



ST. JOSEPH PARISH  
THE JESUIT PARISH IN SEATTLE

## **St. Joseph Faith Justice Commission Discernment Process Update – February 2021**

**During Fall 2020, St. Joseph's Faith Justice Commission embarked on a listening and discernment process to gain a better understanding of the status of our current efforts as a Commission and the concerns of the broader parish community.** We hoped that this process could help us as discern and prioritize our focus for the coming year. With the challenges and increased anxiety of our most vulnerable neighbors due to COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice uprisings across the country, Commission members were especially aware of the difficulties and changes this time presents to our partners' work and ministries.

**The Commission identified two parts for this listening process: 1) one-on-one conversations between Commission members and over a dozen current outreach ministry leaders; and 2) two parish-wide virtual listening sessions on Zoom to receive information from the entire St. Joseph Parish community.** Our one-on-one conversations focused on what was working well and what could be improved in ministry partners' relationship with St. Joe's, as well as current challenges and opportunities in our ministry partners' work. The parish-wide listening sessions sought to uncover what faith justice means to the parish community, what issues are important to the parish, and how parishioners want to be engaged in the parish's faith justice work. After each step of our discernment process, the Commission met to review and discuss this input and fruits of the conversations in order to identify opportunities and clarify our priorities for the direction of our faith justice efforts.

From our one-on-one conversations with outreach ministry partners, we heard about devastating impacts on vulnerable communities; increased needs for advocacy; the incredible resilience and creativity of our ministry partners; and the need for personal connection and closer relationship between parishioners and the people we seek to serve and be in solidarity with.

From the parish-wide listening sessions, we heard the following themes:

- **Current main issues of concern to the parish are racial justice & equity, homelessness, immigration, and environmental justice**
- **Parishioners would like to see increased collaboration and relationship-building with other parishes, as well as faith-based and social service organizations**
- **Increased and diversified communication to the parish community is needed in order to better share opportunities for service and advocacy and enable the parish's prophetic voice of solidarity on these issues**
- **Parishioners would like to have more clearly communicated opportunities to engage in advocacy, but direct service and advocacy should not be exclusive goals; rather, advocacy should come out of relationships we cultivate (and have been cultivating) with ministry partners**

**As a result of this process, Commission members decided to form four sub-committees organized by the main issue areas of interest to the parish** (racial justice & equity, homelessness, immigration, and environmental justice) in order to connect with ministry partners and parish committees to outline specific activities and steps for expanding service and advocacy opportunities. Two of these sub-committees already exist in the parish with our **Racial Equity Committee** and the **Immigration Committee**; they will continue their work in progress. Two new sub-committees will be formed to prioritize issues of concern related to **homelessness** and **environmental justice**. The Commission also agreed to return to our outreach ministry partners and ask for an updated sense of concrete needs and ideas for how to move forward together.

**As part of our next steps, the Faith Justice Commission is setting up communication channels for more consistent communication with the parish on opportunities to engage in our work.** This will include more opportunities to learn about opportunities through the bulletin, website, and parish social media channels. The Commission plans to actively engage parishioners in the work of the sub-committees to gather information; parishioners will hear more from each sub-committee in the coming days and weeks about programming and volunteer and advocacy opportunities. If you would like to become involved in one of the four sub-committees, [please fill out this short interest form](#). You can also email the Faith Justice Commission Co-Chairs, Bob Baur and Julia Fitzpatrick, at [faithjustice@stjosephparish.org](mailto:faithjustice@stjosephparish.org).

We are grateful to the St. Joseph community for their prayerful support of and participation in this process so that we, as a parish, can better love God and love our neighbors and be in right relationship in companionship with each other.

~ The St. Joseph Parish Faith Justice Commission

Bob Baur & Julia Fitzpatrick, Co-Chairs

### **St. Joseph's Faith Justice Commission Mission Statement**

*The Faith Justice Commission builds a community of gospel love and care at St. Joseph by sharing information and promoting opportunities for parishioners to engage in direct service with those in need, assisting in those events or programs that build greater companionship with the poor or marginalized, and developing collaborative avenues of advocacy to transform structures of poverty and displacement.*

"IGNITED BY THE EUCHARIST TO LOVE & SERVE"

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