

Voice of the Faithful New Jersey
Coordinating Team Minutes
January 6, 2024

In Attendance: Mary Aktay, Bernice Anglin, Tish Dickinson, Mary Gannon, Bob Hoatson, Carol Jenkins, Bob Pipchick, Peg Pipchick, Carole Rogers, Leo Rogers, Charlie Saco, Juanita Saco

Gathering Prayer

Charlie read a passage from A Mystical Heart by Edwina Gately.

Liturgy

Charlie has scheduled liturgies through June 2 with Mike Corso, Mark Destephano and John Judie. Included in the schedule are four community celebrations.

Program

Dennis Crowley's Advent reflections on Thomas Merton were well received. Dennis's sharing of his meeting with Merton through a valued college professor, Sr. Therese Lentfoehr, SDS, was both thoughtful and mystical. It was clear that these relationships impacted the course of Dennis's life.

Future Programs:

Peg announced that she, Mary Gannon and Leo have planned several programs relating to the theme of migration. All presentations will be via Zoom.

1. On January 28, "The Journey to Citizenship" will be a three-person panel discussion moderated by Erin Sweeney, an immigration lawyer. See the newsletter for more information.
2. On March 10, John Stowe, OFM. Conv., Bishop of Lexington, Kentucky since 2015, and the President of Pax Christi, will speak to us. Details to follow.
3. On April 14, Fr. Daniel Groody, author of A Theology of Migration, will speak. He is an assistant professor of theology and director of the Center for Latino Spirituality and Culture at the University of Notre Dame. Details to follow.
4. On September 22, Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, will describe her current work on the U.S.-Mexican border. Details to follow.

Lenten Reflection:

Our Lenten reflection will be given by Fr. Ken Lasch on Sunday, February 25 via Zoom. See the newsletter for details.

Abuse

Bob Hoatson reported that the cases of thousands who came forward through the Child Victims Act have been stalled by bankruptcies. Several religious orders want victims to sign a confidentiality clause, which violates the Dallas Charters's ruling. Religious orders are not dealing with victims compassionately. Bob stated there are additional victims of Fr. John Geoghan and Fr. James Porter. At the same time, people who were victimized in 2000 are now beginning to report their abuse. Media coverage is important as it brings forth new victims. It is important to remember that victims come forward only when they are ready.

Finances

Bob Pipchick stated that VOTFNJ now has a donate button in the newsletter and on the website. We have received generous donations through PayPal. It is hoped that the donate button will be a good source of income in the future. It is important especially this year as we have lined up several excellent speakers to whom we will give honorariums. Our bank balance for November was \$1,930.89.

Juanita reported that we are planning for the 2024 membership drive. Although we are considering a slight increase in the membership amount, we will also include an adjusted donation statement in our appeal.

Communications

Mary Aktay will send out the January newsletter on Tuesday, January 9 with a resend on Thursday, January 11. Mary asked us to send to her the names of people in need of prayers as well as details of future programs.

Second Visioning Session on January 13

In order to define who we are and to consider next steps, Carole asked us to reread the notes from the first visioning session and review the mission statement on the VOTFNJ website.

Next Business Meeting: Saturday, March 2.

Submitted by: Juanita Saco