Meeting Minutes
St. Sebastian/St. Vincent Social Justice Ministry
Sunday, March 21, 2021


Prayer: Carolyn offered the opening reflection “Prayer of St. Francis”

General Session: Carolyn led discussion of the Pope’s new encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* “On fraternity and social friendship” the Introduction and Chapter One: Dark Clouds Over a Closed World

Discussion included:

- The document opens speaking of Saint Francis of Assisi speaking to his brothers and sisters. The document has been translated in a more inclusive language than documents in the past. This reflects a Franciscan ideal of equality.
- The story of Francis’ visit to the Sultan Malik-el-Kamil was outlined. It highlights the importance of approaching people with a willingness to listen to them. In listening we do not impose our beliefs; and a dialogue can be started.
- When a genuine dialogue begins, a deeper relationship is possible that is based on mutual respect. Respecting others allows us to live in a fruitful community.
- The document then continues to outline the idea of “Dark Clouds Over a Closed World” where Pope Francis lists examples of:
  - Recent reversal of many of the positive movements based on hope of a better more equitable environment including the reversals in the EU and failed attempts to integrate the Latin American nations.
  - The trend of growing myopic sense of nationalism and the loss of social conscience.
  - “Opening up the World” while a potentially broad concept has been co-opted by economic forces which are most often the underlying forces driving decisions in the international arena. Greater equitable access for peoples of the world is sometimes an accidental consequence rather than a fundamental goal in international transactions.
- It appears that there is a push to have our younger generations discount or ignore history and the wisdom that historical awareness can bring. This can result in short-sighted decision making which is often self-centered and destined to fail because it will often repeat the mistakes of the past.
- Globalization and loss of historical perspective also impacts the knowledge and sense of cultural identity.
- The misuse of language confuses the conversation and frustrates the participants. This can lead to discouragement and despair for dialogue. With mass communications, the conversation has been captured by the media and our information is being managed by the wealthy and powerful.
- The care for our environment and resources is being managed by economic forces. As resources diminish, global conflicts will rise. The conflicts will of course be under the “guise of noble claims.”
- The decline in the birthrate is leading to an increase in the age of the population. Elderly are being ghettoed to communities and homes. This isolates the knowledgebase of those generations depriving younger family members of opportunities to learn.
- The Pope notes that world wealth has grown but notes the accompanying growth of inequality which is generating “new forms of poverty.” Poverty of opportunity is very real and growing.
- The idea of universal human rights is suffering against the growth of economic power. The pandemic has exposed working conditions where the workers have no effective voice (or value) in the methods of production and workplace safety.
All agreed there is much to discuss in this document, and we would do so deliberately. Therefore, we will continue Chapter One, paragraph 29: *Globalization and Progress Without a Shared Roadmap* in April.

Mary Yanko will lead the discussion.

**Minutes:** The Minutes for February were approved with the correct spelling of **Bellarmine** Chapel and will be placed on file, and made available for distribution to the parishes’ websites.

**Catholic Commission Update:** In Greg’s absence, Mary T provided the following information from Jeff Campbell’s recent email regarding Commission’s Agenda:

- **Guest Speaker at Commission meeting:** Peter Maurin Center coordinating Akron Emergency Winter Shelter with Dave Chorbuck or Jim Orenga ([www.akronemergencyshelter.org/index.html](http://www.akronemergencyshelter.org/index.html))
  - Winter shelter numbers/experience; water main break/ruined bedding; effects of COVID?
  - Idea of co-sponsoring together an Annual Homeless Memorial Vigil

- **Civil dialogue and Common Ground initiative; Commission resolution approval**
  - Commission resolution to DSAO: Review, discussion and final consideration

- **Finalize online program ideas for first half of 2021**
  - Plans in the works: DSAO Lenten Racial Solidarity Virtual Journey Series
  - Review of our December discussion
    - Community input/hiring process for Akron Police Chief (local town mtgs. to attend?)
    - Racism justice: local “white allies”/anti-racism work, and former white supremacists
    - Immigration/refugee policy and advocacy online speaker/panel
    - Intro/discussion on “Fratelli tutti” (w/ Missionary Discipleship Office?)
    - COVID series: Akron/Summit Eviction Task Force
      - Regional Foodbank (local hunger in COVID, latest COVID relief)
    - Book discussion groups: “Fratelli Tutti”; “Open Wide Our Hearts”; JustFaith modules

- **Legislative advocacy update**
  - Ohio death penalty: via Ohioans To Stop Executions; thank you letters for Sen. Roegner (combined with letters of concern for the following…)

- **Upcoming events**

  **Emotional/Spiritual Support** (12p): [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcOCprjkuEtQWdO8NMDIyxf9rRkMndDlX](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcOCprjkuEtQWdO8NMDIyxf9rRkMndDlX)

  **Capacitar Training** (1.45p). Register: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtd-6rqT4oE9Gl1RK2ve7y3gXdYjllo4](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtd-6rqT4oE9Gl1RK2ve7y3gXdYjllo4)
St. Vincent:

- Lenten Series on *Fratelli Tutti* will be completed this coming Wednesday at 7pm in-person in the church, or via Zoom livestream link. Rita along with Jeff Campbell presented last Wednesday; Rita spoke about civic engagement.
- A business plan for the parish is nearing completion. Bernie will represent the Social Justice ministry in terms of how our ministry fits in with the mission of the church, and its business plan.

St. Sebastian:

- Carolyn will contact the parish office about reserving meeting space in Byrider for our SJ meetings August-November.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: First Friday Club Board has suspended programming for the first 6 months of 2021; a recent email suggested programs will resume in July.

Next meeting: **Sunday, April 18, 2021 @ St. Vincent, following 8:30AM Mass.** Since most members seem to be fully vaccinated (or will be by April meeting), Rita will request the rectory dining room; if the weather is delightful, bring a lawn chair to meet in rectory side yard. Rita will bring her computer to connect anyone preferring Zoom meeting to in-person.

**Treat/Prayer/Discussion Leader:** Mary Yanko

Minutes prepared by Mary Tschantz