

Roc Catholics Northwest Steering Committee

June 4, 2025

Notes

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

Excused: Dcn. David Squilla (Roc Catholics Northwest website)

Updates

Evangelization Committee (Marianne Katz)

- The committee is preparing for a gathering focused on evangelization to be held on Tuesday, June 10. This event was suggested by a member of the Task Force. The purpose is to exchange ideas and give input to the 7-parish Evangelization Committee. 35-40 people are expected to participate.
- The committee has also been responsible for the following:
 - Advent and Lent flyers listing offerings of the 7 parishes
 - Resources available on the Roc Catholics Northwest website
 - Bible studies and Adoration opportunities
 - The digital library of apps, podcasts, radio stations, etc. created to enrich the faith of our parishioners
- A listing of resources for grandparents is being developed, including some on the diocesan website.
- The challenge has been how to make people in the pews more familiar with what is available on our website.

Follow up conversation:

- L. Chase: has been compiling a list of Mass times for Holy Days which goes in parish bulletins. We have been adding these to the website, too. Some parishes also include the list on their own websites.
- M. Katz: It would be good to know how many are going to a different parish for programs.
- E. Giblin: maybe we could use Survey Monkey as a follow up after Advent and Lent.
- L. Chase: suggested a flyer with weekend and daily Mass schedules, Adoration, confessions. These could be available at each parish for people to take after Mass.
- E. Giblin: we could also include information about how to find a parish and Mass times when traveling.
- L. Chase: Fr. Paul Tomasso has suggested that we help people become familiar with their neighboring parishes since additional clustering is likely.
- F. Pettrone: does every parish use Formed? Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, and St. Mark's do but not St. Lawrence or St. John's. We are uncertain about St. Charles and St. Leo's.
- F. Pettrone recommended the book "Return: How to Draw Your Child Back to the Church" by Brandon Vogt as a resource.
- F. Pettrone: St. Mark's has been talking about how to reach people outside the parish. Maybe a table at the Greece food truck? We need to be intentional and visible outside the

- church doors.
- M. Katz: One success St. John's has had is encouraging parishioners to post parish events on their personal Facebook pages. For example, when there was information about their Christmas Eve Mass including a pageant, many others beyond parishioners came. There can be more of an impact if news comes from a friend.
- B. Coffas: the Mass schedules of the 7 parishes and other news could also be included on Flocknotes for those parishes which utilize this communication tool.
- M. Katz: We need to look for easy ways to get people to our churches—e.g. pet blessings, blessing of Easter baskets. This information could be put on a postcard and handed out by parishioners to their neighbors.
- F. Pettrone: The Lent and Advent flyers could also be given out at fish fries sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.
- M. Katz: Some of our parishes have put information about events and resources on table tents for parish coffee hours.

Vocations Committee (Dcn. Ed Giblin)

- All 7 parishes now have displays of brochures about vocations.
- At the suggestion of Fr. Coffas who attended a Vocations Committee meeting last June, the committee is working on "Adopt a Seminarian." This spring members of the committee wrote to our seminarians. In the fall this initiative will be opened to all parishioners. A sample bulletin announcement has been drafted. We will emphasize not to send food, just notes and cards, with no expectation of return correspondence.
- The committee hosted December's Fisher Dinner for men interested in exploring the priesthood. The next will be in Geneseo. B. Coffas asked if the committee might be willing to host the December 2025 dinner. E. Giblin will take this proposal to the committee. The feedback from members was very positive; they appreciated being able to attend the Mass and hear the presentations.
- The committee also held a holy hour for vocations followed by an informational meeting about the permanent diaconate. Two of the three beginning diaconal formation this fall were present. Another who attended is deferring for now.

Follow up conversation:

- F. Pettrone: St. Mark's includes vocations periodically in the prayers of intention at Mass as well as offers Masses for vocations.
- F. Pettrone: The Archdiocese of New York is asking parishioners to recommend young men who might be good priests. Maybe this effort is titled "Called by Name"? L. Chase: our diocese did something similar several years ago. B. Coffas: The diocesan Vocations Awareness Team discussed this last fall, but no plans were made to do something similar at this point.
- L. Chase: Dcn. Dave Squilla leads a communion service on Thursdays, Fr. Chase's day off. Those gathered pray for vocations.
- B. Coffas: seminarian Ed Fantauzzo is serving at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows this summer. David Cataline was just ordained a transitional deacon, and several from the two parishes were able to attend.
- B. Coffas: When priests are in smaller assignments with fewer churches, it is easier to build relationships, get to know parishioners, and encourage young men to consider a vocation. L. Chase: The bishop also recognizes the value of having priests serve as college chaplains

or teach on campus. Also, if priests are stretched too thin, they may suffer burnout and there will be fewer vocations. Unfortunately, our number of priests has decreased, and it is difficult covering all of our parishes.

Roc Catholics Northwest website (Karen Rinefierd for Dcn. Dave Squilla)

- D. Squilla has reported that everything seems to be working well.
- K. Rinefierd recently sent a reminder to parish contacts to send information about upcoming events, since little was being sent in for advertising after Lent. We now have late spring and summer events listed, including the summer faith formation programs and vacation bible schools.
- K. Rinefierd: Several months ago, Steve Amico from the Task Force noted that all of the parishes do not have this shared website included on their bulletin shells or parish websites. That would help drive parishioners to the website. She will follow up.

Focusing the Steering Committee's purpose/work/how to proceed

- K. Rinefierd shared the responsibilities for this group as suggested by the Task Force:
 - Coordinate the work of the 7-parish committees (currently Evangelization and Vocations although others will be added as needed); provide direction, guidance, and assistance as needed; steer the committees toward implementable strategies
 - Identify new collaborative initiatives for the 7 parishes
 - Assist with transitioning in the event that there is a reduction in the number of pastoral leaders appointed within the 7 parishes
 - Support communication among the 7 parishes through the Roc Catholics Northwest website and through parish bulletins, websites, and social media
- Those present recognized that this meeting fit with those goals. We will likely meet 2-3 times a year.

Upcoming staff changes

- F. Pettrone shared that Kristine Burgio will become Pastoral Associate at St. Mark's and Pastoral Associate of Christian Formation at St. Leo's. St. Mark's is hiring a Catechetical Coordinator to assist Kristine with duties at St. Mark's.
- L. Chase said that Dcn. Bill Rabjohn is being appointed to St. Lawrence.

Coverage

- Fr. B. Coffas, Fr. Justin Miller, and Fr. Bob Schrader have been covering daily Masses and funerals at Sacred Heart Cathedral on a temporary basis. The Thursday 5:30 pm Mass at Holy Cross has been suspended through at least this month. Parishioners recognize that priests are stretched thin and have been gracious about this change.

Future topics

- L. Chase: if Mass schedules change, what happens to Mass intentions? How should they be handled?
- L. Chase: we might want to devote time on a future meeting of the Steering Committee to discussing how to promote our two schools.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 1, 1:30 pm, St. Lawrence rectory conference room