

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting
January 18, 2011

Attendance:

George and Ruth Chippendale, Walt Lundin, Paul Chestnut, Mary Fong, Laura Chiu, Nancy Ng, Claire Collins

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week - Walt

2. Approval of November minutes

3. Welcome to Claire Collins, Volunteer Supervisor, Refugee Resettlement Program, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Claire came to our meeting to discuss the Refugee Resettlement program run by Catholic Charities. There are thousands of refugees from all over the world. Sr. Marilyn Lacey is the founder. Catholic Charities is the only agency in the South Bay Area that resettles refugees who have come to the U.S. Currently, the U.S. Government provides a stipend for one month services per refugee. Because federal funding is inadequate, agencies that resettle refugees rely on donations, partnerships, and volunteers. Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County provides help for between 200 and 300 refugees per year. Claire asked us to consider ways that the HCC could help. Examples are:

- Greet refugees at airport
- Sponsor a family
- Offer rental support for a newly arrived family
- House refugees in your home for up to three months
- Sponsor a refugee transition house
- Find job opportunities
- Become an English language tutor
- Take newcomers on outings
- Provide transportation to appointments

We agreed to think about these ideas and take up the topic at our next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

4. Death Penalty Update - Terry

There will be a Mass on Sunday, April 10 at Queen of Apostles Church, 4911 Moorpark, San Jose for victims and survivors of violence. Terry passed around flyers for the event.

There will be a fund raiser for Californians People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty at 7:30 p.m. on March 24. The Bishop of Oakland will preside.

Update on 1000 Congregations: there are 30 now, well short of the goal.

Updates: New Jersey and New Mexico have abolished the death penalty. Illinois is considering. Ten percent of the people of Illinois are against the death penalty. Call the Governor of Illinois to express your opinion: In Springfield: 217-782-0244, In Chicago: 312-814-2121.

A petition to the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors is being passed around that asks the District Attorney to eschew asking for the death penalty. There will be a week of action at the end of February or beginning of March. It will include an event at the Lytton Plaza. California People of Faith have initiated a scholarship of \$1000 that will be given to the student who writes the best essay on the death penalty.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Plans for the year: select some particular issues from USCCB list

The USCCB have a list of social justice issues to work on during the next year. Walt suggested that we select one issue from that list.

6. Plans for Undie Sunday February 12 and 13

Nancy Ng presented the plan for Undie Sunday, but she called it "Have a Heart Sunday." We agreed to change the name

in order to satisfy objections from some members of the St. Thomas community. The objective of the drive is to provide clothes for the poor, but not just any clothes: new underwear, because the usual clothing drives neglect this important aspect of clothing.

7. Plans for Bread for the World Offering of Letters

Postponed till next meeting.

8. Jon Pedigo talk February 8 at St. Albert

The Spirituality Tuesday event will be on the theme of immigration. Walt will write up a message. The Spanish community will be urged to come.

9. Response to county Council of Churches "Urgent Appeal" - Terry

The Executive Director sent an appeal for funds. Can we increase our contribution? Can we move up our contribution in time? Terry will check with Chuck Tully.

10. What's On Your Mind?

Walt: He sent an email message to all members about health care. Regarding budget cuts: Non-profits are not in a position to simply say, "Don't cut my program," They must come up with alternatives, such as the oil and gas depletion tax, a tax on email, a tax for the internet transaction, a tax on stock transaction, re-do Proposition 13.

Walt: By March the HCC must come up with a person to replace Walt on the Parish Stewardship Council, because Walt plans to phase out of HCC.

George: Regarding the BuildOn program that we discussed last month: The plan is to revisit this idea later in the year.

Facilities: Laura will arrange for our future meeting place: she will book one side of the OLR Hall; the Knights of Columbus use the other half.

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

Next meeting - February 15, 2011