

Roc Catholics Northwest Steering Committee

June 3, 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)

2027 Lenten Retreat for the seven parishes

- Karen shared the following input from others--
 - suggested topics we received on feedback surveys at the 2026 Lenten retreat: tips on how to keep focused, the Mass—scriptural bases, how to pray, discussion of the rosary, Mary our Mother, saints, prayer, eucharistic miracles, a breakdown of the Mass and the sacraments, forgiveness, Holy Spirit, relationship with the Holy Spirit and how to apply in my everyday life, teach us how to defend our faith and discuss apologetics, how to serve children in our churches, sacred music, topics more related to Lent as it relates to living in today's world, Ten Commandments, Fruits of the Holy Spirit, helping oneself and others live by their faith within the world views of today, what is “true” and what are “stories” (aside from parables) in the bible, what predestines a soul to hell, how to determine our own unique gifts and use them in the church
 - suggested presenters we received on feedback surveys at the 2026 Lenten retreat: Lisa Lickona, Sr. Briega McKenna, OSC and Fr. Pablo (focus on Eucharist/Priesthood), Dan Reynolds (a cartoonist who did a presentation for the Catholic Daughters of the Americas at the NYS Convention in Syracuse), Matthew Kuhner, more speakers from St. Bernard's
 - from the 7-parish Evangelization Committee and the 2026 Retreat Committee: run the retreat on multiple Sundays, run the retreat over three nights and close with a Mass or an evening of eucharistic adoration, have the topics more related to one another or coordinated, remind people of Christian ways to approach change if there are changes or anticipated churches in our parishes, Pope Leo's encyclical “Magnifica Humanitas.”
- Discussion:
 - We could offer an adult education program on the ethical use of AI and the pope's encyclical, possibly with a professor of ethics from St. Bernard's.
 - M. Katz added that Jeff Rice from St. Mark's made a proposal to have a 7-parish visitation of our parishes on Holy Thursday. He will come to the next evangelization meeting to discuss this further. Discussion of his proposal included another option-- having one session each week at one of our parishes—maybe focus on the seven last words or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This would encourage parishioners to visit each of our parishes.
 - Questions to be worked out: what? Topic? Format?
 - Possible national speakers (unlikely we could schedule for 2027; would be for 2028 or beyond):
 - Fr. Mike Schmitz
 - Fr. Patrick Gonyeau (3 life-changing tips from Fr. Solanus Casey)
 - Chris Bray (we tried to get him before, but the diocese said that it was too difficult to pay someone from Canada). Maybe check with the diocese again?

- Possible local speakers
 - Fr. Isaac Slater, OCSO (at the Abbey of the Genesee, author of Desert Wisdom for a Polarized World)—he could possibly speak on Augustinian spirituality. We could potentially sell wares from the abbey.
 - Lisa Lickona (currently at St. Bernard’s but taking a new position at McQuaid Jesuit High School)—she has done a series of retreats about the saints. Possibly on Saint Carlo Arcutis. We could promote this in our schools and faith formation programs, including Confirmation preparation.
- Action: Karen will email the pastoral leaders about the direction we are going in for their thoughts, asking that they “respond all” with comments and suggestions.

Updates on our faith formation programs

- Fr. Lee Chase: Maura Spencer (formerly the administrator for Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Lawrence) has been hired as the new director of the program. Sofia Frongillo, from Wisconsin, was interviewed for the coordinator position, hired, and will begin in September. There has been discussion among the pastors and the finance director about hiring an administrator to assist them, and now it looks like that will be a part-time position.
- Dcn. Frank Petrone: Kris Burgio has been out on disability but is expected to return this month. Stephanie Oswald has been assisting at St. Mark’s on a part-time basis. St. Mark’s and St. Leo the Great are combining for this summer’s faith formation offerings: a summer intensive program and vacation bible school, both of which will be offered at St. Mark’s. They welcome the other parishes to advertise the free vacation bible school. Dcn. Frank will send information to the other pastoral leaders and for the ROC Catholics Northwest website.

Proposal by Fr. Bill Coffas to set up a meeting with Justin Rees, new diocesan Associate Director, Strategic Planning and Parish Finance

- Justin Rees, from Chicago, is a recent hire in the diocesan finance office. He has been meeting with various people to learn more about local planning efforts. Fr. Coffas wondered if we want to invite him to a meeting to learn more about what we have done in our area as part of his research. The steering committee thought this was a good idea. An invitation would be extended to the other pastors and, without making this too large a group, we would like one or two task force members to participate if possible. Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday afternoons would be best. Action: Fr. Coffas will set up this meeting.

Collaboration Updates

Vocations Committee (Dcn. Ed Giblin)

- The committee meets tonight. Currently the committee is interviewing local lay ecclesial ministers for the bulletin and website. Possibilities being considered for the future include expanding the new traveling chalice practice at St. Leo’s to the other parishes, purchasing manipulatives for faith formation programs (Dcn. Ed noted that St. John’s has a lending library for kids so the committee could build on that idea), a 7-parish Mass with Bishop Bonnici to pray for vocations, and creating videos of local people sharing how they discerned their vocations. There will be another informational session for those men

interested in learning more about the permanent diaconate with their wives. Fr. Lee Chase noted that he is seeing more young men in church with some inquiring about priesthood.

Evangelization Committee (Marianne Katz)

- The committee uses summers to look at their priorities. Fresh blood is needed among the membership since most current members have been on the committee for more than three years. The committee needs new ideas so that previous activities are not just repeated without looking at the broader picture of evangelization. Committee members have reached out to the pastoral leaders to invite new people to join.

Roc Catholics Northwest website (Dcn. Dave Squilla)

- The website is going well, and the workload is doable for Dcn. Dave. Action: Karen will check to make sure that there are links to the 7-parish website on each of our parish websites.

Recent staff changes

- Joe Gaudio has been hired as the new St. Lawrence School principal.
- With the new appointment of Fr. Bob Ring, the Unity Hospital schedule will need to change.

Future topics

- how to promote our two schools (make sure we cover this at the next meeting)

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 21 at 1:30 pm, in Deacon Hall at St. Lawrence