

Human Concerns Committee

Mission Statement:

On behalf of the parish community we respond to Jesus' command to love neighbor and self by working for the common good of all. The committee works to inspire the parish community to discern and act in ways that make the works of peace, justice, and mercy integral to their daily lives. To become salt of the earth and light of the world, we work to alleviate the distresses of hunger, homelessness, disease, lack of housing and health care, and other human needs. We are sustained in this mission by seeing the face of God in others and pray for God's oversight and guidance as we proceed.

Members: Chair - (vacant), Secretary - Paul Chestnut, PSC Rep - Walt Lundin, Treasurer - Terry McCaffrey, Volunteer Co-ordinator - Laura Chiu. Others - Terry Atkinson, Mary Washburn, Susan Adams, Sasha Madison, Nancy Ng, Ruth & George Chippendale, Patricia Markee, Alma Lalonde, Mary Fong, Chris Lundin, Kamal Mansour, Laurie Vavuris, Roberta Uebbing and Yi Wang.



The HCC continued its work of parish social justice education, encouragement of volunteers, and advocacy in a variety of social justice topics:

1. JustFaith Alumni

This is the educational arm of social justice and consists of the graduates of previous JustFaith programs. We put on programs that educate the parish about social justice, mostly those designed by the central JustFaith organization in Louisville, Kentucky. Last September a JustFaith module on Climate Change (8 meetings) was offered with 14 people signed up for the 8-week program. This October we will be putting on an 8-10 week module on non-violence. We are also planning to show videos and possibly lead book discussion groups. Many JustFaith graduates are now actively involved in parish work, if not the leaders of major parish efforts.

2. Death Penalty Abolition

Members attended various Prayer Vigils to protest the death penalty.

Terry is circulating a petition by California People of Faith asking Santa Clara County District Attorney to not seek the death penalty. He is also working to have the Bishop meet directly with the DA.

We hosted the showing of "The Empty Chair" in April, which documented the varied feelings of family members of murder victims, and the contrast between retributive and restorative justice.

3. St. Vincent de Paul – Palo Alto Chapter

Throughout the year, we offer food and other aid for needy people in Palo Alto. In the last fiscal year, we responded to 573 requests, giving out 126 bags of food, paid out \$16,000 in rent assistance, \$5,000 in motel vouchers, \$4750 for utilities bills and \$4400 in food vouchers.



4. St. Vincent de Paul – East Palo Alto Chapter

George & Ruth Chippendale organized scholarships for children from low-income families to attend summer camps at Hidden Villa. Various parishioners provided pickup and drop-off transportation. A subcommittee was formed to improve the computer program for organizing food deliveries. Data entry is now more user-friendly and volunteers can log in online to upload food requests using the Google document interface. With the help of the youth group, they conducted a food drive in Nov and a toy drive in Dec. ** ***** *Both chapters of the St. Vincent de Paul Society are seeking additional volunteers. The need for various forms of assistance has greatly increased during the current recession.*

5. Hotel de Zink

Hotel de Zink was held the first two weeks of April at the Church of Christ on Middlefield Road, and also at the Christian Reformed Church on Arastradero in August.

6. Undie Sunday

Undie Sunday was held on February 16 and 17. We delivered 570 packages to the Opportunity Center, plus \$1,281.

7. Day Worker Center of Mountain View

A building on Escuela Avenue has been purchased, and plans are being developed to make it their permanent home. A permit allowing them to renovate and eventually move into the building was unanimously approved by the City Council of Mountain View.



8. Fair Trade Gift Sale for Easter

Coffee, tea, chocolate and other gift items were sold out over two weekends in March. The objective is to increase awareness among our parishioners of the fair trade movement, whose purpose is to guarantee fair wages to disadvantaged artisans, farmers, and workers. It also provides the technical and financial assistance that poor people so desperately need but so rarely get in the conventional trading system.

9. Bread for the World - Offering of Letters

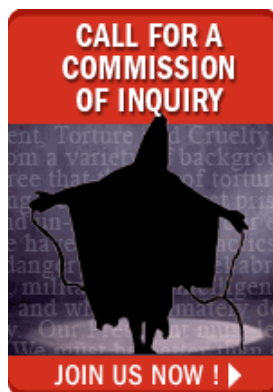
The Offering of Letters was held May 16 and 17. The theme was to call on our representatives in Congress to rework foreign assistance to make it more effective in reducing poverty. We collected a total of 1386 signed letters from our parishioners, or 462 to each of our three representatives: Representative Anna Eshoo, Senator Barbara Boxer, and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

10. Catholic Lobby Day

We participated in the annual trip in April to Sacramento, where an estimated 650 Catholics from around the state asked legislators and their staff to support newborn life by extending the safe surrender time limit, reform youth sentencing, simplify food stamp certification and protect the poor in the complex California budget.

11. Comprehensive Immigration Reform

We continue to monitor and update members and parishioners on national progress. Members are in touch with Congress and with various coalitions.



12. National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Banners displaying: "Torture is wrong" were placed on our churches during January and June. Co-sponsored the anti-torture panel discussion and conference organized by the Santa Clara County Council of Churches.

13. Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA)

Activities this year, especially in our Hispanic community, focused on preserving the safety net for the needy, health care reform insuring low-income affordability, and comprehensive immigration reform.

14. Environmental Concerns

In an outgrowth of the Diocesan effort, we began to plan a continuing Parish campaign to reduce the human impact on the environment.

