

# St. Ignatius Church

A Jesuit Parish  
San Francisco, California

## Worship Commission

Meeting Notes – June 11, 2003  
Xavier Hall – 6:30 p.m.

In attendance:

Committee Members:

John Bitterman – *Chairperson*  
Howard Case – *Secretary*  
Ofelia Alayeto  
Kevin Boden  
Maria Boden  
Gerry Cole  
Bill O’Neill  
Victoria Siu  
Stephen St. Marie  
Nick Ricchio

Staff Supporting the Committee:

Don Crean – Director of Liturgy  
Fr. Jim Blaettler, S.J. – Associate Pastor  
Fr. Charles Gagan, S.J. – Pastor  
Tim Murphy – Director of Contemporary Music

Chairperson Bitterman called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Stephen St. Marie offered a prayer for guidance on our proceedings.

### **The Order of Business**

The published Agenda was distributed:

1. Update on financial situation of the parish
2. Update on the music program
  - I. 9:30am ensemble director
  - II. 11:00am choir director
3. Update on the 4:00pm mass time change
4. New Business
  - I. Worship Commission Chair – length of service
  - II. Disabled seating in the church
  - III. Other new business

The minutes from the last meeting were approved for distribution and posting on the parish web site with correction of noted typos.

## **Review and Update on the Financial Condition of the Parish**

Review presented by the Pastor, Fr. Gagan

- **The Budget**  
The staff is just finishing the budget and is almost ready for presentation. We are approximately \$16,000 from balancing the target budget.
- **Collections are down from last year**  
We are off about 10-15% from last year. This will necessitate a conservative spending plan.
- **Liturgical – Music - Decisions**  
Some decision have been made: We will reinstate four paid section leaders for the 11:00am mass for every Sunday. Fr. Gagan said that it is very important to get away from “you have more this mass, so we should get more at that mass...”
- **Children’s Faith Formation**  
The fee for children's faith formation will be raised from \$100 to \$125 per student in the next year. Fr. Gagan emphasized that these fees are not meant to cover the entire cost of the program. This program benefits the entire parish and should be supported not only by the parents, but by the entire parish, he said.
- **Attendance**  
John Bitterman asked if we know if attendance is down. Don Crean replied that we do not have accurate counts other than once a year, but it does appear that we have experienced a decline. He surmised that the instability in our music department has caused some people to go elsewhere. Stability in this area, he continued, is important. Maria asked about new parish registration. The figures were not known.  
  
A short discussion initiated on things we need to do to retain and increase mass attendance.

## **Update on the Music Program**

- **9:30am Sunday mass – The Contemporary Ensemble**
  - **Tim Murphy Appointed Director of Contemporary Music.** Don Crean introduced and welcomed Tim Murphy who was recently hired. Tim comes to St. Ignatius from St. Dominic’s and he has an impressive résumé. He is officially starting May 25 and his first 9:30 mass will be Pentecost Sunday. A short review of the selection committee and its process was presented.
  - **Stephen St.Marie thanked.**  
The Worship Commission offered strong thanks to Stephen St. Marie for the stability and anchor he presented to this ensemble during the period between directors.
  - **Going Forward**  
Our challenges for this liturgy include:
    - Stability
    - Music choice process, especially involving the community
    - Cantor training

- Budget, especially for **printed mass programs**

**Discussion:**

Nick offered that it was important to bring the new director up-front to make him visible to the community, and that an accompanist would be a great asset. Don said that the budget did not allow for an accompanist.

Vicki offered that maybe we should bring the piano forward to make Tim more visible.

*Tim Murphy took the floor and offered his thoughts:* He did not want to “shake the boat” too much and make big changes right away. He is having on-going discussions with several people on positioning of the choir and himself. He agrees that his increased presence is a good thing. He opened the floor to a discussion of using the baldacchino steps, risers (which he favors, but which Stephen noted have met with resistance from the community – too much like a formal choir), or other positions. The committee expressed confidence in Tim to make the appropriate changes.

Nick inquired if he (Tim) planned to increase the size of the choir. Nick said, yes, indeed, “the more the merrier.”

- **11:00am Sunday Mass – The Motet Choir**

Don Crean led this presentation.

NB: Jonathan Dimmock was not present at the meeting as he was performing in England.

- **Jonathan Dimmock’s Contract** expires soon and is up for review. We will not be offering him the same compensation because of a tightened budget and reorganization of the music department. Don emphasized that we are doing everything we can to keep him, believing he is a very valuable asset to the parish. He said that we have told him that this reduction has nothing to do with him or his performance, but is a matter of economics.
- **No Overall Music Director.** The Pastor has decided that we will not have an overall Music Director. He has asked Don Crean to serve as Coordinator. Not the same as a supervisor, but act as the point of coordination of the music and liturgical functions between the Contemporary and Motet music programs. Don asked us to say a prayer to the Holy Spirit to guide us in his work.

**Discussion:**

There was general expression of hope that Jonathan will stay and that an equitable arrangement can be worked out, and general affirmation of his value to the parish. Fr. Gagan said that a recent e-mail from Jonathan contained a proposal that was “in the ballpark” and that it looked hopeful that an agreement would be reached.

A question was raised why pay section leaders. It was reaffirmed that this type of music requires this to support the volunteers and to add continuity upon which to build a strong choir. Tim Murphy reinforced this position. It was also noted that Jonathan has been assembling a group of volunteers (Mark Razama and others) to sing at the 5:00pm mass. Stephen asked that we elevate the importance of the not-yet funded accompanist at the 9:30 mass to the same level of importance as applied to the section leaders for the 11:00 mass.

Howard offered that in this new arrangement with Don as Coordinator – and not supervisor, it is very important that Jonathan and Tim be given explicit instruction on what kinds of matters they bring to whom (Don, Pastor, Rachael, etc.): professional

concerns, personnel matters, financial matters, scheduling (vacation, etc.), etc. and what the chain of escalation should be for these matters. There was general agreement.

Maria said that Jonathan needs to make a living and asked if we are not offering him something that he can accept, have we made a back-up plan. The answer from Don was that we have not done so at this point. John asked, a bit rhetorically, if we could get anyone at the price we were offering.

Don expressed that he felt that the 11:00am community has been hard-hit with the recent cut-backs and frequent changes in the choir make-up. He felt that choir will be greatly missed over the summer. There will be only a cantor for the summer, with the choir returning in August sometime. Gerry asked if we made an announcement about the cantor. We had. Howard said we should put an announcement in the bulletin every Sunday until they return.

Other masses: For the time being the 8:00am mass will have no music. Most parishes have one quiet mass. The 5:00pm Saturday mass will continue to have music.

### **Report from the Committee on Changing the 4:00pm mass to 5:00pm or 5:30pm**

Maria Boden as chairperson of the subcommittee formed last month to investigate the possibility of changing the scheduled time for this mass reported on the work and findings of the subcommittee.

The subcommittee measured the effect of moving the time of the 4:00pm mass on the congregation that attends that mass by producing a short questionnaire and posting volunteers at each of the 4:00pm masses during the month to distribute and collect the questionnaires and to interview parishioners. There was also a questionnaire distributed in the bulletin.

There was no attempt to measure the parish at large or the congregations of neighboring churches with late afternoon masses.

Maria distributed several comprehensive documents from the subcommittee's work.

- A recap of the comments and answers of the survey respondents
- Analysis of late Sunday afternoon masses in the area
- Analysis of the respondents to the survey

The analysis showed 176 favorable to the change (including those that were indifferent) and 92 not favorable.

Fr. Gagan asked if we have the results of the survey of the University – one of the goals of changing the time is to coordinate this mass to serve the University students. Don said that we are still waiting for them to speak.

The subcommittee recommended that we change the time to 5:00 or 5:30.

### **Discussion:**

Bill suggested maybe we move it as an experiment for a month or so and see how it goes. Gerry offered maybe move it just for the summer during daylight savings time to accommodate the people who don't want to go home after dark. Fr. Gagan and others felt that this is too confusing; it is better to develop continuity.

John asked if we have a problem scheduling with the Jesuits at this new time. No was the answer.

Howard inquired about attendance at St. Dominic's and St. Gabriel's. The answer was 500 - 600 at St. Dominic's and a similar number at St. Gabriel's. The current University student mass has about 150.

- **Vote:** Nick moved to propose to the Pastor moving the 4:00 mass to 5:00 or 5:30. It carried unanimously.

A discussion followed on which time slot, comparing the times for services at other churches and the needs of the University community, including dining hall hours.

- **Vote:** Gerry moved that we set the new time at 5:00pm. It passed unanimously.

A discussion proceeded on when to start the new schedule. It was agreed that owing to various schedules, August 24<sup>th</sup> would be the best time.

- **Resolution:** The commission therefore recommends to the Pastor to change the time for the 4:00pm mass to 5:00pm starting August 3<sup>rd</sup>, with announcements to start in the bulletin immediately.

- **Target Audience for this Mass**

A discussion then ensued on the character of this liturgy and the target audience. This mass has been developing into a jazzy, gospel, contemporary theme. With the addition of the university students it was felt that further developing this theme was a good idea. It was also felt that this group is not well represented with its "own" liturgy at St. Ignatius and we might be able to draw from other churches with a well-done liturgy.

Tim had no objection to this and enthusiastically endorsed the idea.

- **Vote:** Howard made a motion that the commission should ask Tim Murphy to develop a liturgy to appeal to a younger audience with a goal to increase attendance with new members or converts from other churches. It passed unanimously.

**\*\* New Business \*\***

### **Worship Commission Chair – length of service**

This item was placed on the agenda at the current Chair, John Bitterman. Our current rules do not specify length of service. Our Mission Statement only states that members serve of 3 years.

**John proposed an 18 month term.**

#### **Discussion:**

Kevin said that it takes 1 year just to get into the roll of chairman and become effective. Our rules should also allow for overlap of membership to insure continuity, it was suggested. We should have a method of **member rotation**. Fr. Gagan said he would make the method of rotation for the Parish Council available. Don said he would make the Diocese Liturgical Working Rules available.

- **Action Taken:** John Bitterman said he would take on the task of assembling the information for consideration at a future meeting.

### **Disabled Seating in the Church**

This item was placed on the agenda at the current Chair, John Bitterman. The issue has been raised that the disability seating can be improved. The current area for wheelchairs, while

convenient and adequately spacious, prevents viewing for the disabled when the congregation stands.

**Discussion:**

Several options were discussed, including removing the modesty panel on a portion of the front pew. Kevin mentioned that there are organizations that will recommend configurations and that these things are complicated requiring consultation. Fr. Gagan mentioned that weddings and the needs of brides must be considered, and that we did a round of this a while back with the installation of the ramps of the side entrances and the removal of the pews for the wheelchairs. John pointed out that there are special needs for distributing communion to those with crutches/walkers.

- **Action Taken:** At Fr. Gagan's request the Worship Commission formed a subcommittee to investigate additional handicapped needs, with Fr. Blaettler as chair. Don asked that Nicole Bohn, who handles handicapped issues for the University, to be included on the subcommittee. John Bitterman, Kevin Boden, and Bill O'Neill volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

**Other New Business**

Fr. Gagan asked the Worship Commission to form two additional subcommittees:

- **Carpet Replacement subcommittee** to investigate and report on a replacement for the existing carpet which is very old and dangerous with its many duct tape patches.
- **Sound System improvement subcommittee** to investigate the upgrade of our existing sound system, judged by all to be very inadequate. Jonathan Dimmock had initiated this effort and will turn over his work to the subcommittee.

Fr. Gagan hopes to realize enough from the upcoming fund raiser to cover these expenses.

- **Action Taken:** The Worship Commission formed a Carpet Replacement subcommittee with Nick Rocchio as chair. Howard Case, John Bitterman and Gerry Cole volunteered to serve on this subcommittee. Post meeting note: Fr. Gagan asked Nick to include Fr. Blaettler on the subcommittee.
- **Action Taken:** The Worship Commission formed a Sound System subcommittee with John Bitterman as chair. Kevin Boden, and Tim Murphy volunteered to serve on this subcommittee. Ray Frost will be asked to join the subcommittee and Jonathan Dimmock will advise.

**New Items to be Considered at a Future Meeting**

Role of the users at St. Ignatius Church.

Don Crean, for whom this commission is a primary advisory panel, thanked the Worship Commission for making this set of discussion "a gift of its own" as we have grown and developed.

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:30pm.

**Next Meeting: July 9, 6:30 p.m. Xavier Hall**

**Summary of Action Taken:**

The Worship Commission recommended to the Pastor that the 4:00pm Sunday mass be moved to 5:00pm starting August 24th
The Worship Commission asked Tim Murphy to develop a liturgy for the 5:00pm Sunday mass to appeal to a younger audience with a goal to increase attendance with new members or converts from other churches. It passed unanimously.
The Worship Commission formed a subcommittee headed by Fr. Blaettler to investigate additional handicapped needs in the church.
The Worship Commission formed a subcommittee headed by Nick Rocchio to investigate the replacement of the church carpet.
The Worship Commission formed a subcommittee headed by John Bitterman to investigate the upgrading of the church's sound system.

**Summary of Action Items:**

<i>What</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>
Job descriptions with reporting chain & escalation for various types of issues in writing for Tom Murphy and Jonathan Dimmock	Pastor and Don Crean with other appropriate staff	not specified
Elevate the importance of an accompanist for the 9:30 mass & printed mass programs when budget allows	Pastor, Finance Committee	ASAP
Announcement in the bulletin regarding the 11:00 mass cantor-only and return of the full choir in August every Sunday until the choir returns.	Don Crean	ASAP
Develop young person oriented liturgy for the 5:00pm Sunday Mass	Tim Murphy	not specified
Do research and assemble information on Worship Commission membership and Chairperson rotation	John Bitterman	not specified
Form and organize the handicapped subcommittee to report at a later meeting	Fr. Blaettler	not specified
Form and organize the church carpet replacement subcommittee to report at a later meeting	Nick Rocchio	not specified
Form and organize the church's sound system subcommittee to report at a later meeting	John Bitterman	not specified
Place "Role of the Ushers" on a future agenda and invite Vanita Louie to attend that meeting.	John Bitterman	ASAP

Meeting notes produced by Howard Case: Please send comments, suggestions and corrections to [hcase@casesf.com](mailto:hcase@casesf.com)