

PASTORAL COUNCIL LISTENING SESSIONS SUMMARY, 2015-02

After Mass - 53

Faith, Family & Friends - 50

Young Adult Group - 6

College Students - 26

Confirmation Class - 80

High School Students - 7

WORSHIP - Sacraments and Prayer

- Have more Contemporary Christian music
- Sing modern upbeat songs. Don't be afraid to sing songs not in the hymnals
- Would like music to be a mixture of new and old. Prefer music at 11 am and 7 pm mass because it's more contemporary. Would like more energetic, uplifting music.
- Would like screens with the words for songs that are not in the hymnals or use electronic boards like at Sacred Heart
- Invite more people to be in the choir; let them know they don't have to sing every week
- Would like to see a children's choir
- Would like to sing the Spanish or Latin lyrics of songs that are in the hymnal
- We need a qualified music minister
- Likes Edgar's singing
- Explain why there was a change in the melodies of the Mass responses
- Add more musicians
- Sound system is not good, the music is great but you can't hear all the singers or the instruments; music is important and we need a better sound system
- Sound person needed during mass
- Cafeteria speakers almost ineffective during mass
- Father Dave's homilies is one of the main reasons they come to Mass
- Integrate our parish ministries into the sermons as they relate to the scripture message (i.e. loaves and fishes, mention Friday night meal ministry)
- Young people would like to have more engaging homilies, speak to how it is practical in our lives today
- Want homilies on what the Mass means or explain the Mass as it goes; we assume that everyone knows why we do the things we do. What makes us different from the other Christian churches?
- Young people felt the mass is boring and the homilists have monotone voices; need to make it more exciting; Have the priest or deacon engage with congregation, maybe ask questions
- Needs to include examples of how readings apply to the youth
- Use the homily to talk about the history surrounding the gospel
- Have audio on the website of the homilies given at mass to help refresh points made
- Need a Holy Week brainstorming session - Don't want the same old service; Head of family wash the feet of entire family?

- Have a Mass where we bring the kids up to the altar. Have special Masses for children, the high school students, First Communion class, Confirmation class, College Students and RCIA where they get to participate
- Invite different groups (first communion, confirmed, RCIA) to receive communion first
- At the children's mass, the priest used to call the children up and ask them questions before they left, need to get back to that practice
- Would like to see the high school students help with bringing up the offertory gifts
- Would like to have a dedicated teen mass like Holy Spirit, maybe the 11am since most go to that now; participate in the mass as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, helping with the offertory, leading music; have contemporary music at the mass. Have teens sit together upfront. Mass can be boring due to homilies delivered to older individuals, need to be more engaging.
- Have a Mass for high school and college students explaining the Mass
- From the pulpit, challenge the congregation to get involved
- Use the pulpit for announcements involving ongoing ministries and programs
- During Mass, ask if anyone is new, visiting, having a birthday or anniversary– if new, ask them to go to the front desk and pickup a welcome packet. Invite them to coffee.
- Would like to see the priest invite those standing in the back to come forward and take a seat
- Before mass starts have the priest invite people to greet their neighbors
- More welcome to all is needed. Follow-up with new attendees needed, possibly mentors from within.
- More and more need of Spanish interpreters. Hispanic community growing at SPNC.
- Consider once a month Spanish Mass – Bilingual mass might attract more bilingual students (EsTuDios).
- Confessions are only once a week and some students have class; need twice a week at a different time
- Program for 0-5 during Mass (nursery co-op)
- For baptisms, have entire family at the font
- Encourage people to hold hands during Our Father
- Eucharistic ministers line up at the end of communion to receive communion
- We need to be a prayerful parish
- Respectful pause before the Mystery of Faith, instead of music starting right away
- Encourage people to wear purple during Lent
- Explain the meaning of the art work and give credit to the folks who do the art work
- Incense during Mass – somehow announce ahead of time (allergies).
- Organized events before and after mass for community building.
- Saturday 5 pm and Sunday 7 pm masses don't get the same deals as the other masses. Feel left out.

DISCIPLESHIP – Spiritual Formation within the Parish Community

- Bring in speakers such as Matthew Kelly, Honora Chapman, Andrew Fiala, Chris Stefanik
- Sponsor more speakers throughout the year; challenge us intellectually & spiritually
- Make the Newman Center a think tank for the diocese with a vision and innovative ideas and programs
- Bring Dave Ramsey finance series back to Newman. May help increase tithing
- Bring in speakers from Catholic and non-Catholic areas of interest would present food for thought and stimulation (possibly professors from local colleges).
- Several sessions needed on Cardinal Newman and what he stood for
- Would like speakers from Fresno State on controversial topics
- Would like refresher courses on an Explanation of the Sacraments, the history of the Church, meaning of the Mass
- Would like more pamphlets & Dynamic Catholic CDs in the lobby; enjoys the enrichment; willing to pay for them (\$2)
- Books for reading and discussion, such as the Matthew Kelly “Dynamic Catholic”, need to be dissected and presented to the complete parish, not just during Tuesdays of sessions of FFF.
- Would like to see women’s retreats scattered throughout the year
- Retreats – adult retreats need to be offered. Prayer and Life Workshops are helpful.
- Individual retreats both on-site and off-site
- Retreats throughout the year for singles
- Sponsor Diocese area retreats for young adult groups.
- What happened to participation in Ecumenical Council?
- Interfaith Community – decreased involvement from SPNC. Youth need more involvement. Input to bishop needed for broader connection.
- Hear testimony from parishioners about their faith journey
- Youth Group on Sunday is hard to get to
- Have youth group every week. Hard to figure out when it is.
- If you going to have high school Bible study do something fun with it
- Priest needs to attend meetings especially confirmation and RCIA when we are trying to attract new members
- FFF is not recognized as being for everyone
- There is a decrease in FFF attendance, need to look into that
- Enjoyed Joy of the Gospel – would like more
- What happened to the results of the Advent retreat held several years ago?
- What happened to Faith and Community?
- Focus of the church needs to be more prayerful, have classes on how to pray (Prayer and Life Workshops)

- Organize a group to attend Christian based activities in the community (i.e. Winter Jam)
- Sister Kathleen making the announcement about the Lenten Retreat at masses made a huge difference and made people want to go
- Would like to see a class on the current catechumen process, possible tap the RCIA classes and put them online
- One of the students attends a couple of different youth groups at other churches, the activities they do are: watch a video then have a discussion, and have a scripture reading with discussion, would like to see something similar
- Take a video of what is being taught in RCIA and confirmation; make it available online for everyone to view
- Tuesday morning bible study is for men only. What about women?
- Confirmation – scheduling problem with classes.

FELLOWSHIP – Drawing all Parishioners Together

- “Once I inserted myself into the church through helping I felt more like family” (College student)
- “I have felt very much a part of this community.” (College student)
- “As a freshman I came here and it felt like a family.” (College student)
- College students feel like they are getting “shot down” when requesting funds for opportunities
- “I feel like part of the college community not necessarily the church community.”
- “My issue is that it’s not our Newman center. It’s Fresno State’s Newman Center.”
- Would like to get college students involved in the art work and decorating of the Church
- Young Adult Group should be talking to the College group, who should be talking to Confirmation class, who should be talking to junior high class to bridge the gap between groups. Let the students know they have a place to go when they are finished with their current group.
- Facebook page would be best to utilize in addition to the bulletin as a way of communicating
- Twitter—Need to send out daily posts like Pope does
- Social activities- dances, movies. (College student)
- Have Estudios leadership sit in on pastoral council meetings to give their input.
- Start to integrate College and Estudios groups.
- Mission statement “You exist for us”- (us being college students)
- “I wonder where I go from here. What’s the next step? How do I get involved as a young adult?”
- Disappointed that college was not able to attend Mardi Gras - Discounted Mardi Gras ticket price was high for college student budget; If ticket cost were \$25 a table for college students then may make up for the cost with silent auction item purchases
- Have a coffee shop for the college kids to hang out at
- Is the library open to college and high school students to study?
- High school students would like more activities to have fun and socialize with their friends from church off campus. Cal Skate, six flags, Hume lake, Stubenville, hiking, Santa Cruz. Other churches such as Northside and New Covenant are where some of their friends go and they feel do a better job in this category. When Joe was here, it was more fun.
- High school students would like to have fundraisers and use the money to go on trips. Ideas for fundraisers were Jamba juice cards, dinner out with proceeds from a restaurant benefiting their group, babysitting night at Newman.
- High school students would like to have service projects as a group.
- Advertise our young adults group in other churches’ bulletins

- Youth group needs to be every week preferably on Tuesday coinciding with FFF, rather than every other Sunday. They liked the bible study but when it was introduced, several people stopped coming. They'd like to see a mix of both fun and bible study.
- Youth would like to interact with their families and parish by having a game night.
- Need ways to integrate the youth into our faith-based community; how do we nourish them?
- No place for HS confirmation students after they are confirmed; Need to integrate them into the parish life
- Host donuts for just HS in John XXIII after mass
- Need to focus communication with the youth via social media
- Confirmation should have a photo album on parish's Facebook
- More social media - Kids are discouraged that their social media posts, likes, etc. are not being accepted by the administration
- Have youth activities and parties in CNH
- Youth group needs to be fun, then incorporate lessons; texting is a great way to get the information to everyone, and food is always good
- Maybe once a month have a mini retreat on a Saturday instead of having youth group try and meet every other week at least during the school year
- Organize a group to attend Christian based activities in the community (i.e. Winter Jam)
- Would like to have the youth group earlier on Sunday or on Wednesday (starting at 7/7:30 with food)
- Would like to attend Christian concerts and activities together
- Many Confirmation students are not involved in the Youth Group
- Would like to see summer activities for teens – get a text blast; also send out a monthly schedule of activities so teens can plan for events
- Mini retreats (2 hours) every other month for teens
- High schoolers would like to go some place not in Fresno area, like Hume Lake, Disneyland, Santa Cruz, Nature walk, Places with other Catholic kids
- Youth Group – possibly mid-week events that include interesting bible study teachers. More ways to stay in touch with others from parish.
- Promotion of more programs for young families (new life). Strategy for recruiting of young families. Need for future of SPNC. More activities to attract youth (visits to convalescent homes, visit the aged. Catholic Boy Scout/Girl Scout troops needed. Dances and concerts for teens. Summer camps for youth. Larger budgets for youth programs. More fundraisers for youth activities.
- Parish Picnic was part of the young adults but was not returned after the 50th anniversary party. Young adults would like to be in charge of this event. Feel hurt they were not asked to do it again this year

- Have a Newman Center tailgate at the Fresno State football games instead of selling parking to non-parishioners. We could sell food and create a family environment.
- More activities needed for college students (Dances, concerts, outside speakers. Budget needed.
- The church is locked up and not very welcoming, need to figure out a way to open the doors while remaining safe. At least put signs on each door stating how to get in. Pope says to unlock the doors!
- Parish welcome and information is lacking.
- Need to contact new parishioners soon after signing up
- Need to post maps of the campus with meeting room names for new members and guests
- Need to post better notices around with location of meetings, etc.
- Need better on-line information. Mass schedule for the week should be front page
- Need a flyer for new parishioners that has a layout of the facility and all of the ministries; have an iPad so people can enter their data at the front desk; need follow up, possibly a mentor (go to their house with cookies or call); get them involved
- Tri-fold of ministries needs to have all ministries and how to get involved
- What has happened to the late 40's to early 50's age group? Investigate why they left and how we can get them more involved
- Invite past parishioners – find out why they don't come any more
- Procedures for interviewing parishioners that leave parish needed.
- Would like to have the church organize meeting for coffee once a week, morning or evening, would help build community
- Wants more family friendly events so everyone in the parish can participate – make them free or low-cost
- Would like to see more activities for the retired parishioners
- The Greatest Generation is not as active as it used to be, they need more social activities
- Small groups – initiate small group approach (prayer, discussion and action to the community).
- Would like to see more activities for single and divorced parishioners
- There is not a good outreach program for divorced individuals; the divorce group failed, there was a married individual who didn't understand; need to have a trained divorced individual lead the group; there needs to be better outreach and a better support system
- M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Preschoolers) needed.
- Progressive dinners to help form community
- Single parishioners – need to be outwardly accepted.

- Renaissance Festival was started as a festival for art; Food festival had art booths this past year but did not advertise for them at all, and expected 20% of earnings; Art vendors felt underappreciated and not welcomed
- More involvement of artists and musicians would add to community.
- Volunteer appreciation dinner or luncheon needed
- Have greeters before and after Mass
- Re-instate the prayer line
- Some of the older parishioners can't drive at night; need a way to get them picked up
- Have town hall meetings several times a year (specific topics or listening sessions)
- Further meetings to discuss what we do next as a parish
- People want to feel welcome and that they are part of a community
- Sell Newman Center shirts
- Positive note: loves the Newman Center, feel like community; loves the High Schools Confirmation program; music and outreach to college are great
- Sponsor a city-wide Young Adult retreat
- Have an EM get-together so we know each other at other Masses
- Ministries should let congregation know that the money they raise goes back to the parish
- Have ministry leaders come to FF&F for recruiting and information about ministries.
- Surveys during mass to identify community wants/needs. Discussion of survey results during mass.

SERVICE – Serving the Needs of Others and Eradicating Injustice

- Raise awareness of what all the ministries are doing, accomplishments and what they need (people, time, materials, money) through the bulletin, on-line and from the pulpit.
- How do the people find volunteer opportunities within the Church
- Need Welcome Sunday more than once a year
- Welcome Sunday doesn't give anyone a chance to get involved, no follow-up
- Need a friendlier welcome area
- Need pamphlets for new members describing the different ministries and set up a mentor program
- Need to do a better job announcing and advertising opportunities and events to college students
- College students would like to volunteer but don't know how.
- They'd like to see volunteer opportunities listed on the high school website/Facebook
- Ministry newspaper articles, testimonials, topics related to the ministry.
- Bring the leaders of all the ministries to the Confirmation class and College student night so they can explain how the youth can get involved
- We start ministries and they die on the vine with the same leader
- What is happening with the Friday night meals?
- Have the college students thank the cooks personally (written note); have a get together for the cooks and the college students at the beginning of the school year so they can get to know each other; need to know if there are any diet restrictions; need better coordination of duties and rotation of what is brought. Would like to have a reminder email about bringing a dish a week before not the week of; and would like to be able to change what type of dish one brings each month
- Need to do more to help our surrounding communities, More involvement to help the poor
- As a parish, how do we help others?
- Outreach to outside communities does not happen anymore; connect with organizations such as Faith in Communities
- Need to get more involved with giving back to the community specifically the poor
- What happened to Social outreach programs?
- Need to work on getting more young people into our parish ministries
- We have a lot of ministries, but are we good at them? Don't just have them to have them - Must tie to our mission/vision. Don't be afraid to say no to new/existing ministries
- Each ministry should have a mission statement that specifically ties to the Newman Center mission statement

- Focus on vision statement, what the church stands for, how each of the ministries fit that vision
- What were the results of the Advent retreat where people signed up for different ministries?
- Need an inventory of talents, have some type of inventory so people could reach out to others
- Families Helping Families in need with food, clothing, transportation
- Food Drive sending food to homeless discussed – work with the Community Food Bank
- Start a food ministry that cooks and bakes for events
- Would like to see thank you's in the bulletin when people do something over and beyond for the parish
- Parish needs to be more involved with promoting Knights events; need to understand the money goes back into the parish. Knights have tried to put announcements in the bulletin and have been turned away; no ministries should be turned away
- High schoolers interested in babysitting for parent's night out and working daycare at the masses
- Would like to see an LGBT outreach ministry
- Positive: there is great support for the Food Recovery Network; parish is very supportive and generous.
- The listening sessions were a great idea
- For those who say they don't get anything from the Mass, we still want you to participate in our ministries
- Mona Faulkner is working with the bishop to help people with sending their children to catholic school; Our Lady of Victory is at 63% capacity; the diocese has a scholarship fund; would like to see our parish help with the tuition fund (Good Angel fund).
- Use carecalendar.org to assist those individuals who are dealing with a sick family member, has recently lost a family member, or is in crisis. Have a sign-up sheet, the support would come in the form of cooking meals, walking the dog, driving them places, mowing the lawn, etc.
- Personally ask for volunteers
- Want training for the Environmental committee; what can we do and not do; want to make the Church inviting
- Is there a way to donate to a specific ministry?

STEWARDSHIP – Sharing of Individual Time, Talent and Treasure, and Responsible Use of those Gifts

- List of finance committee members and how to contact them with requests & concerns
- Pastoral council and finance committee should be elected or have expressed an interest, not appointed. Process needs to be more open and procedure to become involved needs to be published for all to have opportunity to become involved.
- Organ - How did we come to the conclusion we needed it
- “I have pulled back my financial support because I don’t feel the finance council is making the best decisions” (I think has to do with the purchase of the organ)
- Who controls finances? Who decided the organ was needed or more important than other parish needs? Seems like they bypassed normal channels
- Raise monthly contribution goal
- Provide information on how money is being spent
- Parish-wide parking lot sale with all the proceeds going to buy a new sound system
- Collection, contributions, funds for an on campus event to promote CSA, Estudios, and Newman Center
- Why doesn’t the Decorating committee have a budget
- How do you ask for money from the Finance Committee
- Have a strategic plan for raising money (short term and long term) and what the money will be used for
- Look to the parish for a fund raising consultant
- Glad that the Ash Wednesday collection was for a specific group

EVANGELIZATION – Spreading the Word

- Need bigger presence on Fresno State campus
- Build better relationships with Fresno State Catholic faculty and staff
- Concerned about college programs and getting bodies; make use of connection with Dr. Castro
- Why wasn't the Fresno State Ash Wednesday service with the bishop advertised in our bulletin?
- What happened to Priest presence on Fresno State campus?
- Need to announce college activities in other parish's bulletins and on-site
- Need outreach to the other colleges in town, not just Fresno State
- Have activities that bring outsiders to the church to see what we do
- Have a worship concert to help bring in more college students
- Do we have a connection with the other Newman Centers within the CSU system?
- "We really enjoy the meals brought to us on Wednesday night. That is a really great thing." (College student)
- Connect with Fresno Rescue Mission for volunteer opportunities
- Campus Ministry used to be more visible; would like to see them volunteer and help with activities at the church; be more involved
- Community Outreach – high school students want to get involved with students at other churches (possibly Wesley)

LEADERSHIP – of Clergy and Laity

- Would like to have a residential priest not just a sacramental priest.
- Need a young, dynamic parish priest who will be involved with families; RCIA; mentoring; hearing confessions anytime; can talk to confidentially; has a vested interest in the people of the parish
- Bishop John told us we would have a parish priest in two years. Feel we were not told the truth.
- Feel the Sacramental priest is not available
- Why do some parishes have more than one priest and we only have sacramental priest
- We take care of the sacraments (sacramental priest), take care of business (parish administrator), but lack the personal side
- Need for Parish Priest – There were many comments regarding the need for an assigned priest. All made it clear that Father Norris is excellent and this request for an assigned priest was no condemnation of Father Norris.
- We have strayed from being a Newman Center, need to focus on the fact that we are the only one in the diocese
- Adopt and install Cardinal Newman philosophy back into parish life. Review other Newman Center programs for ideas and best practices.
- More Town-Hall type of meetings for parishioners needed for stimulation of discussions.
- What type of parish are we? Ordinary parish or a Newman Center?
- What is our true mission?
- Need to have a strategic plan
- What makes a Newman Center different from a regular parish
- Would like a college representative on the pastoral council
- Decision-making process transparency would be appreciated; the process seems to be secret with no parishioner input.
- Who makes the decisions?
- Empower the laity and respect their opinions
- Feel “we are the parish” until a decision needs to be made, then you don’t want to hear from us.
- We have meetings to ask for ideas but then none are ever implemented. Do you really want our ideas or are you just asking because it’s the thing to do
- Concern with Deacon John, Deacon Bill, and Father Dave and their upcoming retirement plans. What is the plan to replace them?
- Start the process for replacing Father Dave and Deacon John – talk to the Bishop regarding our concerns – recruit nationally; Need a sacramental priest, lay theologian and office manager
- Concern about the path the parish is on due to retirements and lack of vocations

- Need to have three key staff positions: Sacramental Priest, Lay Theologian, Office Manager
- Want enthusiastic Church leadership who present intellectually challenging topics, spiritual guidance, and reinvigorating positive community atmosphere
- Got a new organ, what happens when Lynn retires? Is there a plan?
- Who is the music director? Seems like 2 people are in charge
- Need to feed soul/spirit
- Sister Kathleen is a great asset and needs to be brought on full time; she has brought the HS confirmation class back to life; is a great leader of our youth
- Have a retreat for people to assist in the planning of Church events for the year – first 50 people that sign up get to help plan the events

ADMINISTRATION

- Communication from staff – There seems to be lack of follow-up and communication from parish staff (lack of response to inquiries by email or phone).
- Hard to get support from administration. Everything is a struggle
- Does the Parish staff have written job descriptions? Are they available to the parish? Do they all work 40 hours a week?
- What are the staff's responsibilities? Who does what?
- Do we have staff doing the proper jobs? Does there need to be reorganization?
- Parish staff has a lack of structure and accountability
- Front desk staff needs to have knowledge of items in the bulletin to be able to answer questions
- Staff needs to be able to connect with catholic and non-Catholics alike
- Better ways of finding out what and where things are occurring at parish.
- Online bulletin not always available
- Can the website list what priest is saying Mass?
- Web-site is not reliable
- List volunteer opportunities on the website
- Daily texts/web communications needed
- List daily calendared events on website (young adults group is ultra-busy with jobs and activities).
- Need to have a website just for high school kids
- Website should have a pop up that shows "today's events"
- Facebook page needs to be updated
- Get more involved with social media
- Written bulletin too convoluted. Update communication efforts.
- Reminder texts for events or volunteer opportunities
- Other Newman Centers do not have the word "Catholic" in their name; it is redundant
- Return former sign and cross that were on the side of the building; they were more tasteful
- Parish database is outdated, not easy to update or get information from. Is there a standard for the diocese? Parish Soft is used at other parishes
- Need a dedicated staff member for the Young Adult Group to set agenda, take minutes, update calendars, put items in the bulletin, follow up with members who have not attended in a while, update Facebook page. They don't really have a staff person to contact like FFF, CCD, and other groups. Thought Edgar was hired to help with Young Adults but he's pulled away on too many other projects
- Staff liturgist is needed. More creativity is needed.
- Newman Center needs a volunteer coordinator
- Want a Business Administrator to run the office

FACILITIES

- Increase parking lot lighting, especially on the south side; need this during Holy Week
- Would like a statue out front or in the entry way of Cardinal Newman or St. Paul
- The art and decorations are getting old. We use the same ones over and over
- Would like to see new input on art for the church, specifically from the college students
- Security of the campus is lacking – maybe the installation of additional lighting, cameras or guards of the parking lots would be beneficial. Better relationship with neighbors would help security. More outreach to neighbors from parish members is needed.
- Get ideas from the congregation on how to make our church safe
- Turn our vacant land into a community garden
- Hallway outside chapel needs to be brighter; too dark
- Environmental Committee concerns: a well thought out beautiful decoration was set-up on the alter on Monday before Ash Wednesday, by Tuesday it was removed and the only reason given was that new guidelines had come out; the individual making the comment read the guidelines and couldn't find where the display didn't fit within the guidelines; suggested that guidelines be given before plans to decorate are made so this won't happen again; felt it was really unfortunate and sad that the display was removed.