

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - May 18, 2015

Attendance:

Anne Fillin, George Chippendale, Ruth Chippendale, Mary Fong, Paul Chestnut, Terry Atkinson

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

2. Approval of April minutes

The minutes were not available.

OLD BUSINESS

3. Death Penalty News

We participated in an effort to place an initiative on the November ballot to replace California's death penalty system. Signatures were gathered on April 3 and 10. Our parish collected over 400 signatures. The campaign submitted over 600,000 signatures; 300,000 were required to qualify for the November ballot. The California Conference of Bishops is now on board. We expect the Conference to provide support for the initiative.

4. SESS Books for Summer Reading

Our group collected books on the weekend of May 1 for the second graders at Elizabeth Seton School to provide reading material for these new readers for their summer vacations. We collected over 20 books and \$498. Books were purchased, and they were assembled into packages for all the second graders and distributed just prior to the summer break.

5. Interfaith Potluck With Muslim Community

The Thomas Merton Center (TMC) arranged for a family potluck luncheon on Saturday, April 23 in the OLR Hall. Bishop Patrick McGrath, Fr. Matt and the Muslim Imam joined members of both our St. Thomas Aquinas Parish as well as members of the local Muslim community. The program started at 1:00 pm with brief statements from these three. About 70 members of our parish and 40 members of the Muslim Community attended. An article about the event appeared in the Valley Catholic, which featured a picture of the Bishop, the Pastor, and the Imam.

NEW BUSINESS

6. Torture Awareness Month

June is Torture Awareness Month. We plan to make note of this event in several ways. For each of three consecutive Sundays, June 11, June 18, and June 25, we will have a table in each church that will contain posters, educational materials, and also two petitions: one to end prolonged solitary confinement, and one to close the Guantanamo prison. We will have a bulletin insert and a pulpit announcement on June 11. We will also place the "Torture is Wrong" banners at each of our churches, as we have been doing since 2008, to show publicly that our Catholic faith tradition does not support torture.

7. A Spirituality Tuesday Plan

George is formulating a plan to have a Spirituality Tuesday event on the subject of homelessness. He contacted Veronica Duluk, who is planning a presentation on "Ending Homelessness in Santa Clara County." Others who are involved are Anne Fillin, and Mike Veuve. The event will be an additional followup to the request from Fr. Matt to review the "Community Plan to End Homelessness."

8. Voter Registration

The Green Committee, with help from the Human Concerns Committee, sponsored voter registration sessions after Masses at all churches in the past several weeks. The events started on April 24 at OLR after both Masses. On the weekend of April 30/May 1 we were at St. Albert the Great, and on May 15 we were at St. Thomas Aquinas.

Because we had never done this before, we requested the League of Women Voters to provide training so that we get it right. They graciously agreed to provide training and to get us started at the sites. The LWV provided two training sessions at OLR Hall on April 24. They provided the necessary forms and made on-line registry available. They were very knowledgeable about the process and were able to answer all questions from the parishioners.

9. Palo Alto Peace Walk

Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice is planning a Peace Walk in September. The walk will take us from the Muslim temple in south Palo Alto to the Jewish Community Center on San Antonio Road, to the Unitarian Church on East Charleston, to the AME Zion Methodist church on Middlefield and concluding at Our Lady of the Rosary. After the walk we will gather at Mitchell Park for the annual 9/11 Peace Picnic hosted by American Muslim Voice.

10. What's On Your Mind?

Ruth: Hotel De Zink will operate for two weeks in August at the Christian Reformed Church.

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

Next meeting - June 15, 2016