**Strangers No Longer Zoom Meeting: June 21, 2022**

**Attendance:**  Julie Watanabe, Donna Nesbitt, Fiona Archer, Kathy Best, Sue Johnson, Rose Pikor

Mary Lou LaTorre, Cyndi Malow, Sister Martha De La Torre, Watoii Rabii, Pat Boland-Saoud

**Opening Prayer:**  Fiona Archer

**Special messages:**

* **Sister Martha** had just received news that her special friend, who was 79, had been murdered in México, supposedly by gangs. He was a special priest who served those in need. She had known him for many years and was very saddened by this news.
* **Mary Lou LaTorre:**  She is feeling much better after having been in a very serious car accident, and is currently in physical therapy.
* **Pat Watanabe:** She continues to heal from her knee replacement.
* **New Member:** Pat Boland-Saoud, a parishioner at St. Blasé, has joined our group.

**Thank You Message:**  Flor and Gricelda zoomed with us and thanked us for our financial help when they had Covid virus and were out of work for three weeks. It helped them buy their groceries. In addition to our help, they were helped by St. Mary’s Parish in Ann Arbor, and with Strangers No Longer Emergency Fund.

**Circle Leader Formation Meeting:**  There was a meeting held on May 21st. Julie sent feedback on the Luncheon fundraiser from the discussion at our last group meeting. Discussion was on the upcoming visit with Sister Norma Pimentel. The SNL website lists her scheduled activities. If any can take part in one of her meetings, a Reflection could be put into our Bulletin.

**Education Enrichment:**

* **Freedom House:** St. Michael’s has worked with Freedom House in the past and we would now like to obtain even more information about this organization. We invited Mercedes Pergande, from Detroit’s Freedom House, to share our zoom meeting to help educate us with their programs. Freedom House was originally founded in 1983 by Catholic nuns with other religious and community leaders for those fleeing the Civil War in San Salvador at that time. The Detroit Freedom House is one of 8 in U.S. and is also found in Canada. They offer humanitarian aid for those fleeing from persecution and are seeking protection and asylum. Ninety percent of the clients have been tortured and show up with very little personal supplies. They offer shelter, food, clothing, medical and mental services. Their staff consists of 13 permanent members and one attorney. Volunteers are always needed. They also help with education and resume building. At present they can house 65 people, which can be men and women. Majority now are men. Most are families and many at present are from Africa. Their clients are “normal people” trying to survive. They have served people from every continent. They also serve those from human trafficking. They also get children ready for school. America is the only safe border they have, and some may have been turned away from other shelters. These clients don’t qualify for any government programs, except for WIC helps children’s needs. Many use “word of mouth”, maps and the internet to find Freedom House for shelter. This organization works with Homeland Security and also with ICE and other agencies.

Ways we can help Freedom House are:

1. Replace some of the $400,000 loss from HUD Even $5.00 a month donation helps.
2. “Sponsor Seeker”, where one coordinates with a client
3. “Beacon Network”
4. “Amazon Wish List”, which lists their specific needs

Julie suggested asking Michelle Hayes to donate some money to Freedom House. We can also use some of our funds to purchase what is needed on their “Amazon Wish List.”

* Kathy Best offered to write an article in the Bulletin on Freedom House. We discussed having a monthly article for our Bulletin describing various immigrant journeys.
* We are going to read “Immigrant Saint: The Life of Mother Cabrini” by Pietro de Donato. Julie is going to ask Claudia to see if we could use the Youth Group room in September where we could discuss the book and watch a DVD on Mother Cabrini which Julie has already ordered.
* We plan to continue finding articles to discuss on St. Romo, Pope Francis, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Bishop Scalabrini to contribute to our educational enrichment.
* Watorii offered to find updated information on immigration. Also, members in our group will try to find articles on immigration to share with others.

**Christian Service Update:** Cyndi gave a report on the last meeting, May 19. The Family Parish Churches had met, and Michelle doesn’t anticipate changes which might affect us. The Parish Council had $30,000 extra left after meeting our CSA goal last year. The extra money after reaching our goal this year will be used to fix the floor in the multipurpose room. Donna was chosen as the new Chairperson. Christian Service has about 30 different activities which they service. Backpack project might still be scheduled. Easter basket project still needs to be organized, but we will continue this. No separation between groups for Christmas stockings. End of year luncheon, on June 9th, was catered in the Social Hall.

**Funding Suggestion:** Cyndi opened up a discussion on other possible ways we can raise money other than using donations from the Youth Groups and the Giving Tree. We will continue this discussion at our August meeting.

**Closing Prayer:** Donna

**Next meeting:** August 16 **Agenda:** Julie **Minutes:** Rose  **Opening Prayer:**  Pat W.

**Closing Prayer:** Cyndi **Communication with Kathy Chadick:** Julie

**Communication with Michelle Hayes:** Julie