

Pastoral Report 2019-2020

Encountering Christ in word, sacrament, and each other, we serve to create hope and peace for our community and world.

Encontrando a Cristo en palabra, sacramento, y en unos con otros, servimos para crear esperanza y paz en nuestra comunidad y el mundo.

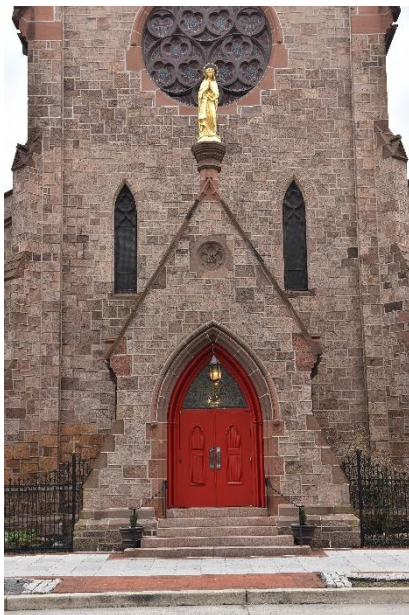
A.) Spiritual Life

St. Francis de Sales wrote that the Eucharist is the sun of all spiritual exercises.

We offer three Sunday Masses: 8:30 (English), 10:00 (English & Polish) and 11:30 (Spanish). Outside of the pandemic in which we find ourselves, the average attendance at the three liturgies is 127, 51, 289 respectively. There are times when they may be higher depending upon a certain celebration or anniversary. Our deacon preaches at the Spanish liturgy the third Sunday of the month and Fr. Mike McCue takes a Mass one Sunday per month. I hope you find the homilies breaking open the scriptures and relating to the world

and our lives especially where we find ourselves at this particular present moment. We are blessed with talented musicians at each of the three Masses. We owe them a great debt of thanks for helping us to pray well and “twice” as St. Augustine taught. Similarly, we are grateful to all our lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. We have about seven people who take communion to our “homebound.” These are all incredible ministries.

We offer a bilingual Mass at 12:05 from Monday through Friday at the Cathedral. This is attended by parishioners, diocesan employees and others who work in the city. There is an 8:30 AM Mass on Fridays at St. Joseph’s Polish chapel with Benediction and the Novena to the Sacred Heart on the First Friday of the month.



We are still struggling with how to offer other faith formation activities for adult parishioners outside the context of Mass. We have experimented with Advent and Lenten offerings, with the “Cathedral Series” of guest speakers every other month and other similar events. Many questions rise around this. Am I playing a numbers game and expect huge turnouts? Are we not offering appealing things? Are people too busy? It seems that having bilingual offerings is not successful. We have had some success especially with the “Cathedral Series,” our “listening session” for the Clergy Abuse Crisis and last year, our “Parish Convocation” that was a Saturday retreat that mirrored the diocesan event in Atlantic City on the Joy of the Gospel was a spectacular event for the parish with great participation. We are particularly happy to host a meeting place for the Juan XXIII movement and are happy to announce that they will be holding their “retiros” when they commence again at St. Joseph’s Polish. Every Friday, los carismáticos meet in the Cathedral. The third Sunday of each month is dedicated to the meetings of *Las Damas* and the men’s group *Santo Nombre*. Both groups

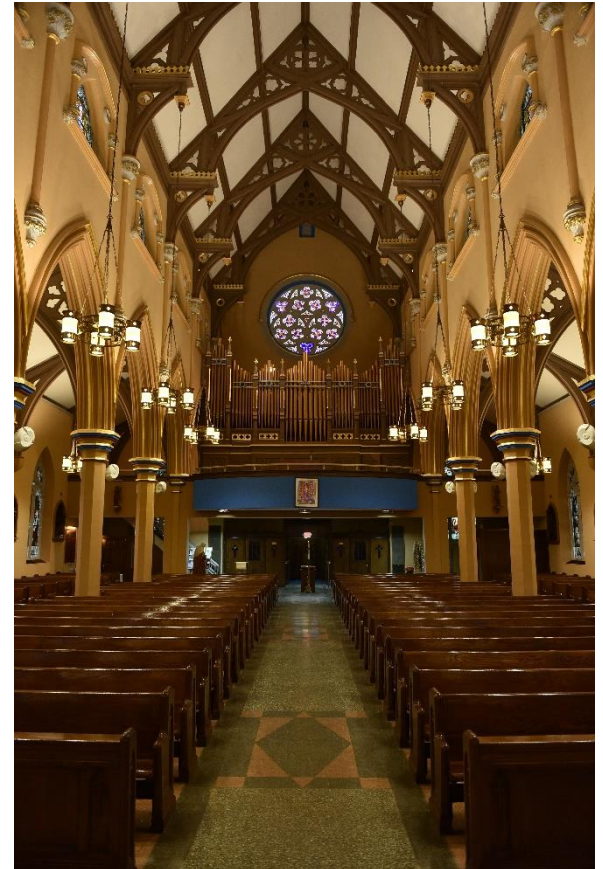
welcome new members. I am also asking the groups to take on a parish activity. For example, las damas took over the “baby bottle campaign” in October.

A note about volunteers: If I ask people to do something, they always agree to help. We are in need of more involvement such as ushers, people to assist with the Rice Bowl campaign, House of Charity solicitation, new membership on the Pastoral and Finance Committees, and the like. I would like people to volunteer for these activities rather than have me ask.

Looking Ahead: I would like to see more members in the music ministry at each of the Masses (after the pandemic subsidies). I am still hoping to locate a pianist for the 11:30 liturgy. I would also like to see more lectors join the rotation of proclaiming the Word of the Lord. One of our goals of our pastoral plan that is “in process” is to have a set number of ushers who would alternate weeks and wear the specially designed suitcoats that used to be worn here at the Cathedral. We are in the process of installing livestreaming capabilities at the Cathedral so that we may record a Sunday Mass on *YouTube* for our homebound parishioners throughout the year. This would also allow us to broadcast a special lecture or spiritual event that some would like to attend but distance or timing make this prohibitive. On this point, we were blessed to have livestreaming capabilities at St. Joseph’s Polish when we were only livestreaming Mass during the pandemic.

We look forward to offering “**Parish Conversations**” beginning this Fall on various topics such as but not limited to “Faithful Citizenship and the upcoming Election,” discussions of racism, and other issues either live in Cathedral Hall or via Zoom. To this end, there are a series of articles and videos offered on the homepage of our website.

Social outreach: we continue to host the full meal, snack and sandwich for the next day for the residents of Joseph House on the third Wednesday of the month. Thanks to those who regularly volunteer for this ministry. All are welcomed to join. Holy Eucharist Parish assists us greatly with a monthly contribution of \$300 for this and similar outreach programs to those less fortunate. Our baby bottle campaign in October and the diaper collection in January are two other charitable projects that help us to show a commitment to prolife as *we serve to create hope and peace for our community and world* as our mission statement exhorts us. Your faithfulness to the various second collections allows us to alleviate in a small way the suffering of others. The Oblate annual appeal (in January) for seminarians and men in retirement is another worthwhile example for which the three Oblates living here are grateful. During the pandemic, I have been meeting several times a month with pastors of all faiths in Camden with the Chief of Police concerning pandemic issues and other realities such as the unrest in our cities recently. We have participated with the department in peace marches and a presser denouncing the events surrounding the death of George Floyd.



Looking ahead: we need to have parish representation on the Faith in Camden County group which is a subdivision of Faith in South Jersey which is a coalition of all faiths working directly for equality, justice and peace issues. If interested, please see me. Ordinarily, meetings are on Monday evenings. Also, we have yet to get off the ground Journey of Hope, a ministry to those dealing with cancer and their loved ones. Daniel Diaz and Elva Vazquez went on the training and others have signed up to assist with this group. So, come September, let's make this a great outreach program. Recently, Mariannie Zayas accepted the lead for our parish on a newly established diocesan program "Walking with Moms." There is information in our weekly bulletin and on the bulletin board at the back of the cathedral.

B.) Sacramental Life

In the previous year, we welcomed 37 people into the community through the Sacrament of Baptism. We celebrated the lives of 22 people who went back to be with the Lord. The pandemic interrupted our



Easter Vigil and First Communion. When we returned to Mass with a limited congregation, 15 children received their First Communion. We await the Bishop's schedule for Confirmations. Seven couples celebrated their marriages in the parish with a few having to reschedule due to the Coronavirus.

Below you see the data for our Faith Formation Program under Sr. Linda Taber, IHM. I would like to call everyone's attention to the RCIA program. If you know of adults who would like to become Catholics, please let us know as soon as possible, so they may be part of this year's program. An interested adult needs a sponsor to accompany them in the rewarding faith journey to the Easter Vigil.

Statistics for Religious Education 2019-2020

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Teachers | 9 |
| Aide | 1 |
| High School Aides | 2 |

Grades

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 17 |
| 2 | 20 |
| 3-5 | 5 |
| 1st Conf. | 5 |
| Confirmation | 19 |
| CICA | 11 |
| RCIA | 1 |
| Full Communion | 9 |

Adults 4 (to be celebrated)

C.) Parish Registration

The diocese uses a software system known as Parish Soft. This states that we have 1603 family records and 2367 individual members in our parish. Obviously, this is inaccurate and is in desperate need of being updated. Mariannie Zayas, our Director of Parish Services, will begin working on a new and updated census, so that we can maintain the most reliable data for parish membership. This is a priority. To be successful, she will need your cooperation in completing any necessary paperwork. Good news, this was one of two headaches hanging over us. The other was the proper storage of all the sacramental books for our parish and the various parishes that have joined us over the years. We recently purchased three fire-proof cabinets and are happy to report that all sacramental books are safely and orderly stored.

D.) Staffing and Financials

The masthead of the parish bulletin names the pastoral staff. Full time employees are the pastor, director of faith formation (Sr. Linda), business manager (Aga Kupchik), director of parish services (Mariannie Zayas), and building & maintenance (Victor Román). Iris Maldonado works part time on Mondays and Fridays. Clarence Walker does custodial work on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Sr. Claire Sullivan, IHM volunteers her time. The parish pays rent for her to live in the parish in which she resides in Runnemede. We are grateful to her and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters for her ministry. Fr. McCue and Bro. Mickey are in residence and a vital part of our community. They help with the financial picture in providing a monthly rental fee. We are privileged to enjoy Mickey's art and Michael's sacramental ministry with us. Sadly, we mourn the passing of Deacon Felix "Tito" Miranda. He will be missed but he left us an example of gentleness to follow in his memory.



A full, detailed fiscal report is due to the diocese at the end of August 2020. I will make the highlights of this known in writing once it is completed. Here, I attempt to report some income and some capital expenditures.

In an effort to get better, we kept a "dashboard" of income on an Excel sheet this recently completed fiscal year which I will present through this Word document in a summation chart. This is a snapshot and not the exact amount of income.

| Source of Income | Total |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Mass Intentions | \$7,614.00 |
| Baptisms | \$1,225.00 |
| Weddings | \$1,800.00 |
| Funerals | \$5,030.00 |

| Source of Income | Total |
|--|---------------------|
| Sweet 16 & Quinceañeras | \$1,600.00 |
| Hall Rental | \$6,575.00 |
| Gifts | \$22,647.82 |
| Anonymous | \$9,000.00 |
| Rent (OSFS) | \$17,800.00 |
| Hope Community Charter School | \$234,818.22 |
| Cemetery Income (St. Joseph's Chews Landing) | \$51,655.42 |
| Interest from Revolving Funds | \$49,303.53 |
| Yearly Offertory (Weekly Collection) | \$204,645.01 |
| Total | \$613,714.00 |

Some thoughts: Without a doubt, if we did not have the rental income from Hope Charter Community School using Fatima school, rectory and church basement, we would be in deep financial trouble. This income amounted to \$234,818.22. The last six months, there was a reduction in rent of \$12,499.98 due to lower enrollment and a tough financial picture. The yearly rent for this coming financial year is \$252,264.61 if enrollment is fine and Covid-19 does not have a deleterious effect on this. We live with the constant threat that their charter may not be renewed, and we would lose close to 39% of our income. We are blessed to receive a percentage of income monthly from sales at St. Joseph's Cemetery at Chews Landing. Similarly, we almost received \$50K from interest on our revolving funds. These funds are held with the diocese. It is from these funds that we are able to do capital projects (see next section).

The pandemic hurt us economically as it is doing with the rest of the world. We could not have sacramental celebrations, life milestones, hall rentals and the like. One generous benefactor had to put a freeze on his monthly "anonymous" contribution of \$1000. We were fortunate to receive a PPP grant of \$133,500 which kept our staff fully employed along with their benefits which was the main purpose of the program. During this pandemic, we saw an increase of "outside donors," those who are not parishioners but have an affiliation with us and reach out to support us. It was always on the agenda to offer online giving, but the pandemic made it necessary. As an aside, during the month of July 2020, 30 people contributed online for a total of \$1870. I ask that if you are going to donate online, you may want to make one monthly contribution as opposed to weekly withdrawals as the parish realizes more of the money. A small percentage goes to the company hosting online giving.

During the time of no live Masses, it was absolutely heartwarming to see how you kept up with your contributions to your parish. It became commonplace, to answer the doorbell and greet many of you who were dropping off your envelopes. This is still taking place as some are waiting to return to Mass "live." Thanks! Blessed! We are also blessed with a bishop who supports us generously throughout the year and at every "second collection" or special projects such as the organ fund for this present financial year 2021. He made an appeal at the last Mass livestreamed before we returned to in person parish celebrations and continues to reach out to his friends for this fund.



Revolving Funds: We have 11 different revolving saving funds with the diocese from which we gain monthly interest. One is an organ fund of \$10,129 (this does not include our fundraising efforts) which will be depleted in this present fiscal year due to repairs, cleaning and overhaul of the organ. From another, regular revolving fund savings, we will withdraw about \$20,650 for the sealing of the terrazzo floor, another capital project for this fiscal year. Both are in process or completed by the time this report is issued. Included in the revolving funds is our Catholic Strong Savings (\$65,688.77).

E.) Capital Projects

Last year, we completed the painting project. The bottom half was done by Victor and a volunteer. All the paint was donated by a parishioner. The upper half of the Cathedral was outsourced for \$87,535.

Additionally, all the lights in the nave of the Cathedral were changed for \$1,337.90. The ones previously there were moved to the sanctuary to soften the lighting so that it matches in appearance with the rest of the Cathedral. There were electricals donated and especially the time and talent of two professionals, one is a beloved and dedicated parishioner.

We installed new rugs to St. Joseph's Polish Church in November for \$19,229.

The ongoing projects of the organ (\$39,200), terrazzo floor (\$20,650) and livestreaming camera at the Cathedral (to be installed for \$5000+) and the recently completed painting at St. Joseph's Polish Church (\$9600) are for the current financial year 2021.

F.) Other outreach Initiatives

We had English as a Second Language Classes (ESL) that was running on Sundays. However, the facilitator's schedule prohibits her from continuing with this. We need to restart this. If anyone has experience in teaching English or can point me in the direction of a capable possibility, please let me know. If anyone is interested in taking these classes, please see me especially with reference to what would be the ideal day and time to offer such classes. This would have to be balanced with pandemic protocols.

We will begin "parish conversations" in September using the Zoom platform. Ordinarily, I will post an article or link to a video for you to review before the session. This gives us a time to journey together and learn about one another and from each other. I soon will post some upcoming parish conversations on the homepage of the parish website.

