

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - September 17, 2014

Attendance:

Paul Chestnut, Terry McCaffrey, George Chippendale, Mary Fong, Chris Lundin, Bob March

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

2. Approval of July minutes

The minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

3. Spirituality Tuesday plans

Campaign Nonviolence is an international movement taking place the week of September 20 to 28. A dozen local churches are participating in a week of study, action, and peaceful witness. Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice is a local organization that is working on the campaign.

As a part of this campaign, HCC will sponsor an event on the effects of gun violence. The title of the event is TBD. The idea is to call attention to and find solutions for the gun violence that is so prevalent in East Palo Alto. Some of our number are strongly involved in social activities in EPA. Ruth and George Chippendale have been leading the St. Vincent DePaul Society there for many years. Our parish has supported St. Elizabeth Seton School in Palo Alto, all of whose students are from EPA.

The event will have three speakers:

- EPA Police Chief Mark Raffaelli will offer his view of the subject, touching on what he sees as the causes, and the frustrations of his officers.
- Jose Betancourt from the Archdiocese of San Francisco will describe what he's doing in East Palo Alto (St. Francis of Assisi parish) to try to help.
- George Chippendale will offer his personal observations about the impacts.

4. Social Justice Day

Planning is proceeding for the Social Justice Day next year. It is official that this event will be sponsored by the Diocese of San Jose. That assures that the event will be significantly larger than previous years because it will involve not just one Deanery, but all parishes. Susan Olsen is working with Reuben Solorio and other diocesan personnel. The date has been set for January 17, 2015, which coincides with Martin Luther King weekend. The location has tentatively been set for St. Lawrence Parish in Santa Clara. Keynote Speaker, closing speaker, and workshop presenters are being considered. Volunteers for various positions are being solicited. If you would like to help, contact Susan.

5. Death Penalty update

On October 5, California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty will be observing World Day Against the Death Penalty. In conjunction with Death Penalty Focus, CPFWA will be organizing a series of events, focusing in particular on mental illness and the death penalty (this year's theme of World Day Against the Death Penalty). There will be a rally on October 5 at Lytton Plaza. The keynote speaker will be Diana Gibson. Rick Walker, who spent 12.5 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, will be present. Mary Kay Raftery, whose son was murdered in a senseless crime, will be present.

The Thomas Merton Community is interested in holding a Mass focused on the death penalty (TBA), and

presenting a movie: *Dead Man Walking*, at the Thomas House.

6. Homeless issues

We did not discuss this topic.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Pro-Life Activities - Bob March

Bob March attended the meeting in order to discuss the activities of the Pro-Life world. The concept of the dignity of the human person is part of the mission of the HCC, so it is fitting that the Right to Life group should be under the umbrella of the HCC. From September 24 to November 2, our community will take part in "40 Days for Life," which is a coordinated international mobilization opposing abortion. Locally, there will be a vigil at the Planned Parenthood facility at California and San Antonio Roads. Throughout each day, members of the group will sit peacefully and offer prayers. The group emphasizes prayer and fasting, which leads to a change of heart. The group is completely nonviolent. No signs are carried. They do not obstruct the driveways or sidewalk while standing in the public right of way. They do not threaten or verbally abuse anyone.

8. What's On Your Mind?

9. Volunteer for Faith-sharing/Question of the Week

Next meeting - October 15, 2014