

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Parishes Evangelization Initiative

October 5, 2023

Notes

Present: **St. John the Evangelist:** Marianne Katz, Dominick Zarcone, **St. Lawrence:** Patricia Urbinelli, **St. Leo the Great:** Joan Rohr, **St. Mark:** Carolyn DelVecchio, **Facilitator/link to the Pastoral Planning Task Force:** Karen Rinefield

Excused: **Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows:** John Owens, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Rose Marie Lombard

Opening prayer: Philippians 4:6-9, sharing a word, a phrase, a prayer, the Lord's Prayer

Purpose of this group: to share parish evangelization best practices, to design and implement shared evangelization projects

Target audiences:

1. Members of our parishes—helping them deepen their relationship with God.
2. Members of our parishes—helping them talk to others about their faith without judging or criticizing.
3. Members of our parishes who pulled back during Covid.

Initial sharing:

- Joan shared the list of OCIA (RCIA) dates and topics for St. Leo's. Sessions are open to all.
- Karen passed on news from St. Charles Borromeo emailed to her by Rose Marie. The parish has a newly formed Eucharistic Revival committee in response to the 3-year focus on the Eucharist. They are holding a 4-session series "Elements of the Mass" with the introductory session this Saturday after the 4pm Mass. As of today, 61 people have signed up.

Objective 1: publish a list of good electronic resources for Catholics

- Include apps, podcasts, Catholic radio and tv stations, websites (e.g., Ascension), daily spiritual reflection emails (e.g., Richard Rohr, Joan Chittister), USCCB, The St. John the Evangelist Shop in Spencerport if people are looking for Catholic things.
- Each member will add resources and ask others for recommendations.
- Action: Carolyn will create a spreadsheet to add resources/information under each category.
- This will be a living document which can be put on the 7-parish shared website once it is created (tentatively by Lent 2024).
- The draft list of resources will be shared with pastoral leaders before it is finalized.
- We will start with 10-12 in each category.
- We can rotate recommendations in marketing. A follow up question to ask: which of these resources helped you to draw nearer to God?
- We need to talk with younger people for recommendations as well as youth ministers and the diocesan Dept. of Evangelization and Catechesis.
- To start: what resources do committee members currently use?
- Action: Joan will email to everyone the list of resources that the St. Leo's evangelization committee created.

Objective 2: Advent/Lent events for all 7 parishes

- The Diocese of Ogdensburg has the Immaculate Heart Mystery Players—a group of high school seniors who act out either the nativity or the passion as an adult narrates. We could build a retreat day into this experience. Cost is \$500. We could see if we could get them or develop something similar with our own parishes' teens.

- The second part of ChristLife is Following Christ. These sessions include video presentations and discussion questions. St. John the Evangelist parish has the materials. There are sessions on prayer and forgiveness. Perhaps during Lent?
- Another possibility would be to have sessions for 5-6 weeks and include different resources previously used by one or more of our parishes (e.g., The 99, Alpha, ChristLife). The sessions could move from one parish to another. Maybe the hosting parish could coordinate a soup and bread supper to go with the session. We would need to have a sufficient number of facilitators.
- Lessons and Carols.
- For this Advent, we could ask the pastoral leaders to make room in their bulletins to share Advent events from across the 7 parishes that are open to parishioners from the other parishes. AND/OR we could create a document of Advent events, post it on parish websites, and have a short bulletin article telling parishioners where to find it. Patricia offered to create the document.
- Eventually we could have a well-known speaker from outside the diocese or a local person lead a 7-parish event. When we are ready to do this, we would generate a theme and a list of possible speakers. We would need to run possible speakers past the pastoral leaders and get a budget from them.

Objective 3: "Where did you find God today?" with responses shared

- Create a bulletin article to launch this effort to create context. Start with our committee members sharing our responses.
- One possibility would be at parish coffee hours--having the walls covered with paper so that parishioners can add their responses and see those of others. Afterwards these could be hung in the narthex of the churches.
- Process: first introduce, then have parishioners respond (e.g., at coffee hours), then display responses wherever they would be visible at each parish to share responses most broadly. Over a couple of weeks people could see responses and add more.
- We need to explain to leaders, the task force, and parishioners at large why we are doing this—how it can help parishioners deepen their faith. We need to do something similar with all our objectives.
- One suggestion was for people to offer witness talks sharing their response at weekend Masses after the Communion Rite but before the final blessing. However, not all priests are open to including additional elements within the Mass.

General comments:

- The evangelization team realizes that we are a consulting body to the task force and pastoral leadership of the 7 parishes. As such we may need to explain how some of our suggested activities work to achieve goals for our target audiences. Further we will need to work with each pastoral leader on implementation of some activities. How something is accomplished in one parish may not work best for another.
- One member of the committee wondered, if one or two pastoral leaders prefer not to implement a suggestion in their parish, could others go forward or must each objective be embraced by 7 communities? Karen felt that we should do our best to ensure that the activities/programs we want to implement are appropriate for all 7 parishes and embraced by their leaders. However, each parish could choose to participate or not in a particular activity/program. If subsequently it was shared in all bulletins under the pastoral planning activities, it could be listed as "some parishes did ..."
- We are hoping in the future to have more dialogue with the task force that includes an opportunity to pray with them.

Closing prayer: Hail Mary

Next meetings (tentatively at St. Charles Borromeo in room 7) at 6:30 pm:

- **Thursday, October 19**
- **Thursday, November 2**
- **Thursday, November 30**