MEETING OF ST. VINCENT dePAUL SOCIETY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2016, 9:30 am

DELANEY HALL, ST. ANN’S

President Mike Farrar called the meeting to order. Deacon Jack Frebery led the **Opening Prayer.**

The following **new members** were welcomed: Mary Ann Conlon, Ann Evans, Joanna Keller, Jean King, and Rita K Ryan. **Minutes** from the last meeting were approved.

**President’s Report**: Mike asked for our prayers for his daughter who is battling a serious illness. Until his family situation is stabilized, he requested we designate John Traina as Acting President, which was approved unanimously.

**Teasurer’s Report**: Beginning balance was 10056.72. Total disbursements were $2941.87, including $1740 for electricity and $936.28 for food, leaving a balance of $7907.09. YTD, there was $16,511.20 in income, including $4000 from members, $3600 from the VIC dance, $3000 from church donations and $1500 from the men’s club. YTD expenses were $8, 117.93, leaving a balance of $8,117.93.

The Report was approved.

**The Form for Sending/Recording Payment for Assistance to clients** is now available, and will be included in the resource materials for whoever has the phone.

**Last Two Week’s Activities**: Jim Lutrzykowski reported that **Team Three** had five in-person clients and handedout 11 bags of food. There were no food or logistics problems, although all available bags should be in the same place. Mike said he would see to that. Lenore Thommes said her keys do not open the closet where the brown bags are stored. The vestibule was unduly warm due to heating problems. Eight phone-in clients were helped with electric bills; the Pyle Center matched our $200 per client. Del Marva Power sends out denial notices the first of the month, so there will probably be a surge of requests the last week of the previous month.

Kay Gebhardt reported that **Team Four** had 18 in-person clients and dispersed 39 bags of food, with estimated value of $20 per bag. Lenore said food ran so low, even though Ron Forgnoni had already shopped, that she and Rosa ran out to the store so all the requests could be filled. After talking to Ron, Deacon Jack recommended that if more than one food bag is dispersed, flour and rice should be in only one of them, and that “standard bag” items should be numbered on the shelves. Also, the packing system needs to be refined.

Kay reported six telephone calls, including a woman with a Protection of Abuse Order from her spouse needing rent help, and a homeless client needing help with moving a trailer. She spent a great deal of time talking with Candace at the Pyle Center about someone on John Traina’s watch list as a system abuser. In-coming phone service is not good; it was pointed out the problem may not be the phone as much as where clients are calling from. Kay is donating a briefcase to hold client applications.

Mary Iaci asked if we can develop a **list of “in-kind”resource skills** that are either free or volunteered. If a service such as moving a trailer were donated, we would face no legal liability. Mike said the SVDP Rule discourages individual action, stressing group consensus, but suggested we contact National SVDP Office for their interpretation. Candace at the Pyle Center had suggested the Good Ole Boys Network as a possible resource.

John Traina and Deacon Jack met with the **Pyle Center.** They are all very professional and helpful. We should contact them first when a client asks us for assistance. If a client does not get back to them in 48 hours, they close out the file. They work with the ACTS Center on Route 26, which used to be part of the Magisterium, an interfaith council of churches, but which now operates alone. They have strict criteria, and can be accessed only through the Pyle Center. Sister Loretta works with them. The current status of the Magisterium is uncertain.

Deacon Jack stressed that even system abusers should be treated sensitively, and considered for a home visit. We should pray for them. Tish Galu has an article she will circulate to us on why the poor make bad decisions. Linda Palladino also recommended Tish’s article on listening.

**Formation Workshop**: Ronnie Malone has contacted a friend who recommended two Vincentian priests to guide us through a formation activity. She would like feedback on what the chapter wants, including time of year and a whole or half-day program. Anyone with a specific suggestion should contact Ronnie before the next chapter meeting. Mary Ellen Gronsky asked for a straw vote on providing speaking fees and transportation, which was affirmative. John Traina suggested opening the program to the entire church. Reaction was mixed. Deacon Jack suggested the chapter could have a closed session, then open the Mass and homily – with the heart of the day’s message - to the public.

**Reflecting on the Rule**: to seek out the poor. Mike said people may have other needs as great as their poverty and/or need for food. Ronnie wondered how we actually seek the poor out. Eileen Mulaney said just by repeating our stories of dealing with the poor, over the phone or in person, we change each other. Mike encouraged us to send in our “best report” stories.

**Other Business**: Eileen Mulaney reported that check #1029 for $200 in rent, issued by Team 2, has not cleared yet, and she has no way to follow it up.

Team 7 asked if there had been any home visits yet. There have been two. Bill Clarke said there are often kids involved, and it’s important to know that. Tish Galu says their special team is setting up a protocol for home visits. Deacon Jack called for caution as people are not always comfortable with home visits. John Traina said his former chapter would not disperse assistance without a home visit. Eileen from the Easton MD conference has a team just for home visits. Rita Ryan said the sensitivity of the client should be considered. The feeling after extended discussion was that, while no one should be required to make a home visit, it was a skill that became easier with repetition. People who had no experience could be paired with those who did.

Mike said the Deanery, which has an evaluation meeting every 5 years, will visit our chapter.

Jim L. from Team 3 asked if we could change the food pantry hours to 9 – 11 AM. The change was approved beginning March 1, giving us time to publicize it.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM to Grotto’s Pizza for our first informal social get together.

**Next scheduled meetings**: Feb. 22@ 7PM; March 7 (**not** March 14) @ 9:30 AM; March 28@ 7PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Janus