

Meeting Minutes
St. Sebastian/St. Vincent Social Justice Ministry
Sunday, November 21, 2021

Members Present: Mary Benzie, Annie Burris, Larry Furman, Bernie Rochford, Rita Rochford, Greg Sain, Harry Skeen, Dave Tschantz, Mary Tschantz, Carolyn Varner, Mary Yanko
Guest: Keith Johnson

Prayer: Larry offered the opening prayer “Season of Creation”

General Session: Larry continued the discussion of Pope Francis’ *Fratelli Tutti* Chapter 4: “A Heart Open to the Whole World”.

Discussion included:

- When our neighbor is an immigrant, complex challenges arise.
- All individuals have a right to find a place that meets their basic needs.
- We must “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” helping those who are emigrating in search of a better safer life.
- We must focus in our societies on the concept of “full citizenship” and reject the discriminatory use of the term “minorities”.
- The arrival of those coming from other ways of life and cultures can be a gift that enriches us all.
- Don’t succumb to “cultural sclerosis”...promote that which unites us...differences may allow us to grow in mutual respect.
- Globalization should give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity.
- The different countries of our world should think not simply as a country but as part of the larger human family.
- Tension exists between globalization and localization. We must have a global outlook, but embrace local efforts for community.
- The ability to welcome those who are different occurs if we are firmly rooted in our own culture.
- We must constantly broaden our horizons in order to see the greater good.
- No state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated.

Minutes: The Minutes for October were approved and will be placed on file, and made available for distribution to the parishes’ websites.

St. Vincent:

1. Food drive was held Nov 20. Bernie Rochford and Linda Subich facilitated; food drive may be held quarterly in 2022.
2. Fr. Norm would like to explore collaboration with an African American faith community. More information will follow.

St. Sebastian:

1. Keith Johnson, parish catechetical leader, is attending today’s meeting.
2. New parochial vicar is Fr. Jozef Bozek.
3. Parish’s Giving Tree will benefit Maurin Center, Valor Home, BWS Hope & Healing, Ronald McDonald House.

Announcements:

1. December 3 - First Friday Club – Byzantine Bishop Milan Lach will speak on his mission as a bishop in our Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma. Doors open at 11AM. Our Lady of Cedars, 507 S. Cleveland-Massillon Rd, Fairlawn 44333.

Catholic Commission Update:

- 43rd Annual Bishop Wm Cosgrove Justice Dinner/Awards and Silent Auction was held Friday, Nov 19, 2021 at Tangier, Akron OH 44303. Those honored were:

Cosgrove Justice Award – Mary Lou and John Grossman, for their leadership in the Interfaith Justice Alliance and for significant involvement in St. Mary (Akron) School’s after school program; then founding the St. Mary Urban Education Endowment Fund that has had tremendous positive impact on the school.

Bishop Pilla Leadership Awards – Colette Jenkins Parker (posthumous recognition), for serving as Dominican Associates of Peace Director, in Akron racial justice work, leading Sisters’/Associates’ Racial Harmony Series, and for her news writing on area advocacy; **and The Kenmore Free Store** at Immaculate Conception Parish-Kenmore, for ecumenical partnership to serve those in need in Kenmore/Barberton area and remaining open during COVID by safely using a parking lot pick-up system.

Faithful Servant Award – Holly Klein, for recently co-founding Grace House, a nonprofit residential hospice ministry to prevent vulnerable persons, and anyone, from dying in isolation or poverty.

Laudato Si’/Care for Creation Award – St. Eugene Parish St. Francis of Assisi Peace Garden, for starting this native tree/plant garden based on *Laudato Si’* and Catholic Social Teaching integration of life/dignity.

Youth Justice Award – Ty Williams, St. Vincent-St. Mary HS senior, for his service to local homeless neighbors with Akron Snow Angels and starting a sizeable Christmas Day meals and clothing ministry.

Project HOPE at Archbishop Hoban HS, a homelessness outreach ministry, for empowering students, parents and faculty to prepare and deliver weekly meals and to build friendship with the poor.

Old Business:

1. Rita acknowledged receipt of letters from Fr Valenchek as well as Bishop Malesic in response to our letter to the bishop following our discussion of the pope’s letter on the celebration of the Latin Mass. Fr. V has since indicated that the discussion is ongoing in the diocese, and that anyone interested can write letters to the bishop.

New Business:

1. Rita shared she is retiring as SJ ministry chair at the end of 2021, so a new chair must be discerned at our January gathering.
2. Rita commented on the sentencing of Fr. Robert McWilliams (for child porn and related offenses) and the bulletin column written in his defense when he was first arrested by his classmate, former St Seb parochial vicar Fr. Simone. Keith Johnson, who also knows Fr. McWilliams well, indicated no one is defending him any longer. Rita’s expressed concern was that future victims may hesitate to come forward with this type of initial response by clergy. Should the parish publish something to acknowledge that fact, to ‘correct the record’?

Next meeting: TBA – Social Gathering Pot Luck at Rita and Bernie’s. January 2022 dates will be circulated. Discussion of *Fratelli Tutti*, Chapter 5 will resume in February.