

ST. NOEL PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2009

PRESENT: Dave Barni, Georgeanne Botek, Patty DeJohn, Ric Doringo, Randy Eveland, Kathleen Heer, SLW, Alice Hinkel, Joan Mihalcik, Margaret Neville, Eleanor Reilly, Tom Repko, Fr. George Smiga, Bob Tomkalski, Mel Troha

ABSENT: Diane Cszaszar, Sharon Waltermire

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM

- I. Opening Prayer: reflection and sharing on John 18: 33b-37 (Christ the King)
- II. Fr. George reviewed with Council that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the resolution from the Diocesan Social Action Office on the topic of the Ohio Death Penalty.

Council members came to the meeting prepared to discuss the following documents:

- Ohio Death Penalty – Recent Developments
- Document beginning with the words: “Whereas Catholic Social...” proposal
- Document from the group Ohioans to Stop Executions Moratorium Campaign
- Document entitled “Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty”

All members present spoke to the issue, their reactions to the materials provided, and whether they felt they could support the resolution from the Diocesan Social Action Office. There was general consensus in favor of signing the resolution to have the State of Ohio move toward a legislative study of the death penalty and its alternative of life in prison without parole, with a moratorium in place until such study is completed.

Discussion then turned to “on what basis does the parish staff and the Parish Pastoral Council speak for the parish?”

Reflections included the following:

- Our parish Mission Statement says that we are a Catholic community living by gospel values
- This is a hard issue and we are taking a stand for a consistent ethic of life
- It is currently the law, but it is not fairly applied
- Victims include both the one on whom the crime was committed as well as the person involved in a flawed legal system
- Victims want justice, making sure that justice is delivered in a fair and equitable manner
- Catholic Social Teachings state that the value of life supersedes the taking of a life
- We are looking for a more effective justice, more in terms of mercy
- It is imperative for us to take a risk and educate parishioners on this issue

We need to educate the people of St. Noel Parish on these three points of the moratorium:

- Ensure that death penalty cases be administered fairly and impartially, in accordance with basic due process,
- Minimize the risk that innocent persons may be executed, and
- Prevent the execution of persons with developmental disabilities and persons who were under the age of 18 at the time of their offenses.

Proposed education steps :

- Fr. George will write a bulletin article/letter to inform parish about the issue
- Use upcoming GIFT session which deals with turning the other cheek
- Topic of justice be addressed in homilies during Advent Season (coming of the Son of Justice, etc.)
- Members of PPC and Social Justice Committee be available to listen to parishioners who may need to process the information shared
- Include Catholic Social Teachings in all aspects of the process
- Have the handout "What Every Catholic Should Know About the Death Penalty" available in the narthex for further information and education
- Be pastorally sensitive to parishioners who struggle with this concept due to life experiences with violence and crime, respecting freedom of conscience

To date:

St. Noel Social Justice Committee has endorsed the death penalty moratorium as a whole. Two members endorsed it with reservation, wanting to eliminate the death penalty, but support this first step in the right direction.

St. Noel Parish Pastoral Council endorses the signing of the moratorium, citing that our stance is to approve a moratorium until we can get a just and fair elimination of the death penalty.

Tomorrow, the Parish Staff will discuss the proposal. Once this group endorses it, the proposal will be signed in the name of St. Noel Parish and mailed to the proper persons.

Meeting closed at 9:00pm with prayer.

Next PPC meeting: **Monday, January 18, 2010**
Prayer: Tom Repko
Minutes: Randy Eveland
Refreshments: Rick Doringo

Minutes submitted by Kathleen Heer, SLW

