

FROM THE PASTOR: A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE PASTORAL COUNCIL & CHANGE IN SELECTION PROCESS

Are you interested in becoming more involved in parish life at St. John Neumann? Do you have ideas for putting our new Pastoral Plan into action or for how we can grow as a faith-filled community? Are you looking for ways to live out your charisms? If so, you may be an ideal candidate for our Pastoral Council!

The Council's focus is on engaging parishioners in the life of the parish through worship, community activities, and volunteer service. Over the past several years, the Council has:

- Been a sounding board and advisory group for the Pastor
- Played an integral role in bringing the Called and Gifted Workshop to SJN
- Represented the larger parish during the creation of the SJN Pastoral Plan
- Assisted with the initial roll out and continued action items of the Pastoral Plan
- Offered support for many of SJN's ministries

Benefits of being part of the Council include working with a wonderful group of people to enrich parish life and community; ensuring that the voices of parishioners are heard and considered when making decisions, and enhancing your knowledge of the parish and your parish life experience.

What is the time commitment? Pastoral Council members serve three-year rolling terms, so there are always experienced members on the Council to orient new members. The Council meets monthly from September through June, making the annual commitment very manageable.

This year, after consultation with the Pastoral Council, I have decided to make a change to the selection process for new members. Previously, we asked parishioners to vote on a slate of nominees. Experience has taught us that this is not as effective as we might want it to be. Parishioners often feel uncomfortable making choices among people they do not know, resulting in low "voter turnout." Many who might serve are equally uncomfortable with the process and have been hesitant to volunteer. And a survey of other parishes revealed that most have abandoned a voting process. The Pastoral Council and I have had substantive discussions about this topic and together have agreed on a new format. Nominees will be invited to meet with a small subset of Council members to discuss their interest in serving. This group will then make recommendations to me and the full Council for discussion and final selection of new members. Please be assured that this will be a "gentle" process—it's not a job interview, but rather a means of getting to know one another to ensure that it's a mutually satisfying fit.

With all this in mind, I encourage you to prayerfully consider whether you have an interest in serving on the Council. Look around the pews and encourage others with whom you share ministries and believe are good candidates to consider nominating themselves. A little affirmation from friends often has a big impact! **Submit your nomination, along with your phone number and email address, to Father Joe at jbrennan@saintjn.org by Friday, April 20.** If you have questions or need more information, please contact Stephanie Sturgell, Pastoral Council Chair, at stephiemaurin@yahoo.com or 703-349-5966.

Live Jesus,
Father Joe