

Roc Catholics Northwest Steering Committee

October 1, 2025

Notes

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

Excused: Fr. William Coffas

Updates

Evangelization Committee (Marianne Katz)

- On June 10, those involved in evangelization at the seven parishes gathered to share success stories and challenges and give feedback to the 7-parish Evangelization Committee. Most knew what the committee had been doing but few knew about the Roc Catholics Northwest website.
- In addition to preparing Advent and Lent fliers and updating the digital library, the committee set the following as priorities:
 - Promote the Roc Catholics Northwest website. The committee proposed to leaders to utilize the St. Bernard's on the Road topics and speakers.
 - Encourage the pastoral leaders to hold a 7-parish Lenten retreat
 - Outreach to parents after the sacraments of initiation.
- The committee sees value in bringing people together for key events, since there is a different energy when more people are together. Examples shared included penance service days, a Lent retreat, and possibly shared retreats at Notre Dame Retreat Center.
- Information for the Advent flyer is due by October 14.

Follow up conversation:

- K. Rinefierd shared input received from B. Coffas regarding the proposed Lent retreat. He is very supportive of this idea and suggested the following as these topics address pressing issues our people and our church currently face: 1) Encountering the Heart of Jesus offered by Lisa Licon, STL, 2) Casting Fire Upon the Earth: The Radicality of the Gospel and the Mission of the Laity offered by Matthew Kuhner, Ph.D. He recommended having all the talks at St. John's to avoid confusion and because it is centrally located. He also recommended having the retreat early in the week and noted that the diocesan Day of Penance will be Tuesday, March 24.
- L. Chase noted that St. Bernard's programs can be very academic and not spiritual. He supported these topics and speakers if we can work with the speakers early enough to shape the program and integrate music and prayer.
- F. Pettrone noted that St. Leo's has a Sunday evening Mass.
- Consensus, pending agreement by the other pastoral leaders and working things out with St. Bernard's: to hold the retreat on Sun., March 22 at 2:00 pm and Mon., March 23 at 6 or 6:30 pm followed by celebration of the Day of Penance on Tues., March 24 at each of our parishes. We could list the schedule for penance at each parish.
- Action: L. Chase will contact J. Firpo, and F. Pettrone will contact J. Catanise. P. Enyan-Boadu is away, but those present felt he would be extremely supportive of a shared retreat.

- The goal is to keep sharing retreats with the preference being to have all seven parishes involved. Last year was an anomaly since it was an anniversary year for St. Charles, and they had already scheduled a parish retreat.

Vocations Committee (Dcn. Ed Giblin)

- Parishioners have been invited to “adopt a seminarian” with information in all parish bulletins. Last spring this initiative was piloted by the Vocations Committee members, and some seminarians did indeed write back even though there is no expectation that they will.
- The committee will hold another holy hour to pray for vocations followed by an informational session about the permanent diaconate. There is no urgency about setting a date since the next class of permanent deacon candidates will not begin formation until fall 2027.
- Committee members will help with the next Fisher Dinner to be held on 12/29 at Holy Cross with a dinner prepared by the Holy Cross Knights of Columbus.
- This year the committee will emphasize lay ecclesial ministry. A brochure is being developed and will be included in the parish vocation displays. There are also plans to advertise these displays more fully. It was noted that people have been stopping by and taking brochures. The committee hopes to interview some of our local lay ecclesial ministers with short articles for bulletins and fuller interviews on the Roc Catholics Northwest website.
- Our diocese currently has ten seminarians in formation for the priesthood as well as six candidates for the permanent diaconate.

Roc Catholics Northwest website (Dcn. Dave Squilla)

- We haven’t been receiving as much information lately from parish contacts about upcoming events and programs.
- D. Squilla said that he likes to link information back to what is posted on the website of the parish submitting it but often the event is not advertised there. It is important to have links to synchronize information since sometimes it changes.

Follow up discussion about the website and communication in general:

- We need links to the Roc Catholics Northwest website on the bulletin shells and the websites of our 7 parishes.
- K. Rinefierd will be asking Brendan Parker to create a QR code taking people directly to the website.
- M. Katz suggested creating postcards with information about the website on one side and parish-specific information on the other.
- L. Chase noted that if these are always in the foyer or in pews, it becomes messy.
- M. Katz: these could be available in the parish and school offices and also at special events—e.g. Ash Wednesday, concerts, pet blessings, other opportunities that bring people in beyond our regular parishioners.

Recent staff changes and collaboration

- James Sarkis was hired to direct faith formation for Holy Cross, Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles, and St. Lawrence. He is only in his fourth week and has done tons already. Maura Spencer is now the halftime administrator for the four parishes. We are still advertising for a coordinator of faith formation.

- With fewer children in faith formation, it makes sense to share more. This year the four parishes will have one family faith formation program and two summer intensive programs. Preparation for first penance and first communion will be together with one first penance celebration and first communion celebrations at each parish. There is one registration form and one fee schedule. Donna Gray and Cindy Lammes each lead one year of Confirmation preparation. The OCIA team includes people from all four parishes. The pastors would like to reach out to St. John's to see if they are interested in participating in the future. Later on, James Sarkis will focus on reaching out and marketing. Dcn. Bill Rabjohn is interested in leading a regional baptism preparation class with intake and then celebration happening at the individual parishes.
- Kristine Burgio is now pastoral associate at St. Mark's and pastoral associate of Christian formation at St. Leo's. Stephanie Oswald is now catechetical coordinator at St. Mark's. The parishes are early in this transition with the expectation that there will be more streamlining in the future.

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, January 28 at 1:30 pm, St. Lawrence rectory conference room