Notes from Justice Peace & Reconciliation Commission Meeting

March 4, 2019

Provincialate Offices

Present: Fr. Bob Bossie, Fr. John Czyzynski, Fr. Wayne Jenkins, Mark Peters, Fr. Ed Zemlik and Fr. Guy Blair (via phone).

1. John led us in prayer about not “merely praying” for an end to war, starvation, prejudice and other ills but using the gifts God has given us to work for it ourselves. After check-ins, Mark gave a report covering the progress of the immigration program at St. Martin of Tours, the last meeting and upcoming activities of the North American Migration Committee, and his work with Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investing. He has also been invited to serve on the Benedict Center for Criminal Justice Board. He noted that the season for social justice-oriented conferences is upon us and that we have money in our budget to help with costs of SCJs who might want to attend.
2. Time was spent discussing what is happening in Venezuela and our concern with the impact of US sanctions on people there who are already impoverished and hungry, as well as the administration’s attempts to influence the political process there in light of our past record in Latin America. We will attempt to get in touch with the Province of Spain and SCJs in Venezuela to hear their perspective.
3. We have four excellent nominations for the Klingler Award this year, and will make our recommendation to the Provincial Council in April. The Council has approved the idea of accepting nominations from lay people who are PoSH employees or closely associated with the Province, such as parishioners at SCJ-administered parishes. Mark will put out one last call for nominations before the March 29 deadline. He will also check with Fr. Vien and Fr. Ed about presenting the award at the June Assembly [this was approved].
4. Mark shared the Voces de la Frontera-led campaign for “Drivers Licenses for All” that the local DACA coalition has agreed to support. Members agreed we could reach out to SCJs here in Franklin to show the video that’s been created, get signatures on a petition, and see if there is interest in lobbying our state officials.
5. We reviewed our budget for this year and foresee no big changes next year. We will work up our 2019/20 budget on our next bi-monthly phone call and approve it before the April 12 deadline.
6. We continued in the afternoon with a clarification of Commission members’ terms (Wayne’s comes up this year, Ed, John and Juancho’s in 2020, and Bob and Guy’s in 2021), a report from John and Mark about our Immersion program proposal that was sent to the SCJ Formators, and continued discussion of the article we read last time on the healthy and unhealthy uses of anger. We see the significance of the article in light of what’s going on in our society and many of our own communities, familes, etc. Mark will share the article and Richard Rohr’s journal that focused on the topic with David Schimmel.
7. We concluded with discussion about people’s beliefs and attitudes about “politics” and faith. The terms must be defined: promotion of parties or particular candidates is not appropriate, but connecting our faith and social teaching to real-life political issues is not optional. Many people associate social justice activists with “leftism” or socialism; Fr. Dehon experienced the same accusations but “he persisted.”
8. We will set our next regular meeting soon, Mark will send out some dates. Wayne will lead prayer next time. We concluded with spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving and petition.