

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT AND OPERATING GUIDELINES

Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.

Matthew 25:40

As Catholic Christians who are called to honor and protect the dignity of each human life, we have a responsibility to stand together with our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. At St. Thomas More Catholic Church, we choose to do this together through a collective voice and as a collective body. The Parish affirms its commitment to this mission by:

- supporting and coordinating social justice programs through a Social Justice Committee
- creating opportunities for organized action as they arise
- distributing the Parish's annual Social Justice allocation to causes and organizations in service to those most in need

In doing these three things our mission is to ensure that:

- our actions and gifts are prayer-driven and reflect the values of our faith
- our efforts are local, national and global in scope
- our efforts include volunteer opportunities, advocacy, and education
- we bridge any divide between those who serve and those who are served so that we may gain the blessing of a greater solidarity with, understanding of, and love for those we serve
- we create a Parish-wide sense of unity and compassion around collective social justice service and action

We define social justice as equality in the distribution of economic, political and social rights and opportunities for all persons, all of whom are the children of God. Thus, social justice encompasses a myriad of topics including but not limited to: poverty; abortion, the death penalty and the dignity of all human life; immigration and refugees; labor and education rights; access to health care; criminal justice; and the protection of our common environment. Our goal is to focus the charitable works and resources of the Parish in order to maximize and sustain our impact in the community.

Committee Operating Guidelines

The St. Thomas More Social Justice Committee shall be comprised of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than nine (9) members of the Parish. The Committee will invite a member of the STM Young Adult Ministry to serve as liaison between the Young Adult Ministry and the Social Justice Committee. The Committee shall elect a Chair and a Recording Secretary from among its members. The Chair will preside over Committee meetings and deliberations. The

Committee shall meet on a periodic basis as required by the matters pending before the Committee. The Committee shall report its activities to the Parish Council on a periodic basis.

Committee members serving at the time of the adoption of these Operating Guidelines will continue to serve until March 31, 2019. Thereafter those current Committee members will vacate their positions on a staggered basis. Three current members' terms will end March 31, 2019, to be succeeded with three new members appointed by the Pastor for a three (3) year term. Three additional members' terms will end March 31, 2020, to be succeeded with three new members appointed by the Pastor a three (3) year term. Any remaining members' terms will end March 31, 2021, to be succeeded with new members appointed by the Pastor for a three (3) year term.

The Committee shall adopt a protocol through which charitable organizations may seek financial support from St. Thomas More under the guidance and recommendation of the Committee. That protocol will require that a requesting organization submit information regarding its charitable mission and purpose; its impact in the community; its structure, operations and funding; and other information supporting the request. In considering and recommending approval of requests for financial support the Committee shall give priority to organizations with ties to the Society of Jesus and/or the St. Thomas More Parish or parishioners, and to organizations brought to the Committee's attention by the Parish or parishioners.