

Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Human Concerns Committee Meeting - May 22 , 2013

Attendance:

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

1. Faith-Sharing/Question of the Week

2. Approval of March minutes

The minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

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

The organization Multi-Faith Voices for Peace and Justice is planning an effort to encourage the abolition of torture in America. They are acting in concert with NRCAT (National Religious Campaign Against Torture). They were offered a \$1000 grant by NRCAT to accomplish a prescribed effort. The main activity is to urge our Senator, Dianne Feinstein, to release the report of the Senate Intelligence Committee which investigated the use of torture. By accepting the grant, MFVPJ agrees to work on several initiatives:

- 1) Find two religious leaders to write articles in the newspaper
- 2) Strive to get seven religious leaders to meet Senator Feinstein to urge the release of the paper
- 3) Talk to our pastor to get him to lead us on this issue
- 4) Play the five minute video for five congregations
- 5) Advertise in our bulletin the event at the Unitarian Church on June 7 at which the video will be played.
- 6) Put up the "Torture is Wrong" banners at three churches.

We agreed to be a co-sponsor of the event.

4. Save Buena Vista

There was a PAUSD (Palo Alto Unified School District) meeting recently to address the "Save Buena Vista" movement. Buena Vista is a mobile home park near El Camino and Los Robles. There has been a proposal to convert the park into a large scale development. The Friends of Buena Vista is a group that will fight the proposal. There were 100 attendees. The owners of the site want to build there. It is impractical to move the homes. If the proposal is accepted, it will mean the elimination of many low income housing units, and the uprooting of over 100 people, with poor prospects of finding alternative living arrangements in Palo Alto.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Collecting books for kids in EPA - Terry A

The HCC is hosting an "Early Reader Book Drive" to gather new books to be given to second graders at St. Elizabeth Seton School. The objective is to encourage summer-time reading by these "just learning" readers, and giving them a book or two of their own for the summer. Donation boxes will be in our vestibules Saturday, June 1 through Sunday, June 17. Monetary donations will also be accepted which will allow the HCC to purchase some appropriate books.

6. Immigration March - Mary

There was a march for immigration on May 1 with about 1000 participants. It passed from Rengstorff to the Mountain View city center. Fr. Randy Valenton was there. The Bishop spoke at City Hall.

7. PSC meeting - Mary

Mary spoke about the recent PSC meeting. The main theme: the budget is tight. A report for the January to June period for each ministry is due at the June meeting. Paul will provide it.

8. Letter to Fr. Matt

Paul wrote a letter to Fr. Matt about the status of the HCC. The membership is declining. The members are getting old, and we have not been able to get any new blood, despite several attempts. Our intensity has been declining and we are not doing as much as we used to do. So we believe that the parish should have a Human Concerns Coordinator. He did not respond.

9. What's On Your Mind?

Terry M: There is a campaign by the CPFWADP (California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty) to abolish the death penalty in California by 2016. The group met on April 15 in Fresno to discuss strategy. While Proposition 34 was narrowly defeated, the people of California are evolving on the issue. The group will work to induce the legislature to put the issue on the ballot.

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

Next meeting - July 17.