

Notes from the Our Lady of Fatima Social Ministry Committee Meeting  
which took place on March 2, 2011 in the Gathering Space at St. Catherine's.

Those in attendance were: Father Tom Jennings, Lisa Kramer from Catholic Charities, Virginia Gerken, Bill Deutsch, Connie Wieneke, Bernadine Merrill, Becky Ranchau, Sue Linebeck, Tillie Clark and Mary Lou Mulligan.

The meeting was opened with a "Litany of Intercession for Those Who Suffer" led by Mary Lou.

Once again we discussed the Communities of Salt and Light booklet from the USCCB pp. 1-10. One of the main things that the bishops said was "We believe the Church's social mission is an essential measure of every parish community." So we discussed how to get more people interested in social justice issues. Each member is asked to invite one other person to the next meeting in April. We know that many people work on these sorts of things in privacy but it is important that we also work as a parish. Another point made in the booklet is that prayer and worship should anchor social ministry. We feel that Father does a great job of tying these ideas into sermons and the Faith Formation program stresses social action. Next month we will prepare pages 10 through 16 and work on the questions at the back

Lisa Kramer reported on the Bread of Life ministry in Worthington. Our students are will be serving on April 17. She said that some companies have come forward to assist as have many churches. Groups who work there supply \$35 plus workers who prepare the food. The ministry supplies kitchen supervisors and the food. The meals are simple and are called a community meal and are not publicized as for the "poor." They have served as few as 35 and as many as 80.

Lisa also told us that the mission trip to Guatemala will probably happen from January 10-18, 2012. The retreat led by Immaculee will be in Worthington on July 15 at 6 PM through 16 afternoon. She also announced an Immigration Retreat in Worthington on Saturday, April 2 at 11 AM and ending with 5:30 PM Mass. They would serve a noon meal. People interested in learning immigration stories or anyone who wants to know what kind of problems immigrants encounter are invited to attend.

Father Tom introduced the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon campaign. It is an exciting initiative taking place in our community. Churches and other local organizations are forming a collaborative effort to support service members and military families. Minnesota troops will be deployed again this year, probably in May, so this will become even more important. Father had handouts for everyone for that and for several other items. His next subject was the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. We joined that group as a parish cluster. As a result we receive emails monthly and some times more often than that regarding conservation and legislation. He wanted everyone to know about the magazine from the NCCW called The Catholic Woman. There were some good articles on social justice and he handed copies out to all who did not get the magazine. He distributed another article from that magazine on the changes in the Mass starting in Advent. Father handed out a list of political leaders for whom to pray. By the next meeting I will make another one that will be for Ellsworth because they are in Nobles county and my list was specific to Luverne, Rock county.

Lisa and Mary Lou attended the Day on the Hill in February and thought it was a good day. Governor Dayton spoke early in the day and made clear that taxes, especially taxes on those most able to pay, would need to be increased. They met with State Senator Doug Magnus and State Representative Joe Schomacker. The legislators did not spend a lot of time but we did get to ask them to try and not balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable people in the state. Since then we have both written and thanked them for their time and Joe returned a letter to us. We hope to stay in contact with them in the future as budget items appear in the news. We urged everyone to watch all of the proceedings in the legislature and Congress. They need our input.

We discussed Hunger Free Minnesota and decided that we should join the Hunger Free Rock County group. I will send in the form. No one stepped up to be the person that would attend the meetings. So we will talk about that again. We should have someone at those meetings because we are a part of the Backpack Program. As a part of that same group, Sharon Oksness has volunteered to lead a group of Saint Catherine people to fill backpacks each Thursdays in April in the building that was the former Brandenburg Gallery at 7 PM.

We passed the Fair Trade sales volunteer forms once again. We now have roasted almonds as well as drinking chocolate in our little display and the usual candies, coffees and teas.

Sue Buffington is still receiving gifts for the Helping Hands Pregnancy Center. She took orders for daffodils and she will receive the flowers on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup>. Judy Walgrave and Mandy Skattum have taken over the Relay for Life ministry. I will invite them to our next meeting.

Mary Lou reported that we did a good job of collecting food for the Rock County Emergency Food Shelf in the month of February. They can always use donations of money or staples. Right now they are very low on paper products and laundry detergents. March is MN Food Share Month. The local food shelf receives more food and money from that group, dependent on the amount of food and money received in the month of March. That means that we will continue to collect for them this month also.

Connie is chairing the Easter Baskets to Shut ins program again this year. She has located some baskets which she will order tomorrow. Father is going to obtain some holy cards. The LCCW will pay for the supplies.

Mary Lou explained that Habitat for Humanity is building in Luverne on Marie Wiegel's lot this year. Groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> but our first priority is to find a partner family. She handed out the flyer that tells the qualifications for applying to own a Habitat house. She asked that if anyone knows of a family that might be interested in becoming such a partner. They can offer them the flyer and tell them to apply. We, on the board of directors, would love to receive applications.

Our next meeting will be on April 6 at 6:30 PM. If we change the date or place I will email or call all the people who usually attend.

In concluding, Father Tom reminded everyone about our Mardi Gras event with Doug Brummel on Fat Tuesday and about Lent: 1) Our theme will be Jesus' words on the cross, "I thirst." 2) Our Lenten focus will include, "Catholics Come Home" --- an outreach to invite people back to the Church.

He also encouraged composting as a way of recycling kitchen waste. (Please, no meats, fats, or dairy products.)

Father Tom closed the meeting with a reading from Sirach that was the first reading at today's Mass. Home-made treats were prepared and served by Mary Lou. Coffee was supplied by LCCW.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Lou Mulligan, Coordinator