

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - September 10, 2013

Attendance:

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

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

Laura led us in (I don't recall).

2. Approval of July minutes

The minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

3. NRCAT grant to continue the fight against torture - Chris

Chris has been working with Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice on an NRCAT (National Religious Campaign Against Torture) grant to continuing the fight against torture. MVPJ hosted a film on the subject on (? need a date). They tried to arrange a meeting with Dianne Feinstein, but they met with aides instead. The usual exchange occurred.

4. Homeless meeting 7-13

A meeting took place on August 13 regarding the homeless situation. The City of Palo Alto has decided to close Cubberley to overnight stays by homeless people. The "Stop the Ban" group is raising funds to work on alternatives. We will monitor developments and perhaps contribute where we can.

6. Refugee Foster Care Meeting

Catholic Charities is funded for a Refugee Foster Care program, and they asked us for help in finding foster parents. The plan is to place refugee and asylum youth into homes in the Bay Area. We arranged a meeting on Sunday afternoon, September 8 at OLR Hall, at which Claire Collins and Tyr Rodriguez made presentations. The meeting was a big disappointment, as only two individuals that were not associated with the HCC attended. No potential foster parents stepped forward. We agreed to continue to support the concept, and perhaps to insert occasional bulletin notices on the subject.

7. Pictures from book drive

Terry showed pictures of second graders who enthusiastically opened the books received in June following our "Early Reader Book Drive."

NEW BUSINESS

9. The Parish Social Ministry Liaison

Susan Olsen was unable to attend the meeting, but she sent notes about the Parish Social Ministry Liaison meeting which took place the week of September 2. Susan had been appointed to be the parish's liaison to the diocesan Social Ministry. See next two items.

10. Social Justice Day

Susan reported that there is a strong push to have a Social Justice Day. Such an event was planned a year ago, but it was postponed. Susan had been the chair for such an event for eight years in Deanery 7. She would like to see if there is sufficient energy within Deanery 2 to make this day happen again. The idea of the day is to reach people who aren't already involved in Social Justice (though most people who attend have been very committed). It is an opportunity to infuse new energy into parish social justice groups. If our HCC is interested in this, Susan is willing to chair the event, and she would seek the support and assistance of others who have worked in the past. She would also seek the help of a whole new group of participants. We all were receptive to this idea. We all want to know more about the concept. What is the format? Are there speakers? Workshops? What topics are considered? We think it would be a good method to enlist more members to our group.

11. A Right To Life Group

Susan also reported that a person has approached us (Chris Lundin and Susan) about a Right to Life group at STA. He wanted to put an article in the bulletin soliciting supporters - people to work with him. Susan suggested that any proposal should go through HCC. Since then, he has come to Fr. Matt with information about "40 Days for Life." This concept is something that the Bishop highly supports, and Fr. Matt has also asked that Susan pursue this with the HCC, and he has given his blessings to the individual interested in bringing it to STA. We discussed this issue at length. We did not have enthusiasm for a Right to Life group. We believe that it tends to focus on one issue (abortion), and we do not think that that issue is something that is in the charter of the HCC. We did not show any enthusiasm for "40 Days for Life."

12. What's On Your Mind?

George reports that the East Palo Alto St. Vincent dePaul will not be sponsoring the Christmas Toy Drive this year. This program will be picked up by the Ecumenical Hunger Program. The Giving Tree program will continue.

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