

## St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting November 6, 2024

**Present:** Msgr. David A. Sork, Joe McGuinness (chair), Namele Baker (vice chair), Stephanie Bezner, Rosemarie Diehl, Mike Gibson, Ron Homer, Steve Ludwick, Tom Magee, Christopher Marrs, Ryan McCormick, Jennifer Ryan, Charlotte Hargrove (youth rep.), Patrick Lee (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, Chris Acherman (recording secretary), and Kim St. Romain as the staff representative

**Absent:** None

**Guests:** None

Msgr. Sork opened the meeting at 7:01 PM. The Council prayed the First 15 led by Joe McGuinness. Msgr. Sork recognized Kim St. Romain, Director of Religious Education.

### **Chair/Vice-Chair**

#### **2024-2025 Pastoral Council Objective Reports**

Joe McGuinness asked the leader of each group to give a brief report of their progress.

- Obj. (1) *We will actively recruit volunteers for all ministries.* Charlotte Hargrove reported that her group met and discussed ideas on how to get volunteers for all types of ministries. She will reach out to one of her high school classmates in the Catholic Athletes club to get some ideas for getting the youth to attend church and other ways to improve volunteering.
- Obj. (2) *We will work together through the transformation of our campus as we complete our parish master plan.* Chris Marrs said Gayle Plecha provided him with a summary of how things are moving along with the building. His group wants to upgrade the school and the security to make it more attractive as a way to increase enrollment. Gayle Plecha said this would be discussed further during the building committee section of the meeting.
- Obj. (3) *We will develop opportunities for family-based faith formation and service.* Ryan McCormick reported that his group is working on three areas. The first is to provide mentorship programs, prayer groups and seasonal activities such as carolers for those in senior homes. They want to identify goals to help the current ministries and service the poor through re-engaging the Toberman House and help PV Resale with their mission. They also want to provide an opportunity to deliver care packages to children's hospitals and senior care homes.
- Obj. (4) *We will seek innovative and creative ways to encourage parents and children to participate in Sunday Mass together.* Ron Homer passed out a handout with ways to activate the families at Mass such as parents and kids serving together as greeters, ushers and lectors. They want to promote the "family room", which is located in the back of the church, by putting up a poster to explain what it is. He emailed Pastoral Council members to get their input and feedback for the family Mass. They would like to add a more detailed children's section to the newsletter and include a couple of questions for kids to answer in order to get a treat from the ushers after Mass. He asked for information about activities in the past that have worked or not worked. Msgr. Sork said they need more volunteers for the Children's Liturgy of the Word so it isn't always the same person. Kim St. Romain said she has been personally inviting RE parents to participate, but no one has taken her up on it.

Rosemarie Diehl suggested pairing a couple of Confirmation students with an adult to integrate them into the Mass and earn service hours. Gayle Plecha shared that they used to have a children's Mass a few times a year with the homily directed towards the children and they would gather around the altar. She added that the children's choir would occasionally sing at Mass. She clarified that the multipurpose/bride's room is used for nursing mothers during Mass. The Mass cards in the pews mention these items. Msgr. Sork said the idea of the quiet/family room is for kids to calm down so families are able to return to Mass. Kim St. Romain said the yellow pew cards are being reprinted and will be in the pews again very soon.

- Obj. (5) *We will promote activities which encourage a closer relationship to church and faith.* Chris Marrs said they would like to promote the Hallow app which is a daily prayer app that has become very popular. They would also like to promote Formed which is like a Netflix for Catholics. They're hoping to provide information and a QR code for these sites in the bulletin so parishioners can try it. He has really been enjoying the app and the programs. He passed around a packet of information about Formed. Tom Magee said there may be local parishes who have already adopted these and they can talk with them and build a network. Rosemarie Diehl said it would be good to introduce these resources to the parish, and if there's enough interest, they can develop it further. Msgr. Sork encouraged the committee to look at other resources and their value as well.

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

#### **Peruvian Mission Festival, Sunday, October 6, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

No Pastoral Council members attended. No feedback.

#### **State of the Parish Address**

Msgr. Sork reminded members that they provided input at the last meeting which he used to write his address. In his address he shared with parishioners what happened in the parish throughout the last 12 months. Stephanie Bezner thought it was great and was glad that he highlighted the ministry activities. Ron Homer appreciated that the format is consistent, and he can see progress from previous years and what the parish hopes to achieve. Jennifer Ryan was happy he mentioned Women's Cornerstone and said it felt good to hear about the groups she's involved with and hoped that others will want to join.

#### **Annual Financial Report**

Msgr. Sork said two weeks after the State of the Parish address members of the Finance Council gave their annual report. He said it is very important to him to be transparent with the parish finances. He wants the parishioners to know how their money is being handled. Rosemarie Diehl enjoyed hearing the presentations. Joe McGuinness thought Bob Pethick did a great job. Chris Marrs mentioned that the Music Guild is not included in the report. Gayle Plecha will talk to Grant Hungerford about that. Msgr. Sork shared that 20 years ago they realized that the concerts were getting expensive to produce, so Grant Hungerford established a music guild to help finance them in order to keep them going. Msgr. Sork said next weekend as part of the Stewardship process he will be challenging parishioners to give back the first portion of what the Lord has given them.

### **Music Concert**

Msgr. Sork said this time the concert was held on a Saturday. Grant Hungerford is very appreciative of the help Pastoral Council provides. Joe McGuinness thanked Chris Marrs and Mike Gibson for taking the lead with greeting and hospitality at this concert. Chris Marrs shared that he was happy to help, but didn't get to enjoy the concert since he was outside. He feels the concerts need better promotion. People who live in care homes and retirement communities would enjoy the concerts. He suggested sending out electronic invites to all parishioners as a way to get them to participate in the parish again. He also recommended having a table after the concert to get people to join the church. Joe McGuinness thanked Chris Marrs for his energy and enthusiasm for this event. Gayle Plecha said the concert programs include an option to join the Music Guild.

### **Trunk or Treat**

Namele Baker said it was an amazing event, and they had a lot of volunteers. The photos are on the parish Instagram page. She felt it was a big success. Steve Ludwick thought it was a lot of fun again this year. Ryan McCormick said a lot of people liked the snow cone truck. Kim St. Romain reported that there were 12 trunks participating this year.

### **Building Committee - Renderings**

Msgr. Sork said the building project has been in the works for a very long time. They have the archdiocese's approval and Del Amo Construction will be building it. Gayle Plecha shared a poster of the new building and where it fits into the current site. She also showed a slide presentation of the building renderings which Joe McGuinness had also sent to Pastoral Council members. She explained that during school hours there will be a locked gate so visitors will have to enter the new Eugene A. Gilb Welcome Center. She explained this building was always part of the plan, but they didn't have the funds for it until now. Msgr. Sork said that school security is not mandated, but it's a "best practice" for the school. Gayle Plecha explained all the different office locations in the new building and some of the changes to existing buildings. The current faith formation offices will be used for storage in lieu of a basement in the new building. Msgr. Sork said the construction would not increase the school's capacity for more enrollment; however, they already are able to accommodate 50% more students than they currently have. Gayle Plecha said the construction timeframe is 14 months. They expect to receive the building permit in December followed by a groundbreaking ceremony. Ron Homer felt the changes and additions would make for a more attractive campus and hopefully bring in more families. Msgr. Sork said this is the last part of the master plan which began in 2004. He added that they have many talented parishioners on the building committee.

### **Looking Ahead**

- **Together in Mission**

Msgr. Sork said we are short of our goal so he encouraged members to share Together in Mission and its purpose with other parishioners. Gayle Plecha said their goal is \$200,000 and so far, \$116,000 has been pledged. It will wrap up at the end of December.

- **Veterans Day Celebration & Lunch, November 10<sup>th</sup> after 11:00 AM Mass**

Msgr. Sork said the event is this Sunday. Chris Acherman added that the deadline to RSVP was November 5<sup>th</sup>, as they had to give a headcount to the caterer.

- **Mass of Remembrance, November 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM**

Msgr. Sork said normally this Mass is on the first Monday in November, but he was out of town, so it was postponed one week. It's a very powerful and beautiful Mass with all the candles. Invitations were sent to those families who have lost someone in the past year. Charlotte Hargrove asked if the person had to be a member of the parish or had a funeral at SJF. Gayle Plecha said it's for anyone who has lost a loved one in the last 12 months. Please submit any names as soon as possible to the parish office. If no family members are able to attend, representatives will light the candles on their behalf. It will be livestreamed.

- **EMHC Training, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 PM**

Msgr. Sork said they don't have enough Eucharistic Ministers to offer communion under both species at all Masses. He asked the members to encourage people to apply. Beverly Beatty conducts the training and Msgr. Sork gives a talk. They will be commissioned at the 5:00 PM Mass that day.

- **Thanksgiving Day Mass, 9:00 AM, Blessing of the bread and wine**

Msgr. Sork said they have a special Mass on Thanksgiving. He encourages people to bring their bread and wine for their Thanksgiving meal to have it blessed. It's a very beautiful ceremony with singing. He looks forward to it every year.

Namele Baker added that their Santa's cookie workshop is on December 8<sup>th</sup> and they need volunteers.

## **Chair/Vice-Chair**

### **Approval of October Meeting Minutes**

Joe McGuinness asked for corrections to the October meeting minutes. Hearing none, Charlotte Hargrove moved to approve the October meeting minutes as presented. Rosemarie Diehl seconded. The October meeting minutes were approved.

### **Staff Representative Brief: Kim St. Romain, Director of Religious Education**

Kim St. Romain said she is grateful to be at SJF and is getting settled. They have a total of 163 children enrolled in Religious Education. She's been having family meetings to get to know the families she's guiding and she's enjoying it. During these meetings she's been inviting families to volunteer for the family sandwich ministry. There are currently nine families in Family RCIA. She plans to resurrect REPA (Religious Education Parents Association) to help move forward the new vision of catechesis. She is looking into ways to staff catechesis faith and development. She passed around a flyer with information about the Advent sales which will begin this weekend. They are selling chocolate Advent calendars that include a scripture, Advent wreaths and candles. She needs volunteers to help at the sales table. They have daycare available for the 9:00 AM Mass, but no one was interested at the 11:00 AM Mass so it was discontinued. Daycare for the RE parent class was well received. She has 14 catechists and 6 assistants and plans to develop a team of RE office volunteers. Namele Baker said that last year the RE families helped at their

cookie event and requested help again for the event on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Kim St. Romain also shared a little bit about her personal and educational experience.

### **Yearly Mass Attendance Census & Pastoral Plan Handout**

Joe McGuinness spoke about the census handout that Gayle Plecha put together. He thanked everyone for their help with the census count. He feels it is good news as the church attendance continues to increase. The total for the 2024 count was 1,347 plus 60 more who watched Mass via livestream. He said they are going to hand out the pastoral plan this Sunday. It will be announced from the pulpit and anyone who is interested can pick one up from the table. Some Pastoral Council members volunteered to sit at the table to assist with the distribution.

### **Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese Agreed Settlement**

Joe McGuinness said Msgr. Sork asked him to send out the information on the settlement to all Pastoral Council members. He wanted to point out that the funds don't come from the churches. They are paid from reserves and the sale of properties that the Archdiocese owns. No programs will be affected by this. This settlement has to do with the actions of clergy from long ago. There are no new cases. A new window on the statute of limitations allowed for new claims to be made. Msgr. Sork said there will be a Zoom meeting with the Archbishop on Friday at 7:00 PM. He encouraged members to attend so they would be able to answer any questions parishioners may have. Ryan McCormick hopes it will be recorded and posted on the website so more people can see it. Msgr. Sork said the settlement is \$880 million, involving 1200+ cases. A judge will determine the amount that each of the remaining 1,200 victims receives. No parish money, earmarked for Called to Renew, Together in Mission, or invested parish or school money will be used for the settlement payment. The Archdiocese will have to sell property and take out long-term loans to pay the settlement proceeds.

### **Next Meeting:**

- December 4, 2024, at 7:00 PM

### **Other**

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

- None.

The meeting was concluded at 9:03 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher Parish.