

St. Francis Parish Council Minutes
Regular Meeting; Brunsmann Hall
Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Fred Bermudez, present
Debbie Clingingsmith, present
Francine Freitas, present
Jo Gonsalves, present
Darrin Greer, vice chair, present
Margaret Healey, present
Melba Hinajosa, excused
Bob Lavelle, present

Dennis Mahoney, excused
Kent Meyers, excused
Gary Myrick, present
Fr. Des O'Reilly, pastor, present
Bob Reid, chair, present
Janet Vitt, secretary, present

Also attending was parish staff member Beth White and members of the Bread-baking Ministry.

Chair Bob Reid opened the meeting, and Francine Freitas led the room in a prayer.

The minutes of the September 11, 2018, council meeting, upon motion by Darrin Greer and seconded by Margaret Healey, were approved unanimously with one amendment. They will be forwarded for posting on the parish website.

Parishioner Input & Comments about change in Altar Breads

Fr. Des thanked the individuals who have baked the bread during the past 30 years and explained his reason for ending the practice of using community-baked bread for Sunday Masses, citing concerns for crumbs, health-related liabilities and compliance with practices across the Sacramento Diocese. He said St. Francis is the only parish left using community-baked bread. He said he had had some of the concerns since arriving at the parish, and that a recent discussion about insurance liabilities in parish facilities had been the catalyst for deciding to purchase Communion bread. Staff explored a number of potential suppliers and settled on a community of Cistercian nuns of [Santa Rita Abbey](#) in Arizona, for which baking is a major source of income.

Parish member Jean Iacino addressed the council to share reaction by the Bread-baking Ministry to an upcoming change from Communion bread that is baked at the Parish Center to commercially made Communion bread. She said she would not read a statement she had prepared if it could be part of the record of the meeting. (It is attached to these minutes along with a 1998 document, "One Bread, One Body"). Ms. Iacino summarized the written statement, saying how and why community-baked bread had been introduced in the late 1990s as a part of a vibrant liturgy sought by Vatican II. She said that bread baked by parishioners was a liturgical best practice. She said he had not learned of Fr. Des' reasons for the change before coming to the council meeting.

Parish member Judy Robinson thanked the council for being a forum for discussing the issue and asked if it was possible to approach the county in hopes of finding a way through the kitchen issues to continue the ministry.

Fr. Des said that wasn't possible and that the change would be implemented in early November.

Several council members commented on the issue, saying it felt like another loss of tradition of the parish. Mr. Greer said he could see that there are considerable issues to weigh, including food-licensing, which curtails what the Steps ministry can offer our guests. Debbie Clingingsmith said members of the baking ministry approached her at the parish picnic to share their feelings of loss. She offered her resignation from the council, effective immediately, because she felt open discussion had been precluded at the council meeting.

Pastor's remarks

Father Des summarized what is intended to be a series of facilitated discussions open to parish members to sign up for limited seating. The topic of the first Day of Discussion, to be Oct. 20, will be the Catholic LGBT community. Bishop Jaime Soto will attend. The number of guests at each Day of Discussion will be limited to promote small-group discussion. Future topics could include the sex abuse scandal in the institutional church and how it was handled by church leadership.

Staff liaison report

Beth White reported

- Richard Hernandez thanked all volunteers who helped make a good parish picnic
- So far 116 children were registered for Faith Formation this academic year
- All staff has completed mandatory sexual harassment training
- Confirmation has been set for March 26, 2019, with Bishop Emeritus William Weigand presiding.
- A new RCIA group is forming in November to prepare for baptism and anointing on Easter 2020.
- Joe Prassa said a new air-conditioning unit has been installed at the Parish Center and meets updated regulations.
- The church sound system was adjusted to enable the choirs to hear themselves.
- The staff has been busy with both funerals and weddings.
- A new San Damiano cross has been ordered that will be lighter weight but otherwise like the old one.
- Mums will be used to commemorate parish members' loved ones as in years past and a litany of remembrance will be included in all Masses Nov. 3-4.

Follow-up Reports

- **Parish Directory Report:** Ms. Freitas said photo sessions continue at the Parish Center. There have been 161 photo sessions, which is nearing 80 percent of the committee's targeted goal of 200 sessions. The committee awaits new dates for additional sittings, and there isn't word yet when the directory will be published. [Francine Freitas](#) is the contact for those who have questions about sittings or about getting photographs that have been taken.
- **Celebration of Volunteers:** Margaret Healey a celebration will be scheduled for spring.

Committee Reports

- **School Liaison:** Fred Bermudez said he would attend the school board meetings when they begin.
- **Membership:** Mr. Greer moved to accept membership by Linda Hill to fill one of two council vacancies. It was seconded by Janet Vitt. By unanimous vote, Ms. Hill was named to the council. She will take her seat at the November meeting. Mr. Greer said the committee would have another name to propose to the council at a future meeting.
- **Outreach:** Ms. Healey said she would explain to the Steps Ministry what food is allowed to be served to Steps guests after reports that sometimes hot foods were being prepared in the Parish Center kitchen.

Ms. Freitas led the Council in a closing prayer after which the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

The next meeting will be at 6 p.m., Tuesday, November 13, 2018, in Brunsman Hall. Gary Myrick will provide the opening and closing prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Vitt, secretary

**Statement by Jean Iacino to the St. Francis Parish Council
Regarding the Use of Community-Baked Bread for Eucharist
October 9, 2018**

Using unleavened bread baked by parishioners is not a mere “tradition” of St. Francis Parish.

It is a liturgical best practice instituted in March 1998 after more than a year of study, consultation, and preparation by the liturgy committee. I was on the liturgy committee in 1997 and 1998 and led a year-long effort to make community-baked bread the standard for Sunday Mass (prior to that time, we had used it only for special liturgies). This effort included a trial period in January and February 1998, during which we solicited feedback from the parish.

I will not elaborate here on all the reasons why community-baked bread is critical to our Eucharistic celebration, although I would be happy to do so at some future time. I have attached a bulletin insert that appeared when we began the practice in 1998 that briefly summarizes the issues. I hope each of you will read it.

I noted earlier that community-baked bread is a liturgical best practice. This was not just the conclusion of the liturgy committee and the pastor at St. Francis. The book, “The Three Days: Parish Prayer in the Paschal Triduum,” speaking of the Easter Vigil, notes “Those parishes that do not yet bake their own altar bread may want to do this at least on the great festivals (as a way of initiating this for every Sunday)” (pg. 132). And, “If tonight is different because the bread has been baked in the parish or because everyone can share the cup, then something is right tonight but wrong on Sundays” (pg. 156).

The document “Gather Faithfully Together: A Guide for Sunday Mass, 2000,” published by Cardinal Mahony in 1997 as “A Message to All Catholics of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles” calls for real bread as part of his vision of what Sunday worship should be. I personally spoke with the liturgy director of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles about the issue as our own liturgy committee was doing its preparation.

Our parish mission statement says, “We value vibrant liturgy and personal prayer as a way to worship God and celebrate life.” Vibrant liturgy is the result of more than just good music. It is a sum of many practices large and small, noticed and unnoticed, that combine to make how we pray reflect what we believe. Core to our belief is that Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life, present to us in the consecrated bread and wine. That belief is far better reflected by a piece of real bread, baked by community members for our celebration, than by a hard, perfectly round wafer out of a plastic jug that is evocative of nothing. Eliminating the community-baked bread will further impoverish our liturgies and strikes at the heart of how we view ourselves as a worshipping community.

Of necessity, I have prepared this statement prior to hearing Fr. Des' concerns with the bread. However, I would note that there is no church rule prohibiting the bread we bake. It complies with the requirements of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, paragraphs 320 and 321:

320. The bread for celebrating the Eucharist must be made only from wheat, must be recently made, and, according to the ancient tradition of the Latin Church, must be unleavened.

321. By reason of the sign, it is required that the material for the Eucharistic Celebration truly have the appearance of food.

One Bread, One Body

Community-Baked Bread is Part of Our Weekend Liturgies

Beginning March 21, 1998, the St. Francis community will routinely break community-baked bread during all weekend liturgies. This commitment is one more step in our journey to fully experience Eucharist in our lives. It is an important and an exciting step, because the process used to make this decision involved nearly everyone in the community and already has created and strengthened new personal and spiritual relationships. It is an example of God's love being stronger than our fears.

The process began nearly a year ago when the issue was raised before the Liturgy Committee. Initial discussions focused on practical issues like crumbs, complicated issues such as dealing with shortages and excesses, concerns for members of the community who have physical challenges, and the daunting task of organizing and sustaining an entirely new and volunteer ministry. Some members of the committee -- ambitious, persistent and patient members of the committee -- consulted with other parishes using home-baked breads, planned and recruited volunteers for a trial period this winter.

The trial period showed that all of the practical issues were real, but could be dealt with. It revealed individuals who were not only willing to give up one Saturday morning a month to bake, but found themselves called to an enriching and prayerful ministry. It demonstrated the sincere and skillful efforts by the Eucharistic Ministry to reduce distractions, enhance our reverence, and meet the physical needs of all who come to the table. It showed that this community, which prides itself on being progressive, understands that means constantly growing and changing.

The choice here was not simply one of taste -- bread or wafers. The choice was whether to take into our human hands the bread that we bless and we break in remembrance of the new covenant of love and forgiveness. The essence of the Eucharist is one bread and one body. The conclusion that was reached in the committee -- after trials and consultation with the entire community, at the urging of the nascent bread-baking ministry, in collaboration with the Eucharistic ministry, and with the full participation and enthusiastic support of our pastor and the parish staff -- was to break community-baked bread weekend in and weekend out.

And this is just the beginning. At each weekend liturgy, we all have a new opportunity to be even more "present" when receiving Eucharist. Out of respect for the Eucharist we need to carefully hold and consume the bread to minimize crumbs falling to the floor. Out of respect for those in line behind us, we need to forgo intinction -- that is, dipping the bread in the wine. To receive Eucharist in both species is the privilege, the blessing, the sacrament. But if for whatever reason, individuals do not want to physically partake in one or the other, remember Christ is present fully in both the bread and the wine.

In addition, more fully understanding the spirituality of the Eucharist and the practical aspects of receiving it are important issues that cannot be addressed in a single bulletin insert. For that reason, in the coming months the Liturgy Committee plans will provide more opportunities for the community to hear about and discuss the Eucharist in our liturgies and our lives.

And finally, whenever sacraments are administered, there are unique and individual circumstances that may prevent some people from completely participating in the Sacrament as it instituted. If the use of community-baked bread presents such an obstacle to any member of the community, that individual is invited and encouraged to speak with Richard Juzix, our pastor, or Margie Will, our director of worship. Every effort will be made to accommodate special needs.