State of the Parish Address**

Msgr. Sork gave his state of the parish address at all the Masses including the livestream. Chris Ratliff watched it via livestream and thought it was a very good address in the sense that these are challenging times, yet it was a very upbeat report on the status of the parish and how we're moving forward. Dana Hargrave saw it live and given the COVID-19 situation, she found it comforting that the church is hanging in there and that we'll get through it. Joe McGuinness found it reassuring that we are getting a tent and lighting and dealing with the weather.

- **Annual Financial Report to the parish**

Chris Ratliff feels the most significant thing is that a thorough and transparent report was delivered. Chuck Huebner did a great job presenting it. Msgr. Sork said there was a glitch at the 11:00 am Sunday Mass so the report was not given. Gayle Plecha said there will be an article in the bulletin instructing people how to find the hardcopy on the parish website and where to find the presentation in the livestream. Msgr. Sork said the report is very important because he is committed to transparency. People need to know there are no secrets. Gayle Plecha does a good job assisting the Finance Council with their script.

- **Mass of Remembrance (livestream)**

The Mass of Remembrance was livestreamed this past Monday. Chris Ratliff thought it was well planned and presented. Janos Bakos said he and his wife thought it was very nice. Joe Arroyo was really moved by the way the candles looked on the livestream. It made it even more spiritual. Gayle Plecha shared that the Confirmation students were given the option to watch this Mass as part of a Prayer Encounter Worship (PEW) requirement. Unfortunately, there were some disturbing, inappropriate, and sacrilegious comments posted in the livestream chat during the Mass. David Bloodgood was able to remove the comments and restream the Mass after the event ended. They suspect that it was Confirmation students based on the nature of the comments. Msgr. Sork said due to the shutdown, Katie Dante has had limited opportunities for these kids to complete their requirements, so she saw this as an option for them. He feels they were probably bored during the reading of the names so perhaps they started playing. Since this was a very sensitive Mass, this activity should probably not have been part of their requirement. The IT support company is trying to trace the IP addresses to identify the offenders.

Msgr. Sork asked for suggestions in handling comments going forward.

- To delete the comments in real time the video minister would have to monitor the chat, but we can't expect the video ministers to do both as their attention is focused on videoing the Mass.
- Perhaps another video minister or staff member could monitor the chats from home.
- The chat option may not be necessary for special events; however, the subscription level needs to be upgraded to allow the chat option to be turned off.
- Parishioners like the chat option as it creates a sense of community and they feel a connection during Mass.
- Other streaming services offer chat filters to censor certain words.

Msgr. Sork asked for suggestions to give to Katie Dante for addressing the incident with the Confirmation class and their parents.

- This could be used as a teachable moment for the youth.
- Let the students and parents know that the church is investigating the incident and there will be consequences.
- This might bring up lot of dialogue and give them an opportunity to come forward and talk about it so they will feel a level of guilt and remorse.
- Hopefully, peer pressure will be a factor in the violators admitting what they did, and they can learn something from it.
- Require the students to write letters of apology to every person who had a loved one remembered at the Mass. This might help them to empathize with those who lost a loved one.
- The incident appears to have been planned.
- This was more than just being bored. Creating a fake account and then making inappropriate comments makes it more intentional. It is akin to vandalism.
- This group of students seems to be very immature. The incident should be made a big deal.
- An environment needs to be created where the kids learn to love the parish and want to be there.
- A sense of value and community in the parish needs to be instilled at a young age so the youth will want to experience events together.
- Zach Zuvich's Sunday panels are a good way to get the youth involved.

Msgr. Sork doesn't want to overreact as he's hearing positive things from this dialogue. The mistake was offering this project to the youth.

- **Sagrado Corazon visit**

Antonia Lavender summarized her trip report from her visit on 11 October. She was delighted with the gifts SJF has given to the Sagrado Corazon community. They have such great pride in their parish. They have a great outpouring of volunteer work and a very active community. It's a beautiful parish and they are doing well on their own. Chris Ratliff, who accompanied Antonia for the visit, added that the pastor reported they don't need any financial support or anything else from SJF at this time.

Msgr. Sork said he is overdue writing the parish letter for November 15, but he wanted input from the Pastoral Staff and Parish Council. Chris Ratliff suggested including a call for service in the letter as there may be a shortage of volunteers at this time.

Looking Ahead

- **Thanksgiving Mass – November 26, 9:00 am**

Msgr. Sork said the 9:00 am Mass on Thanksgiving has been a tradition at SJF. They usually get a great turnout. Due to COVID-19 it will be livestreamed this year so more people can view it. They will have outdoor communion after the Mass, and people can bring their bread and wine during this time to be blessed.

- **Giving Tree Gift Drop off – November 28 – December 21**

Misty Jesse shared that the Christian Family Movement's Annual Giving Tree won't be inside the church this year. The Narthex will be open for gift drop off and there will be a table in front of the gym during the weekend Masses. Listen for pulpit announcements and look for articles in the bulletin for more information. The pick-up day for the charities will be December 21. Chris Ratliff feels that there will be a greater charitable need due to COVID-19 and it should be reflected in the announcements. Sheila Bloodgood asked if donations could be made through Faith Direct. Msgr. Sork said this would take away from the whole Giving Tree process. Gayle Plecha said due to the lag time for contributions arriving in the account, it would be too late for them to shop for gifts. The best way is to give cash or checks directly to the event. People can also purchase gift cards.

- **Input on Christmas Masses (if not in church)**

- **Staff input** – Msgr. Sork shared what the Pastoral Staff discussed during their meeting today about Christmas Masses. Since most people attend Mass on Christmas Eve, those Masses will be held outside.
4:00 pm – One Mass with overflow chairs on the grass.
6:00 pm – Traditionally has been the Ara Coeli Mass; however, this year it will be a cantor and singers.
8:00 pm - Youth Mass.
The Midnight Mass will be livestreamed with no communion distributed after Mass. There will be two outside Masses on Christmas Day: 9:00 am and 11:00 am.
- **Pastoral Council input** – Msgr. Sork asked for input from Pastoral Council regarding the Christmas Mass schedule.

- There is concern about maintaining social distancing. The regular attendees are used to it, but those who don't come very often are not familiar with the way it's done.
- Currently there is a group who sits to the side and doesn't wear masks or maintain social distance. Special attention will need to be paid so no one gets infected during the Mass.
- Msgr. Sork said there is no direction from the archdiocese. He doesn't see it as a major problem as people are used to this by now.
- The parish always discourages people from attending the 4:00 pm Mass to try to reduce the attendance to a manageable size, but it's still overcrowded.
- A few members suggested livestreaming the 4:00 pm Mass instead of having it outside. It's the biggest attendance so it should not be in person.
- Several members suggested two Masses at 4:00 pm -- outside and livestreamed.
- It was recommended to have a preplanning meeting with the ushers to discuss the flow of traffic. They will have some challenges.
- Post the Mass schedule and concerns in the bulletin and on the website. Let people know that only so many people will be accommodated. If people understand the overflow, then they will know what to expect and self-regulate and self-organize.
- Those who don't attend Mass regularly might not read the warnings.
- People need another livestream option other than Midnight Mass.
- The Midnight Mass can be watched anytime on Christmas Day.
- Will large families affect the dynamics and will SJF be able to handle it?
- Those people who only come once or twice a year may not come at all.
- People who come once or twice a year won't watch the livestream Mass at 4:00 pm, but it would be nice to offer it, so they have the option of not attending in person.
- Communion can be offered after the 4:00 pm Mass.
- Msgr. Sork said they are not planning to livestream on Christmas Day as those Masses have never been well-attended.

Msgr. Sork said there will only be one Mass on Christmas Eve at 4:00 pm. He asked the Pastoral Council to vote for either an outdoor Mass or livestream. A final vote was taken with six for Mass outside and three for livestream Mass. The 4:00 pm Mass will be outside. They will need to prepare the ushers.

- **Headcount Review**

The number of views was noted during the livestream Mass, at the end of the Mass and again at the end of the day for a total of 630 views. Sheila Bloodgood shared the algorithm used to calculate the headcount. She said the number of viewers on each device could range from one to ten. They figured each phone and tablet counts as one person and each desk top computer could be as many as ten views. They decided to count 1/3 as single viewers, 1/3 as two viewers and 1/3 as a family of four. They came up with an average of 1.8 people per view. This seemed to be a reasonable estimate. Using this estimate and adding it to the number of in-person Mass attendees, Gayle Plecha calculated that there were 1,616 attendees on the 2nd Sunday which is about 10-15% less than last year, and which is similar to the drop in the Sunday collection.

- **IMPACT magazine**

Gayle Plecha said hopefully everyone is familiar with the IMPACT magazine that is mailed to every registered parish household a few times a year. We only published one issue in 2020 before the COVID-19 shutdown. The IMPACT team has dwindled down to two writers and there's been difficulty in finding topics. The team is thinking about terminating the magazine. They are asking for input on whether it's a good idea or if there is a way to rejuvenate it and continue to produce it. It's an expensive process. Chris Ratliff said they should try to recruit people. Gayle Plecha said they ran articles in the bulletin with only one response. Cathy Alessandra said this might be the one thing people receive from the church during this time. Dana Hargrave admitted that she doesn't really read it, but it looks great. Dave Williams suggested uploading it digitally on the website. Msgr. Sork said the Pastoral Staff commented that the postcards are a more effective tool and cheaper to produce and mail than IMPACT. The postcard was an objective from last year and it will be coming out soon. Joe Arroyo asked if it would make sense to just send out the magazine once a year. Misty Jesse said it's been done for so many years and it's become such an effort to come up with topics. If it's published only once a year, then it becomes a financial report or a summation so it might as well just be put in the bulletin. Joe Arroyo said the youth issue presented a very important topic. If we want to go on the record for what we're doing for youth, then once a year would make sense. Misty Jesse said the bulletin could be dedicated to a specific department in an issue at no cost. Cathy Alessandra asked what the original purpose of the IMPACT was. Gayle Plecha said that it was to share what was happening and the impact on the parish. It started as monthly black and white magazine when the bulletin was a much smaller instrument. Msgr. Sork said the IMPACT has evolved over the years and became a quarterly publication and then it changed to a thematic approach. Gayle Plecha said it is sent to almost 3,000 households: 1,000 who come to Mass regularly: 1,000 who come twice a year: and 1,000 who registered and live in the area but never attend church. Cathy Alessandra said she doesn't download the bulletin unless she's looking for a specific article or event. She said it's a matter of whether parishioners are reading it and getting information they wouldn't get otherwise.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of October Minutes

The chair asked for corrections to the October minutes. Hearing none, Dana Hargrave moved to approve the October minutes as presented. Dave Williams seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff rep brief: Misty Jesse – ministries and evangelization programs

Misty Jesse, Director of Evangelization and Outreach Ministries, shared the changes she's had to make during COVID-19. Many ministries have been successful with Zoom meetings. Some groups meet outside. Outreach ministries such as sandwich and hot food are now making substantial meals from home to be distributed or picked up. Some of the ministries geared toward visitations are on hold. Other ministries like Crafters for Christ are making scarfs and shawls from home to be delivered or picked up. She has reached out to the ministries via emails to ask if any help is needed. They've done well considering what they're facing. RCIA was having Zoom meetings, but now faith formation gatherings related to religious services are allowed to meet onsite. So RCIA dismissal and catechesis are meeting in the school courtyard or Barrett Hall depending on the weather. Inquiry still meets via Zoom. Pre-baptism classes are held on Zoom. That should've happened years ago as it works better for families with young

children. This format may continue going forward. Faith Formation classes that were taught onsite are now on the uploaded on SJF website. *The Prophets* is a live 10-week Zoom series. *The Book of Ruth* was a one-night Zoom class. Dana Hargrave said Misty Jesse is doing an amazing job with her ministries and they are so blessed to have her. Misty Jesse thanked Sheila Bloodgood for conducting the survey with the ministry leaders. She also thanked Chris Acherman for getting the ministry directory posted on the website. Gayle Plecha said the SJF website has a YouTube icon in the upper right-hand corner. If you click on it, you can find Margaret Johnson's and Misty Jesse's classes. Misty Jesse shared that people can still join the Prophets series, but they have to purchase the workbooks on their own. She said they added the Camp Pendleton collection to the Military Ministry. The regular Veterans Day Military Ministry collection is this weekend, and the Food Pantry collection is the first weekend in December. Parishioners have been very generous during this time.

2020 – 2021 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review

The chair asked one member from each team to give an update on their objective.

Objective #1 – We will develop live and virtual opportunities to interact, worship and retreat with emphasis on the vulnerable and disenfranchised of our community. Cathy Alessandra's group met with Gayle Plecha this past week to discuss ideas for a new website. They will meet with the Communications Advisory Committee to learn what they would like and what would and would not be needed. They also talked about an email newsletter. The chair said Keith Kamholz is the chair of the Communications Advisory Committee. The group will meet again for a virtual retreat.

Objective #2 – We will use what we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to further our community bond. Dave Williams said their bulletin announcement "Do You Feel Safe at Mass?" triggered two emails. People want copies of the readings and prayers and asked if the priests could post their homilies on the website. Msgr. Sork said he doesn't write down his homilies and it's not something that would be helpful. The readings and Mass guide can be found on the SJF website. They said public health guidelines indicate singing is not allowed and they are concerned that SJF is not following these guidelines. Chris Ratliff feels that by wearing masks and having outdoor Mass, singing doesn't contribute any additional concerns. Dana Hargrave said the problem is that the congregation sings, and they don't know how to deal with that as it's not the safest thing to do since literature suggests it's a risk. Msgr. Sork said there is risk in everything, but the question is how much risk. Sheila Bloodgood feels the person is worried about SJF getting in trouble for not following the guidelines. Chris Ratliff said to express to this person that SJF is following the guidelines. The person has the option of coming to Mass or watching livestream. Gayle Plecha suggested that Dave Williams compose a response, and she will email it on behalf of the COVID-19 team. He will send her something tomorrow. There is also concern about chairs not being six feet apart and no cones to maintain separation during communion. Dana Hargrave said the ushers are having a difficult time keeping that separation. Sheila Bloodgood measured the chairs, and some are less than four feet apart. Msgr. Sork said it's safer than commercial air travel as the airplane rows are not six feet apart, plus church is outside and people are wearing masks. He made an announcement at the 5:00 pm Mass instructing people on the process for communion. When Mass was in the church, they had cones keeping people six feet apart. The main aisles need to be clearly delineated. The ushers need a meeting or email reviewing what the correct practices are. Dave Williams said the postcard announcing Mass times and procedures is being mailed to all parish households this week.

Objective #3 – We will enhance youth and young adult engagement by contributing to and supporting the creation of online resources. Chiby Onyeador said his group met a week ago and talked about how the youth view the church. They plan to contact Zack Zuvich to set up a meeting sometime next week. Some of what they discussed was talked about earlier in tonight's meeting.

Objective #4 – We will assess the health of SJF ministries and lend assistance where needed, emphasizing impact of COVID-19 and current social issues. Sheila Bloodgood said that after reaching out to Misty Jesse and Margaret Johnson, they created a survey for the ministries. There are some staff-led ministries, but they focused on the 42 parishioner-led ministries. They've talked to 20 of them and they seem happy that someone reached out. They are enthusiastic and active in their ministries and the majority have figured out how to keep going. Others are having a tougher time, and it may not be COVID-19 related. They were asked what they would most like help with. They would like to see their ministry on the website. They wish they could advertise a little more. The team would like to help implement those advertising ideas. The group plans to continue the phone calls and summarize the results, figure out themes, and collect COVID-19 best practices to help people with Zoom. They will report back at the December meeting.

Next Meeting: December 2 at 7:00 pm

The chair announced that the December 2nd meeting will take place via Zoom at 7:00 pm.

Other

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

- Chiby Onyeador asked if they could keep the California Conference of Catholic Bishops' topic of racial inequality as a discussion topic for future agendas.

The meeting was concluded at 9:35 pm with the prayer of St. John Fisher.