

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

**Present:** Chris Rehmann, Francis Todey, Marianne Todey, Paula Friedrich, Ann Gansemer-Topf  
Due to problems with the Zoom connection, Chris joined the meeting late and Felicity Douglas was not able to join the meeting. **Action Items Highlighted**

**Opening Prayer:** Provided by Chris.

**Minutes of June 7:** Approved

**Business**

**Update on Environmental Stewardship Activities:**

Francis provided a brief update on the Joint Care for Creation Committee with St. Cecilia Parish. As reported at the last meeting, the official kickoff for the two parishes will be the weekend of September 17 & 18. The homily at all masses that weekend will focus on care for the environment and church teaching on environmental stewardship. The committee is working to identify resources that could be shared with parishioners after all masses to provide further information on goals for the group and to help develop support for the team. Along with planning for this kickoff event, work is underway to recruit additional members from both parishes. Having a large enough committee is important, because it will allow multiple projects to be planned at each church. These projects could range from facility improvements to reduce energy usage in the church building, to providing aids to each family on how to make more environmentally sustainable decisions in their homes.

Chris shared information on capital improvements being planned by the St. Thomas Building and Grounds Committee. Specifically, these improvements provide the opportunity to improve efficiency of the current building. The Social Justice Committee's question is whether additional funding may be needed to purchase the most efficient replacement equipment available. Bobby LeBlanc provided the information on the proposed improvements. The replacement boiler being considered is 95 – 98 % efficient, so it is unlikely more efficient equipment could be purchased. The windows that are considered for replacement leak air and make it difficult for the HVAC system to keep offices comfortable. Planning for this work is ongoing. If additional support is needed from the Social Justice Committee, we will be contacted.

**Discuss USCCB Document on Racism as a Parish Learning Opportunity:**

Francis provided comments on the US Bishops pastoral letter against racism, “open wide our hearts” and how it might be used in the parish. While the pastoral letter provided good background on racism in society, the companion study guide appears to provide some very good resource documents. These documents would be useful to promote discussion on both individual and structural racism, as well as how we may not see racism in society. Possible methods to present this topic may be at a Sunday Morning Seminar, a Wisdom and Wine event, a lecture, or

a small group study. The committee felt this would be a good topic to pursue so we should continue developing a presentation plan. It may also be wise to include St. Cecilia Church in any events that are planned. Francis will do further review and consider how to best present this topic. We will discuss it further at the next meeting.

### **Ministry Leaders Meeting:**

Chris reported on the meeting Fr. Kyle had with St. Thomas ministry leaders in late June. STA has around 40 committees, and there were approximately 13 individuals in attendance at the meeting. Fr. Kyle discussed how to encourage parishioners to become more personally connected with parish activities and he is looking for help from ministry leaders. Recruiting is most effectively done by personal invitation. Chris noted this is similar to the AMOS model where house meetings are held so concerns can be discussed and people can explain why they are involved in specific activities. From there, personal invitations are made to get involved in the various activities. There was general agreement that recruiting individuals is necessary, but there is also uncertainty on exactly how to narrow down the specific interests and talents of each individual. Knowing the specific interests of each individual would be helpful for targeted recruiting efforts. The committee brainstormed ideas on how to encourage more discussion among participants at liturgies to get to know each other better and find out how fellow parishioners are involved at STA. There will be more discussion on this topic.

### **AMOS Activity at STA:**

There is no specific AMOS report. However, after the meeting with Fr. Kyle that was discussed at the last meeting, a plan is being developed to hold house meetings with STA parishioners. There will be more discussion at a future meeting.

### **Next Meeting:**

August 2, 2022, 6 p.m. by Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Francis Today.

Minutes Approved August 2, 2022