

Minutes of the Social Justice and Ministry Committee
Oct 8, 2018
7 p.m.

Members present: Carol J. and Angeline D., co-chairs; Eileen H., Mary and Mike Q., and Michael, Peggy and Michaela R. Absent: Sharon S., Susie M.

- A. Opening prayer: Everyone present shared in reading lines from the prayer.
- B. Minutes. Minutes from September 10 were approved with the following changes:
 1. Peggy noted that "G. New business" should instead be "F. New business."
 2. Carol and Angeline should be identified as co-chairs.
- C. Adjustments to the agenda: Old business was discussed before announcements and reports.
- D. Old business: Continuing education of the committee through discussion of Chapter 1, *Lazarus at the Table*. Issues identified or discussed:
 1. Bernard Evans dedicated this book to Nancy, who is his wife. She now has cancer. Angie suggested that committee members pray for her.
 2. Page 1 (Angie): In the mid-1990's, bishops mandated that all Catholic education (including faith formation, parish catechesis, and seminary instruction) should draw attention to Catholic social teaching. To what degree do you judge that is now happening?
 - a. In parish catechesis? Eileen noted that it happens in the sermons.
 - b. In faith formation in our parish?
 - 1) The new faith formation person has more work to do than originally planned.
 - 2) Students in our faith formation program do not come through the program with a clear understanding of social justice teachings, Michaela noted.
 - c. In seminaries?
 - 1) Carol's son has a friend at St. Paul seminary, and she thinks he learned about it.
 - 2) Mike has the perception that conflict about it exists between the Catholic establishment/hierarchy and seminarians. It would be fascinating to look at the courses seminarians take.
 - 3) Angie wondered whether social justice coursework is now required of all seminarians. Despite more than thirty years' time since the bishops issued their mandate, some seminarians have not engaged in such coursework even in recent years.
 - 4) Mary offered to check with family members who would have some knowledge of such requirements.
 - 5) Michaela wondered whether there were differences between what the Benedictines do as compared to Jesuits.
 3. Page 5 (Carol): Clement of Alexandria "encouraged Christians to share what they did not need and not try to distinguish too carefully between the deserving and undeserving." How can we

live up to this ideal of not distinguishing too carefully? How does that relate to our American idea of fair play?

- a. Angie: Some people believe that, if you are poor, it's because you are undeserving.
 - b. Mike observed that such a belief is sometimes accepted as common knowledge or common sense.
 - c. Carol said that when she first started working with students, some would ask for exceptions or privileges. She subsequently developed a practice of awarding a limited number of "tokens" to each student, a system that did not require her to make judgement calls.
 - d. Mike roughly equated it with a sin of omission. People can easily fail to distinguish between wants and needs (with which Angie agreed). Sometimes they fail to live simply and minimally versus living more extravagantly, although some people do choose the former lifestyle.
4. Carol noted that the time allotted for the discussion had ended.

E. Announcements and reports

1. Eileen gave the Treasurer's report: No money has been spent since the last meeting.
2. Peggy continues to send out notices of social justice programs and events, including
 - a. "Informed Voting: A Poverty Progress Report" at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Faith Community Oct. 18, 7-8 p.m. Peggy will include Mike & Mary when she forwards future program announcements.
 - b. "Biased Property Rights and Violence" on Thursday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m., Art Center Auditorium (Art 102), SJU.
 - c. Annual Peace Studies Conference at SJU on Monday, Oct. 29, 2-9 p.m. Quad 264.
Talks planned:
 - 1) Foundations for Muslim-Christian Dialogue and Peacemaking: Ideas about God, Faith, and Sacred Texts
 - 2) The Dangers of Religious Nationalism: Lessons for the U.S. from Bosnia
 - 3) Education for Preventing Religious Extremism and Nurturing Peaceful Relations
 - 4) Cultivating Inclusive and Peaceful Communities: Multi-faith Sources of Inspiration
3. Angeline reported on early plans for an SJM program on Creation Care. One of its aims is to identify activities that could be shared within families.
 - a. The parish mission statement: "*We are a progressive Catholic Benedictine Community encountering Christ through the celebration of Word and Sacrament, one another, nature, and our thirst to create a just world.* Creation care is intended to focus primarily on nature and our appropriate human role within it.
 - b. Increasingly 21st century theologians are calling our attention to using creation as our primary means of understanding God and our relationships with God. In the past our primary source for such understanding has been Scripture. But Scriptural writing was mediated by both the century and the culture of its authors, making it a partially indirect source for knowledge about God. Creation, however, is a direct expression from God. If creation itself images God, then the interrelatedness of all creation should image finitely for us a greater understanding of the infinite relationship that exists among persons in the

Trinity. Additionally, scientists are proclaiming that the interrelationships and interdependence that characterize the earth's systems and creatures—even those of the cosmos—must be respected and nurtured, not dominated or exploited. Our plan for a program in Creation Care will be a limited parish attempt to bring the earth to fuller fruition. The alternative, scientists now warn us, is that we are on our way to extinction, and we are causing it.

- c. Our intent is to hold off in launching Creation Care until after Fr. Greg is back. Meanwhile, planning for that program has been tabled.

F. New business

- 1. Plans for future work: A discussion ensued concerning how the Social Justice & Ministry committee fits into the parish's mission statement.

G. Adjournment was at 8:32 pm.