

7-Parish Vocations Committee

Notes December 3, 2025

Present: **Holy Cross:** Mary Ann DeLucenay, **Our Mother of Sorrows:** Rick Cammilleri, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Mark Stechschulte, **St. John the Evangelist:** Rick Paoletti, **St. Leo the Great:** Neil Combs, **St. Mark's:** Lorraine Vancour, **facilitator/link to the Steering Committee:** Karen Rinefierd

Excused: **St. Lawrence:** Deacon Ed Giblin

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: Isaiah 11:1-5, faithsharing, intercessory prayers, Our Father

Miscellaneous

- Neil went to the recent diocesan Men's Conference and picked up copies of the brochure prepared by the monks at the Abbey of the Genesee to introduce their community to those possibly considering life as a monk. He brought copies for the vocation displays at all of our parishes.

7-parish Lent retreat

- Sun., March 22 at 2:00 pm at St. John the Evangelist: Lisa Lickona “Encountering the Heart of Jesus”
- Mon., March 23 at 6:30 pm at St. John the Evangelist: Matthew Kuehner “Casting Fire Upon the Earth: the Radicality of the Gospel and the Mission of the Laity”
- Karen met recently with the two speakers who asked that she pose two questions to our committee:
 - 1) What would you really love to see or come away with by the end of the retreat?
Comments:
 - Grow closer to Jesus Christ (we can never be close enough to him).
 - I like the wording of “encountering the heart of Jesus.”
 - 2) Because the second day is focused on the mission of the laity and we are focusing on lay ecclesial ministry this year, do we want to include a witness talk by one of our local lay ecclesial ministers? Comments:
 - Agreement that a short witness talk would be good, but it does not necessarily have to be by a lay ecclesial minister.
 - The mission of the laity is important. I never thought about having a mission myself.
 - Maybe the laity need a little more spiritual warfare—is one of our weapons the rosary?

Fostering vocations to the priesthood—sponsoring December 29 diocesan Fisher Dinner

- No new information.
- Those able to help: Rick Cammilleri, Mary Ann DeLucenay, Rick Paoletti, Lorraine Vancour, Neil Combs, Mark Stechschulte.

- Karen will pass these names on to Fr. Bill Coffas and share details with our committee as they are available.

Fostering vocations to lay ecclesial ministry (LEM)

Lay ecclesial ministry brochure—St. Mark's, St. John the Evangelist, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Lawrence already have placed copies in their vocation displays. Neil will add them at St. Leo's, and Mary Ann will ask Fr. Bill Coffas about doing so at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows.

Status of interviewing some local lay ecclesial ministers

James Sarkis (new Faith Formation Director for Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles, and St. Lawrence) – Rick C. will contact him to see when he can do this.

Donna Gray (Regional Youth Minister for St. Lawrence and St. Charles Borromeo) – Ed has the interview done already.

Tod Simone (Pastoral Minister at St. John the Evangelist) – Rick P. reached out to Tod who said that he has prepared the answers but wants to review them with Fr. Peter before sending them on to Rick.

Kristine Burgio (Pastoral Associate at St. Mark's and Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation at St. Leo's) – Lorraine emailed her a week ago and will follow up later.

Patty Gorman (Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Leo the Great) – Neil talked with her already and will reach out to see when she can do the interview. [Since the committee meeting, she has submitted her response to the questions.]

Identifying vocation practices of parishes named by Vocation Ministry as being vocation-promoting parishes during a nationwide search—Committee members have learned the following:

Christ the King in Little Rock, AR (Lorraine)—website ctklr.org—has a vocations committee, offers adoration 8 am – 7 pm, instituted the Vocations Chalice Program (each weekend a family receives a chalice, prays for vocations; prayers are given to the family; the chalice is returned to the church office the following Friday to be offered to the next family), has a Holy Hour for Vocations every Thursday evening.

Mother of Sorrows Catholic School in Murrysville, PA (Mary Ann)—No information was available on the school website. The school is located in the Diocese of Greensburg, and Mary Ann brought information about its vocation efforts. Website greensburgpriest.org. Programs and initiatives: 1) **Holy Family Circle:** Families (with children under 18) are invited to join the Holy Family Circle, an initiative supporting priestly vocations through prayer, encouragement, and participation. Members receive regular mailings with family devotions, prayer guides, and resources to help children grow in faith and listen for God's call. They also receive invitations to spiritually enriching events throughout the year. 2) **The Melchizedek Project** (a national initiative): A program for high school and young adult men that includes prayer, discussion on priesthood-related topics through

several courses, and dinner. 3) **Called by Name:** allows the public to suggest young people who they believe would make a great priest or sister to the Vocations Office.

St. Ann's in Bartlett, TN (Neil)—website stannbartlett.org. The homepage has a graphic “Our future priests are in our homes” with a link to the parish vocations webpage. **Vocation Chalice Program:** Families host the chalice in their home for a week and pray for vocations. **Called by Name:** a program meant to encourage laity, deacons, and priests to identify men in the diocese to discern the priesthood. **Seminarian Post Office:** In the narthex are materials to learn more about seminarians assigned to the parish. Parishioners are encouraged to send them notes of appreciation and encouragement by dropping notes in the special mailbox in the narthex, and the parish mails them to the seminarian. **K of C Squires:** The Squires is the official youth organization of the Knights of Columbus. The Columbian Squires is a leadership development program for Catholic young men, 10-18 years old. The parish also offers multiple times for Adoration and has a school. The vocation ministry meets monthly.

St. Anthony of Padua in The Woodlands, TX (Mark)--The parish is associated with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and encourages vocations by hosting/promoting events such as a marriage seminar and Holy Hours for vocations. The parish website has a link to Houston Vocations. This website has numerous vocations resources on priesthood and consecrated life (for men and for women). There are posters, seminarian prayer calendars, and seminarian "trading cards" available.

St. Jude's in Laredo, TX (Lorraine)—The parish has a “31 club” chalice program where a family takes a chalice home for a month and uses specific prayers for an increase of vocations.

St. Luke's in Austin, TX--Ed learned that this is an Episcopalian community and did not see anything related to vocations on their website.

Sacred Heart in Turlock, CA (chosen as the best) (Lorraine)—website <https://shparish.net>--**There** is a Youtube video with a member of the parish speaking about the accomplishments of the parish's work to increase vocations and receiving the annual award from Vocation Ministry: The speaker notes that 1500 families have prayed for vocations during the past five years. They hold an annual retreat for young boys and girls and another retreat for couples preparing for marriage. The parish had its first priest ordained in 2025, and two others are currently seminarians. The parish prepares podcasts with interviews of priests currently serving where they talk about how they were called to the priesthood. Eucharistic adoration is available for one hour weekly.

We decided to defer to the next meeting discussing any of these practices we may want to consider locally.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 28, 7:00 PM, room 7 of the Borromeo Ministry Center

Closing prayer: Hail Mary