

ST. THOMAS à BECKET CHURCH
Care for Our Common Home Ministry
March 17, 2022 Minutes
9:45am – Room 5

OPENING PRAYER: from the Lorica of St. Patrick read by Patti Kaiser

PRESENT: Lori Brady-Neuman, Helen Dickey, Carol Even, Harriet Hanlon, Patti Kaiser, Mary Ricotta, Beebe Stroik

SYNOD '21-'23: The Pope has called a Synod on Synodality that is intended to draw peoples everywhere together to listen to one another, but especially to the Holy Spirit. Every parish will conduct listening sessions. In person listening sessions will take place in our parish through April. Get involved!

Questions arose about how our parish will respond to this request from the Bishops and the Pope.

Will there be separate sessions for different groups, for ministries, for long-time parishioners, for newcomers? We don't know what format Fr. Bill will choose, so we will have to wait and see.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS: Every weekend there has been a short message from our committee. This month, on the theme of food, we are thinking of Ukraine and the deprivation and sacrifices people there are making. Our Sunday, March 20th message joined with the call from our parish to donate, with a pitch for Catholic Relief Services.

PRAYER IDEAS: On three fronts today, the importance of prayer confronts us: the crisis with Russia in Ukraine, the call to increase our prayer during Lent, and, relevant to our group, the need to connect our prayer to our work for Laudato Si. Patti has asked if the group might support a Parish effort to gather a prayer group who would learn and practice Lectio Divina and/or contemplative prayer. Carol suggested that Patti, Lori and Beebe work together on presenting this to the Parish.

Here is a source of useful resources for contemplative prayer: <https://contemplativeoutreachnova.com/>. On that webpage, you can click 'find a group...' for a directory that includes the two Saint John Neumann zoom groups, Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina on Thursday mornings, and Centering Prayer on Thursday evenings, run by Marie Kordes. The links online do not give you their email addresses but will connect you to the facilitators. If you have further questions, please contact Patti.

RECYCLING: Remember that MOM's has compost recycling around the back of the store, as well as indoors.

TEA BAGS: Helen explained that she placed numerous tea bags, minus the staple, string and tag, onto the soil around her lemon tree. Then she lightly covered that layer with a little dirt on top and watered it well. Her tree has begun blooming and fruiting more than ever before.

EGGSHELL WATER: Harriet uses water that has had eggshells soaking in it overnight to water houseplants for improved growth.

MAKING ROSARIES: Helen brought rosaries she made from cotton/nylon thread and from strips of old t-shirts. One member stated that she would like to learn how to make them from t-shirts. Fyi, Helen used to lead the Patriotic Rosary after 9am Sunday Mass, where each Hail Mary was said for one of the fifty states and patriotic songs were sung afterwards.

HOME COMPOSTING: - a member asked How much space do you need for in-home recycling and compost production? Where and how do you keep it while preventing odor? An outdoor compost bin needs doors or a lid to keep out pests. If it has the right mix of contents, it does not produce odors.

QUESTION FOR MEMBERS: if we invite a speaker from a recycling company, what questions would you have for her? Some thoughts – what happens to the waste that is not sold, but is recyclable? - how does the recyclables market fluctuate? - does her business make as much just picking up trash? - how much recycling does her company do? – what are the local regulations and requirements, and how does she put them into practice? PLEASE bring in or send in questions and thoughts to share next meeting.

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES PLANNING: Plans to schedule an outdoor fair, tentatively named the Laudato Si Fair, have run into conflicts with Easter and Divine Mercy Sundays. We are hoping to do this after Arbor Day, on Sunday, May 1st after 11am Mass. Betsy said we could have tables along the outside of the office windows, just not

blocking doors. Fr. Bill loved the plan to give away free saplings. All the plants are native to Virginia including Holly Winterberry, Black Chokeberry, Hickory Shagbark, Arrowwood, and a healthy-looking mystery bundle.

Carol will be meeting with Liz to talk over the possible ways to deal with surplus books donated to the church library.

Father Bill does not want us selling anything at the event.

We will be doing a roadside cleanup on Wiehle Avenue for Adopt-A Highway in April with date and time to be announced.

FACS REPORT AND DISCUSSION: Harriet brought in an email from Scott Peterson about the EPA leader encouraging electric school buses in Fairfax County. \$2.7 million have been given to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) to increase the present number of electric buses from eight to eighteen. They expect delivery in June of this year. FACS members were asked to advocate for more of these, as the total number of gas-powered buses presently used by the County is well over 1500. It took three years to get the eighteen buses. There needs to be greater progress in that direction, but it may take increased advocacy.

We need lithium batteries for cleaner energy as in electric vehicles, but most come from China, presenting a problem.

Virginia is not a green state, based on its use of fossil fuels. Wind farms only provide about 2% of our state's energy, while we import 37% of our energy from West Virginia and it is made from coal. This is a great impediment to our progress.

Additionally, we see that the Post Office has problems with the EPA request to consider going over to an all-electric fleet, and instead has chosen to purchase gas powered vehicles.

Carol gets a monthly statement from Arcadia that shows renewable energy credits much (RECs) coming from Texas and Florida wind and solar farms.

There are ongoing research studies on the impact that poor environmental stewardship has on the poorest of us. The results of these studies need to be shared and used in our efforts to educate and advocate for change.

Locally, there are efforts to provide better windows in low-income housing to keep residents' energy costs down. Where would that money come from?

We might think about asking Scott Peterson to speak to us on these issues.

In Reston, we have Supervisor Walter Alcorn 'on the train'. He is an ally on the environmental front and deserves our support.

REVISIT SOLAR PANELS? The consultation about our church roof was done long ago, and it was determined that the slope of the roof was too steep for solar panels. We need to find out when and who did that report, along with the details because there may be a new type of panel that would fit safely on our roof. A new residential installation was noted on a very pitched roof, so we are thinking there may be better techniques for installing, or a different type of panel that might be suited for our church roof. Perhaps a new consultation would find that there is no hindrance. Does the Hebrew Congregation have ideas about solar panels? We would do well to talk to them.

RECOMMENDED: Helen recommends "The Bible in a Year" podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz.

BOOK DISCUSSION: postponed until next meeting.

CLOSING POEM: William Butler Yeats – The Lake Isle of Innisfree

NEXT MEETING: The third Thursday of April, the 21st at 9:45am.