

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Meeting Notes, April 5, 2022 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom)**

Present: Chris Rehmann, Chuck Glatz, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Felicity Douglas, Mary Ellen Wishart, Paula Friedrich, Rebecca Crawford, Logan Davis, Fr. John Herzog

Action Items Highlighted

Opening Prayer: Chris

Minutes of March 1: Approved

Business

Recommendations from STA Visioning Group – Discussion and Actions:

Social Justice Speakers - Rebecca Crawford from the Service and Justice Team and Campus Minister, Logan Davis joined the meeting to discuss how the Social Justice Committee and Campus Ministry might coordinate developing a speaker list for St. Thomas. This could range from a Supple Lecture that would be an on-campus event to smaller events at STA such a Wisdom and Wine discussion. The goal for this Spring is to develop a list of potential topics and speakers that could be scheduled in upcoming academic years. Rebecca will contact Service and Justice Team members to find who may be interested in helping develop a list of potential topics. She will coordinate with Chuck when she gets responses from team members.

A second discussion topic related to the Justice Journals that are written by Service and Justice Team members. The journals include writings from students on individual Social Justice Principles based on studying the Catholic Church's teaching on the topics. Logan suggested that the journals could be consolidated, then links to them could be placed on the Social Justice Committee web page.

Laudato Si' Study Group – The group has met five times, and have one more meeting planned. There have been six or seven people at each meeting, and the discussion has been very good. The encyclical raises awareness of how far reaching the effects of climate change can be.

Catholic Social Teaching Information – Marianne reported that she will be meeting with Michael Steimel and Bobby LeBlanc tomorrow (April 6) to discuss options for placing social justice information in the bulletin.

Social Justice Grant Review:

Social Justice Grant applications were due April 1st, and 16 applications were received. The review team will be Marianne, Francis, Paula, Felicity, Chris, and a student representative. Between \$25,000 and \$26,000 is available for the grants. Francis offered to prepare a spreadsheet for the reviewers, listing all the applicants and the amount requested. There were a couple small problems noted with the on-line application form, so those issues will need to be

reviewed before the next application cycle. There was a short discussion on the potential for direct gifts from parishioners to help supplement the Social Justice Grant funds. More discussion is needed to determine how this might work.

Stewardship of the Environment Topics:

Follow-up Discussion with Finance Council – No report. Topic is tabled until the next meeting.

Joint Care for Creation Team – Chuck provided the statement shown below for committee review. This is a modification of the information sent to the St. Cecilia Pastoral Council. Before moving forward, the team felt it is important to get approval of the social justice committee and pastoral councils of both churches. After approval by this committee, Francis will forward the statement to the STA Pastoral Council chair, who will share the information with the Council.

Fr. Kyle felt a presentation at the council meeting is not needed, but Francis will follow up to see if any further information is needed. The statement was approved by this committee.

Recently, a few representatives from the St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Cecilia Social Justice Committees have been meeting on a regular basis to explore forming a “Joint Parish Committee for Care of God’s Creation”. The intention of forming this new group is to develop an ongoing committee focusing on education, direct action, and advocacy. After the new committee is formally approved by the Pastoral Council at each Parish, we will also join with the Catholic Climate Covenant, an organization which is supported by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It can help provide us additional support and direction. Both Fr. Don Czaplak and Fr. Kyle Digmann are supportive of the development of such a committee.

On April 5, the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Social Justice Committee, approved going ahead with the formation of a joint effort between the two parishes. The expectation from the SJ members is that regular reports would be provided to the Social Justice Committee of actions taken by the new program bringing together the talents of both parishes. So now, the next action step at STA is to explain the Care of Creation Care Team initiative to the Pastoral Council, and request formal approval for recognition of the new effort. (In anticipation of SJ approval, Francis Todey has requested time on the next PC Agenda).

Solar Project – Chuck noted that the two for one matching opportunity for students to raise funds for purchasing solar panels will continue until the end of the semester. Cinzia Cervato will have the opportunity to speak to the STA students about this fund-raising opportunity. Mary Ellen suggested updating the social justice bulletin board in the STA Lower Lounge to reflect the progress on the solar project to this point, since Sunday Coffee and Donuts will start up at the end of April.

AMOS Core Team:

Courtney Dufford from AMOS, Mary Ellen, and Chris will be meeting with two individuals who have shown interest in being part of the STA Core Team for AMOS. The meetings will take place later this month.

Next Meeting:

May 3, 2022, 6 p.m. by Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Francis Today.

Approved 5/3/2022