

**St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
November 2, 2022**

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Sheila Bloodgood (chair), Joe McGuinness (vice chair), Janos Bakos, Stephanie Bezner, Celeste Cummings, Antonia Lavender, Steve Ludwick, Ryan McCormick, Tim Niemann (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, and Grant Hungerford as the staff representative

Absent: Namele Baker, Rosemarie Diehl, Mikaela Ventura, Lucas Damasco (youth rep.)

Guests: Ana Sussman (Mission Circle), Carl Mossberg (Mission Circle)

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:02 pm and welcomed the guests and staff representative.

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Antonia Lavender.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

Liturgical Ministry Training, EMHC (10/8)

Stephanie Bezner enjoyed Msgr. Sork's instruction on the Eucharist. Unfortunately due to a wedding they were unable to hold the training in the church. Joe McGuinness feels it's an honor to present the Body of Christ.

Peruvian Mission Festival, October 16

Carl Mossberg reported that they raised \$35,000 at the festival and combined with the funds they already had, they were able to send \$45,000 to the mission. Fr. Tony Coney attended and helped with the event. It began with the Lord of Miracles and a procession to Barrett Hall. He gave a talk about the mission and presented a video of the kids thanking SJF for their support followed by food, the auction and Peruvian dancers. Ana Sussman thanked everyone for making it happen and feels the parishioners understand the cause and what happens at the mission. The youth center brings the children of the neighborhood together and helps those who have been abused or fallen behind in school. Antonia Lavender thought the event was beautifully done with lots of participation, the food was delicious, and dancers were amazing. Msgr. Sork shared some background of this ministry and said Carl Mossberg has done an amazing job with his leadership and has gone above and beyond his expectations.

State of the Parish Address, October 22-23

Antonia Lavender thought the parishioners were very attentive and it was well received. She liked that Msgr. Sork went into specifics at the end about the children and he made it very personal. Joe McGuinness thought it was a good combination of updating people on the school and the new building. Msgr. Sork thanked members for their input at the previous meeting. It's a tricky thing to capture everything while keeping it under 2,000 words.

Financial Report, October 29-30

Antonia Lavender thought the person giving the report did an excellent job. Stephanie Bezner was glad the numbers balanced this year. Gayle Plecha explained they've been using the same format for years which is a consolidated version of what they send to the Archdiocese, but she's open to suggestions. Sheila Bloodgood feels the operating income and loss which

is driven by the collections should be separated from the Capital Campaign numbers which is an extraordinary item. It makes the bottom line misleading since it makes the church look like it has more money than it really does. Steve Ludwick thought the overall presentation was very good compared to previous years. He heard what he needed to hear, and it was simple. Msgr. Sork explained the process for putting together the Financial report. Ryan McCormick commented on how narrow the margin is for covering church expenses. He hopes there is a plan to break even. Msgr. Sork said it's definitely a concern especially with inflation. He explained the two different investments that SJF has. Janos Bakos said someone commented that it's a bit jarring to have a financial report at Mass and perhaps it could be printed in the bulletin instead. Msgr. Sork said it's done at the end of Mass instead of in the middle for this reason. He promised to be transparent with the church finances and reading it in the bulletin doesn't have as much impact as hearing it. Grant Hungerford said if you don't put the needs of the church in front of the people, then it makes it difficult to ask for money. Gayle Plecha reported that the witness talks are this weekend and the following weekend parishioners will be asked to make a Stewardship commitment.

Youth BBQ and Trunk-or-Treat, October 30

Joe McGuinness said it was a wonderful event and he was surprised how many people participated. The level of detail in the decorations was amazing and it was a joy to see the kids. Steve Ludwick said it was fun to see the kids in costumes and enjoyed what was presented. The event was a success. At least 300 people attended which is a huge increase from last year. They served around 300 hamburgers and 200 hotdogs and ran out of food. Many people said they want to participate next year. Yolanda Williams' Girl Scouts helped with the food and games. Next year they'll plan for more food and organize the timeline of the event differently. Ryan McCormick said there were some safety concerns with parking and the people walking. He said his kids were confused about the raffle process. He suggested asking the ministries to host baskets for more raffling options. He thought the raffles took longer than anticipated. He suggested having the trunks open for an hour to give parents an opportunity to participate with their children as he didn't feel he had enough time to attend everything. Stephanie Bezner felt the event was a bit short compared to other parish events, so she doesn't want to accelerate the timeline. She suggested having non-parents host the trunks so families can enjoy the event with their kids. 25% of school families participated. Steve Ludwick and his family thought it was a great event. They ran out of candy just as they ran out of kids. They left feeling good. It was mentioned that Justin Fontenot would like to get the Confirmation students involved and this could count towards their service hours. Gayle Plecha shared that Justin Fontenot submitted photos from the event with his bulletin article.

Fr. Caro Retirement, October 30

This was Fr. Caro's last Mass with SJF. Antonia Lavender thought it was a beautiful celebration, but unfortunately his microphone wasn't working at the beginning of Mass. She thought it was well attended and enjoyed Msgr. Sork's presentation to him.

Together in Mission Update

Gayle Plecha said the goal of TIM is based on 10% of ordinary income. For SJF that amount is \$204,391, which is less than last year. So far 60% has been pledged and they've received 55% in cash. They need to raise \$83,000 more in the remaining two months of this calendar year. Historically they have a surge in December, but they don't want to count on that this year.

2022 Pilgrimage Readout

Sheila Bloodgood would recommend the pilgrimage and thought it was well organized and the guides knew when to arrive to avoid the crowds. She thought Celeste Cummings did a great job as Msgr. Sork's assistant and coordinating the pilgrims. It was a treat to have Msgr. Sork celebrate Mass at the fantastic biblical locations such as Jesus' tomb and the Sea of Galilee. Celeste Cummings said it was an overwhelming experience to put into reality what you've only read about. Stephanie Bezner added that the experience exceeded her expectations. Msgr. Sork said he never feels unsafe because the guides know exactly what is going on and take good care of everyone.

Building Committee Update

While Msgr. Sork was in the Holy Land the Building Committee met with the city officials and worked out a more simplified plan that will save time and money. The Committee met today, and the cost estimate is a lot more than they expected so they have had to figure out ways to trim the budget. The biggest change was to remove the basement which saved \$2.2 million. So far they've trimmed off \$5 million and are still working on it. The Campaign Committee said to wait until next year to resume fundraising so they can get more realistic project cost numbers.

2022 Mass Census Results

Msgr. Sork thanked Joe McGuinness for all his work organizing the census and counting heads at every Mass. Sheila Bloodgood emailed the results before the meeting. She highlighted a few items: Page 2 shows the tabular data for previous years and the average of last year compared to this year. There is a 7% increase in attendance from last year, which is good. Every Mass except the 5:00 PM Saturday Mass had an increase. The number of devices using Livestream increased from 145 to 182. Attendance is down 36% from 2019, but it's still too early to tell which direction things are going as a result of Covid. Page 6 looks at attendance and percentages as a total. It shows that each Mass has lost attendance since 2019. Page 11 shows the demographics of the Rancho Palos Verdes area based on the U.S. Census. The number of younger people (25-34 bracket) in RPV has dropped since 2010. The largest growing demographic is age 85+. The bottom of the page shows the comparison to surrounding cities. Msgr. Sork said it's important to keep the Livestream Mass for those who are unable to go to church due to age or illness. Gayle Plecha shared that the Archdiocese asked all parishes in the San Pedro region to submit their results by 11/15/22 so they may be able to find out how SJF compares to other parishes. She said last year nationwide there was a 40% drop from 2019 to 2021 which is equal to what SJF experienced. Msgr. Sork asked members to look at ways to bring people back to the church. Grant Hungerford shared that Bishop Barron has done a study on why people leave the Catholic Church, and the reasons vary from the way the church stands on certain issues to the way the receptionist answers the phone. Msgr. Sork said this needs to be an ongoing conversation.

Looking Ahead – Upcoming Events

- **Mass of Remembrance, November 7** – This is a beautiful event. Family and friends of those who have passed away in the last year are invited. Each name is read, and a candle is lit for that person.
- **Veteran's Day Lunch, November 13** – Mass at 11:00 AM followed by lunch and a celebration in Barrett Hall for veterans and their families and friends.

- **Military Ministry Collection, November 5-6** – Military Ministry is collecting items for the USO and money for military charities.
- **PV Resale Christmas Boutique, November 12-13** – Christmas items will be for sale in the parking lot of the thrift shop.
- **Thanksgiving Mass, 9:00 AM, Blessing of Bread and Wine** – People are encouraged to attend this wonderful Mass to sing and bring their bread and wine for a blessing.
- **Anointing of the Sick, December 3** – This event occurs twice a year for the sick.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of October Minutes

Sheila Bloodgood asked for corrections to the October minutes. Stephanie Bezner said to change the last sentence under the first Pastoral Plan objective from “suggested a chili contest” to “has a chili contest” and to switch the order of the second and third to last sentences for better flow. Stephanie Bezner moved to approve the October minutes as amended. Joe McGuinness seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff Representative Brief: Grant Hungerford, Music Director

Grant Hungerford shared that the Liturgy Committee needs the help of Pastoral Council to collaborate on ways to reach out more globally to get people to come back to the church. He wants to blend the themes of Advent and Welcome Back with scripture. He would like to have banners on street corners, the website and anywhere they can reach people. He asked members to brainstorm and email him ideas before the November 14th Liturgy Committee meeting. Gayle Plecha said they can request banners on the corners of intersections through the City. They have to see what is available, get the permit and pay the fee. Stephanie Bezner suggested creating signs for people to put in their yards similar to the campaign or graduation signs. The signs could read “Join us in walking with the light of the Lord” and have the SJF logo. Members liked this idea.

Grant Hungerford said the Liturgy Committee wants to nail down the Christmas and Easter Mass schedule and what happens in the PAC. The Children’s Choir director has to send out the schedule to the parents. The Mass options on Christmas Eve are 4:00 PM with the children’s choir, 6:00 PM school Mass, 8:00 PM teen Mass, Midnight Mass which is concelebrated. Christmas Day Masses are 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM. A discussion ensued about having a second priest in the PAC or just overflow with Livestream. Celeste Cummings said parishioners were upset that there was no live priest saying Mass in the PAC at Easter. Grant Hungerford is concerned about having a choir in both the church and the PAC for the 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Mass. Msgr. Sork said to keep the PAC for overflow at the 4:00 PM Mass on Christmas Eve. He said to encourage people to attend the 6:00 PM Mass as it is less crowded than the 4:00 PM Mass. Since the 11:00 AM Easter Mass is the most highly attended, he suggested having a second Mass at 11:15 AM in the PAC and encouraging people to attend the 1:00 PM Mass. Ryan McCormick suggested a flyer insert for the Christmas bulletin to engage people to return to church.

Advent Activity Volunteer Sign-ups

- Advent Concert, December 11 at 2:30 PM – Sheila Bloodgood said she would have a sign-up sheet at the next meeting for members to help with hospitality and ushering.

She asked members to keep in mind they will need to help greet and usher at the Christmas Masses.

2022-2023 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review

- 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 her group met and three PC members decorated trunks for the Trunk-or-Treat event. The school told them to wait until after the Jingle Bag Bingo event is over to start working on the Lisa Patterson event to make it a church event.
 2. *The Pastoral Council will assist the parish in publicizing parish activities and ministries using a variety of tools, including social media.* Ryan McCormick said they are working on social media and defining some goals and use of photos. They want to reach out to other parishes and research their social media methods and tools and get some recommendations. They will put something together to present.
 3. *The Pastoral Council will directly support youth and young adult program development and monthly events.* Joe McGuinness said his group hasn't met yet but is planning to meet next week. Gayle Plecha shared that Justin Fontenot may need help at his Edge event later this month.
 4. *The Pastoral Council will support the marketing efforts to increase school enrollment.* Stephanie Bezner said her group did not meet this past month, but she reached out to the school board president to let her know they would like to help where needed. They are working on their marketing plan, and she hopes to help with that. They don't want to hinder the efforts of the school or their plans. Msgr. Sork met with the school board president yesterday and said she is very talented. She knows that she has the support of the Pastoral and Finance Councils.

Next Meeting

- Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Other

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

- Antonia Lavender heard from two people who each have children in the Confirmation program and feel the kids are not engaging with other kids and are potentially not attending church. She would like the committee to continue brainstorming ideas to bring families back to church. She would also like to observe some of the Confirmation activities.
 - Msgr. Sork expects the parents to attend Mass with their children. He talks about this as part of the first year Confirmation classes.
 - Gayle Plecha suggested Antonia Lavender contact Katie Dante to find out how she can assist with getting parents to bring their kids to Mass and engage them in activities.
 - Antonia Lavender agreed to contact Katie Dante and ask if she and Joe McGuinness can attend an event.

The meeting was concluded at 9:07 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher Parish.

