

**MINUTES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING
2018 03 13**

PRESENT:

L. McKenzie, S. Scollard, C. Scollard, M. Colihan, C. Gauthier, Sr. Maria, Deacon Gaston, C. Murphy

The meeting began with a prayer for social justice prepared by Sr. Maria

Larry distributed for perusal two books "Living Justice - A Gospel Response to Poverty" and "Living Ecological Justice" both published by the Citizens for Public Justice.

BLANKET EXERCISE OUTCOMES:

There has been a request for an article on the Blanket Exercise for the Parish Fall Newsletter.

Members of the committee who have participated in the Blanket Exercise. expressed their thoughts on how it had affected them. There were many different responses because of the various emotions that the exercise had aroused in the participants. This was followed by a discussion of how indigenous communities throughout the world have faced many of the same issues as have been faced by our own communities here in Canada.

There was a lengthy discussion as to future action to take as a result of our experience with the Blanket Exercise. Larry suggested that we need to consult with the indigenous community in our area as to what steps could be taken addressing issues they experience here in London. It was suggested contacting the N'Amerind Friendship Centre might be helpful. With this in mind, Charles will contact the centre hoping to speak to an outreach person to try to arrange a meeting to learn more about the concerns of the indigenous community here in London. Deacon Gaston will seek Parish Council support for this outreach initiative at the next meeting of the Council.

Carole will write thank-you notes to the CWL, K of C, and Father Murray expressing our appreciation for the financial and other support they provided in sponsoring the Blanket Exercise.

Cathie will contact the 33 participants in the Blanket Exercise with suggestions for further action such as a book study.

DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE:

James forwarded his thanks to all readers for Solidarity Sunday, as well as a copy of the script. After Larry expressed some concerns it was decided that after Charles had a chance to read the script Charles would contact James and discuss possible revisions.

REFUGEE COMMITTEE:

Sr. Maria reported that despite the fact numbers in attendance at the recent Euchre Tournament were less than last year, the event still raised approximately \$2000 for the refugee committee. The refugee fund now stands at about \$56000, in anticipation of the Karen family, being sponsored by the parish. The required documentation has been completed but an interview date by immigration has not been set. Sister Maria also brought us up to date on the progress of the family of 6 being sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. After many problems faced throughout the process the family now has an interview date set for March 15th. Sister asked for our prayers for the family.

Sister Maria informed the committee that at present the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has imposed a moratorium on refugee sponsorship by church groups. The reason behind this is that there is a considerable backlog in the number of refugees seeking to immigrate and until this is cleared up no new applications are being considered.

ST. MICHAEL'S BREAKFAST PROGRAM:

Because of the high number of plastic bags being generated by the Breakfast Program, Mary Ann would like to develop a relationship with Loblaws which would entail Loblaws taking the bags for recycling. The bags are necessary because many of the students do not arrive at school by bus in time to eat in the lunch room and consequently must have the food bagged to take and eat elsewhere. Mary Ann would also like to offer prepackaged meals as opposed to students taking what they want. When students have the choice they generally take the less healthy options first and this problem would be alleviated by having the meals prepackaged.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mary Ann suggested having the parish host an all-candidates meeting before the upcoming city election. She was recently talking to Paul Paolatto, one of the mayoral candidates, and he has indicated his willingness to participate. Deacon Gaston will bring our suggestion to the next meeting of the Parish Council and, if approved, we will invite the mayoral candidates for a September all-candidates meeting. Committee members are reminded that at our April meeting we will come up with dates for Social Justice activities for 2018-19, as much as possible, for submission to Doug Manners by April 23rd.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on April 10th. Suzanne will chair the meeting and Cathie will prepare the prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm