

February 2022 Pastoral Leadership Team Update to St Joseph Parishioners



Last July in our State of the Parish presentation we shared where we were as a parish. Our presentation provided information about the parish, including statistics and trends for the number of registered parishioners, Mass attendance, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, weddings, faith formation and school enrollments, ministries, parish finances, the mission and museum, condition of our facilities, and the new church project.

The second half of our July 24, 2021 presentation shared goals and plans for moving forward together as a community of faith (parish + school + mission and museum). Father Anthony spoke about his pastoral vision for Saint Joseph parish: *"An Amazing Parish on Mission,"* which comes from Christ's commission to **"go and make disciples of all nations"** (Matthew 28:19).

Our pastoral plan for the parish includes:

- ❖ Liturgy as Foretaste of Heaven: providing an amazing Sunday experience from hospitality to music to Sacred Liturgy.
- ❖ Family of Faith: forming a culture of faith centered on family and works of charity, mercy, and justice.
- ❖ Facilities as Visible Signs of Faith: providing beautiful, holy, and functional places for worship, ministry, and evangelization.
- ❖ Holistic Pastoral Care: creating a cohesive system of Sacramental Life to support families and individuals at all stages of life.
- ❖ Devotions to God and Saints: providing many and varied opportunities to build a strong faith-filled community.
- ❖ St Joseph School: moving to a new tuition model that makes our school affordable to more parishioners and fills the school.
- ❖ Mission San Jose: Enhancing its use as a living church and evangelical resource.

A copy of our July 24, 2021, presentation and a YouTube video can be accessed from the parish website in the Pastoral Council section under the "About Us" menu.

This weekend at each Mass we are sharing an update on our progress. Our update is organized around the three goals of our pastoral plan: (1) *Providing amazing worship experiences*, (2) *Forming missionary disciples*, and (3) *Promoting works of charity, mercy, and justice*.

Father Anthony, the Pastoral Council (Lisa Dang, Denise Lai, Mike Gaffey, and Bill Utic), parish staff, and ministry leaders invite your questions, suggestions, and involvement about making our parish vision a reality! Email us at: PastoralCouncil@SaintJosephMSJ.org.



Amazing Worship Experiences

Worship encompasses all celebrations of Sacraments and devotional practices that authentically foster and anchor our faith in Christ. At Mass we witness the life-changing encounter between heaven and earth, between God and his people. In the Gospels, people of all backgrounds, who encountered the Lord with an open heart, received a fantastic transformation of life. Here at St Joseph, we want everyone to meet Christ through us as we celebrate Him with true faith.

We've added more devotional opportunities to encourage spiritual growth. Not all spiritual journeys are the same, so different devotionals serve different purposes and faith traditions. We now have Vespers (evening prayers) Thursdays at 6 PM in the church, Devotion to Saint Joseph on first Wednesdays at 7PM in the Mission, Devotion to The Sacred Heart of Jesus on first Fridays at 8 AM in the Mission, and Devotion to The Immaculate Heart of Mary on first Saturdays 8 AM in the Mission. Last year we added a liturgical celebration and public procession for Corpus Christi, and this year we will add a devotion and procession for Our Lady of Fatima. Our second annual 33-day devotion to St Joseph began February 15 and concludes on the Feast of St Joseph, March 19. All of these join other devotions and traditions we already celebrate.

Beauty and sacred art have the power to orient, elevate, and invite prayer. They echo heavenly beauty and inspire us. We've beautified our main worship space and created a new Eucharistic Adoration Chapel which is open daily. We've also added votive candle stands in the main church and renovated the confessionals. Confession is now available thirty minutes before every Mass in the church and Mission.

We have moved some weekend Masses to the Mission church to allow more parishioners to experience its beauty. Kneelers have been installed in the Mission church and repaired in the main church. The old, worn carpet in the main church has been replaced, wood flooring installed in the sanctuary, and new energy-efficient LED lighting has brightened our worship space. The cost of these beautification projects was \$63,000 and were fully funded outside of the parish's operating budget by generous donations of parishioner time, talent, and treasure.



Work has begun to re-landscape the area between the church and the Mission Blvd sidewalk. The ivy will be removed, and patio pavers installed, to create a large, new gathering area for parishioners to enjoy before and after Mass under the shade from our trees. Our new St Joseph Dream Garden will have statues of Joseph, Mary, Jesus, and other holy figures that will be gently illuminated at night. This project is being planned and funded by generous members of the parish.

Last year we celebrated with our Bishop Michael Barber the rededication of our parish shrine to St Joseph. This year there will be new spiritual opportunities as part of our commemoration activities for the 225th anniversary of the founding of Mission San Jose and our parish. The Mission church, St Joseph shrine and St Joseph Dream Garden will be a Diocesan pilgrimage destination.



Missionary Disciples

As disciples of Jesus, we are to go out and introduce Him to others who do not know Him or have drifted away, so they too can have the joy of knowing Christ.

The sixty members of our neighborhood outreach ministry have worked to contact every registered parishioner to let them know we care about them and, for those who have not been present because of the pandemic or for other reasons, to invite them back to celebrate Mass with us. We continue to live stream Sunday Mass and other liturgical celebrations for those unable to join us in person.

We have also welcomed the Chinese and Vietnamese communities as official members of St Joseph parish. They enrich us with their presence and participation, joining the Filipino, Indian, and other communities already part of our parish.

Our job at St Joseph is to provide the best opportunities for our people to become missionary disciples. That is why we have implemented new models of faith formation. St Joseph School and our Baptism, Confirmation, Youth, Young Adult and Adult ministries are working more closely together to provide a more holistic approach to faith formation. Our new school board will promote a shared vision for the school and parish.

We also believe that faith begins in the home and that parents should be the primary source of faith education for their children. Family of Faith is our new structured weekly program of faith formation and sacramental preparation taught by parents to their children at home with monthly support classes at the parish for both parents and children/youth. The parish provides resources and guidance, and parents commit to dedicate time at home to teach their children and prepare them to receive the Sacraments.

Family of Faith brings the entire family together to worship Sundays at noon. 62 families and 88 children are participating.

The energy at this Mass every week is amazing! Together they share, pray, learn, and become future evangelizers of our faith. We believe with stronger parent-child engagement in faith formation, our children will mature into authentic and life-long disciples of Jesus Christ.



This year we are forming a parish stewardship team. Stewardship, quite simply, is recognizing that everything we have, and everything we are, are gifts from God and that we should be grateful and generous with those gifts. God reveals His perfect and infinite love for us most visibly in His Son, Jesus Christ. Good stewards make God's love visible to others by using their God-given time, talent, and treasure to "love one another as Jesus loves us." We will begin this formation journey together later this year.



Works of Charity, Mercy and Justice

We cannot love God without loving others. Jesus' great commandment of love compels us to offer Christ to all. St. Joseph's beautiful presence in Fremont is because of our many dedicated volunteers and generous donors who serve others through our St Vincent de Paul, Sister John Marie Pantry, Homeless Outreach, Refugee Assistance, and other outreach ministries.

Inspired by our Catholic faith, Caritas is the helping hand of the Church reaching out to the poor, vulnerable and excluded, regardless of race or religion, to build a world based on justice and love. This past year we increased the amount of donations, number of volunteers, and number of families and persons receiving help. A goal for this year is to create an online tool on the parish website to make it easier to plan and sign up for volunteer and donation opportunities.

Last year St Francis Xavier parish in Wiaga, Ghana became our new Sister Parish. St Francis Xavier has over 4000 members and was founded in 1927 by missionaries. It is the third oldest parish in northern Ghana. Besides the main church, the parish has eight outlying missions. Two of the missions have church buildings and the others use schools for worship. Most parishioners are very low-income earners who support their families through subsistence farming. We raised \$13,000 for our new Sister Parish after Fr. George Asigre's visit and will build our relationship in the coming years.

We Are an Amazing Parish on Mission!



Five Years from Now:

- ❖ We will have 3,000 members
- ❖ We have a culture of family and faith
- ❖ Stewardship and evangelization are part of our daily lives
- ❖ A renovated Carriage House provides space to grow our ministries
- ❖ A new tuition model for parishioners will fill our school
- ❖ We've built a sports field for our school
- ❖ We resume work on our new parish church

In summary, as we recommit ourselves to the mission ("*go and make disciples of all nations*"), we will focus on 1) facilitating a transformative encounter with Christ as we worship and pray, 2) forming missionary disciples centered on the Eucharistic Lord, and 3) serving others in truth and humility, making God's love visible to others through our actions. We can have confidence in our success because we have the power of faith, for "*Nothing is impossible with God*" (Lk 1:37).

- Father Anthony, Lisa Dang, Denise Lai, Mike Gaffey, and Bill Utic