

Report of the situation with the Koinonia de Giovanni movement, in the year 2010, in the Church of St. Stephen:

On the 16th of January, 2010, an evangelization course called Phillip Course was given for the families in our community, in Anoka, with the help of two priests from the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, with all of the required permissions by the Archdiocese. They had previously been in Brooklyn Park, giving the same course, at the St. Alphonsus Church, with Father Bill Bueche. Later, there was not enough space at St. Alphonsus and a scheduling difficulty with the visiting priests. Mayra Esquivel (Berry) was the contact between the two parishes and the priests from Brooklyn, New York, for the retreat in Anoka.

The agreement with the priests and with Mayra Esquivel was to only have the Phillip Course and a formation for the community at St. Stephen. For the following six months, the priests continued to travel here from New York, to meet with the leaders from our community without the knowledge of Pastor Mike Van Sloun, Associate Pastor John Floeder or Deacon Ramón García.

We had a meeting with Father John Floeder and Deacon Ramón García at the home of Mayra Esquivel and her husband Chris Berry, and Father Claudio and brother Marcelo were present, to clear up all of the things that were happening without the knowledge of the parish, for the good of the community. There was not much clarity, and we did not receive the information about how Koinonia works.

The activities and critical points that were worrisome to the community:

- The parish of St. Stephen was unaware of the way in which Koinonia works, both within and outside of the parish, the way that they belong to the church, the Ecclesiology, methodology, formation, structure and doctrine.
- The worry was that only one person, Mayra Esquivel, was responsible for the coordination, planning, programming administration of the Koinonia movement, without a relationship with the parish and without an ordained spiritual guide to be the responsible person for the local church, i.e. bishop, priest or deacon.
- The work was done separate from the church, without planning with the church, the pastoral plan for the church and an overall lack of communication.
- There were various attempts to work together and help the Koinonia group, on behalf of our parish of St. Stephen, with the help of Father Bill, Father Fernando, Father John Floeder, and Deacon Ramon. There was no trust on Koinonia's side, in presenting a plan.
- There was no knowledge of the names and number of the leaders that led the Houses of Prayer. The worry was that the leaders in the homes did not have formation and had not completed the VIRTUS training, with youth and children present.

- Internal problems within the group, regarding money, the tithing of Koinonia members, in the Houses of Prayer, and the fact that the tithing was collected for Koinonia right after mass. The church had to discuss this situation.
- Internal decisions within the Koinonia group, such as the purchase of a van (\$5,000), for the trips to retreats in New York, involving the tithing money, donations, collections, loans, on behalf of the people involved in the Houses of Prayer.
- Prayer groups in Minneapolis, Monticello, Shakopee, Anoka and other areas
- Consequences, conflicts, divisions, within and outside of the community
- Comments and worries about the way that help was offered to the community, by way of pastoral counseling by Mayra Esquivel, involving people and families.
- One of the ways to attract people to the community was the healing masses
- Money collected during the healing mass to send to New York
- Distortion of messages that involved the whole community of St. Stephen and Koinonia that caused division, confusion, doubts as to whether Koinonia was Catholic, information about the tithing, confession and the work of the Catholic Church.

After a year of discernment and prayer about this situation, both inside and outside the community, and in dialogue and discernment with Father Mike Van Sloun, Father John Floeder, and Deacon Ramon García, and further investigation about the Koinonia movement, it was discovered that it is an ecclesial movement parallel to the NeoCatechumenate.

It was decided that our Hispanic community at St. Stephens is too new and too small to give it that particular direction, transforming it into a Koinonia movement, and that it was not the right time for our community.

Also, it was agreed upon that in order to enter into this movement of Koinonia in the parish, permission from the Bishop of the Archdiocese would be needed for the frequent visits of the priests from New York. Given that this movement does not belong to a parish and operates outside of parishes at all times, and that there is not an assigned minister from this archdiocese assisting them, it is a delicate situation for the life of our community and for the correct practice of faith for the believers.

It was communicated to the members of Koinonia that they should be contacting the Archdiocese to fix this situation with the church.

Church of St. Stephen

Deacon Ramón García