

St. John Fisher Pastoral Council Meeting
October 6, 2021

Present: Msgr. David A. Sork, Sheila Bloodgood (chair), Dave Williams (vice chair), Cathy Alessandra, Namele Baker, Janos Bakos, Stanley Crow Jr., Celeste Cummings, Troy Kelley, Antonia Lavender, Joseph McGuinness, Maddy Magaña (youth rep), Lucas Damasco (youth alt.), Gayle Plecha, and Grant Hungerford as the staff representative

Absent: Dana Hargrave

Guests: None

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

The Council prayed the First 15 led by Dave Williams.

Pastor-Parish Life (Msgr. Sork)

“Welcome Forward” Celebration, September 11-12

Msgr. Sork was impressed with all the work that Pastoral Council members put into this event. Cathy Alessandra thought it was fabulous and it's nice to be back to church. Antonia Lavender thought it was beautiful to see the families returning and was inspired by their enthusiasm. The jazz concert was very good, and the food was delicious. Troy Kelley thought all who attended would feel the weekend was a success. Sheila Bloodgood said it took a lot of volunteers and a lot of hard work to make it happen and perhaps some of the activities could be carried forward into the coming year. Msgr. Sork said the activities geared towards the kids were a success. Having the In 'N Out truck was a great idea. Gayle Plecha added that the whole weekend was so well organized and thanked Sheila Bloodgood and Dave Williams for all they did to make it so easy on the business side. Sheila Bloodgood felt that the volunteers could have been organized better. She asked everyone to email with her ideas for how it could have been done differently. Msgr. Sork asked her to bring those items to the Executive Committee meeting so they can be considered for the agenda for the next Pastoral Council meeting. Dave Williams said there was some confusion about the paperwork from the photographer, but once she submits her W-9 and is paid, she will make a USB drive for everyone who had their pictures taken and signed the waiver. Gayle Plecha said there are pictures from the event on the SJF Facebook and Instagram pages. Antonia Lavender said people were hoping to see some pictures in the bulletin.

Knights of Columbus BBQ, September 26

Celeste Cummings felt there was some confusion about where/how to get the meals. Antonia Lavender said according to the flyer and the website the meals had to be pre-ordered, but fritters were available for purchase onsite. Stanley Crow thought the food was delicious. Msgr. Sork would like to know the results of this fundraiser.

Life Teen event feedback

Lucas Damasco said this was his first LifeTeen event at this parish. He thought it was fun, social and engaging and the food was good. He wishes more kids would attend and feels that more needs to be done to spread awareness of these events. He didn't even know about it until Sheila Bloodgood reached out to him so there may be others who didn't know either. Celeste Cummings suggested announcing it at all the Masses not just the Sunday 5:00 PM Mass.

Antonia Lavender said there was nothing in the bulletin about it. She added that the Confirmation class should end at 5:00 PM so the kids can attend that Mass together. Msgr. Sork said that is the intent, but not all families go to that Mass, and many parents pick up their kids after class. Gayle Plecha said class ends before 5:00 PM so that those kids who are serving as ushers etc. at Mass have time to prepare. Grant Hungerford said the “teen” section was empty at last Sunday’s Mass. Namele Baker asked about the Mass expectations of confirmation students. Msgr. Sork said they are expected to attend a Mass each week. Namele Baker felt they should be going to the 5:00 PM Mass so they can attend the LifeTeen event afterwards. Dave Williams said the LifeTeen event was on the back of the bulletin. Grant Hungerford said teens don’t read the bulletin, so they need to ask Katie Dante and Zack Zuvich what other ways they are promoting their events. Troy Kelley said sometimes people are not in the right place to hear about events, so the parish needs to fine tune their promotional tools.

Formation of Liturgical Ministers

Altar server training was held last Saturday. There are many newly trained altar servers now. This Saturday is the formation session for Eucharistic Ministers. There aren’t many people signed up possibly still due to COVID. The lector training is next Tuesday. Msgr. Sork would like to have more Eucharistic Ministers to the homebound. Currently there 16 Eucharistic Ministers bringing the Eucharist to 58 homebound people, so they are traveling to many locations. Antonia Lavender shared that it is very time-consuming. They used to recruit people for various ministries at the annual Sanctus retreats so now they need other ways to recruit. Cathy Alessandra suggested sending an email to the current EMHCs to see if they would be interested in participating. Msgr. Sork said they may need to offer another training if they need more EMs. He also added that he has increased the number of Eucharistic Ministers needed at each Mass effective with the next scheduling period.

Catechetical Sunday feedback

No feedback

Together in Mission

Gayle Plecha reminded everyone that this is the annual appeal of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and every parish is given a goal of 10% of their ordinary income. SJF has always exceeded its goal. However, this year we are woefully behind due to not having the annual February appeal with a speaker explaining that the money goes to the neediest parishes and schools. Due to COVID, it was postponed to May, but they still didn’t send speakers. The Archdiocese did a lot of direct mail to parishioners who have given in the past. They have a website so it’s easy to give. SJF needs to raise \$217,347. So far parishioners have pledged \$107,372, which is 49% of the goal, and SJF has received \$94,428 which is about 43% of the goal. SJF exceeded last year’s goal which was greater than this year’s. The Finance Council will mention it when they give their annual report to the parish. SJF needs to raise \$123,000 by the end of the calendar year. Msgr. Sork said the poor parishes need it now more than ever. He understands the reasons why the donations are down, but he just hates to let these parishes and schools down. Celeste Cummings asked if it was possible to get a speaker to talk at Mass. Msgr. Sork said in previous years various people have come to talk such as a priest from a needy parish. World Mission Sunday is October 23/24 so it couldn’t be done this month. This weekend he will talk about it during his State of the Parish address and do the best he can. Dave Williams suggested having a speaker two weeks before Thanksgiving as people may feel more like giving at that time. Gayle Plecha said the next Together in Mission campaign will begin in February 2022 and they plan to have a speaker for it.

Looking Ahead

- **Topics to be addressed at the State of the Parish Address, October 9-10**

- Together in Mission
- Announce during the Livestream 9:00 AM Mass that people should come back to Mass inside the church.
- The success of the Welcome Forward event and the progress the church is making.
- It's important to come back to church and receive the Body of Christ
- The need for EMs to the homebound
- Share how SJF adapted during COVID with Mass outside, the tents and now back inside.
- Be positive and share that the COVID numbers are dropping, and people are getting vaccinated. Things are looking up for 2022.
- As a community SJF has been very resilient and flexible. Things keep going despite everything that's happened.
- Recommitment to the ministries especially the Sunday hospitality.

- **Capital Campaign updated**

Msgr. Sork reminded everyone they were ready to announce the campaign to the parish when COVID hit so they suspended it. The committee has continued to meet. SJF has a goal of \$8 million and they had reached \$5 million when it was paused. Since then, the people who made pledges have been regularly fulfilling them. So far over \$2.5 million has been received. SJF has made two payments to the Call to Renew campaign which is the Archdiocesan capital campaign. The committee feels it is time to resume the campaign. Major donors may want to donate before the end of the year. Fundraising firm CCS will resume working with us in the middle of October, and we will begin approaching people later this year. In January we will announce the campaign to the parish. At that time people will be contacted to make a commitment. The campaign will conclude at the end of February. The funds will be used to construct the Msgr. Gilb Pastoral Center which will include all the offices. The school will be separate and secured, and there will be more meeting rooms. Gayle Plecha added that the Archdiocese started the Call to Renew campaign and gave each parish a goal. We had the option of a combined campaign to include needs at our parish as well. The feasibility study proved it could be done. \$1.4 million will go to the poor parishes and \$6.6 million will be used for our campus.

- **Upcoming Events:**

- **Talk Saves Lives: Teen Suicide Prevention, October 7, 7:00 PM**

Msgr. Sork handed out the event flyer. This event is for ages 18 and older. Antonia Lavender said teen suicide is up 50% for girls ages 12-17.

- **Dawn Unity Panel in Barrett Hall, October 19**

SJF is hosting this event at 7:30 PM with leaders from various faiths. They will discuss dysfunctional families in the Old Testament and how each faith looks at it. Dawn Unity began at SJF 20 years ago. Four of the original panelists will be participating.

- **Mass of Remembrance (livestream), November 2, 7:30 PM**

Msgr. Sork said the Mass will not be livestreamed this year as he wants people to attend in person. He moved it from the usual Monday to All Soul's Day on Tuesday. It was livestreamed last year due to COVID. Gayle Plecha is concerned that the elderly might not be able to attend so it would be good to be able to view it livestreamed. Grant Hungerford felt family from other parts of the country would like to watch it. Msgr. Sork is open to the idea. The chat function will be turned off during this Mass.

Chair/Vice-Chair

Approval of September Minutes

Sheila Bloodgood asked for corrections to the September minutes. Hearing none, Celeste Cummings moved to approve the September minutes as presented. Cathy Alessandra seconded. The minutes were approved.

Staff rep brief: Grant Hungerford, Music Director

He is trying to bring back the choirs. The 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM choirs will be singing at the 11:00 AM Mass. Participation ebbs and flows with people's comfort levels. The children's choir will sing in November. He is looking for a pianist for the teen choir. At this time there is no rehearsal after the 5:00 PM Mass. It's always a struggle due to confirmation class occurring just before Mass. He teaches music to 5th-8th grades at SJF and hopes to recruit some students into the choir. He would like to have the middle school sing with the band at the 5:00 PM Mass to reignite the excitement. There will be a "Lessons and Carols" concert on December 12th with readings leading up to the birth of Christ and carols in between each reading. There isn't a large enough choir or band to do anything bigger. He's trying to decide which choir to have for the Thanksgiving Mass. Perhaps the children's choir would be a good choice to get people involved.

Pastoral Council formation session feedback (Sheila Bloodgood and Dave Williams)

Sheila Bloodgood thought the choice of text was something everyone could get engaged with and have good discussions and it spawned a lot of ideas which led to agenda topics such as: where are we? what is the target audience? and what are some techniques? It was very successful, and everyone participated which made it dynamic and enjoyable. Troy Kelley said there are groups who are always engaged and those who only come to church for Easter and Christmas. They need to reach out to those who are peripherally involved and the younger parishioners who are less active. Celeste Cummings said those people may have established new habits during COVID and may not come back. Antonia Lavender suggested creating a database and tools to send out information the way people will want to read it. Dave Williams said email and texting are the ways to reach the majority of the people.

Msgr. Sork said Pastoral Staff had an extensive talk about the website. He asked Pastoral Council members to look at the website on their phones and give him some feedback and suggestions to discuss at the next meeting. It's still a work in progress. Celeste Cummings noticed that the homepage had changed but not much else. The most critical information can be viewed by scrolling. Antonia Lavender felt it was extremely improved on the mobile phone and much easier to use. Namele Baker said the majority of people are using their phones rather than computers to look up information. Troy Kelley said this is an adaptive mobile site meaning it was built for the phone. People are used to scrolling now and not clicking. He thinks it looks great.

Mass attendance census and planning, October 10 and 17 weekends, all Masses

At least two people are needed at each Mass to count attendance during the homily for these two weekends. Sheila Bloodgood passed around a sign-up sheet for members to sign up for at least one Mass. It's up to the counters to decide the best way to count attendance at every Mass. Msgr. Sork will mention it during Mass. Gayle Plecha said to count the children at the 9:00 AM Mass or get those numbers from Justin Fontenot. She asked for someone to email the headcount after each Mass to her and Sheila Bloodgood so she can enter the information in the spreadsheet.

Handout of Pastoral Plan, October 10 weekend

Pastoral Council members will hand out the Pastoral Plan to parishioners after all the Masses this weekend. Please wear your badge and be seen. Msgr. Sork will mention the handout in his State of the Parish address.

2021-2022 Pastoral Plan Objectives Review

Everyone has a copy of the objectives and team composition. Each group selected a leader to give an update on their progress.

Objective #1 We will further develop SJF's social media presence with content designed to foster unity and invitation to greater connection in the SJF community. Troy Kelley shared that his group had a ZOOM meeting. Digital communication is key to keeping younger parishioners engaged. The digital ecosystem begins with the website. He recommended looking at ProChurchTools.com. This site helps churches navigate how to reach people. Namele Baker said there is a parishioner who is good at social media and comes from a point of social justice and wants to get involved. She will send the link to this parishioner's website and portfolio so members can check it out. Troy Kelley added that this objective can be done in three phases. They will evaluate all SJF digital communications in order to make recommendations. He plans to reach out to Adrienne who runs the marketing for SJF School and bring some of those ideas together for the parish. Namele Baker said the communications advisory committee was working on this, but they tabled it while they updated the website. Gayle Plecha said they can't change the wording of the objective, but she likes the ideas they've come up with. This provides the leadership that is needed. They are being strategic whereas the communication advisory committee is tactical. Troy Kelley concluded that he would look into the overlap of communication and social media.

Objective #2 The Pastoral Council will host three "family fun nights" over the 2021-2022 term to continue to draw parishioners back post-pandemic to SJF. – Dave Williams said an email was sent and they are figuring out the best time for a Family Fun Night. Vaccination for younger children may be coming soon so they were holding off a bit and waiting to schedule an event. Sometime within the next month or so they will have an event.

Objective #3 We will assist the Pastoral Staff (as needed and requested) in bringing back recurring parish events that could not occur during the pandemic. Dave Williams met with Justin Fontenot last Sunday. They will have the RE BBQ with hamburgers and hot dogs on October 31st, 12:00 PM–1:30 PM. Children will be encouraged to wear costumes of their favorite saints or their regular Halloween costume. They will have a cakewalk game, so they need people to make individually wrapped cupcakes and small cakes. The Girl Scouts will assist. He would like all Pastoral Council members to participate to make it a rewarding event. They plan to have a new parishioners brunch in the spring. Grant Hungerford would like help with hospitality after the Christmas concert.

Objective #4 The Pastoral Council will directly support the Youth Ministry in the implementation and growth of LifeTeen, including the development of an Edge (junior high) program. Antonia Lavender said the number of participants in LifeTeen is too low to start an Edge program. Gina McDuffie is on the board of directors for LifeTeen so they would like to meet with her to get information and guidance. There is a gathering on October 17th. The core team will attend to obtain information to support Justine Fontenot and Zack Zuvich. They will follow up with Lucas Damasco who has some great ideas for this event.

Next Meeting

- The next Pastoral Council meeting is November 3, 2021, at 7:00 PM

Other

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

- Celeste Cummings shared that she encountered two long-time parishioners at the Welcome Forward jazz concert who had been away from the church for a while but now plan to come back.

The meeting was concluded at 9:18 PM with the prayer of St. John Fisher parish.