

Roc Catholics Northwest Steering Committee

January 28, 2026

Notes

Attending: Fr. Lee Chase, Fr. William Coffas, Dcn. Edward Giblin (Vocations Committee), Marianne Katz (Evangelization Committee), Dcn. Frank Pettrone, Karen Rinefierd (facilitator), Dcn. David Squilla (Roc Catholics Northwest website)

Mass times

- There was a suggestion that, at a future meeting, the Steering Committee look at Mass schedules for Holy Days and Ash Wednesday to ensure that the greatest variety of options are available. This would be a preliminary discussion with needed follow up with each parish's pastoral leader. The committee might also want to discuss options for times when a priest is sick or away for vacation/retreat and also what to do in emergencies—e.g. if a church had a broken boiler.
- If any pastoral change necessitates a change in weekend Masses, there was agreement to bring the pastoral leaders together and ask what help the steering committee could provide. K. Rinefierd noted that, as Mass schedules have changed in various parts of the diocese over the past twenty-five years, the local church has learned from both the positive and less effective ways changes were made. That information is available in a document for other parishes to consider.

Mass intentions

- L. Chase will contact the diocesan chancellor, Fr. Dan Condon, and ask whether it is permissible to have multiple intentions at the same Mass. Sometimes there is difficulty allocating the available number of Masses when a large number of requests comes in. Religious communities and campus ministries are often able to take some of these requested Masses.
- St. Lawrence has formed a Memorial Society, and the Community of Mother of Sorrows and Holy Cross similarly created a Good Shepherd Memorial Society. This was a practice suggested by Fr. Condon. Those requesting a Mass intention are given the option of enrolling their deceased loved one in the Memorial Society. Twice a year—usually close to Memorial Day and All Saints Day--there is a Mass where everyone enrolled is prayed for. In this case, the stipend goes to the parish and not to the priest.

How should our parishes handle planning future 7-parish Lent retreats?

- K. Rinefierd raised this question. When four of the parishes (Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. John the Evangelist) previously shared retreats, they found that potential speakers from outside the diocese frequently were booked out one or more years.
 - Action: K. Rinefierd will contact the pastoral leaders asking them to consult with staff and friends and contribute their suggestions for future retreat speakers. She will include Fr. Robert Schrader since he organizes the diocesan retreats for priests and is familiar with many presenters.
- W. Coffas suggested as a possible focus "lay ministry within the church."

Updates

Vocations Committee (Dcn. Ed Giblin)

- The committee is focusing this year on lay ecclesial ministry. They are interviewing local lay ecclesial ministers with plans to publish summaries in bulletins and post the complete interviews on the Roc Catholics Northwest website.
- Committee members also served at the recent Fisher Dinner at Holy Cross, while the Knights of Columbus prepared the meal and pizza was purchased. These semi-annual events are coordinated by the diocesan Vocation Awareness Committee. Young men who are interested in exploring the priesthood are invited to gather with priests and seminarians.

Follow up conversation:

- D. Squilla: Often serving at the altar begins the path to greater involvement and ministry in the church.
- L. Chase: There was a recent vocations day at St. Lawrence School. Students were encouraged to come dressed as what they would want to be when they grew up. He and D. Squilla did a presentation and mentioned altar servers in their comments.
- L. Chase: Would the committee want to create videos? E. Giblin: The *Catholic Courier* created videos of priests about their vocations. When he asked about doing something similar about the permanent diaconate, the response was lukewarm.
- W. Coffas: This December's Fisher Dinner might have been the most successful one thus far. There were approximately 30 people and a variety of ages. It was good having a mixed group including priests, seminarians, interested men, and laypeople. It was great how the community supported this event.
- F. Pettrone: Is there anything for younger boys? He has a 10 year old who is very interested in the priesthood.
- B. Coffas: The homeschooling association at St. Dominic in Shortsville has an annual event. Other dioceses have programs for altar servers. Someone younger could come to the Fisher Dinner if accompanied by a parent.

Evangelization Committee (Marianne Katz)

- The committee provided the original suggestion to use speakers from St. Bernard's on the Road for the 7-parish Lent retreat and have provided guidance for the new retreat committee.
- The committee has the same goals as previously shared: publicize the Roc Catholics Northwest website, coordinate Advent and Lent flyers, and explore practices as a follow up with parents after sacraments. Members are reaching out to parish staff members to see what they are already doing as follow up and what would be helpful.

Roc Catholics Northwest website (Dcn. Dave Squilla)

- Things have slowed down—both parishes not sending in their items to be advertised and traffic.

Follow up conversation:

- K. Rinefierd: The Lent flyer will be on the home page but there are only plans to have a separate listing of Ash Wednesday Masses and services.

- Suggestions: Have a separate flyer with times for the 3/24 Day of Penance and Mercy. Also put this on parish facebook pages, possibly before Ash Wednesday. Action: K. Rinefierd will follow up.

Recent staff changes and collaboration

- James Sarkis has left his position as director of faith formation for Holy Cross, Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles, and St. Lawrence. Advertising this opening has begun.
- Crystal Criticos has left her position as principal of St. Lawrence School. Ann Marie Deutsch has taken her position on an interim basis.
- The seven parishes are sponsoring a large ad welcoming Bishop Bonnici.
- W. Coffas has been getting calls from other pastoral leaders asking what the 7 parishes did in planning locally as well as inquiring whether the planning process was directed by the diocese. He shares that the process was initiated by the pastoral leaders, not the diocese.
- Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, and St. John's are collaborating on Divine Mercy Sunday. The prayer service will include the chaplet of divine mercy and benediction.

Future topics

- how to promote our two schools

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 3 at 1:30 pm, St. Lawrence rectory conference room