

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Pastoral Planning Task Force
Tuesday, October 3, 2023
St. Lawrence, Room 3 in Deacon Hall

ATTENDING: Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows: Fr. William Coffas, Fr. Justin Miller, **Holy Cross:** Joe DiVincenzo, **Our Mother of Sorrows:** Marc Boeh, David Witkoski, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Fr. John Firpo, Gina Reeder, **St. John the Evangelist:** Nick Verdino, **St. Lawrence:** Fr. Lee Chase, Jeri Rombaut, **St. Leo the Great:** David Jones, Barbara Surash, **St. Mark's:** Deacon Frank Pettrone, Peter Blind, Kimm Wesley, **Facilitator:** Karen Rinefierd, **Minutes Scribe:** Maryanne Sutton

EXCUSED: Holy Cross: Ryan Snyder, **St. Charles Borromeo:** David Steklenski, **St. John the Evangelist:** Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu, Paul Parkman, **St. Lawrence:** Steve Amico, **St. Leo the Great:** Father Joseph Catanise

Prayer (Phil 4:6-9): one word, one phrase, sharing prayers, the Lord's Prayer

Over the past year and a half, what have we accomplished?

- A) Initial contributions from the 9/25 meeting of the pastoral leaders
- Engaging parishioners in understanding what has changed and what is changing
 - Collaboration among parishioners, not just among the pastoral leaders
 - Education through the bulletins has been excellent—other priests in the diocese have said that they should be doing the same thing
 - A wealth of conversations are taking place outside meetings
 - There are many areas in which we are collaborating
 - The leaders are seeing people from other parishes at their Masses
 - Parishioners are increasingly reading other parishes' bulletins
- B) Followed by input from lay members
- Identified 3 areas to move forward with: Evangelization, Vocations and Shared Website
 - Trying to bring parishioners back into church as people have gotten complacent after Covid.
 - Encouraging young people to consider vocations.

How shall we move forward?

- A) Initial contributions from the 9/25 meeting of the pastoral leaders
- The leaders want to engage the lay members of the task force more—sometimes it seems that the clergy speak the most at meetings and that the lay members defer to them and don't put forth their own ideas and opinions.
 - We need to bring the parish staffs up to speed—they may bring different perspectives we need to hear—beyond their own pastor/pastoral administrator communicating with them, should we bring all of them together? Do so within any potential groupings? Could staff contribute to our work on potential parish groupings?
 - We need to make progress on possible parish groupings to recommend to the bishop.
 - After we communicate with staffs, we need to do the same with pastoral councils and finance councils.
- B) Additional comments:
- Although other Northwest parishes are not a part of the task force, we should be in communication with these parishes (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Hamlin; Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Brockport and St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport).
 - One member expressed questions: is she speaking for her views or the views of the lay people of the parish as she believes? How does she get in touch with their opinions? Response was that the lay members of the task force were chosen by their pastoral leaders for their wisdom and experience

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with their parish. She should speak for herself. We will be getting input from parishioners later on at church hall meetings.

- There have been no clear, concrete objectives for our work. We want to get into concrete objectives. Response: unlike other planning efforts which were directed by the diocese with very clear expectations for the task to be addressed, ours is locally directed. The work that we are doing is ahead of the curve; there will be more need for this.
- Continue work on the 3 collaborative initiatives listed above (Evangelization, Vocations and Shared Website).
- In addition to the task force work creating recommendations for the time when we have fewer pastoral leaders assigned to our parishes, the task force is also coordinating the work of the three sub-committees; we will be the conductor of these efforts.

Future meetings with various constituencies—parish staffs, pastoral council and finance council members, parishioners at large

- Have a group staff meeting to bring them up to speed. Make sure we listen to them and get their input into any recommendations we create.
- Bring together parish leadership (pastoral councils and finance councils) and share any recommendations we create.
 - Are we missing something?
 - What are your concerns?
 - What are you thinking about?
- Don't have parishioners re-invent the wheel.
- Share what we have done and get input.

Brief updates on the 7-parish collaborative initiatives: Karen Rinefield

- **Evangelization** is focused on strategies that can be done across all seven parishes to deepen the faith of our parishioners. The evangelization team meets again this Thursday to start to flesh out the following four areas:
 - publish a list of good electronic resources for Catholics
 - work on an Advent/Lent event for all 7 parishes (first to happen in Lent 2024 if possible as a follow up to this year's three-part focus on the Eucharist and Vocations)
 - invite parishioners to respond to the question "where did you find God today?" and share these responses broadly
 - communicate opportunities for Adoration and Bible Study
- **Shared Website**
 - Target date to have the website up is February 2024 before Lent begins
 - Brendan Parker from the diocese is designing the website for us
 - Domain name: ROC Catholics Northwest
 - Working on logo
- **Vocations**
 - Members have been identified and the first meeting will be in late October/early November.

Proposal: create two subcommittees of lay task force members with the same task: What do we think would be the best grouping of parishes if our 7 parishes only had five leaders (Pastors/Pastoral Administrators)? If we had four? If we had three? If we had only two?

- Dave Steklenski said he would like to participate in a sub-committee.
- We should have a group without leaders, 2 groups would be stretched thin, so only have one sub-committee.

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- Have staff come up with their own staff recommendations? Perhaps have them give their input later on.
- How does all the work that we did earlier factor into this committee? The subcommittee should review the Parish Inventories we created earlier as part of their work as well as the brainstorming of possible groupings the task force did earlier this year.
- What does it mean to group a parish? The parishes in a particular group would share a leader the same way that Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows already do.
- Stress these are recommendations only. Bishop makes final decision.

- Members of the short-term subcommittee: Joe DiVincenzo, Marc Boeh, Dave Steklenski. Fr. Chase thought that Steve Amico would also be a good choice for this subcommittee and said that he would ask him if he was interested. [Since the task force meeting, Steve has agreed.]

- When is realistic for them to report back to the task force?
 - Realistically we should expect their work to be done before the task force meets in January.
 - Suggested that subcommittee members should do this work themselves without talking to clergy or staff.

Future meetings of the task force:

- Wednesday, November 8th at 6:30 pm in the St. Charles Parish Center
- Wednesday, January 10th at 6:30 pm at St. Mark's
- Tuesday, February 27th at 6:30 pm tentatively at St. John the Evangelist in Greece

Short meeting of the pastoral leaders afterwards to determine details of gathering staffs

- Decision to gather them after the January task force meeting—probably in February or March
- Possible locations: St. John's parish center, Deacon Hall, the diocesan pastoral center
- Acoustics will be important so that all can easily hear
- Fr. Coffas proposed Dick Orth as a possible facilitator. Dick is a skilled facilitator who has worked through IBM, done mediation, and facilitated planning/chaired pastoral council in the Owego area.
- Action: Karen will contact the leaders to ask for the number of their staff who would be invited and their positions so that we can have consistency across the parishes.