



Solidarity

A newsletter reflecting just some of the justice work of our St. Francis Xavier faith community.

August-September 2021

Upcoming J & L Events

All are welcome!

CuraCommunity (Zoom)

August 26, September 9 and 23

7:00 pm

Social

September 1, 15, 29

10:00 am

Discuss Ignatian Principles

Anti-Racism (ARC) Meeting

August 29 – 9:00 am

October 1 - 9:00 am

Red Cross Bloodmobile

August 26 1:00-6:00 pm

Migrant Farmworkers

Lexington - 3:00-8:00 pm

August 30

September 27

October 18

Irish Fest

Sept 3-5

Visit our beverage tent and help support our sister parish in Belize!

RIM Meeting

September 12 - 9:00 am

J & L Retreat

October 23

(Pending, due to Covid)

Justice & Life - Writing the Next Chapter

It has been said our lives are like a book – a series of chapters and experiences that create our own unique story. New chapters often begin and end by life events that change or define us. As survivors of a global pandemic, as witnesses to George Floyd’s murder, as the Body of Christ who could not gather for worship for over a year, as we celebrate our 71st year in this sacred space at 52nd and Troost, as we live in a country and a church that often act more divided than united, as we tackle the second round of this deadly pandemic, this seems like a good opportunity to take a look at our Justice & Life ministry and discern Jesus’ invitation to us. How will we write this new chapter?

Respondents to our 2021 Summer survey believe we should focus our efforts on the following areas:

- Anti-racism (71.8%)
- Book Discussions (49.3%)
- Voter Registration (45%)
- Refugee/Immigrant/Migrant support (35%)
- Serving meals at Morning Glory/One City (27%)
- Care for Creation (21%)
- Death Penalty (18%)

- Health Ministry (17%)
- Sister Parish (17%)

Many noted the interconnectedness of these justice issues, making it difficult and short-sighted to focus on just one. With that knowledge, we are creating an over-arching Justice & Life Committee that will guide our parish and integrate our efforts. This group will help:

- align our activities/ministries to the Universal Apostolic Preferences,
- plan our Fall retreat and other events,
- create a balance between the Jesuit tenets of Contemplation and Action, and
- expand our network to support other organizations for greater impact and advocacy.

You are warmly invited to be a part of this dynamic, newly forming committee and any facet of the Justice & Life ministry to which you feel called.

Together in Christ, *Sue*

Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.

Benjamin Franklin

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Refugees - Immigrants - Migrants

Our RIM Committee

Justice issues and personal stories from refugees, immigrants, and migrants can seem overwhelming. After the release of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (see side bar) and prior to Covid, Fr. Steve led our RIM committee in a discernment retreat. Through prayer and reflection, the group came up with five goals:

- To offer **Encuentro trips** to the border and support their partnerships with **Manos Amigas** and other agencies.
- To support the **Migrant Farmworker project** by volunteering and collecting necessities for migrants who come to Lexington, MO. Soft
- To support the work of **AIRR** (Advocates for Immigrants Rights & Reconciliation) as they respond to the needs of refugees in Kansas City.
- To educate others about the systemic value of **fair trade** and promote it within the parish and community.
- Investigate the feasibility and possibility of sponsoring a **refugee family**.

Then, Covid hit.

While we were still able to support the Migrant Farmworkers last summer, all other goals were placed on hold. On July 11, 2021, our group met in person to review our goals and discuss how

we were being called to respond as we work our way out of this pandemic. To summarize:

- We hope to schedule an Encuentro trip in October 2022.
- SFX: You have *outdone yourselves* in donating items for the farmworkers who are currently arriving in Lexington. Thank you! We are scheduled to volunteer on August 30, September 27, and October 18.
- We decided to gather more information (post-pandemic) about AIRR so we can better discern if - and how - we can support.
- We will educate the parish and possibly host a fair-trade show/sale in the Fall.
- We ARE supporting a family seeking asylum!

God – and SFX - works in and through Covid!

Our group will meet again on Sunday, September 12 at 9:00 am. We cordially invite you to join us.



“We confirm that we are committed to caring for migrants, displaced persons, refugees, and the victims of wars and human trafficking, and to defending the culture and the dignity of indigenous peoples. We seek to help build a culture of welcome, walking with all these groups as they integrate into society, and to promote the defense of their rights.”

Excerpt from Pastoral Letter by Arturo Sosa, SJ, February 19, 2019, announcing the Universal Apostolic Preferences.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences

On February 19, 2019 - after almost two years of discernment, formulation, and approval by Pope Francis - Arturo Sosa, SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, released four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP's) that would guide the Jesuits and us, their lay companions, in our work over the next decade. The preferences begin with developing and deepening our relationship with Jesus through the Spiritual Exercises as we:

- show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and their practice of discernment.

With Jesus as our foundation and guide, we can:

- Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, and those whose dignity has been violated, in the mission of reconciliation and justice,
- Walk together with young people to build a hope-filled future,
- Work together to care for the earth, our common home.

SFX is committed to carrying out each one of these preferences. They are not a checklist of tasks to mark off, but rather, a way to live our lives in solidarity with God, humanity, and creation. How is Jesus calling you to respond?

Want to be Anti-Racist? It's a lifelong journey.

"I'm not racist".

"I don't see color."

"I have black friends."

"I've worked hard for everything I have."

"Don't be an Indian giver."

"I can't do anything about racism."

"People can do anything they set their minds to."

"We're all equal."

"The laws are the same for everyone."

George Floyd's murder "woke" many white parishioners to our ignorance about just how deep the wounds and scars of racism divide us. The Covid pandemic and our ability to shelter in place gave us the opportunity to educate ourselves about our white privilege and our white fragility when challenged about our racist habits and tendencies. It was humbling and heart-breaking as multiple people lamented, "How could I not have known?" *How did I not see this until now?*

In addition to book studies (*White Fragility*, *How to be an Anti-Racist*, *Caste*, and *Nice Racism*), we held bi-weekly public witness and prayer services along Troost to show support and educate ourselves about the lives and achievements of our African American brothers and sisters. We held voter registration opportunities at SFX and around the community. We formed an Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) to examine more deeply how race divides us. Several members of that group participated in a 12-week,

12-step program called *Recovery from White Conditioning*. While those of us who are white will never understand what it is like to be black in America, we stand with our African American brothers and sisters to work for systemic changes to unjust policies.

Respondents to our SFX 2021 Summer Survey overwhelming indicated that our parish should focus our efforts on becoming anti-racist - personally, within our parish, and within our community. They noted that racism is intricately connected to voter registration, gun violence, the death penalty, health inequalities, poverty, employment opportunities, policing...sadly, the list goes on. Therefore, we need to lend our voice, vote, and our presence and energy to all these justice issues.

What ideas do you have to make SFX a more welcoming, anti-racist parish? What do you need for your personal growth in this area? How is Jesus calling you to invest your time and energy to alleviate racism in our world? ARC will meet again on August 29 at 9:00 am. Watch the SFX Update for the location. New members are always welcome! Contact Sue for more information.

*If you want peace,
work for justice.* - Pope Paul VI

"Caste is insidious and therefore powerful because it is not hatred, it is not necessarily personal. It is the worn grooves of comforting routines and unthinking expectations, patterns of a social order that have been in place for so long that it looks like the natural order of things."

— Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

What's the problem with being "not racist"? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: "I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism." There is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of "racist" isn't "not racist." It is "antiracist". - Ibram X Kendi, *How to be an Anti-Racist*

"Stopping our racist patterns must be more important than working to convince others that we don't have them." - Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility*

"We are responsible for our own ignorance or, with time and openhearted enlightenment, our own wisdom." — Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength. And the second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." Jesus

Food Pantry - 2020 Review

"We never missed a day!"

2020 Stats

Number of volunteers

24

Number of days open

160

Volunteer Hours worked

Administration: 754.25

Office: 605.25

Bagging: 439.5

Truck: 129.5

People served

1,571

Harvesters food distributed

23,240 pounds

Christmas Baskets distributed

93

Changes made due to Covid

- ✓ Orders staged in Romero Room
- ✓ Placed food directly in car
- ✓ Removed parish boundaries
- ✓ Masked and distanced in workspaces

Covid only strengthened the resolve of our dedicated food pantry volunteers to serve our neighbors in need and stay open through the pandemic. With our YES, amazing things began to unfold. Harvesters suddenly had more food available to agencies at reduced prices. New food opportunities became available through our partnership with Visitation Parish. New volunteers and donors came forth. A new parishioner with a connection to a Hy-Vee bakery started delivering bread and baked goods to us every Friday. (Those donations are not included in the food distribution total in the sidebar.)

Prior to Covid, we only served people in our parish boundaries. As non-essential businesses closed and people lost jobs, we opened our resources to anyone in need. While we never had people lined up around the building, we were always able to generously serve all who called or came by. As one volunteer proudly exclaimed, "We never missed a day!" We served many who, for the first time, were food insecure and frightened for their future. We continue to spread the word that we have food thanks to YOUR generosity and the creative partnerships we have formed.

And now, thanks to timely rains and dedicated volunteers, our Community Garden is producing abundantly. When Kansas City Community Gardens came out to tour in July, they said our gardens "looked better than their demonstration gardens!" To date, our faithful gardeners have harvested over 320 pounds of green onions, mustard greens, carrots, beets and beet greens, turnips and turnip greens, lettuce, squash, cabbage, tomatoes, and peppers. We also forged partnerships with Thelma's Kitchen and Kanbe's to share our harvest when we have more than we can use. Jesus told his disciples, "*There will always be poor among you...*" (Mt. 26:11) As we continue to work for justice and equity, thanks to your generosity, the poor among us will always be lovingly cared for and well fed.

