

Meeting Minutes
St. Sebastian/St. Vincent Social Justice Ministry
Sunday, October 20, 2019

Members Present: Rob Brooks, Annie Burris, Larry Furman, DonnaMarie Kaminsky, Rita Rochford, Harry Skeen, Linda Skeen, Dave Tschantz, Mary Tschantz, Carolyn Varner, Mary Yanko.

Prayer: Linda offered the prayer “Hearing the Cry of the Poor” from Psalm 34:7, from the World Day of Prayer.

General Session:

Harry led the discussion of *Misericordia et Misera* the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis at the conclusion of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy November 20, 2016. Items discussed included:

1. God forgives without condition and asks us to look forward and (try) not to sin again. There was consensus about the difficulty of complete forgiveness of those who have offended us personally. There is often a lingering anger or distrust. Perfect forgiveness looks only forward and is done with the past.
2. It was noted and many agreed that the oft-referenced lone woman adulterer used as an example of a sinner is typical of the ‘male’ writing style and annoying.
3. The ability to fully accept God’s forgiveness can also be challenging. When forgiven divinely we need to look forward without guilt. Some suggested that part of the difficulty lay in our being told that we are sinners and we commit sins all of the time and should confess regularly.
4. In section 3 there are statements regarding technology and resulting isolation, sadness, and depression particularly among the young. Some felt this attribution to the ‘young’ was a little harsh but it did highlight problems in fully understanding the perspective of others across generations.
5. Section 4 again speaks to the idea that God forgives unconditionally. When forgiveness is asked and received, the transgression is in the past, there is only future.
6. The document notes that priests strive to assure and comfort the laity regarding God’s total forgiveness; to allay fears about past sins and to, again, look forward. Harry noted that, in his experience, there have been a couple priests that were especially gifted at this and their liturgies seemed always enheartening and gave an inner peace that he felt as he left the church.
7. It was noted and many agreed that one approach to forgiveness is ‘to forgive and then avoid contact’. With many things, people, and places, avoidance is a valid strategy to avoiding sin. DonnaMarie indicated that we can forgive someone but still not agree with them.
8. Section 8 notes that forgiveness is important to achieving real joy. When we do not fully forgive, we retain resentment and anger which prevents personal experience of joy.
9. Section 13 relates to mercy, noting that consolation is an important form of mercy. Discussion touched on the idea that simple solidarity with someone who is grieving can be a great help. It is important that someone know they are not alone and that you are there for them even when you are not able to express something in words. A friendly touch can be more helpful than some of the platitudes.
10. Section 14 talks of “the richness and burdens of our personal history; this is what makes us different from everyone else.” This difference is comprehended by God and God is accepting of us all. In that light, it is important for us to be welcoming of all people. All people have unique gifts and perspectives which must be acknowledged and accepted. Agreement is not required but acceptance of those around us is important.
11. Section 18 addresses the issue of our need to feel solidarity with all people suffering around the world. This is in conflict with the individualism that is emphasized in our

culture today. We must personalize the sufferings of others in order to appreciate the desperation many feel. It was noted that shortages of water in the future will trigger unstoppable migrations that must be understood and addressed.

12. Section 19 speaks of the need for the Church to identify opportunities for new works of mercy. Harry suggested and others agreed that the Church has focused on social acts of mercy. But it is equally important that we focus on social justice and take actions that address social injustices. This focus will provide longer term relief and solutions to problems.

Minutes: The Minutes for September were approved and will be placed on file, and made available for distribution.

Catholic Commission Update: No report in Greg's absence. Mary T reminded the group about making reservations for the Cosgrove dinner; request to sit at the St. Sebastian tables. The Bishop Cosgrove Dinner and Silent Auction will be earlier this year – Friday, November 15, 2019 at Tangier, starting at 6PM with Cash Bar/7PM Dinner. Tickets available at Eventbrite.com, keyword: Bishop Cosgrove Dinner. For more information, contact Jeff Campbell, CC Director, 330-535-2787

St. Vincent Report:

Rita reported that St V Parish Council is currently working on a strategic plan; info will be shared as the plan is developed and implemented.

St. Sebastian Report:

- ! Voter Registration resulted in 0 registrations or address changes; Carolyn was able to educate one parishioner (who objected to holding voter registration in the church) on the Bishops' initiative on Faithful Citizenship.
- ! Two people 'signed up' for SJ Ministry at the parish Ministry weekend; one of them only wants to be notified when the focus is environmental issues...
- ! Mary T raised concerns about the Sanctam Catholicam conference held Saturday in Zwisler Hall and encouraged members to google the group...
- ! Carolyn asked Fr V if there were any more copies of Bishop Barron's booklets "Letter to a Suffering Church"; he indicated there weren't – so she may go ahead and order more for our group to discuss. DonnaMarie or Linda will ask Fr. Steve if they can be available at St. Hilary the night of the Trauma program.

New Business:

Program **Recovering from Clergy Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse** will be held Wednesday, November 20 from 7-9PM at St. Hilary, featuring presenter Dr. Ted Raddell. DonnaMarie was instrumental in bringing this program to Fr. Steve, Linda is assisting with publicity and other arrangements.

Announcements:

1. Rita asked us to pray for two young men who have matters before the court, and are connected to/affected by gang violence.
2. First Friday Club Nov 1, 2019 @ Tangier with speaker Judge Joy Malek Oldfield. Doors open 11AM.

Next meeting: **Sunday, November 17 at St. Sebastian Byrider Hall following 9:00AM Mass.**

Discussion of Chapters 1 & 2 of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation Letter to Young People, referenced at Bishop Perez' First Friday talk:

w2vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

Discussion Leader: Carolyn

Prayer and Treat: Greg

Minutes prepared by Mary Tschantz