

The Social & Eco Justice Committee
(2019-2020, annual report submitted by Yvonne Hsieh)

Between August 2019 and February 2020, the ten members of the SEJC met six times in person. From April to June 2020, they also met informally via Zoom three times.

We organized two events at the parish:

1. Projection of the PBS Film “**The Sultan and the Saint**” on Oct. 4, 2019 (the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi). The film recounts the interfaith encounter between Francis and Sultan Al-Kamil of Egypt in 1219, during the Fifth Crusade. 2019 marked the 800th anniversary of this historic event, and Franciscans rang church bells around the world in celebration.
2. **Write for Rights** session for Amnesty International on Dec. 8, 2019. 20 participants collectively wrote 59 letters in defense of human rights.

In addition, two SEJC members served **breakfast** (sponsored by Holy Cross) at **Our Place** on Oct. 17, 2019, along with 8 other parishioners.

The Chair of the SEJC continued to serve as the Representative for Holy Cross on the Capital Region Social Justice Action Committee.

Due to the Covid19 crisis, several planned activities had to be cancelled. These include a second breakfast sponsorship at Our Place (March 2020), a study session on the CCCB’s statement on Poverty and Housing in Canada (March 2020), and our congregation’s participation in the GVAT Founding Assembly (April 2020).

The biggest contribution the SEJC made this year was as a member association of **GVAT (Greater Victoria Acting Together)**. The SEJC doubles as the Holy Cross GVAT “core team.” Three dedicated SEJC members serve on the GVAT Action Research Teams (Housing, Mental Health and Addictions, Climate) and on its Strat Hub (Steering Committee). The other members support them in their work. The Housing ART seized the opportunity presented by the pandemic to push the provincial and municipal governments to house all the homeless in the CRD, and transform temporary housing into permanent social housing with wraparound services. It also put pressure on the B. C. government to take action in preventing youth homelessness. The Mental Health and Addictions ART is focusing on the following issues: Low Barrier Access Portals to mental health and addiction services, formation of Mobile Response Teams, and early intervention in mental health issues in children. The Climate ART, initiated in December 2019, explored multiple issues, before deciding to launch a campaign to stop the logging of old-growth forests. In July, GVAT sent to both the Provincial and Federal Governments a series of recommendations for a just, green recovery stimulus package. The SEJC approved these recommendations on behalf of Holy Cross.