

Meeting Minutes
St. Sebastian/St. Vincent/St. Bernard Social Justice Ministry
Sunday, March 19, 2017

Members Present: Annie Burris, Larry Furman, Jack Pierson, Jan Pierson, Rita Rochford, Greg Sain, Dave Tschantz, Mary Tschantz, Carolyn Varner, and Joanne Walder, a potential new member from St. Vincent, where our meeting was held in the newly-remodeled 2d floor room in the Rectory.

Prayer: Mary and Dave read the opening prayers “A Blessing for March Seventeenth” and “A Blessing for St. Joseph’s Day” from Andrew M. Greeley’s *Book of Irish American Blessings and Prayers*.

General Session: Larry led the discussion of Chapter 2 of *Amoris Laetitia* called “The Experiences and Challenges of Families”. Larry began the discussion by reminding the group of the petition at Mass referencing “living water” and asking the question: how does an entity make guidelines for the whole world regarding a resource as necessary as water? Societies, like families, are interdependent and the implications of decisions are far-reaching. Paragraph 33 addresses the growing danger “...represented by an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds...” Paragraph 34 discusses the ideal of marriage that is “...marked by a commitment to exclusivity and stability...” challenged by a society that may foster personal achievement over mutual respect and common goals. In paragraph 36, Pope Francis encourages us to be humble and realistic in terms of our relationships, and promotes a much more pastoral approach to the ‘concrete situations’ of ‘real families.’ Paragraph 37 provides the profound statement “We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them.” Paragraph 40 presents a positive view of the commitment of marriage, urging the faithful to find an encouraging way to invite young people to consider the challenge “...with enthusiasm and courage.”

Larry will lead the discussion in April of Chapter 3; Carolyn provided Study Guide questions. Rochfords and Tschantz will be out of town in April, Jack will take Minutes in Mary’s absence. Remember in your prayers DonnaMarie who is currently in Cleveland Clinic, and Mary Yanko who will have back surgery in April.

Minutes: The February Minutes were reviewed and will be placed on file.

Reports:

1. Catholic Commission – Greg reported on a busy meeting last Thursday evening. Liz Raines from the International Institute provided a wealth of useful information on what actually happens when a refugee enters the country. She also reported that many in the Spanish community have moved from St. Bernard to St. Matthew parish for liturgy; and that Akron is an ‘unofficial’ sanctuary city. She pointed out that cities that are growing economically have a large immigrant community. She said that a community approach to home ownership, car-buying, etc., allows immigrants to more quickly realize the goal of self-sufficiency. The International Institute cooperates with Asia Inc. and Global Ties in different ways, including applying for grants for community development. Some websites that

offer good information include: USCRI.org, Catholic Charities, and RefugeeRights.org

Greg also reported that the Commission is facilitating, in a collaboration with the Summit County Health Dept, an area Dialogue Circle on Infant Mortality and Racism which will be held on 6 successive Tuesdays @ 6PM April 18-May 23 at Forest Lodge. Although this will be a small group discussion, they are especially seeking white male participants. Contact Diane Zbasnik at the Catholic Commission (330-535-2787) for more information.

There will be a commission-sponsored event at Crown Point Saturday May 20 on the use of rain barrels.

The commission is starting a book study – on Tuesday, April 11 from 6-8:30PM the book *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America* by Kathryn J. Edin will be discussed.

September 30 the Commission will sponsor a program “Blessed are the Peacemakers” at John Carroll University. Marie Dennis of Pax Christi International will be the keynote speaker. Steve Colecchi will also present.

On March 23, 7-9PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron there will be a Farewell/Thank you gathering for the N.E. Chapter of American Friends Service Committee which will be closing its local office due to lack of funds and support from the national office.

2. The last program in our Lenten series will be this Thursday at Forest Lodge. All agreed the programs have been very informative, but attendance could be better. We talked about better ways to publicize the programs in the parishes, including asking Michelle Huber at St. Sebastian to utilize the email system to send a reminder. St V put the info in the bulletin; but St B’s was edited to exclude our meeting information, perhaps because a discussion group in the parish is also discussing *Amortis Laetitia*. Members expressed disappointment and frustration at this news, since we are trying to build ministry membership in the parishes, and there could be individuals available for Sunday morning discussion who are unable to attend an evening program.

Calendar:

1. Joint Social Justice Ministry Lenten Series: March 23, Forest Lodge @ 7PM – Ron Rett, Executive Director of NAMI
2. “Building Bridges...Conversations on Race” a series presented by/at local churches
 - a. March 22 @ New Hope Baptist Church
 - b. March 29 @ Faith Lutheran
 - c. April 5 @ St. Hilary

For further information, see St. Hilary’s newsletter, or their website.

3. Friday April 7– First Friday Club – 11:30am-1pm @ Tangier – John Litten,
Executive Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society

Next Meeting: **Sunday, April 23, 2017, 9:30AM @ St. Vincent Rectory (following 8:30AM Liturgy)**

Prayer/Treat: Furman

Minutes prepared by Mary Tschantz