

REPORT OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL OLD SAINT JOSEPH'S PARISH 2022-2023

“[Lay people] have the right and even at times a duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church”
Catechism Of The Catholic Church Para. 907 (quoting Codex Canonis Juridici (CIC), can. 212 sec. 3)

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia website encourages all parishes in Philadelphia to have a council that will “foster full participation of the entire parish in the pastoral life and mission of the parish and of the Universal Church.” Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Rationale, Principles and Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils (2005).

The twelve members of Old Saint Joseph's Parish Pastoral Council seek to provide an effective process for realizing both the rights and the obligations of all lay members of our community. In the first year since our reorganization as a consultative body within the parish organizational structure, we have reorganized the Council, consulted with Fr. Hannafey regarding ongoing matters of pastoral concern, worked to better understand the gifts and challenges of our community, and received Fr. Hannafey's approval to start several needed organizational and ministerial initiatives.

What follows is a summary of our activities on your behalf and on behalf of our Pastor during the approximately one year of our reinstatement by our new pastor, Fr. Hannafey. We also report on the initiatives that we will institute in the coming year to enhance both our ability to represent the entire community and the functioning of the community as a Catholic parish within the apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

PASTOR'S REINSTATEMENT AND REORGANIZATION OF A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL PRIOR TO FIRST MEETING:

In late 2021, our Pastor, Fr. Hannafey, S.J., decided to form a new twelve-member Council based largely upon the Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils published by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The new Council would include six elected, three appointed, and three ex officio members, including the Pastor.

Fr. Hannafey formed a small election team, and on February 13, 2022, the parish community elected six members to serve on the new Council. Nineteen members had agreed to stand for election. 143 parishioners cast a total of 803 votes. On February 23, 2022, after he notified all candidates of the results and appointed three Council members pursuant to Archdiocesan guidance, Father Hannafey announced the formation of the new Council.

INITIAL ACTIVITIES IN MARCH, APRIL AND MAY 2022 MEETINGS

In its first meeting in March 2022, Council began by sharing perspectives on the state of our parish in the aftermath of the pandemic shutdowns and change in pastors. Council members discussed their observations of the strengths and challenges for our community moving forward. Council identified some priorities, took action to address immediate needs, and began to form a cohesive and Spirit guided working group.

Also at these initial meetings, Council considered Parish Finance Council reports, the reduction of parish collections and its impact on the short term and long term financial health of the Parish.

Immediately, members of Council began to offer assistance to the coordinators of liturgical ministries where needed to reach out to parish members who had not returned to service when the parish re-opened for scheduled masses. A number of members returned to service through this action.

PARISHIONER CONTACT PROGRAM

Council formed a working group to devise a plan to contact all parishioners. The purpose was to confirm everyone's membership and contact information, urge a return to parish activities, and address any concerns.

CONTINUING REORGANIZATION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

During its first three meetings, Council established basic procedures for its work:

- Council decided, at the Pastor's suggestion and with his full agreement, that the Pastor will not serve as Chair; this is to allow for comprehensive advice and consultation with the representatives of the broadest range of parishioners, and to ensure that all parishioners have the opportunity to raise their concerns to their Pastor
- Council elected a chairperson and secretary from among the six elected members. These officers collaborate with Fr. Hannafey in establishing the agenda for each meeting, facilitate the meetings, and produce Council minutes. The Chair, John Bitterman, and Secretary, Nina Vitullo serve for two years.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES - JUNE, JULY AND SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

During the summer of 2022, Council consulted with the Pastor on various ongoing matters of concern and took actions regarding five matters. Council consulted with Fr. Hannafey on the following:

- replacing carpet in the church
- security concerns in the neighborhood and their impact on parishioner safety after mass and parish activities
- a request by a community group (later withdrawn) to establish a community garden in the National Park Service property adjacent to the church on the Walnut Street side
- maintenance issues regarding that property (issues were referred to staff to address)
- staffing changes

PARTICIPATION IN PARISH MINISTRIES

Through its working group and in monthly meetings, and in coordination with parish staff and the Liturgy and Parish Life Committees, Council organized a series of testimonials by parish leaders from the ambo at masses and published in the parish bulletin, describing their personal experiences and requesting community members to serve in liturgical functions of most critical need. These presentations culminated in the September 18, 2022 Welcome Back Mass and Ministry Fair, in which the community came together to celebrate the reopening of our parish to more normal operations, and provided information and invitations to participate at tables in the courtyard, for parish ministries and activities. Council assisted the Parish Life Committee during these events.

PARISHIONER CONTACT PROGRAM

The parish community outreach working group continued to develop the necessary web-based and paper forms and began taking the parish census during the September 18 Ministry Fair.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Council formed a social justice working group to address our community's calling to respond to the needs for social justice, with particular attention to gun violence in our neighborhood and in the rest of the city. The group attended meetings and reviewed what other organizations are doing, ultimately concluding that the community should best proceed through a parish-wide process of discernment about our calling to work for social justice. This recommendation was reported to Council and the Pastor, and the group began work on a specific plan for such a process of discernment.

CONTINUING REORGANIZATION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Council continued to address necessary procedural matters. Council decided:

- to meet monthly except for one month in summer, with meetings of approximately ninety minutes in length

- to require a 50% attendance quorum for any decision or recommendations to the Pastor
- to ask staff to place our events on the parish calendar
- to hold annual elections, with the next one to occur no later than six months after February 2023.
- that members whose staggered one-year terms expire in 2023 will stand for reelection if they are willing to continue.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PHILADELPHIA AREA JESUIT COMMUNITY

Council sent a letter of thanks to the Philadelphia Area Jesuit Community for celebrating mass for us on Sundays, and for their generous contribution to the parish for replacing the aged carpeting in the church and for necessary maintenance to our historic organ.

FALL AND WINTER ACTIVITIES - OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER AND TWO JANUARY MEETINGS

Council consulted with Fr. Hannafey and Fr. James Casciotti, the Provincial Assistant for Pastoral Ministries, in conjunction with the annual visitation by Fr. Joseph M. O'Keefe, S.J., the Provincial of the Eastern Province. At Fr. Casciotti's request, Council met with him for a wide-ranging discussion of parish pastoral planning.

Council consulted with Fr. Hannafey concerning several ongoing matters:

- the Jesuit Province pastoral planning process
- the parish's participation in the Jesuit Community's gun buyback event on October 29, 2022. Fr. Hannafey delivered the opening prayer for the event and participated in the press conference, which produced positive coverage in the Philadelphia area.
- the parish program of promoting and presenting classical music concerts throughout the year. Support for the arts was discussed as part of the tradition and mission of the parish
- the times of weekday evening masses on holy days
- enhancing our welcoming to parishioners and guests returning to the parish for Christmas liturgies
- the elimination of the 6:30 P.M. Sunday mass and its effect on the Young Adult Community. Fr. Hannafey has decided that this mass cannot be restored at this time in view of staffing difficulties and attendance at the current offered masses
- shortages of ministers in the altar servers and usher ministries
- staffing changes

PARTICIPATION IN PARISH MINISTRIES

A Council working group obtained and published in the Bulletin 13 testimonials from parishioners participating in the various ministries of the parish, to encourage more members of the community to participate in those ministries. These testimonials also are posted on the parish web site.

PARISHIONER CONTACT PROGRAM

Council consulted with parish staff about expanding the parish census campaign to include simplification of the process for parishioners to register for the census, a well- publicized two weekend campaign utilizing both website and paper forms, and direct support by announcements at all masses. The census was taken on two weekends in January with the help of parish ushers and staff. Participation will be assessed and further steps taken to update the list of active parishioners.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Council and our pastoral staff planned, publicized and implemented a social justice combined mass and Ignatian discernment on the question: how can our community live the call to social justice? The liturgy was coordinated with the discernment action. Attendance was high and the discernment process produced insights that Council will use as a starting point for planning parish initiatives to answer the call to action for social justice.

CONTINUING REORGANIZATION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Council decided to end the staggering of terms for newly elected and re-elected Council members; starting with the elections in 2023, all elections will be for three year terms. The three members appointed by the Pastor will serve for three year terms including the past year's term.

Council will meet on March 4, 2023 for a half day retreat on pastoral planning for the parish.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PHILADELPHIA AREA JESUIT COMMUNITY

The Council produced an essay for the parish Bulletin discussing the Society of Jesus' Universal Apostolic Preferences. The essay seeks to summarize these preferences as they apply to our parish, and to note some of the parish ministries that are guided by these preferences. This will be published soon.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION WITH PARISH COMMUNITY

Council will provide the parish with semi-annual reports on Council activities and plans. Council will invite all parishioners to semi-annual listening sessions. The first listening sessions will take place February 25 and 26, 2023, after each mass.

Council requested that a Council call-out box appear in the Bulletin regularly, encouraging parishioners to communicate their needs and concerns through the Council email address with the parish, and Council will monitor the email address regularly to make sure that all parishioner input is addressed appropriately.

MINISTRY TO YOUNG ADULTS

Council will consider the broader opportunity to attend to the particular needs and desires of the young adults of the community, in connection with its pastoral planning retreat. Council will develop and build some new ways to effectively minister to this community, a complex issue compounded by current cultural and societal issues. Council will seek to determine what the parish community can do on a deeper cognitive and experiential level considering the pandemic, parish staffing needs and coordination with Provincial planning.

COUNCIL COORDINATION WITH PARISH COMMITTEES

Council will invite committee chairs to semi-annual meetings and inquire of their six month plans for programming. These meetings are intended to assist the committees to coordinate their activities and to assist in setting pastoral planning priorities for the Parish.