

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - June 26, 2012

Attendance:

Paul Chestnut, Laura Chiu, Terry Atkinson, George Chippendale, Ruth Chippendale, Mary Fong

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

Ruth led us in prayer.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Approval of May minutes

3. Our Congolese Refugees

We had agreed that our committee should gradually withdraw from this project because the family is nearing self-sufficiency. As a way to ease out, we had a picnic on Saturday, May 26 at a park near their home. Laura and Paul bought food using funds left over from the collection last year. All went well. They appeared to enjoy the park, its equipment, and the lunch.

We had a discussion about Mediatrice. Kamal had observed that she is not talking in Swahili or English even though she is already over 3 years old. If it is true, her pediatrician should have noticed it and maybe made a diagnosis and some recommendations. And Susan Adams says that services can be provided through the school district if there is a developmental problem. We decided to ask some questions and find out more.

4. Death Penalty issues

A campaign for Proposition 34, the SAFE Initiative, is underway, spearheaded by California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty. The parish has officially endorsed the initiative. House parties are planned to get publicity and to raise money: August 6 at Channing House and August 19 at SAG.

5. Torture Awareness

We discussed the possibility of starting a drive to get the people of the parish to sign on to a statement opposing solitary confinement. NRCAT (National Religious Campaign Against Torture) is gathering endorsements of a strong statement from people of faith all across the country. Paul volunteered to write a bulletin insert. Whether we can move forward depends on whether Fr. Matt assents to the plan. A message was written to him on June 1. We have not received a response.

6. Soles4Souls

Soles4Souls® is a shoe charity that collects gently worn shoes and monies to provide shoes to those in need. We had decided to carry out a collection drive in September. We discussed several issues. Terry Atkinson plans to find the necessary boxes for the shoes. The volunteers for the three collection sites are:

- St. Thomas: Ruth
- OLR: Laura
- SAG: Jean

The steps in the procedure are:

- ◆ Register with Soles4Souls and receive their collection boxes
- ◆ Place notices in bulletins two weeks prior to drive
- ◆ On collection day, bind pairs tightly together
- ◆ Record number of pairs in each box
- ◆ Take shoes to commercial business site for shipping

7. November Ballot Issues

We had discussed presenting a forum on the November ballot issues. Laura discussed this at the PSC meeting. She also contacted the League of Women Voters, who volunteer to conduct forums, but they prefer to discuss all the issues on the ballot, not just those that we are most interested in. They agreed to lead a presentation on Tuesday, October 9 at St. Albert from 7:00 to 8:30.

8. Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of reproductive slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, or a modern-day form of slavery. The CASE (Californians Against Sexual Exploitation) initiative will be on the ballot in November. It will be Proposition 35. Our committee will support this initiative. It fits in with the goal of the diocesan Human Trafficking Awareness Group. Paul will contact Janet Ferree, head of the diocesan HTAG, to see to what extent they are cooperating with Californians Against Slavery, the sponsor of the initiative.

9. PIA video - consider for Spirituality Tuesday event

PIA is preparing a video and slide presentation about social justice called "Prosperity for All." It represents "A Catholic Framework for Economic Life." It discusses our current economic plight, how we got here, how the gap between the rich and the poor continues to be more pronounced, and what we can do about it. George Chippendale obtained a draft of the slides, and sent them to HCC members. This looks to our committee like an excellent project, and we would like to support PIA in this effort in whatever way we can. George will be communicating with PIA to find out how we can contribute. Paul will contact Fr. matt to advise him about this project. We will discuss whether we can develop an appropriate program for Spirituality Tuesday based on this presentation.

10. PSC report

Laura filled us in on the proposal from the International School of the Peninsula to expand the OLR campus. The proposal will be discussed at length by the Pastoral Council and a decision should be made by -----.

11. What's On Your Mind?

'Ruth: Hotel de Zink will operate for two weeks in August. Ruth will organize the contributors of hot meals for the homeless.

George: South Bay Sanctuary will have an event on Sunday, October 21, at 4 p.m. St. Albert. We will help with publicity.

We discussed changing the meeting time to the third Wednesday of the month. We hope to be able

to attract the attendees of SOUP, which meets at 6 p.m. at OLR on the third Wednesday.

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

Next meeting - August 21, 2012