

**Saint Thomas Aquinas Social Justice Committee
Minutes, April 6, 2021 (via ZOOM)**

Present: Chris Rehman, (Chair,) Tom Budnik (Staff,) Fr. John Herzog, Kathy Trahanovsky, Francis Today, Mary Ellen Wishart, Felicity Doulgas, Dave Dirks, Chuck Glatz, Paula Friederich

Guests: Diane Lyon (STA Honduras Committee,) David Hansen (Ames Sanctuary Interfaith Partners)

Prayer: Chris

God of love and compassion, may we always recognize your spirit:

**In the refugee family, seeking safety from violence;
In the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables;
In the asylum-seekers, seeking justice for their families;
In the unaccompanied child, travelling in a dangerous world.**

**Give us hearts that break open whenever our brothers and sisters turn to us.
Give us hearts that no longer turn deaf to their voices in times of need.;**

**Give us eyes to recognize a moment for grace instead of a threat.
Give us voices that fail to remain silent but which decide instead to advocate prophetically.
Give us hands that reach out in welcome but also work for a world of justice until all
homelands are safe and secure. Amen.**

- Fr. Dan Hartnett S.J.

Minutes of March: Approved with additional note from Chuck on potential Seasons of Creation celebration which may be held jointly with STA and STC: Someone will need to volunteer to coordinate and discuss this with John Wilson at STC.

COVID-19 Fund: Chuck and Kathy report that fund recently had its largest donation period. Approximately \$274,000 has been donated since the program began.

ASIP: Mary Ellen and David Hansen report that there is a Honduran woman, known to Sisters of St. Francis order in Honduras, who is seeking asylum to come to Ames and needs a congregation to support her sponsorship. She is approximately 34 years old and is asking to come to Ames with her 7-year-old son. She is fleeing a desperate and dangerous situation. While living with her parents and family in Honduras, she was the victim of a rapist who was subsequently convicted and sent to prison for this attack. He has since promised to murder her and her entire family.

Her father urged her to leave with her son, and to try to make the journey to the US. She is currently on the Guatemalan/Mexican border seeking and extended Visa to stay in Mexico until she can apply for asylum in the US. She has the support of both her Honduras Diocese and that of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. While a congregation cannot be a primary sponsor, it can be a supporting sponsor. STA is being asked to consider whether our community can and will organize to assist this woman with her living needs if she arrives. She has visited the US twice before and she wants to come into a Catholic community. David also noted that she is experienced in and would like to do agricultural work.

SJC immediately agreed to propose the matter to the Pastoral Council.

Honduras Committee:

Diane reports that approximately \$6000 per year is donated to this fund from STA.

This fund has supported education programs for approximately 100-125 kids for the past 7 years.

It has also helped with various building and repair projects throughout the diocese. In addition, \$4900 was sent for Hurricane Relief last year.

Diane will send information and updates to Chuck so that he may update the website.

LYN: Dave discussed the need to coordinate intake questions to train a new secretary who will replace Don Alexander, who is retiring.

Social Justice Grants: Subcommittee is Chris, Francis, Felicity, Paula. Chris will ask Shari to recommend students from the student SJ group to participate as well. Tom reports that he currently has 12 applications which seek \$30K total. Available funds at the present time are \$20K. The applications will be reviewed in May and the notices will go out at the beginning of June.

Next Meeting: May 4, 2021 @ 6pm

Respectfully submitted by Paula Friederich