

## Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - May 20, 2015

### Attendance:

Paul Chestnut, Anne Fillin, Terry Atkinson, Ruth Chippendale, George Chippendale, Mary Fong, Chris Lundin, Susan Olsen

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week
2. Approval of April minutes

The minutes were approved.

### OLD BUSINESS

3. Minimum Wage effort

The Palo Alto City Council voted to refer to its Policy and Services Committee a proposal to establish a citywide minimum wage. It will likely mimic similar ordinances that were adopted last year in Mountain View and Sunnyvale. California currently has a minimum wage of \$9 an hour, which is set to increase to \$10 an hour next year. If the full City Council goes along with the recommendation, the minimum wage in Palo Alto would rise to \$11 per hour on January 1, 2016. It would then gradually climb to \$15 by 2018 through increments that would be approved annually by the council. The informational forum scheduled for May 19 at SAG was canceled because it had been overtaken by events.

4. Buena Vista update

Chris summarized the Buena Vista situation. Supervisor Simitian is actively leading the fundraising effort to save BV. The Caritas Corporation, a nonprofit organization that manages 20 mobile-home parks throughout California, has joined the to avert the closure of Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. Caritas has entered into a contract with Santa Clara County that, in its first phase, requires the company to put together a purchase and sale agreement with the Jisser family, which owns the 4.5-acre mobile park. We will be following developments, as will many churches and organization in Palo Alto.

5. Torture Awareness Month

There was a lengthy discussion about what plans we have for Torture Awareness Month. Paul had ordered a DVD from NRCAT called "Breaking Down the Box," a film that describes the ordeals of prisoners who had experienced long terms in solitary confinement. We planned to hold a screening of this film after Masses at each of the three churches. As soon as the film arrives, the members will review it. Susan proposed that we hold a Novena which would end on June 26. A prayer will offered after each daily Mass in the parish. Paul volunteered to write a letter to the clergy of the parish to enlist their support. We also agreed to write a bulletin insert for June 14.

6. Future activities and opportunities; Stephen Ministry; Pastoral Ministry

There was a discussion about opportunities that our group might consider for future initiatives.

### Pastoral Home Ministry

St. Thomas Aquinas Pastoral Home Ministry offers spiritual and social support for the sick and the

home bound parishioners of all ages.

Currently there are 21 members, about 18 are actively working with clients. Mary Fong is the coordinator of this ministry. All the ministers meet the diocese requirements of fingerprinting and completing the two Shield the Vulnerable classes.

The home ministers bring communion to clients in their homes and in six nursing and retirement homes in the Palo Alto area.

During individual home visits the ministers bring the Eucharist, pray and chat with clients. The ministers get to know their clients and develop good bonding and friendship. Sometimes they may do small errands and give respite to the caregivers. Most of the individual clients are long term but there are parishioners who are home bound for short periods of time.

The coordinator arranges rides to mass and priest visits, provide information on meals, transportation, home care and other services. The ministry maintains the pray for lists in the bulletin and sends out grief letters to families of recently deceased parishioners.

### Stephen Ministry

"Stephen Ministry equips lay people to provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care to individuals in our congregation and community who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. The minister is a lay person who has received at least 50 hours of training in providing emotional and spiritual care." Susan expressed the feeling that this ministry should not be a part of HCC's agenda.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### 7. Diocesan Green Initiative and the Pope's Encyclical on Climate Change

We did not have time to discuss this issue.

#### 8. What's On Your Mind?

George: We will again offer transportation to East Palo Alto children to the camps at Hidden Villa this summer, and we will need drivers.

Chris: Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice will take a six-month hiatus.

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

Next meeting - July 15, 2015