

7-Parish Vocations Committee

Notes October 26, 2023

Present: **Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows:** Mary Ann DeLucenay, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Mark Stechschulte, **St. John the Evangelist:** Rick Paoletti, **St. Lawrence:** Deacon Ed Giblin, **St. Leo the Great:** Neil Combs, **St. Mark's:** Lorraine Vancour, **Facilitator/Link to the Pastoral Planning Task Force:** Karen Rinefierd

Purpose of this group: to develop and implement strategies for the 7 parishes to work together to encourage vocations—in general, to the priesthood/diaconate, to religious life, to lay ecclesial ministry

Opening prayer: Luke 10:1-9, faith sharing, intercessory prayers, Our Father

Introductions

- Lorraine: in the past has been a parishioner at St. Charles and the Cathedral and is now at St. Mark's; she is involved in choir and the bereavement ministry.
- Neil: a St. Leo's parishioner who also goes to St. John the Evangelist and Our Mother of Sorrows; he became Catholic in 2001 and is now involved in the Knights of Columbus and health and safety committee as well as serving as a driver.
- Rick: retired, a member of St. John's who is an officer of the Knights of Columbus and has served as a lector, catechist, coordinator for 40 days for life, and in the RCIA process.
- Mary Ann: a retired nurse; a parishioner of Holy Cross who serves as a minister of holy communion and volunteers in the food pantry; her son Alex is a deacon assigned to St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport.
- Ed: the director of the diocesan Office of the Permanent Diaconate. He also has several other diocesan responsibilities: Director of Communications, Coordinator of Prison/Jail Ministry, Coordinator of Health Care Ministry, assistance with service to Senior Priests, and other duties as assigned by the diocesan bishop. Earlier he was assigned as a deacon at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows but, in addition to his diocesan appointment, he is back at St. Lawrence.
- Mark: became Catholic through the RCIA; he is a parishioner at St. Charles and serves on the pastoral council.

Review/discussion of ideas generated by the pastoral planning task force/general discussion

- Recognition of the central importance of vocations to the priesthood—if we don't have priests, we don't have Eucharist.
- It is important for young people to see priests as real people, especially since few have priests invited to their home for meals.
- Fr. Justin Miller is in Holy Cross School twice every week.
- The vocation talks by Fr. Joseph Martuscello and seminarian David Cataline that were part of last spring's Lenten series on the Eucharist were very positively received.
- Could we have a team of people to pray for vocations?
- When St. Lawrence has communion services, those gathered pray for vocations.
- We could put a request that people pray for vocations in our parish bulletins.
- Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows have areas where pamphlets on vocations are available.
- The diocese has created posters of seminarians and deacon candidates which have been distributed to parishes.

- St. Mark's is praying for a young man who is discerning a call to the priesthood.
- The Knights of Columbus has an RSVP program to support seminarians.
- Lay Ecclesial Minister is the official term for a lay woman or man whose service in the church includes the following: authorization of the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church, leadership in a particular area of ministry, and close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of the ordained. This ministry is challenging because most lay ecclesial ministers (unlike diaconate candidates and seminarians) pay for their own education and jobs are usually low paying.
- Colleges are a venue for vocations.
- How to encourage parents to support vocations within their own families?
- Legos has a Mass kit which encourages kids to play Mass.
- The biannual NCYC gathering in Indianapolis and the summer retreats at Steubenville may lead to vocations.
- Permanent diaconate: Personal invitation is important, including by current deacons and their wives. Earlier this month there was a diocesan Deacon Sunday. Currently there are four men in formation for the permanent diaconate. It is challenging inviting men to apply. There is a five-year preparation process with an emphasis on academics which is important but it eliminates some who might be good deacons. Some men come forward after they retire but that is too late; younger men are busy when they and their wives are raising children and they are in the midst of careers. Some only see a deacon when he is preaching and are unaware of the three legs of the diaconate (Service, Word, Liturgy).
- Priesthood is not just a career choice but a calling. Conversation about the priesthood does not regularly happen in homes.
- The Catholic ethos has changed—once families were larger and more young people attended Catholic schools and colleges.
- Local videos showing how some discerned a possible call to the priesthood are valuable.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 29 at 7:00 pm in room 7 of the Borromeo Ministry Center at St. Charles Borromeo

Preparation for the meeting: bring the following:

- **two specific ideas for what this committee can do to foster vocations to the priesthood**
- **two specific ideas for what this committee can do to foster vocations to the permanent diaconate**
- **two specific ideas for what this committee can do to foster vocations in general or to lay ecclesial ministry or religious life**

Closing prayer: Hail Mary