

7-Parish Vocations Committee Notes November 29, 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. Mark's:** Lorraine Vancour,
Facilitator/Link to the Pastoral Planning Task Force: Karen Rinefierd

Excused: **St. Leo the Great:** Neil Combs

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: 1 Cor. 1:3-9, faith sharing, intercessory prayers, Our Father

New member of the committee: Karen shared that Rick Cammilleri from Our Mother of Sorrows will be joining the vocations committee.

Sharing/discussing ideas brought by each committee member

Fostering vocations to the priesthood

- Coordinate efforts with the existing vocations awareness team (Fr. Coffas, Fr. VanLieshout, Fr. Martuscello, Fr. Daniel L. White) so that parish-based efforts are in synch with the broader diocesan approach. Highlight more prominently the *roc priest.org* website on parish social media. Complement their in-progress efforts and support them at the parish level.
- The diocesan vocations awareness team sponsors occasional Fisher dinners—one is coming up which includes dinner, talk, prayer, and adoration. This one, held in East Rochester, included invitations to the St. Jerome's youth group and family members.
- Consider having different priests preside/preach at the parishes, asking that some of our newer and older priests speak about their vocational call, the joys and challenges of priesthood, etc. Such a "pulpit exchange" would introduce parishioners to priests of differing ages and pastoral experience, and perhaps pique the interest of discerners. The downside is that if this is done at a Sunday liturgy the target audience is very small, given the general attendance rate of young men, and it is not focused toward the women in attendance. It's the risk of a "vocation talk" at a Sunday liturgy – the benefit is exposure to a lot of folks, but the reality is that the net is being cast for a limited few in this particular instance.
 - If we do something with preaching, we should include Fr. Bob Schrader. He recently spoke about his road to a priestly vocation at Holy Cross.
 - We could have stories about how different priests reached their decisions to pursue priesthood.
 - Even though there are not as many young men at Mass each week, Sunday Mass is where most people are present including family members who could encourage their young. Short videos sent through social media and flocknote might be effective.
 - An entire homily does not need to be about vocations but, where appropriate, vocations could be mentioned and tied to the readings.
- Vocation talk could also be incorporated into faith formation or youth ministry.
- Altar boys and their parents could be invited to a special meeting.

- Vocations can come from campus ministry—we could establish contacts at local campuses.
- Both Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows have displays about vocations. We could replicate those at the other parishes.
- Priest presence is important at schools, CYO, etc. The Ignite model of youth ministry (begins in school gym and ends in church) might lead to vocations.
- We could focus on vocations at Adoration and request the prayers of those participating for vocations.
- Talk to youth leaders to build snippets about vocations into their programs.
- Advertise the monthly prayer requests for priests (<https://mprp-roc.org/cal.htm>) or do something similar for seminarians.

Fostering vocations to the permanent diaconate

- It is important to see permanent deacons in their role as deacons—see what they are doing, hear how they came to their decision to apply to the diaconate, and interact with them.
- There could be a similar display for the permanent diaconate as the one previously mentioned for priestly vocations at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows. Ed recommended two titles that he frequently gives to men considering the diaconate: 101 Questions and Answers on Deacons by William T. Ditewig and The Heart of the Diaconate by James Keating.
- Consider a multi-parish Holy Hour hosted by all the deacons in our seven parishes. Perhaps Adoration with Liturgy of the Hours (Evening Prayer, Night Prayer) followed by an informal gathering in the parish hall with a brief presentation and time for Q&A. Ask the deacons and pastors to make personal invitations to men whom they think might be open to discerning a diaconal vocation.
- Ask the deacons in each parish to write a brief bulletin article highlighting their own call to ordained ministry, their experiences in formation and ministry, and how their diaconate gives sacramental witness to the Servant Christ.
- Have a bulletin article including what the church is looking for in permanent deacons.
- Ask the local priests and permanent deacons to invite men in their communities whom they think would be fine deacons to consider the diaconate.
- Comment: We wish the age maximum in our diocese could be extended. Now it is 62 for ordination which means beginning the formation process by age 57. Our diocese asks for 10 years of ministry after ordination.

Fostering vocations to lay ecclesial ministry

- A brief bulletin article may be a good idea in this case too. So much essential work goes on behind the scenes, with people just expecting that “somebody” from the parish staff takes care of it. As with the deacons, maybe the LEM’s in each parish might submit a brief article that explains their personal response to their Baptismal call within the context of Church ministry, the training/education required, and an overview of all that they do to keep parish life vibrant. They are too often overlooked and taken for granted.

Fostering vocations to religious life

- Consider inviting Sr. Donna DeSanto SSJ and a vocations team member from the RSM’s to share what religious sisters do beyond the classroom, which is probably the setting most familiar to us old folks at Mass from our school days years ago. They can highlight the generous contributions of religious to campus ministry, jail/prison ministry, health care ministry, ministry to the homeless, ministry to women and children, etc.

Other

- Distribute prayer cards for vocations and encourage parishioners to incorporate this into their daily prayer.
- A Mothers of Lu group prays for vocations at Sacred Heart Cathedral. For more information: [Mothers of Lu](#).
- Another resource shared by Ed after the meeting: [Vocation Ministry – Creating A Culture of Vocations](#).
- Encourage parishioners to participate more in retreats and mission trips—from the pulpit and through bulletins.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 24 at 7:00 pm, in room 7 of the Borromeo Ministry Center at St. Charles

Closing prayer: Hail Mary