

St Joseph Catholic Church

Minutes of the Pastoral Council Meeting

April 19, 2023

Present were:

Fr. Brian Eilers (Pastor)

Leanne Southerland

Taylor Schroll

Al Flores (President)

Matt Rice

Anna Damian

Lis Soto (Secretary)

Michael Alexander

Marcel LeJeune

Absent were:

Donna Hannus, Christina Robertson, and Lorian Dusek

Opening Prayer

Prayer was led by Father Brian at 6:12 p.m., after introductions. Marcel LeJeune has joined our Pastoral Council. Marcel is President and Founder of Catholic Missionary Disciples, which consults parishes and dioceses to fulfill their mission.

Our Discipleship Pathway

Father Will has developed a graphic for Meet, Know, Live, Share Jesus. Father Brian invited our opinions on the graphic. Anna suggested that we add arrows and make the graphic look more like the baseball diamond pathway for Missionary Disciples that we have been studying. Several members suggested ways to show motion and progress along the faith continuum while keeping the graphic simple. The words also need to be made in a consistent first person tense with no parenthesis. Matt suggested that each box could use the Title word of the next box to help show the pathway in words. There was some clarification that “**Meet**” should invite people to have an “encounter with Jesus” and “**Share**” should send disciples out to build trust and invite, and bring Christ to people. Marcel commented that most Catholics are passive in their faith and think they have already arrived. He suggested that the words in the graphic need to challenge Catholics to make an active decision to live **with** Jesus Christ and to take the next step of giving their whole person to Him, not just their intellect. Marcel also mentioned that the “pre-evangelization” relies heavily on trust building, which often happens in “the mission field” of parishioners lives - work, friendships, neighborhood, etc. (not within programs at the parish).

Fr. Brian wants to empower those who are already Missionary Disciples (MD) in our parish, as defined in last month’s meeting. MD has met, knows, lives, and shares Jesus.

- 1) MD has met Jesus, has Jesus at the center of their life, and identifies as a child of God.
- 2) MD knows they are a member of the Body of Christ and of a faith community.
- 3) MD lives their faith with daily prayer, participation in sacraments, & obedience to Christ.
- 4) MD eagerly shares Jesus through their words and actions and service.

Fr. Brian wants to commission these disciples and continue to send them out on mission, bringing more souls to Christ. Father Brian will take the comments from the PC to the Parish Leadership Team of 6 people for further development of the graphic.

Pastoral update by Father Brian

Father Brian asked for feedback on special liturgies of this Easter season. Attendance was high for most events and PC suggested using the GSC (Good Shepherd Chapel) more next year, especially for Confirmation, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and First Communion masses. Using CGS allows us to accommodate more people and the screens give us the opportunity to foster greater participation in responses and singing. However there are challenges as well. We need more ushers to help with larger confession events and for communion in the balcony.

Taylor suggested using songs that are more well known for these big liturgies because this will encourage more people to sing. Less well known songs may be more fitting but discourage participation.

Father Brian added that if the number of people attending Mass continues to rise, we may have to move a regular Sunday Mass to the GSC.

The Door to Door Mission on Holy Saturday was a big success, with participants wanting to repeat it soon. 170 missionaries visited 850 homes and visited about one quarter of them. Our parish boundaries are now mapped out, so hopefully a second mission can be developed this year (possibly in advance of or during Advent, with an invitation to Christmas masses).

Divine Mercy Sunday is intended to be a place to invite those away from God to experience his mercy. It was suggested that our parish needs more education about this devotion so that parishioners will be able to invite people they know to come to the Holy Hour and sung chaplet.

About 15 Men attended the Men's Welcome retreat during Lent and are continuing formation.

The next Alpha session will begin in August in the PAC on Sundays at 12:30pm. Plans are for spring 2024 Alpha to be back at the Ice House (or similar) on a weeknight. Once identified, Missionary Disciples should be told to help invite others to Alpha, "to dinner, a movie and a discussion."

Foundations just finished a 3rd session and will begin number 4, a summer session, on June 8th, 2023. The group meets 6:15-8pm at Hannus home for dinner, live talk, and discussion about Catholicism. It is a second step meant to follow ALPHA.

Quads: about 30 men and 16 women have been in, or are currently in, a Quad. Father wants to identify these people as well as those who have completed ALPHA and Foundations and those who are leading Family of Faith groups or other Life groups. These people are already Missionary Disciples and the parish would like to help them live as missionary disciples by

providing formation on how to invite others to meet Jesus. Marcel recommended having an annual reunion/retreat for Quad participants to see the community growth.

Life Groups need resources, especially for people finishing Alpha but not quite ready for Foundations.

New Business:

Anna asked why our parish Festival was moved from our regular date on the first weekend in May to Mother's Day, the second weekend in May. Father Brian explained that The Brazos County Expo Center is the location of choice but it is not available on our traditional first weekend in May.

Matt told a story to emphasize the need for our parish to be more welcoming. Father Brian said that he and Father Will are taking turns making the announcements and welcoming people before Masses. Matt pointed out that there is a tension in how people view Mass, as communal prayer vs private prayer. We discussed taking a moment before mass for folks to meet those around them. Father Brian stated that there will have to be a well stated invitation giving the purpose of this change. For example, "Jesus delights in your focused prayer at mass. Jesus also delights in your welcoming and helping others at mass."

Closing Prayer led by Taylor S.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

Our next Pastoral Council meeting will be Wed May 17, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted by Lis Soto, Secretary