

HOLY TRINITY SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

The parish Social Concerns was formed on January 15, 1992 by John Phillips and Amy Dunbar, Mark Alford, Steve and Sandy Graham, Terry and Mickie Hookstra, and Jim and Jan Ermis. This committee was formed "To support the Social Justice theme of our parish, which was developed during the Renew cycles of recent years (1990-1991), the Social Concerns Committee (SCC) was chartered to foster social justice in the parish and community. The SCC facilitates the development of programs and opportunities for the parish and individual members to reach out and touch others with their talents and to share the blessings which God has given."

The mission statement was revised in 2006 to read: **“The Social Concerns Committee supports the social issues and goals of the Catholic Church by coordinating the strengths and talents of our parish community to make a difference“.**

Several projects which started in the SCC are now permanent activities of the parish. For example, the Bereavement Committee was started by Ronnie Herrick - now deceased. She brought her enthusiasm, determination and other volunteers into this ministry which continues today. Also Adopt-a-family, support for our sister parish, St. Timothy's, and others.

Currently the committee monitors the following:

Volunteer Ministries

Serving Others Now (S.O.N.): Volunteers feed the homeless every Saturday morning at Miss Winnie's Soup Kitchen downtown. A core group of parishioners manage the activity and other volunteers work 1-2 times a year. The parish supplies the food and pays for a cook in support of this ministry.

SAMMinistries Dining Room: Volunteers serve supper to the homeless at the SAMMinistires Shelter, 910 West Commerce. An opportunity for families with older children to participate together in a worthwhile ministry.

Nursing Home Ministry: Spiritual and social support for residents (Alzheimer patients) who otherwise would have no visitors.

St. Peter & Joseph's children's Home: Volunteers put on a monthly birthday party for the children - cakes, gifts, activities.

Meals on Wheels: Pairs of volunteers deliver meals to shut-ins. Deliveries are made between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Hot and frozen meals are picked up at the parish pavilion kitchen.

Angel Tree: This Christmas giving project for the parish provides gifts to homeless children and needy families living in shelters and our sister parish. The parishioners buy,

wrap and then bring the gifts to the parish ball room where they are sorted for pick up by each agency participating in our project.

Hugs Ministry: Volunteers make blankets for infants living with mothers in shelters, hats & scarves for the children at St. P.J.'s and lap-blankets for the nursing home. Volunteers drop off their completed items at the church.

Christian Assistance Ministry (CAM) & CAM Food Drive: Volunteers assist agency with a variety of services for poor and homeless people. Agency passes out food and clothing, helps with delinquent rents and utilities, and provides a variety of counseling services to the poor and homeless.

Christmas Under the Bridge (CUB) & Sunflower House:

CUB: Annual one day event sponsored by the San Antonio Regional Alliance for the Homeless in association with National Homeless Network. Parishioners donate personal hygiene items, socks, underwear, etc. A major Christmas event in San Antonio helping over 2,000 homeless.

Baby Shower: Volunteers put on annual baby shower at our parish for mothers-to-be living at the Seton and Guadalupe homes. Event celebrates the commitment of these young women to their babies.

Projects receiving financial support from the parish

Carter Center (CC) & Equal Exchange (EE):

CC: Parish's \$1,000 gift supports the Center's missions of waging peace, fighting disease and building hope for some of the world's most destitute peoples in more than 65 countries.

EE: Supports Third World farm co-ops to maintain fair market prices for their coffee, tea and chocolates in order to support their families and avoid monopoly by cartels. Parish role: Awareness, encouraging parishioners to buy EE Co-op products.

Sunflower House: The Parish's annual gift of \$2,000.00 coupled with donations from other agencies is the basis for matching funds for a grant by the City of San Antonio's *Art in the Community* project. Sunflower House is a free art and activities day camps for homeless children held at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens during Summer and Spring school year breaks.

Socially Responsible Investment Coalition (SRIC): SRIC influences companies to act responsibly according to the social justice teachings of the Church toward workers and the environment.

...and others.

The Social Concerns Committee meets approximately every six weeks on Saturday morning in the Faith Formation building. For meeting times and dates please contact Jim Ermis (210) 497-8613.

Many new parishioners bring experience from their former parishes. Holy Trinity is a place where you can 'believe and belong' by sharing and volunteering. Come manage a socially responsible project. Attend the SCC meetings. You will find them informative and a venue for your ideas and interests.

At present the country is preparing for another general election. Issues of social justice have always been a part of past elections, but, in spite of the fact that Catholics number in the millions, abortion and other injustices are permitted by law. The Church is clear about such issues. Can we do more to support life? What about immigration? Where does protecting the nation's sovereignty begin and opportunity end for migrant workers? How many immigrants can this country accommodate each year and do our immigration laws reflect that capability? Another issue - capital punishment. The Church warns us about giving into our fears and considers capital punishment almost impossible to justify considering that the public interest, safety and security can be met through incarceration rather than execution.

A few years ago San Antonio spent virtually no local public money for the homeless. Almost all public money came from Federal grants funded through the departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or Health and Human Resources (HHR). Recently members of the community and city government have joined together to plan and build a new shelter in the downtown area for the homeless. It will have many of the features that helping agencies have tried to provide but often were not within the scope of their mission or capabilities. How friendly is our city to the homeless? Criminalizing survival activities such as sleeping under a bridge or on a park bench is a social justice issue. Other cities in Texas have criminalized homelessness.

For the past nine years Holy Trinity Parish has donated tens of thousands of dollars to the homeless. This year is no exception judging from the tremendous generosity during the Christmas Under the Bridge and Angel Tree drives.

Are you Someone who can,

- "...provide a site for local organizations that offer programs for the unemployed or underemployed.
- Organize a parish legislative network composed of people willing to call or write legislators regarding economic justice and other issues of human life and dignity.
- Contact your diocesan social action office, pro-life office, and State Catholic Conference to learn about economic justice and other issues under consideration by your state legislature or Congress. Activate you parish legislative network.
- Identify other local advocacy groups and join in coalition with their efforts to work for justice. Your diocesan social action office or State Catholic conference can help identify these groups." (Excerpt from *Economic Justice for All*, Pastoral Letter on Catholic Teaching and the U.S. Economy).

Currently the parish actively supports many of the document's suggestions:

- Homilies and prayers of the faithful for social justice practices.
- Retreat - subjects about social justice.
- Religious education - social responsibilities.
- Encouraging young people to volunteer to help the poor at soup kitchens and shelters.
- Homilies - environmental responsibility, avoiding waste, responsible consumption.
- Sister parish activities - St. Timothy's Parish.
- Participation in international programs for social justice.
- Sister parish in South America - supporting the pastor and his ministry.

Holy Trinity's motto, "Believe and Belong", is carried out everyday by the faith and actions of the parish. Join the Social Concerns Committee and channel your talents into action for social justice.

This website is meant to be informative

For questions about this website and the Social Concerns Committee, please call Jim Ermis, 497-8613 or e-mail at jamesermis@yahoo.com.