

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - July 20, 2016

Attendance:

Mary Fong, Paul Chestnut, Chris Lundin, Terry McCaffrey

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

2. Approval of June minutes

The minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

3. Death Penalty News

The San Jose Mercury wrote an editorial recommending a Yes vote on Proposition 62 and a No vote on Proposition 66, stating that California's death penalty has been a failure on every level. Points made:

- The penalty is unfairly applied
- It does not prevent crime
- Its abolition would reduce state costs by \$150 million every year
- No other Western nation has the death penalty.

4. Torture Awareness Month

Here are the final results of our campaign to gather signatures for the two petitions: to close Guantanamo and to end prolonged solitary confinement. We collected 203 signatures to close Guantanamo, and 209 signatures to end prolonged solitary confinement. Here is how the numbers break down by church:

	End Solitary Confinement	Close Guantanamo
OLR	78	78
STA	81	75
SAG	50	50

On the last day we had "self-service" signature collection. On that day we collected 25 and 23 signatures.

5. Spirituality Tuesday Plan

George Chippendale is organizing a presentation for the Tuesday night series this fall. The topic is homelessness. Four parishioners will contribute: George, Virginia Duluk, Mike Verve, and Ann Fillin. Since George was not present, we did not discuss the plan.

6. Palo Alto Peace Walk

The Palo Alto Multifaith Peace Walk and Picnic will be held on Sunday afternoon, September 11. The there is to say "no" to fear and "yes" to friendship by walking together in south Palo Alto to show the way to community and peace.

"We will gather beginning at 1:30 p.m. at Congregation Etyz Chaim at 4161 Alma Street for a brief service at 2:00 p.m., and then walk down Alma, then Charleston, then Middlefield, stopping at University AME Zion Church and Our Lady of the Rosary Church for brief services. After the walk we will gather at Mitchell Park for the annual 9/11 Peace Picnic hosted by American Muslim Voice. Shuttle buses are being planned to take folks from OLR and/or Mitchell Park back to their cars. Fr. Matt will walk with us, as will the City of Palo Alto police chief Dennis Burns."

"We invite people from all walks of life, whether they are people of a particular faith or no particular faith, all

colors of the rainbow, left, right, and center, children, youth and adults, to join us on this walk for peace." said the Rev. Dr. Diana Gibson. "We want to show our community and the world that, given the opportunity, people will come together to say 'no' to division, violence, and fear, and 'yes' to friendship and peace."

NEW BUSINESS

7. CROP Hunger Walk

Our parish has created a team for the CROP Hunger Walk, which is a "walk for charity" that raises money to help eradicate hunger throughout the world. We will be joining teams sponsored by many churches throughout the Mid Peninsula. The walk is sponsored by community and interfaith efforts within Church World Service, a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations and communions. The walk will take place on Sunday, October 2, starting at Burgess Park in Menlo Park. Walkers have the choice of completing a one mile, three mile, or five mile walk. We have created a team, the St. Thomas Aquinas Team, that will participate in the event and raise funds to enhance food security. To join our team, register on the CROP Hunger Walk web site: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/menloparkca/>

The San Francisco and Peninsula CROP Hunger Walk is one of more than 1,000 across the nation, symbolizing the walk many around the world must make for basic resources such as food, water, shelter and protection. With our combined national efforts, we raise about \$10 million annually towards the shared mission of ending hunger. Money raised supports work in emergency response, as well as longer-term solutions like enhancing food security and providing sustainable safe water supplies. In addition, 25 percent of funds raised stay in the San Francisco and Peninsula area to bolster the local hunger-fighting efforts here through EHP, Ecumenical Hunger Program, in East Palo Alto.

8. Vigil of reconciliation

More than 100 people gathered at St. Francis Church in East Palo Alto on Monday July 18. The meeting was chaired by Pastor Paul Bains, an East Palo Alto minister (Senior Pastor of Saint Samuel Church in East Palo Alto) as well as a police chaplain from the cities of East Palo Alto and Palo Alto. Diverse members of various faith communities gathered to listen to feedback about recent police shootings across the nation. Several members of our parish Human Concerns Committee were in attendance.

9. What's On Your Mind?

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