

Meeting Minutes
St. Sebastian/St. Vincent Social Justice Ministry
Sunday, February 27, 2022

Members Present: Larry Furman, Bernie Rochford, Rita Rochford, Greg Sain, Harry Skeen (via zoom), Dave Tschantz, Mary Tschantz, Carolyn Varner, Mary Yanko.

Prayer: Rita offered Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace

General Session: Rita led the discussion of Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti* Chapter 5: "A Better Kind of Politics"

- The current situation in Ukraine under assault from Russian forces focused all discussion of this chapter, reinforcing how prescient is the Pope's message.
- The Pope reminds us we need a different mindset: charitable solutions for those in need are good for impact on immediate needs but many of these needs are symptomatic of conditions that also require long term fundamental and structural solutions. A long view is necessary for the common good.
- Many societal problems need global solutions because we are all more interconnected today than we have ever been.
- It must be 'both and' - short term needs must also be addressed as the most vulnerable should be the focus when decisions are made
- "Courage and generosity are needed in order freely to establish shared goals and to ensure the worldwide observance of certain essential norms."
- Pope Francis is not telling us anything we don't know and he is stating the issues articulately.
- How do we communicate this message to others?
- Nation states are failing because transnational businesses affect economies and peoples without any notable oversight or significant consequences for bad actors.
- The UN needs support. We must push back on efforts to delegitimize international organizations like the UN. But we also must recognize its failings and advocate for reforms. The UN Charter speaks to many issues of the common good.
- Look at structural deficiencies; political will needs to make it work for all
- As Fr. Norm reminded us in today's homily – we should understand we have 'blind spots'
- Pope Francis summarized this chapter by explaining that to create an open world with an open heart, it is necessary to engage in politics, and "a better kind of politics" is essential. Politics for the common and universal good. Politics that is 'popular: because it is for and with the people. It is politics with social charity that seeks human dignity. The politics of men and women who practice political love by integrating the economy with the social and cultural fabric into a consistent and life-giving human project.

Minutes: The Minutes for January were approved; they will be placed on file, and made available for distribution to the parishes' websites.

St. Vincent:

1. Synod session, including lunch is today from noon-2:30PM. Rita and Bernie are planning to attend.
2. Parish Lenten Mission "Living and Loving with Greater Hope and Joy!" will be held on 3 consecutive nights, March 13-15 from 7-8:30pm in the Church. It will also be livestreamed. The brothers Chavez will facilitate with stories and music. All are welcome!
3. March 12 and 13 after all the Masses articles from the Holy Land will be for sale
4. Fr. Norm's 75th birthday is today; the parish will celebrate next weekend following the 5pm vigil Mass.

St. Sebastian:

1. Synod sessions will be March 23 and 30 in Z Hall at 7:30pm. Keith Johnson is encouraging participants to register on the website.

Catholic Commission Update:

Ohio Death Penalty legislation finally has momentum in the state legislature! Bernie Smith, St Seb parishioner, head of St. Vincent de Paul Society there, former federal prosecutor and outspoken opponent of the death penalty, spoke to Commission members at their last zoom meeting.

All are encouraged to contact Sen. Kristina Roegner (R-Hudson) to get her re-engaged on this issue. Greg is concerned that the recently argued Dobbs case (on abortion access) once decided may put discussion of the death penalty on the back burner...

Announcements:

1. March 4 - First Friday Club –Catholic students from Summit County High Schools will speak on “How God Has Walked with Me through High School”. Doors open at 11AM. Our Lady of Cedars, 507 S. Cleveland-Massillon Rd, Fairlawn 44333.
2. March 9 - Interfaith Justice series, a collaboration of St. Hilary, New Hope Baptist, Faith Lutheran and Temple Israel begins at St Hilary @ 6PM with a meal, program at 7:30 and continues the following three Wednesdays (March 16, 23, 30) at the other faith communities. See the parish website for more information, and to register.

Next meeting: **Sunday, March 20**, following the 8:30AM liturgy at St. Vincent. Discussion of *Fratelli Tutti*, Chapter 6 “Dialogue and Friendship in Society”. Carolyn will lead discussion.

March Prayer/Treat: Rita and Bernie

Minutes prepared by Mary Tschantz