

Notes from Our Lady of Fatima Social Ministry Committee Meeting
which took place on February 3, 2010 in the Gathering Space at St. Catherine's

Those who were present were: Father Tom Jennings, Sue Linebeck, Sharon Deutsch, Sue Buffington, Bernadine Merrill, Tillie Clark, Virginia Gerken, Connie Wieneke and Mary Lou Mulligan.

Mary Lou Mulligan opened our meeting with a Prayer for Our Nation's Leaders.

The Rock County Emergency Food Shelf board had the annual meeting during January but we did not have the minutes yet. February is the regular month of giving to the shelf for St. Catherine's. We will send a note of appreciation to Dorothy Dorn for her 13 years of service as head of this ministry.

There will be a Valentine Concert at 700 PM on February 14 featuring Emily Lodine in the church. That will be followed by Valentine desserts served in the Gathering Space. A free will offering will be asked. There are sign up sheets for bringing desserts and for serving them.

Mary Lou and Father Tom reported on the caucuses that took place just the night before. They were not well attended. We also discussed JRLC Day on the Hill. We talked about several subjects including healthcare, immigration, Haiti and continuing benefits for unemployed workers. Bernadine Merrill pointed out an excellent article about Haiti by Susan Belongia from Catholic Charities in our most recent COURIER. Father had handouts regarding Catholic organizations seeking to protect the poor in our state this legislative session and an editorial about the history of how Haiti had ended up in such extreme poverty even before the earthquake. Mary Lou suggested several websites where we can get information to form our consciences and also how to influence our legislators and leaders of our country. The USCCB website always has a lot of information on what is happening legislatively. The NETWORK sight for A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby has talking points on all of the important issues along with information on how to contact leaders by phone. They usually include a link to send an email (already composed) to the legislators, the President and a head of department with very little effort. Mary Lou will forward this information to all the participants who have given her their email addresses.

We were all saddened to learn that Tammy Moeller will no longer be the parish nurse. The Methodist Church, which was the only church supporting that ministry, can no longer afford it. We will continue to think and pray about ways to start a similar ministry. As our population ages it will be a very necessary service. Father suggested learning more about this service by having a speaker.

Habitat for Humanity will not be able to start the house on Marie Wiegel's lot this spring. Donations are down so we will not have Habitat Sunday and Board for the Lord until closer to the start time for that house. This is another opportunity for thoughtful prayer about ways to increase funds for the Luverne home.

Sharon Deutsch reported that all is quiet on the Elizabeth Ministry front.

Sue Buffington told us that the Baby Bottle collection in January brought in \$126.40 which she has already given to the Helping Hands Pregnancy Center in Worthington. She also took several boxes of baby things over which had been donated by the LCCW members in December. She set up a Relay for Life Bake Sale to be held on March 19 at the Fish Fry. All are welcome to contribute baked goods. She is also taking orders for bunches of daffodils again this year with the deadline for orders on February 19. This is a fund raiser for the American Cancer Society.

The Good Neighbor fund was discussed and we learned that it is nearly always empty. We tried to think of ways to build it up. Father said that Mary McLaughlin is excellent at interviewing people who approach the church because of an urgent need. She has the expertise to help them search out answers. Sometimes, however, it would be nice to have small amount of cash available. Connie Wieneke mentioned that transients can seek help from law enforcement. A collection or an extra envelope for donations were both discussed.

Next week Father will distribute a flower to each parishioner or visitor who helps care for the sick or handicapped or any other care giving occupation. Thursday is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and she is a patron of caregivers so this time of year is a good time to remember them during our liturgy.

Father Tom suggested that we begin to sell Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate on designated Sundays only. We chose the first and third weekend of each month. Anyone who is interested in helping with this ministry can call Mary Lou at 449-2653. We will need persons to take the money in the Gathering Space on the chosen Sundays and Saturday nights. It only takes a few minutes following Mass. We have volunteers for the month of February but need help for Saturdays in March and April. We will not do this on Easter, the first Sunday in April.

The next meeting will be March 3, 2010 at 600 PM and we will meet in the Gathering Space again.

We would like to have more people come to our meetings. Please accept our invitation to come in March or anytime in the future.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Lou Mulligan, Coordinator.