

**Saint Pascal Baylon Catholic Church
Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, March 5, 2020**

Present: Martha Arko, Anna DeCrans, Bill Dorgan, Ann Karner, Christine Malec (minute writer), Margaret Malec, Fr. John Mitchell, Mary Weyandt and Julianne Wojick

Compassion Kits for the Unsheltered

Ann reported that she and another parishioner assembled twenty additional compassion kits for the unsheltered from the items that were left over from the last time they were put together as well as the donations that were collected during last week's fish fry.

It was determined that the completed kits would not be put out for distribution during Lent due to the fact that this might confuse parishioners since the committee is currently in the process of collecting donations during each week of the fish fry.

Fr. John stated that former Pastoral Associate for Social Justice, Bonnie Steele, did provide him with the name of the parishioner who expressed interest in helping coordinate this project but that he did not have the name with him.

Census Assistance

Bill mentioned that he had attended his caucus and there was a person there who spoke about offering opportunities to those who may need assistance filling out their census forms. He said the speaker suggested that giving people an opportunity to fill out the form at church might make them feel more comfortable - as opposed to having a census worker come to their home asking about the form. Bill stated that the speaker noted that if a church were to hold such an event, the census could provide materials as well as staff to assist those filling out the form.

Fr. John noted that at a recent One Body pastor meeting, it was suggested that encouraging parishioners to complete the census may make them feel more comfortable about filling out the form.

The committee members agreed that even if the parish were to decide not to hold a meeting, it would still be important to get the word out about the importance of completing the census. Anna said that many non-profit organizations are helping to do this. She stated that these organizations might be able to provide interpreters for those who may experience language barriers when completing the census forms.

Bill volunteered to find out more about this issue and noted that if he finds out about locations where census assistance is being provided, he will inform the committee members about this at the next meeting. He agreed to provide the information to Fr. John if he receives it before the next meeting.

Faithful Citizenship Event

The committee members continued their discussion on the possibility of offering a faithful citizenship event at the parish - in response to Pope Francis' call to become actively engaged. They agreed that the purpose of such an event would be to encourage parishioners to think about the upcoming election through the lens of their faith.

The committee members talked about bringing in staff from the theology department(s) of St. Catherine's and/or St. Thomas to speak about this issue - perhaps having a panel discussion. They also discussed the possibility of partnering with other churches in planning this event.

The committee members debated holding this event in late summer or early fall - ensuring that it would not be held during the time that the parish is having its synod meetings. Ann agreed to contact Kim Roering, the parish's Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation, to discuss possible dates when it could be held.

The committee members discussed the possibility of putting inserts in the bulletin regarding this topic - tying in a devotional component to it. Fr. John volunteered to see what may already exist on this.

Fish Fry Table Tents

Julianne said that she did not hear from absent committee member, Kendall Doom, regarding creating table tents on the topic of homelessness/housing (focusing on Ramsey County) for use on the fish fry tables. The committee members agreed to check with Kendall on this issue.

One Body

Ann showed the committee members the "Catholics for Immigrant Justice" stickers that were distributed at a recent meeting for 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.

Ann, Anna and Mary stated that One Body is currently encouraging people to attend caucuses and to become delegates.

Mary mentioned that One Body has Lenten materials posted on-line and on its Facebook page. Ann said that she provided the parish office with a link to information regarding the care of the environment and she believes this will be posted in the bulletin or electronic newsletter.

Catholic Community Foundation

Ann announced that the Catholic Community Foundation, the organization that provided reimbursement for some of the parish's expenses for Phase One of the recently completed JustFaith Catholic program, is offering grants for social justice-related projects - seed money to

get them started (for example, for a community garden or an organic recycling program). She stated that the organization is accepting applications until this summer.

Ann invited the committee members to recommend a project for which the parish could apply for a grant. The committee members agreed it would be good to take advantage of this opportunity and discussed choosing a project that would support the needs of the parish and/or surrounding neighborhood. They also discussed the possibility of choosing a project that focuses on one of the three themes that are the focus of the JustFaith Catholic program - the environment, poverty and racial injustice.

Ann reported that she will be interviewed by the Catholic Community Foundation regarding the parish's experience with Phases One and Two of the JustFaith Catholic program and that the organization might also take a picture of the participants - of those who are willing.

Human Trafficking Presentation

Fr. John reminded the committee members of the e-mail that he sent them stating that he had spoken with parishioner Mark Johnston and Beth Roberts, both retired police officers (for the cities of St. Paul and Richfield respectively), regarding the possibility of them giving a presentation at the parish on the topic of human trafficking - sharing their experience working with victims of this crime. He asked the members for their input.

The members discussed that the committee has offered two previous presentations on this subject - one that provided general information and one that focused on the trafficking associated with large events such as the Super Bowl. It was noted that neither of these events were well-attended.

The committee members commented that it might be interesting to have the former officers focus their presentation on trafficking on the eastside - including what may be occurring at Motel 6 located near Grace Lutheran. They discussed inviting a representative from Brittany's Place, a shelter located on the eastside of St. Paul that helps teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking that the parish has supported financially in the past, to participate in the presentation as well as a member of Grace Lutheran. They spoke about partnering with these groups to take action on the topic.

Fr. John volunteered to invite Beth, Mark and the pastor from Grace Lutheran to the next committee meeting.

Next Meeting

Thursday, April 2, 2020, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in the Staff Lounge

Chris will lead the prayer.