

SUMMARY OF 9-18-09 MEETING

A meeting of Catholic laypersons was held September 18, 2009, at 6:00 p.m., to discuss the introduction of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The meeting was called by a group of parishioners from St. Charles Borromeo. The meeting was held on short notice, but word spread quickly. The meeting was open to any interested Catholic, including proponents of the IAF. No one in favor of the IAF made their presence known. The room was equipped to accommodate 60 persons and appeared to be full. Guests from the parishes of St. Eugene's, St. Monica's, St. John's, Epiphany and St. James were present. Everyone listened politely and nearly everyone contributed in the discussion.

Minutes before the meeting word was received that our Archbishop was preparing a letter to be published in the next issue of the Sooner Catholic regarding the IAF controversy. The moderator suggested postponement of the meeting to see if the Archbishop's letter would settle the matter one way or the other. There was no stopping a roomful of Catholics from speaking their piece. The meeting proceeded as scheduled and was congenial from start to finish. A serious discussion of a contentious issue ensued with some comic relief as needed. Nothing negative was said of the clergy, the church hierarchy or the individuals promoting IAF involvement. The meeting adjourned with the Hail Mary at 8:30 p.m. Numerous persons remained for fellowship until the meeting place closed at 10:00 p.m. Those who could not attend missed a great meeting and a good time. The meeting was a model for parishes wishing to have a meaningful discussion on the IAF issue.

A consensus was apparently reached; remarkable considering the number of Catholics present. The incursion of the IAF will be resisted by any means necessary. The finance option will be considered only as a last resort. Those present will encourage others to consider a two pronged response: immediate and long term. The St. Charles parishioners in attendance will encourage participation at the upcoming IAF home meetings. They will encourage those who attend home meetings to resist being drawn into conflict (Alinski's goal) and to turn the other cheek if ridiculed (Alinski's favorite weapon - Rule #5) Also, home meeting attendees are urged to avoid references to the Clergy, the Bishop, Alinski, the IAF, ACORN, President Obama, et cetera. Those attending home meetings will be encouraged to express their personal and community concerns, whatever they may be. It is hoped that a majority will express that their primary concern is for the sanctity of life, especially life in the womb. Those present at the meeting agreed that social justice begins in the womb and that the greatest social injustice in history is the murder of 3,700 babies a day in America and 115,000 babies a day worldwide. We have and will pursue social justice on many fronts, but we reject the notion of moral equivalence. We need to double our efforts in the struggle against abortion. An appropriate action, in organizing lingo, would be a legislative challenge to the abortion mill in Warr Acres, a few blocks from St. Charles. We don't need to wait for help from the IAF. We can begin pro-life efforts before the home meetings by participating in the 40 Days for Life program.

Equally important is a long range plan to resist the corrosive effects of the Alinski model. Those present will support efforts to analyze how this unnecessary conflict arose and how the two sides can regain the unity that existed before the IAF infiltration. One suggestion was to accept the community organizing approach for improvement of our Christian charity efforts, but without the divisive presence of the Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee, the IAF or any other offspring of Alinski.

Finally, the St. Charles parishioners were advised that their Senior Pastor, Father Seeton, has requested a two week cooling off period followed by a meeting to attempt reconciliation and unity with the IAF proponents. The two week moratorium would preclude further organizing efforts and further e-mails by both sides. So be it. The moderator urged the St. Charles parishioners to honor the two week moratorium beginning September 20, 2009.