

Minutes St. Mary Magdalene Social Justice and Peace Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023 at 7:30 PM via Zoom

Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer and Agenda Review

Present: Laura Fennimore, Holly Mohr, Kathy Haupt, Jim Ruck, Evelyn Christie, Rex Kochanski, Vicki Sheridan, Michael Drohan, Joyce Rothermel, Emily Lippert, Anne Scheuermann

Excused: Lois Campbell, Sylvia Francis, and Rae O'Hair

Accomplishments since last meeting (Nov. 9): Support of our Social Ministry Center, participation in Stop Banking the Bomb pickets, participation in Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Advocates, Sanctuary Project, letter writing to the Holy Father seeking canonization of African American Catholics in Nov. and email to Congress for expansion of the Child Tax Credit Program by committee members, wrap up of 2022 Stone Soup Garden season, anti-war protests, support of LGBTQ potluck, participation in APP talks on Laudato Si and synodality, participation in Dec. 2 anniversary of martyrdom on Church Women in El Salvador, hosting of Fair Trade Fair (thanks to Emily, Buffy, Rae and all volunteers and shoppers).

1. Monthly Collections: Feb. -tuna, March -small hams and April -paper towels. Discussion of lunch bags distribution in Jan. It definitely has increased participation. There was disagreement about whether we should pass out bags which contribute to waste (do they really get recycled in Wilkinsburg?). Fr. Tom did not like the passing out of the bags. He didn't know about it in advance. It was suggested that this agenda item move to Social Ministries and Community Outreach Committee and a small group of people come up with alternative suggestions such as small reminder cards, post-it notes, or an email blast. Vicki said she was willing to work on this with Anne.
2. Letter Writing:  
Jan. 28-29: Topic: Immigration. Writer -Joyce; 4 PM -Laura; 9 AM -possibly Bill and Gertrude; and 11 AM -Rex.  
Joyce and Michael will come up with some possible topics for February and March. Discussed how we want to distribute the letters. We could try having letters at the back of the church and downstairs at St. James and in the Activities Room at St. Bede's. We would need more people to help with distribution.
3. Education Efforts on Catholic Social Teaching in Lent:  
Holly suggested that we have a weekly meeting during Lent with a presentation and discussion about some aspect of Catholic Social Teaching. Holly is willing to draw up a template for the topics and discussion each week. She would be willing to run some of the sessions but would need backup as she doesn't think she would be able to cover it every week. This will be run past Fr. Tom but people expressed that they think it would be in conflict with the Christ's Life program which will also be running in Lent. Joyce, Jim, and Rex are interested in helping. (Joyce checked with Fr. Tom. We can begin on Wednesday nights, April 19 at 7 PM via Zoom and continue for six weeks ending on May 24.
4. LGBTQ Ministry Update: Vicki reported that the December potluck had a good turn-out and an interesting speaker. The speaker talked about her experiences as an immigrant to this city who did not speak English. Fr. James Martin will give a talk that will be livestreamed on January 17<sup>th</sup> through St. Joseph the Worker parish. \*Note: This event had to be cancelled due to Fr. Martin having to cancel. There will be a discernment gathering in early February. If you wish to attend, let Vicki know when you are available. Vicki also reported that the diocese backed off the idea of announcing a new policy on how to deal with students with sexual identity issues in the Catholic schools.
5. Care of Creation Parish Effort Update: There are several parishes in the diocese that now have Care of Creation teams, eg. St. Teresa of Kolkata in the South Hills and Christ the King Parish in O'Hara Township. Should St. Mary Magdalene have a team? Dan Sheid and Jim Ruck are interested. If formed, it would be under the Social Ministries and Community Outreach Committee. Stay tuned.
6. Community Outreach Updates:
  - A. The Sanctuary Project: Evelyn missed the last meeting. She reported that there would be a program and luncheon at the Christian Church of Wilkinsburg, 748 Wallace Ave. on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, at noon on Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>. Next meeting is Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - B. Stop Banking the Bomb Campaign/Anti-War Committee Updates
    - 1) Sat., Jan. 21 at 11 AM at PNC in Penn Hills, Rodi Rd.
    - 2) Anti-War Rally: Sat., Jan. 14 at noon in Squirrel Hill, corners of Forbes and Murray Avenues.

- 3) 2023 PNC Shareholder Resolution – need for donations for contract with Investor Advocates for Justice and Peace. This year’s shareholder proposal will emphasize environmental impact of nuclear weapons. Send checks to Association of Pittsburgh Priests, P.O. Box 2106, Pittsburgh, PA 15230; memo – Stop Banking the Bomb
  - 4) Next Meetings: Sat., Jan. 28 at 10 AM and 10:45 AM respectively via Zoom; for more info or to participate, contact Joyce at 412-780-5118.
  - C. Update on Wilkesburg Affordable Housing Advocates – Emily reported that the partnership between Duquesne Light and Hosanna House has started. One family has been able to purchase a house in Wilkesburg with the assistance of the program for closing costs. Other partners in the community are NeighborWorks and Catapult Greater Pittsburgh. Both groups work with people to get them ready to purchase a home.
  - D. Refugee Updates: We received a letter with an update about the Afghan family we reached out to a year ago. They are doing well. The children are learning English. The father is working two jobs. The mother’s English is still limited. We discussed contacting AJAPO (a local refugee resettlement agency) to see if our we could help in any way. Evelyn, Emily and Jim expressed interest in pursuing this. Rex expressed an interest in working with refugees from Ukraine.
7. Upcoming Activities and Announcements
- 1) Parish book discussion of Fr. Greg Boyle’s book Tattoos on the Heart, on Jan. 31 via Zoom. See bulletin for details. Vicki has copies of the book if you wish to purchase one.
  - 2) Fr. Greg Boyle in person at Carlow University on Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.
  - 3) APP Talk on Wed., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., Archbishop John Wester on Nuclear Disarmament. Register at [www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com](http://www.associationofpittsburghpriests.com)

**Next Meeting: Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 p.m. via Zoom**

Minutes submitted by Emily Lippert

Synodality Input to Pastoral Council

**Social Justice and Peace Committee – May 11, 2021 Input for Pastoral Council**

1971 Synod of Bishops: “(A)ction on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” **Justice in the World** (no.6).

**1. Core Values**

The Committee sees its mission to promote Catholic Social Teaching within the parish and respond to the wider community in light of these teachings. Stemming from Matthew 25 (Christ in the poor, hungry, etc.), the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, Vatican II’s Church in the Modern World, and teachings of every Pope since Leo XIII, CST calls us to respond to the God-given dignity of every human being as an essential dimension of our Faith. The committee promotes merciful outreach to people afflicted with injustice as well as advocacy to address the underlying structural causes of the injustice. Specific issues include hunger, housing, racism, immigration, war and nuclear weapons, and care for creation, paying attention to how we use our resources in all we do as a church. Depending on the needs of the moment, the focus ranges from local to national to worldwide.

The committee’s efforts are often political, but they are not partisan.

While the dimensions of most of these problems are overwhelming, we see ourselves called to act in Faith and for the people whose lives are crushed by the injustice – Pope Francis’ image of the Church as “field hospital.” We hope that all parishioners awaken to the privilege of this work and respond in their prayers, individual actions, and with the Committee as Good Samaritans to brothers and sisters near and far. In this relational understanding of Church, we will know one another and work together to advance our vision.

**2. Gaps between aspirations and where we are today**

Our world and our nation are in crisis. Nuclear weapons and/or environmental devastation can destroy us all. Other problems are a source of misery for so many of God’s children. Too many parishioners are unaware of Catholic Social Teaching and see the world’s problems as not related to their Faith, except for the razor focus on abortion. Yet cooperating with God in the work for life stretches to all social issues and to those on the margins. Catholic Social Teaching is the Church’s lens to see and respond as God sees. Our scriptures echo a constant call to promote justice,

nonviolence, and peace. If this vision is truly at the core of what we do, it should be included in faith-formation activities (for adults as well as children), in homilies and in our parish events. As a parish we need to help each other to wake up. We will break down issues so that parishioners can better understand their implications, identify do-able action steps, and, once involved, become more hopeful.

### **3. Closing the gap to the parish we envision**

We hope that Catholic Social Teaching will be a growing, inviting dimension of our parish. It is Faith in Action. And it is an opportunity to grow beyond our narrow self to active concern to enhance life for all of God's children.

We hope that social concern and the themes of Catholic Social Teaching become a regular part of homilies. Too many parishioners are unaware of CST, of the urgency of their participation, and of the sense of purpose this work provides. Spirituality needs grounding in action and effective action needs the nonviolent, loving impetus that spirituality provides. The Committee will also continue its work, looking creatively for inviting opportunities to engage growing numbers of parishioners, especially young families, including the families with children in the schools, to be an integral part of the parish vision.