

Minutes: EPF Chapter Meeting, April meeting at St. John's

Present: Mike Roman, John Jackson, Blythe Baldwin, Joey Cardamon, Linda Gaither, Melissa Paddler

The meeting was opened with a prayer by John from our new prayer cards. We spent a few minutes welcoming Melissa to the table and hearing a bit about her advocacy work in Boston over the years. Welcome, Melissa!

The "Social Justice Minute" sharing:

Melissa: the despicable attitude to immigrants on display in our government and populace; the violence against women in refugee camps

Mike: an ESPN article on the mentally abusive atmosphere in professional sports, esp. against women > systems of emotional abuse set up the physical abuse; #metoo must protest more than individual instances, expand to systemically oppressive structures, address the complexity:

Joey: the opioid crisis is triggering the prison/police response: same old 'war on drugs' > react with force, use imprisonment

Blythe: 1) episode of two black men at Starbucks waiting for a meeting without buying food; restrooms denied, cops called >> the systemic problem of suspicion by whites of blacks and the quick resort to calling the cops [Starbucks has apologized and changed their policies!]

2) in a positive statement, the Pope has put abortion opposition and migrant care on the same footing

Linda: Trump announced the U.S. will ramp up sales of weapons on the world market
<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/trump-launches-effort-to-boost-us-weapons-sales-abroad/ar-AAw4bYI>

The Poor People's Campaign – report by Melissa, with a hand-out

Plans for 40 days of action beginning on 5/14 with rally in Albany (Melissa is attending); a 3 year effort at education and organizing, with action in towns around So. Tier aimed at developing systems thinking and action

Lots of ways to be involved in the Campaign locally or at state level: see hand-out

Responses:

a) Mike is informing St. John's Vestry; Mary Ann Grady wants to bring PP speakers to St. Johns;

b) Frank is interested in responding to ideas from Tim Shenk: "I've been in conversation with Frank and Blythe about Poor People's Campaign work connected to the faith communities, and I would be very interested in having EPF play a role in convening people of faith around the campaign. I'll talk to Frank more about that but just wanted you to be in the loop, too!"

Report on MLK Service at St. John's, with dedication of King Icon

Over 160 in attendance

Next step: a Francis Perkins icon for St. Francis Chapel (May 13 was "her day"); the dedication might include George Boyer from ILR who is a Perkins scholar

John added the possibility of partnering with a Black church to pray/worship together

2018 Offering of Letters

Several new participating parishes are being lined up: St. Paul's Methodist, possibly the Quakers; getting more of the Catholic parishes on board, along w/Lansing Methodist, is a goal letter writing can continue throughout May, with June as the month for presenting all letters

IC Color: Mike described a situation at Ithaca College involving the Protestant Chaplaincy's unwelcoming attitude to LGBT students. Two students are worshipping at St. John's while they form a protest group to bring the situation to the notice of college administration. [Mike sent us an email following the meeting with more details.] At a protest on campus, Mother Megan spoke in support of the students and of the necessity for a welcoming chaplaincy. The Episcopal Students at Cornell wrote a letter in support of IC Color. The college administration responded with a statement supporting diverse & welcoming institutions on campus (if I understood the press report correctly). The Chaplaincy receives @ \$50,000 in college funding.

Palestine/Israel: Linda reported on Eran Efrati's visit to Ithaca and his topic: "What are American Police Learning in Israel?" She directed people interested in JVP's "Deadly Exchange" program to the website: www.deadlyexchange.org

Clare Grady in Prison: Plow Shares Action in Georgia

Blythe brought acceptable postcards for prison writing and shared the address to reach Clare and her fellow inmates, who are held without bail, together in one cell.

On the evening April 4, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., seven Catholic peace activists entered Kings Bay naval base for a nuclear disarmament action aimed at the Trident submarines which are based there. Most come from Catholic Worker backgrounds. They are:

Mark Colville, Amistad CW, New Haven, CT

Clare Grady, Peter DeMott House, Ithaca, NY

Martha Hennessy, from Vermont and Maryhouse CW, NYC

Steve Kelly, S.J. from Oakland CA

Elizabeth McAllister from Jonah House, Baltimore MD

Patrick O'Neill, Fr. Charlie Mullholland CW, Garner NC

Carmen Trotta, St. Joseph House, NYC

Martha, who is Dorothy Day's granddaughter, wrote the prayer for our EPF-sponsored celebration of the Feast Day of Dorothy Day at St. John's in 2016. John has emailed the prayer to us since last meeting.

Prayer Cards and Prayer Beads: discussion of prayer beads will continue; Linda offers to pay ½ of an order of

100 of our prayer cards to take to General Convention. Can someone who is familiar with the ordering process and lives downtown put in the order? She'll need them by July 3.

The meeting was adjourned at the conclusion of business.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda

