

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church  
Social Justice and Caring Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, September 5, 2019**

Present: Martha Arko, Kendall Doom (and her son Oskar), Bill Dorgan, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Bonnie Steele and Mary Weyandt

**Angel Tree Ministry**

Mary stated that she had nothing new to report on the Angel Tree Ministry at this time. She said that she would discuss this further at the next meeting.

**Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative**

Bonnie renewed discussion on the possibility of having the parish partner with Pastor Emily Goldwaithe Fries who does housing and policy work with Beacon, an interfaith housing collaborative working to end homelessness in the Twin Cities. She stated that she would like to move forward with Beacon toward a shared vision of organizing in St. Paul and that she hopes to get approximately five parishioners that the committee could empower to lead work on housing-related issues.

Bonnie said this organization would be able to provide training to parishioners regarding how to work on advocacy, effectively talk with city and state officials etc.

Ann suggested tabling this issue until JustFaith Catholic begins at the parish since involvement in this program may energize and inspire its participants to work on social justice-related issues - such as housing.

**Compassion Kits for the Unsheltered**

Bonnie mentioned that pastor Fr. John Mitchell is very supportive of the parish making compassion kits for the unsheltered and would like to get this project underway so that the office would have some on hand to distribute to those in need.

Mary mentioned that the Parish Council is also supportive of this project, hoping that it will serve as a means for starting a conversation regarding homelessness.

Bonnie stated that the parish's Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, confirmed that the office would obtain bus tokens that could be added to the kits along with directions to Merrick Community Services.

Bonnie said that she would put announcements in the bulletin asking parishioners for donations for the kits (such as brushes/combs, fast-food gift cards, gloves, hand wipes, medicines such as cough drops and pain relievers, nail clippers, personal hygiene items, snacks, socks, tissues, toothbrushes, toothpaste, water bottles etc.) and that she would obtain some baskets in which parishioners could deposit their donations.

The committee members discussed various ways of requesting donations such as via: bulletin announcements, the committee and/or parish's website, parishioner Toni Baker's e-mail distribution list, Communications and Office Manager Thea Munoz' Mail Chimp tool for making an e-mail blast and possibly a pulpit announcement. Bonnie agreed to ask Fr. John if he would be willing to make a pulpit announcement.

The committee members noted that once enough items were collected, they would schedule a time to assemble the kits and that the completed ones would be placed in an area of the building to which parishioners have access so that they could pick-up the kits to be used for distribution.

### **Gift Cards**

Bonnie stated that she had activated the Cub gift cards that were purchased using dollars from the St. Pascal Baylon Family Emergency Fund to distribute to parishioners in need. Bonnie noted that she and Fr. John will decide if the distribution would be expanded to include non-parishioners.

### **Center for Mission**

Bonnie reminded the members that Adam Fitzpatrick, the Social Mission Outreach Coordinator for the Center for Mission of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis is willing to lead a day of reflection/retreat for the committee during which the members could discern: the charism of the parish, how they could best assist the parish, the work that they do, their values and gifts, what work they should get done, how to build an effective team, how to guide the parish, how to move towards serving in an advisory role for the parish and getting support from parishioners so that they do not have to do all the work etc.

The committee members decided they would like to hold a half-day event on a future Saturday. Bonnie asked the committee members to check their calendars and let her know by Monday, September 9, 2019, which Saturday dates would work for them. Once she hears back from the committee members, she will contact Adam to finalize a date for the retreat.

### **Clothesline Project**

Bonnie reported that she has contacted the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women several times regarding finalizing a date for when the parish will receive its clothesline display containing t-shirts hanging from it with the names of those who have been victims of domestic violence but that she had not heard back from this organization. She said that she would contact this organization again.

### **Come Together**

Bonnie asked the committee members if they had looked at the information on Come Together, an ecumenical group of people of faith who gather monthly for contemplation, discussion, music

and prayer in a variety of churches and faith-based organizations around the Twin Cities to pray for peace and an end to violence in homes, communities and the world.

She stated that she had attended the meeting at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis on Sunday, August 11, 2019, from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. She said that the original focus of the meeting was to discuss the theme of homelessness but that the discussion ended up centering on the recent violence in El Paso, Texas.

The committee members discussed the possibility of having the parish host a Come Together gathering. Bonnie mentioned that each meeting usually reflects the host - in terms of what is important to that community. She asked the committee members to let her know if they would be interested in having the parish host such a gathering. The committee members noted they would like to develop a presence for this in St. Paul.

Bonnie announced that some upcoming meetings will take place at River of Life Lutheran, Frances Cabrini and Nativity Episcopal in Burnsville.

### **Donation Closet**

Mary mentioned that she has not yet finalized the flyer describing the ministries for whom the parish collects donations for the committee's review (Brittany's Place, Joseph's Coat, the Listening House and Merrick Community Services). She and Chris agreed to work together on this.

### **End-of-Life Events**

Bonnie reported that the November 9<sup>th</sup> date for the end-of-life-event regarding palliative care and hospice may change due to possible scheduling conflicts.

### **One Body**

Bonnie reported that she is putting together a core group of parishioners who are interested in being involved in One Body, an organization whose goal is to teach others how to welcome the stranger and immigrant and how to treat them through the lens of Catholic social teaching.

It was noted that this organization could serve as a possible immersion experience for the parish's JustFaith Catholic program participants. (See next section.)

Bonnie announced that the next One Body meeting will take place on Thursday, September 19, 2019.

Bonnie reminded the committee members that parishes are being asked to recognize the Catholic World Day of Refugees on September 29, 2019, and that Fr. John, will preach about immigration during his homily that weekend. She stated that Fr. John will attend a gathering of clergy who are meeting to discuss this event.

The committee members discussed the concerns of undocumented immigrants and how to assist them and invite them into conversation without putting them at risk. This led to a discussion on local sanctuary churches - such as Redeemer Lutheran and St. Thomas More. Bill distributed a document published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding becoming a sanctuary denomination.

### **JustFaith Catholic Program**

Ann reminded the committee members that she will be speaking at each of the masses this weekend to invite parishioners to participate in the JustFaith Catholic program (a three-phase small-group experience involving prayer, study, dialogue and immersion as participants explore contemporary issues through the lens of Christian faith) and that it will be offered at the parish on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. and Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. starting October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> respectively. (Please note, these dates were incorrectly listed as September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in the August 8, 2019, meeting minutes.) She said that Fr. John will speak about this program as well. Ann stated that she hopes to have ten to fifteen people join each group. She mentioned that Fr. John will participate in the program via independent study.

### **Stephen Ministry**

Bonnie mentioned that she would contact some parishioners who she thinks would be a good fit for Stephen Ministry and invite them to become involved in the program - which uses lay people to provide one-on-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life.

Bonnie reminded the committee members to let her know if they would like to attend the introductory workshop regarding the Stephen Ministry program that will take place in Eau Claire, Wisconsin on Saturday, September 14, 2019, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

### **Committee Expectations**

Bonnie asked the members to consider what expectations they might like to establish for committee members - in terms of attendance, term limits, getting representatives from the entire parish etc.

### **Committee Liaison**

Mary announced that she may no longer serve as the committee liaison due to the fact that she may become the chair of the Parish Council. (She is currently serving as the vice-chair.) She said that council member, Richard Ikeri, may fill this role. Mary stated that she would continue to serve as the liaison until this transition is complete.

### **Article**

Mary referenced an article from *U.S. Catholic* entitled "To rescue a sinking church, think mission not membership" in which she thought the committee members might be interested. She

gave a copy of the article to Bonnie who agreed to send a link to it in an e-mail that she would send to the committee members.

### **We Care Campaign**

Chris announced that the next We Care Campaign will take place the weekend of October 26 - 27, 2019, and said that the committee should choose the options for this. The committee members discussed the following options:

- **Catholic Relief Service Hurricane Dorian Relief in the Bahamas,**
- **Health Care for All Minnesota** - a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting affordable, comprehensive and high-quality health care for all Minnesotans through advocacy, community organization and education,
- **Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota** - a non-profit agency located in St. Paul that provides legal assistance to low-income immigrants and refugees in Minnesota and works to educate Minnesota communities and professionals about immigration matters and advocates for state and federal policies which respect to the universal rights of immigrants,
- **Raices** - a non-profit agency that promotes justice by providing free and low-cost legal services to underserved immigrant children, families, and refugees and
- **St. Mary's Health Clinics** - established in 1992 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to provide free health care services to the uninsured and medically underserved people in the Twin Cities and surrounding metro area.

The committee members chose Catholic Relief Service Hurricane Dorian Relief in the Bahamas, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota and St. Mary's Health Clinics.

### **Committee Brochure**

Bonnie passed around several drafts of a committee brochure that she is in the process of creating. She stated that she would continue to work on it. The members informed her that the committee has a logo that could be added to the brochure.

### **Listening House Annual Dinner**

Bill distributed an announcement that he would like to have placed in the bulletin regarding the Listening House's annual fundraising dinner taking place at the St. Paul Hotel on Wednesday, November 13, 2019. He said that the event will have guest speakers that will highlight the work done by the Listening House. He stated that he would like to have a parish table at the event. He invited the committee members to join him for this event and to let him know if they would be interested in attending. The committee members were fine with him placing the bulletin announcement.

### **Little Free Pantry**

Bonnie suggested that the parish maintain a free pantry box on its grounds - similar to the lending libraries one sees around town but different in that it would contain foodstuffs instead of books. The committee members liked this idea.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, October 3, 2019, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in the Staff Lounge

Ann volunteered to lead the prayer for the October meeting. Bill agreed to do this for the November meeting.