

## **MINUTES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING 2016 12 13**

Present: M. Colihan, S. Gasparotto, L. McKenzie, S. Scollard, C. Scollard, T. Ford

Guest: James McDermott

Stephanie introduced our guest James McDermott who has kindly agreed to take over the leadership role in the Development and Peace activities at St. Michael's.

The formal meeting began with "A Christmas Prayer for Loved Ones", prepared by C. Murphy, adapted from Joyce Rupp's "Fresh Bread".

### **DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE:**

Doug Manners will be attending the January meeting of the Social Justice committee to bring the members up-to-date on the various government regulations re charitable status for parish organizations such as Development and Peace.

### **REFUGEE COMMITTEE:**

Larry mentioned that government sponsorship of refugees will end in the first or second quarter of 2017, depending on when the refugees first arrived in Canada. This may result in some hardship for those refugees, depending on what progress they have made over the last year. At our January meeting we are looking forward to having Sr. Maria bring us up-to-date on how the refugees the parish has sponsored are doing.

### **PHYSICIAN ASSISTED DEATH PRESENTATION:**

The presentation that Lauren Mai had arranged at the parish on November 24th was well attended with approximately 60-70 attendees. Marleen Van Laetham, Clinical Ethicist at SJHC, and Cheryl Talbot, Nurse Practitioner at LHSC made a very informative presentation addressing palliative care itself, as well as the Catholic teaching re end-of-life care.

James McDermott led a discussion of palliative care among the members of the committee, emphasizing that such care is for those who are **living** with a terminal illness. The degree of care, and the emphasis, changes, as the patient nears death. However, all were in agreement that hospitals are not equipped to provide palliative care. It is only due to a lack of other facilities, such as hospices that provide effective palliative care, that hospitals have taken on this role. There simply are not enough palliative care beds available outside hospitals.

## **THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE:**

Larry McKenzie mentioned an article he had read recently that suggested providing money to the food bank, rather than food, is a more effective way of using resources. The food bank can multiply the value of the monetary donation much more easily than if the donation is in the form of cans of food. This is something to consider before our next Thanksgiving food drive.

## **JANUARY PRESENTATIONS:**

Larry McKenzie is finalizing speakers for a presentation to be made to the parish on Thursday January 26th. The presentation will focus on income disparity.

Also, at the January meeting of the Social Justice committee, Carole Murphy has arranged for Joan Fernandez, a member of our parish, to speak about her experience as an immigrant who arrived in Canada before parish sponsorship was available. It is expected Joan will speak about 20 minutes.

## **FEBRUARY MEETING:**

Dorothy Solomon has agreed to speak to the committee about her recent trip to the Holy Land, and what it has meant to her. We expect Dorothy will speak for about 20 minutes.

## **THAW (THE HEAT AND WARMTH PROGRAM):**

Because the Social Justice Committee did not participate in the THAW program, sponsored by the Salvation Army, last year, Larry McKenzie will investigate the possibility of resuming our previous support. The THAW program is now called the "Housing Stability Bank".

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Teresa Ford will be making some presentations to groups within the parish on the benefits of a plant-based diet. She has already spoken to the Moms' group, and will be speaking to the Seniors on the Move group and possibly the CWL in the New Year.

## **NEXT MEETING:**

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday January 10th. Suzanne will chair the meeting and Charles will prepare the prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.