

**Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Parishes Evangelization Team (with members of the 2026 Lenten Retreat Committee joining for the last topic)**

**April 23, 2026**

**Notes**

Present: **Holy Cross/Mother of Sorrows:** Ed DiPonzio, John Owens, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Rose Marie Lombard, **St. John the Evangelist:** Marianne Katz, **St. Lawrence:** Karen Bunker, **St. Leo the Great:** Cindy Craner, Joan Rohr, **Facilitator/link to the Steering Committee:** Karen Rinefierd

Excused **St. Mark:** Carolyn DelVecchio

**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 and those no longer participating.

**Opening prayer:** “Where did you see God today?” followed by intercessory prayers and the Our Father

**Membership on this Evangelization Committee**

- Karen R. raised the issue of membership on this committee. Most current members have been on this committee since 2023 and the committee could use new skill sets, ideas, and energy.
- The committee meets approximately 9-10 times per year.
- Ideally we’d like there to be at least 2 members from each parish.
- The pastoral leaders should designate and invite people, but it would be helpful for current members to approach the leaders with ideas of particular people. Suggestions:
  - We need some members in their 50s or younger.
  - The same people always are asked to do additional things—it’s good to ask the unasked.
  - Perhaps people who went through the OCIA—not this year, but recently.
  - Perhaps someone who attended the June 2025 gathering of those working on some aspect of evangelization in their own parish.
  - Since Carolyn DelVecchio is not able to be as involved on this committee right now because of her health, we could ask Theresa Nicolosi for recommendations of St. Mark’s parishioners to send to Dcn. Frank Pettrone for consideration to serve in addition to Carolyn.
- Action: Karen R. will send committee members the list of those who attended in 6/25. She will also ask Theresa Nicolosi for any recommendations.
- Action: Each committee member will think of fellow parishioners to recommend to their pastoral leader to invite to serve on this 7-parish committee.

- At the end of the meeting, Ed said that he would like to join the evangelization committee. We welcome him as a new member from Holy Cross.

### **Outreach to parents after the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation**

- What we learned about each parish's baptism preparation process for parents:
  - St. Lawrence: Fr. Chase said that currently the parents at St. Lawrence meet with Deacon David Squilla or Deacon Bill Rabjohn for a class on the Sacrament. He also said this is all about to change as they are working on a plan for multiple churches in the area to collaborate and have several opportunities per year (possibly four) for parents to attend.
  - St. Leo's: Deacon José Rivera uses materials available through Formed. Joan thinks there are 3 sessions and doesn't know if there is any follow up afterwards. Kristine Burgio was going to work on this prior to her health issues beginning. Most baptisms happen at Mass.
  - St. John the Evangelist: Marianne thinks there is one session. She will talk with Rick Paoletti for details and to learn what materials are used.
- Discussion:
  - Maura Spencer sends out an email to parents after all of the sacraments to let them know what is happening in the parishes.
  - We could approach the young people we see at church and ask them questions like "why are you here?" "What are you bringing your little ones to church?" "What entices you to come?" "How can we communicate with others to invite them?"
  - Joan had previously suggested that parents should be encouraged to subscribe to the diocesan Family Zone newsletter. Action: She will contact Mark Cappellazi at the diocese to learn more. Action: Karen R. will talk with Maura Spencer to see how we can best invite parents to subscribe locally.

### **The 2026 Lenten retreat—what we did well, anything we should have done differently or should change for future retreats, ideas for the future**

- There were issues with the sound system at St. John's. Perhaps Holy Cross or St. Leo's would be better sound-wise. It's more important for participants to be able to hear than to have retreats in one of the central churches. Memory is that St. Mark's is good, and two years ago there seemed to be a good sound system at Our Mother of Sorrows.
- The retreat was very well run and organized. The two speakers also commented similarly.
- We do not know how many people viewed the streaming afterwards. Action: Karen R. will ask Tod Simone since we could not easily get this information online.
- Matthew Kuhner was more academic and did not give examples of what lay people could do in the parish or the wider community.
- Having these two speakers introduced St. Bernard's to those attending the retreat. The school is offering one free summer course to anyone who is interested.
- Each of the speakers asked for questions. Lisa Lickona received some on Sunday, but there were none on Monday although many people talked with Matthew Kuhner afterwards. We could have a prepared question from one of us to get things going. We could also ask people to write down their questions throughout the presentation. Both speakers were generous with their time and remained a long time at the refreshments to talk with individuals or groups of parishioners.

- We were surprised and delighted at how many people went to the parish center for refreshments and conversations.
- There was a good distribution of those attending across all of our parishes.
- Suggestions for the future:
  - Run the retreat on multiple Sundays as long as we avoid Super Bowl Sunday.
  - Three nights and close with a Mass or an evening of Eucharistic Adoration.
  - Have the topics more related to one another or coordinated.
  - Will any themes come from the broader church or our parishes in the coming year?
  - If there are changes or anticipated changes in our parishes, remind people of Christian ways to approach change.
  - A new encyclical from Pope Leo is coming in May with the working title “Magnificent Humanity” or “Magnifica Humanitas.” It is expected to address the ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence and the consequences it may have for human work, social relations, and the dignity of the person.

**Future meetings:**

- Thursday, May 21, 5:30 pm in Deacon Hall at St. Lawrence
- Thursday, June 25, 5:30 pm in Deacon Hall at St. Lawrence

**Closing prayer:** Hail Mary