

SJCC Parish Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2021

The meeting opened with prayer, led by Karen Spivey, followed by some faith sharing.

The main topic for this meeting was the role of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). The Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) defines the PPC as a consultative body. It investigates, reflects, and recommends conclusions. It also states that the Pastor decides the matter about which he wants to consult. It can be narrowly or broadly construed, according to the need of the Pastor. Planning is the main role of the PPC. The role of the PPC has taken on varying forms depending on the need of the current Pastor. That is, Fr. Neville had different needs than Fr. John. Identifying what those needs might be for Fr. John will be important to move forward. Fr. John shared that he likes the word “consultative” but wants to take it a step further: Visionary. He wants to pursue new frontiers for the church. This would mean there’s a need for implementation of what these “visions” might be. There was some continued discussion around if we all saw a “problem” regarding if we’re all “rowing together”, and whether it is spiritual, or structural. Some suggest that there may be a communication issue that leads to believing it’s a structural problem. However, depending on where one might find themselves in their personal relationship with God/Jesus; it could be more of a spiritual issue. Furthermore, it would seem that in many ways the two are linked. It was suggested that having a well communicated vision could help with the structural side of things. Yet, we have the Parish Plan, which does provide direction under each of the 6 priorities. Under the plan, different ministries and commissions are all doing different activities, all aiming at fulfilling some portion of the plan. But there is a concern that some of the work of the ministries consists of activities which are more charity work than that of missionary discipleship. To address the concerns with the structure under which the parish is currently operating, the idea of a Ministry Council was suggested. This might be the missing link, and the start of a solution to our current structural/spiritual problem that we have been discussing. This would provide space for the PPC to continue to be consultative and do the work of research and planning. Meanwhile the Ministry Council would fulfill the coordination need. Additionally, this could help to improve concerns related to communication. Discussion was brought up around the 6 core mission priorities and how to best ensure that there is enough focus and support in each priority. Namely, how might the Ministry Council focus on and coordinate the core mission priorities of the Parish Pastoral Plan? As well as, how the current commissions might be impacted, and ensuring there is some staff representation within Ministry Council.

The plan has helped with intentionality around ways that we do things. The structure of the church has developed (over the years) such that if someone were to come forward with an idea, often they were given the “OK” to execute on this idea. Over time, there are many ideas and actions, but little direction. So the question stands “do we need to be doing *all* of these things?” The spiritual aspect of all of this, is that in doing these activities, one should find their relationship with God/Jesus strengthening. Thus, the spiritual opportunity is being solved on a small level. However, in some cases it could be more busy work than bringing the word of God to those that are being served. So, while it feels good to provide a service to those in need, if we’re not inspiring those we serve to then pursue their own personal relationship with God/Jesus, then we ourselves are not being missionary disciples. The end goal: creating missionary disciples of everyone.

Pastors Report: Fr. John thanked Terry for all of the hard work that has been put into tonight’s meeting. Specifically, all the work leading up to it. Furthermore, he feels that he has a better starting point than ever. Scott Link also helped to bring some insight to this ongoing topic of are we rowing together. He shared a leadership video with Fr. John discussing how sometimes restructuring an organization results in better focus and clear vision. Fr. John suggested that in April, the staff and PPC perhaps try the exercise shown in the video in an effort to fully visualize a restructure and where it might lead to. Steven Thompson (from Reno, Nevada) has been hired as the new Music Director. Bob Bastress and Karen Spivey spent the month of January interviewing 9 applicants (via zoom). There was also a “search committee” made up of musical and non-musical persons. Performances were part of the interview process, as well as spending a weekend working with the choir and musical groups. Steven was chosen as the #1 choice unanimously. The Archdiocese has given approval for a columbarium at the Sykesville church. Cremation takes place after the funeral mass. From the 150th, SJCC has met with a company that makes stained glass. A story board was presented and would work well with our windows. We have enough funds to cover the production of 2 windows, and would have to work out funds for future windows. Lastly, in May we are scheduled to start the discernment process for new PPC members.

Attendance: Fr. John Worgul, Terry Morse, Tony Gioio, Joselle Ruddle, Sue Wilson, Sharon Borcharding, Karen Spivey, Gwen Lily, Chris Patrick, Rachel Wandishin, John Pavlik, Laura Bird, Bob Bastress, Mark Steinbrunner, Josh Theim, Elaine McClearn, Robert Muhl, Leigh Ann Gagnon, and guests Mary Albert and Linda Schwark.